

**FINANCE COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
7:15 P.M., THURSDAY, MAY 1, 2025
*TOWN HALL/ZOOM***

Finance Committee Members Present at Town Hall/Zoom: Chair Ross Lally, Member Robert Morra, Member Amanda Gordon, Member Rhea Klein, Member Tyler Egner, Member Ashley Phelan. Absent was Member Chris Connelly.

Staff Present Via Town Hall/Zoom: Chief Financial Officer Jill Collins, Board Clerk Mary Johnston, Town Administrator Jim Rupert, Selectmen Rodney Fournier, Board of Education Superintendent Kristin Heckt, Incoming Board of Education Superintendent David Caruso,

Others Present Via Town Hall/Zoom: Ashley Paggoli, Jim Loersch, Ann Philaramo, Steve Michaud

1. Call to Order

R. Lally called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

R. Lally advised the Committee he will not vote on agenda items due to a conflict of interest.

2. Public Participation:

Ann Philaramo, Hebron Road, said she would like the Committee to consider the concept of allowing people to pay twice since some residents have concerns with their finances. R. Morra replied this has been an ongoing issue and one of the driving issues that would accommodate that move with the least amount of impact is the reduction in interest rates. R. Lally added the Town would have less money due to loss of interest income. R. Morra stated this is something that can be discussed for a future fiscal year. R. Lally stated this is something the Committee has discussed.

Steve Michaud stated he is having a hard time understanding how the Town is coming to the percent increase for the mil rate. S. Michaud pointed out this is a huge increase of 13.46% from last year, which he will be paying. S. Michaud stated this is somewhat misleading to do the 32.74 mil rate because he thinks it is about a 20% increase from the net amount to be raised by taxation. S. Michaud said he is concerned for the voters that might not realize they are voting for a 13.46% increase and not a 6.87% increase. S. Michaud stated the budget documents should reflect the 13.46% increase for good faith and transparency and asked for this information to be provided to the citizens. After discussion on how to communicate this information, the Committee will add a comment referencing the rate in the budget document that is distributed online and in public buildings. S. Michaud asked when he could approach the Committee for the ability to pay

taxes twice. R. Morra replied citizens can attend meetings to ask the Committee to consider this payment option.

3. Approval of Minutes

3a. April 17, 2025, Regular Meeting

R. Morra MOVED to approve the April 17, 2025, Regular Meeting. A. Gordon SECONDED the motion. A. Gordon stated in Section 6c) to remove the wording that she would complete the presentation and add she will work with town staff. R. Morra MOVED to modify his motion with the modification. A. Gordon SECONDED the motion. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH THE MODIFICATION 5:0:0.

3b. April 22, 2025, Special Meeting

R. Morra MOVED to approve the April 22, 2025, Special Meeting. A. Phelan SECONDED the motion. J. Collins pointed out that the April 17, 2025, meeting at the end of the Minutes should be removed. R. Morra MOVED to amend his motion to remove the April 17, 2025, meeting at the end. A. Phelan SECONDED the motion. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY AS AMENDED 5:0:0.

4. Ongoing Business

4a. Discussion on FY2025/2026 Revenues & Expenditures

J. Collins reported the new Education Cost Sharing amount is \$2,683,216.00 and the FY25 Revenues had an additional \$17,000. J. Collins stated the auditor is certain the Liabilities will not change and reported the new surplus is \$85,000 for a total of \$1,840,291.00. J. Collins said this new information changes to mil rate to 34.74 after adjustments. K. Heckt stated there have been no updates on benefits. A lengthy discussion was held on reporting the vacancy rate for the Board of Education in the budget and the possibility of budget cuts.

4b. Discussion on FY2024/2025 Revenues & Expenditures

A. Gordon MOVED to approve the revised FY2025 revenues at \$24,068,661.00. A. Phelan SECONDED the motion. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5:0:0.

The Committee discussed the volatility cap of the State of Connecticut's annual budget and the effect on the Board of Education's budget.

4c. Consider and possible action on Finance Committee's Approved budget for FY2026

4d. Consider and possibly action on ballot question

A. Gordon MOVED to approve the FY26 Budget in the amount of \$27,239,518.00. T. Egner SECONDED the motion. It was determined the FY 26 budget is approved through the ballot question. A. Gordon RESCINDED her motion to approve the FY26 Budget. T. Egner RESCINDED his second.

A. Gordon MOVED to approve the referendum question **"Shall the Annual Budget for the Town of Bolton, Connecticut, for the Fiscal Year 2026 as recommended by the Finance**

Committee in the amount of \$27,239,518.00 be adopted?”. T. Egner SECONDED the motion. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5:0:0.

4e. Discussion of Public Communication/Outreach

R. Klein shared comments that had been posted on Facebook and NextDoor. Some of the comments were on the reasons for placeholders which are in the budget pending approval by the Selectmen. R. Klein also stated some social media comments were about cutting staff by 5%. The Committee discussed the issue of cutting staff and the impact to town services.

The Committee discussed updates to the Budget Document and adding a brief message from the Finance Committee on the Mil Rate Post Tax adjustment with the percentage. After a lengthy discussion, R. Lally and J. Collins will work on this language to add to the Budget Document.

4f. Budget calendar

A. Gordon MOVED to cancel the May 15, 2025, Regular Meeting. A. Phelan SECONDED the motion. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5:0:0.

5. New Business

5a. Discussion on status of FY2024 Audit

R. Lally expressed his concerns about why it took so long for the FY2024 Audit and asked that this discussion be tabled. A. Gordon MOVED to table the discussion on the status of the FY2024 audit to a future meeting to be determined. R. Morra SECONDED the motion. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5:0:0.

6. Adjournment

A. Gordon MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:13 P.M. R. Morra SECONDED the motion. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: 5:0:0.

Respectfully submitted by Mary J. Johnston

Mary J. Johnston

PLEASE SEE THE MINUTES OF SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS FOR CORRECTIONS TO THESE MINUTES AND ANY CORRECTIONS HERETO.

SEE ATTACHMENTS UNDER SEPARATE COVER.