

**TOWN OF BOLTON  
FINANCE COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC HEARING  
7:15 P.M., THURSDAY, APRIL 28, 2026  
TOWN HALL/ZOOM**

**Finance Committee Members Present Via Town Hall/ Zoom:** Chair Ross Lally, Member Tyler Egner, Member David Cowles, Member Rodney Fournier, Member Benjamin Davies, Member Denay Johnston, Member Melissa Wielandt

**Staff Present Via Zoom/In Person:** Chief Financial Officer Jill Collins, Board of Education Superintendent David Caruso, Town Administrator Jim Rupert, Interim Finance Director Stephanie Smigala

**Others Present Via Zoom/In Person:** Scott Michaud, Katie Desrosiers, Sherri Deveau, Gwen Marnon, Mary Terhune, Mary MacFarland, Eric Luntta, Bryce Aronson

**1. Call to Order**

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

R. Lally discussed the FY 2027 Budget Presentation and reviewed the proposed changes currently under review since the April 21, 2026 Public Hearing: reduce total expenditures \$512,986 to reduce the mil rate increase from 9.78% to 7% (\$72,000 reduction in capital improvements, \$132,747 reduction in the Town Budget and \$308,239 reduction in Board of Education budget) and shift \$30,000 expenditure reduction to unexpended FY2025 Town budget. R. Lally mentioned the \$170 million the State is releasing in ECS Grants, but do not know how they are going to be distributed. R. Lally reviewed the changes/updates to the budget presentation. R. Lally said he will be asking the Finance Committee to work with the Board of Selectmen, Board of Education, and Interim Finance Director Smigala to change the budget process so information can be provided sooner. R. Lally reported the total expenditures for FY 2027 is \$27,405,417 but this number could change as more information is provided. R. Lally discussed how the expenditure budget is distributed and the proposed capital spending budget is \$764,447, summarized the debt service and contingency summary with a total proposed budget of \$1,421,514. The Board of Selectmen Budget Summary is \$7,585,519 and the Board of Education is \$17,613,666. R. Lally displayed how the budget is funded and how the surplus of funds was used. R. Lally said the proposed Mil Rate is 35.46, a 9.78% increase from last year's rate.

Sherrie Deveau, 111 Vernon Road, asked if adjustments would be made once the Town learns the amount of State funds to be received. R. Lally replied once the budget is approved, that is the budget the Town must use, but any additional funds will be surplus.

Scott Michaud, 29 Green Hill Road, asked if the money that is voted down in the first referendum, that money cannot be used to adjust the mil rate for this year. R. Lally replied no, if the first budget gets voted down and the State information is received about state grants, adjustments can be made at that point. R. Lally said typically the budget is adjusted down per the Charter. S. Michaud asked about one-time grants and if this could cause issues next year. S. Michaud appreciated the Finance Committee's efforts during the budget process. D. Caruso added there is a possibility of not receiving the State funds. S. Michaud said he had a tough time following the reason for no surplus funds in next year's budget. R. Lally replied that is why the Town must be careful with grant monies.

R. Fournier said the unfortunate thing with the upcoming referendum votes is that Board of Selectmen and Board of Education may have givebacks in this year's budget.

D. Cowles added the importance of projections and working with the Finance Department to make sure information is being distributed to aid with financial decisions.

Katie Desrosiers, 47 Gulf Lane, asked about the 7% increase mentioned earlier, but the presentations still show 9.78%. R. Lally explained the 7% increase was discussed but not formally voted on. K. Desrosiers asked if there would be follow-up meetings/presentations. R. Lally reviewed the upcoming Finance Committee meetings and reviewed the different tax increase scenarios/options. R. Lally added the Finance Committee must make a decision their Special Meeting on May 7 and adopt the budget by May 10 per the Charter. K. Desrosiers asked where she could find out the status of the Reserve Fund. S. Smigala replied they are currently working on that information. K. Desrosiers appreciated the response and forward-thinking report but wondered why this was not done beforehand. R. Fournier replied they are asking the same question. K. Desrosiers asked where the appropriate place would find more information on that happened. R. Fournier replied to S. Smigala is working on that as well. K. Desrosiers asked what public meeting she should pay attention to understand how this happened and what steps were taken to prevent this and show accountability. D. Cowles replied to the Finance Committee is the best meeting. R. Lally invited K. Desrosiers to attend the Special Meeting following the Public Hearing where the Committee can discuss and invited her to attend the next Coffee and Conversation meeting on May 26, 2026.

Eric Luntta, 384 Lake Street, asked if the pie chart showing Local Property and Taxes Fees be broken down with Commercial properties. The Committee felt this was a good suggestion and will have it available at the next meeting.

Sherri Deveau, asked about projects being done in house but some projects being outsourced meaning more money being spent and was curious if the list of projects on the agenda this year would still take place. R. Lally explained how projects are budgeted.

Mary Terhune, 40 School Road, asked if the stop sign in the Vernon Road project cost is the total amount. J. Rupert replied to the surveying is complete and engineering will start as soon as the Town Green project is complete. This project is scheduled for completion later this year.

Scott Michaud asked if the stop sign was costing \$30,000. R. Lally replied this project is a redesign of the whole intersection.

**2. Adjournment:** There being no further comments, R. Lally closed the Public Hearing at 8:00 p.m

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.