

**TOWN OF BOLTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 12, 2021, 5:00 P.M. VIRTUAL
MINUTES**

The Board of Selectmen held a Special meeting virtually by zoom on Monday April 12, 2021 with First Selectman Sandra Pierog presiding. Also in attendance were: Selectmen Michael Eremita, Kimberly Miller, Robert DePietro, Robert Morra joined at 5:16pm; and Administrative Officer James Rupert. Members of the public present were: John Toomey, Adam Teller, Gwen Marrion, Milton Hathaway, Emily Bradley and Richard Hayes.

1. Call to Order

First Selectman Pierog called the meeting to order at 5:12 pm.

2. Approval of Change of Health Insurance Provider for the Town of Bolton

The Board had a brief discussion about moving to the State Partnership Health Plan and Michael Eremita made a motion to move to the State Health Plan. The motion was seconded by Kimberly Miller and the motion passed 4-0-0.

3. Consider and Possibly Act on Recommendations from the Charter Revision Committee

Section 3.5 – Increase term of BOS/ Increase size of BOS/ Eliminate First Selectman loser provision

The Board began a discussion of item 3.5 on the working document provided by the Charter Revision Committee regarding the terms of the Board of Selectmen. The conversation started with a recap of the previous conversation on the topic for the benefit of those not present at the last meeting. Michael Eremita indicated that after some consideration he was comfortable with the idea. Sandy Pierog shared that it may be better to fill out the subcommittees. Kimberly Miller was in support of the idea. Robert DePietro agreed with the comments made by others. Robert Morra felt that seven members made sense and the staggered terms would bring continuity to the board. There was consensus on this matter to accept as recommended.

A discussion began regarding the election of the First Selectman. Robert Morra expressed that if someone had enough votes they should be on the board even if not the First selectman. Kimberly Miller agreed as did Michael Eremita, Robert DePietro and Sandra Pierog.

Section 7.1 – (A) eliminate EDC, combine IWC and PZC, change PZC, ZBA and alternates to be appointed

Sandra Pierog opened the conversation about section 7.1 of the Charter Revision Committee working document regarding a combined Planning and Zoning and Wetlands Commission.

Michael Eremita indicated he was in favor of the change in that it would be easier for applicants.

Robert DePietro felt that each Board had special knowledge and felt it should stay as is.

Kimberly Miller stated that both Gwen Marrion and James Aldrich made compelling arguments on both sides.

Bob Morra indicated that combining the two made sense and if wetlands were a subcommittee it may be able to address issues on both sides.

Comment was solicited from Gwen Marrion who indicated that a Wetlands Commission was required by Statute. Adam Teller was also asked for comment on the statute and he stated he would want to look at the statute and be sure of the legalities of that issue. Gwen Marrion agreed that both boards have areas of specialty but indicated that it would require all the members to act on items. Adam Teller stated that you would have seven members and if you designated specialists how would it play out in practice. He felt that the best thing was to appoint the same people to both boards so that the meetings are separate and are served by the same staff.

Richard Hayes weighed in and shared that Mansfield and Manchester were two good examples of how this would work in reality. You would simply have the same members on both boards and Wetlands would meet first with one agenda followed by Planning and Zoning. He indicated that this model works well for all applicants who have business with both boards.

At the conclusion of the discussion there was complete consensus by the Board of Selectmen to combine the two commissions.

Section 9.7 – (A) (1) and (2) Thresholds for referenda

There was a brief discussion regarding item 9.7 with regard to the threshold for holding a referendum. Gwen Marrion felt that would require additional discussion if the Board of Selectmen have a lower threshold than the recommendation of the Committee. As such it was agreed to postpone discussion until after the next Charter Revision Committee meeting.

Section 3.1 – (B) reconfiguring BOF

A discussion began regarding item 3.1 on the Charter Revision Committee working document regarding reconfiguring the Board of Finance.

Robert Morra offered a modified approach which was one from member from the Board of Ed and one member from the Board of Selectman. His thought was it would provide continuity of information between each of the boards. He felt that it is similar to shared services and was more effective. The balance of the board would be elected.

Sandra Pierog offered the following idea, one voting member from Board of Selectmen, one voting member from Board of Ed making a board of five and two. She stated it would be beneficial to model it similar to the CAPP Committee.

Michael Eremita expressed that he wanted the Board to be able to make informed decisions. One member from BOS and one member from BOE would get a minority opinion. His goal would be to create a well-informed Board that could make good decisions. He proposed two members from the BOS and two from the BOE with three at large members elected by the public.

Sandra Pierog commented in that if it were only a small window during the year with review of expenses and additional appropriations in addition to the budget preparation it might work but this doesn't fix what's broken. Michael said he felt strongly about having a well-informed better prepared board and that this would do that. Emily Bradley offered that they could require Board of Finance members to participate in BOS and BOE meetings which would give them intimate knowledge and help them to be

better prepared for budget preparation. Michael Eremita remarked that it's not just the budget prep it's the stuff that goes on all year along with long range planning like the old school and Enrico Road storm drains. They would have to attend all meetings for it to be effective.

Kimberly Miller asked Sandra what issues it doesn't fix. Sandra felt that the BOS and BOE go through the budget process twice and then defend it to the BOF. The BOF then seems to control policy through controlling spending. Kimberly Miller asked Sandra if she had a suggestion. Sandra suggested three members from each the BOS and BOE with one member from the public appointed because there would be issues with the 2+2+3 model.

John Toomey spoke and indicated that the BOS works on the budget all year round and Emily Bradley goes to most of the meetings but no one else from the BOF does. Following Sandra's suggestion would mean that people don't need to spend time going to extra meetings which would minimize the time spent on the process.

Robert DePietro stated that the cost of a clerk for the meetings was miniscule and that it would be a lot for anyone to share all the information, even paid staff. No one can be fully aware of all things.

Richard Hayes indicated the BOF should include the First Selectman plus two from the BOS and two from the BOE. Richard shared that he had served on the BOE and made monthly reports to the BOS regarding transfers. The BOF does not need to get involved in those transfers but would if additional appropriations were needed. He was in favor of reducing duplication of efforts and wasting time and energy.

Sandra polled the BOS and the results are as follows. Robert DePietro said to keep as is. Michael Eremita, Robert Morra, Kimberly Miller and Sandra Pierog were in favor of following the recommendation of the Charter Revision Committee.

Sandra inquired of Gwen Marrion if the BOS had addressed the Charter Revision Recommendation list to date. Gwen indicated that it did and the next step would be for the Charter Revision Committee to go over the list and accept or reject the recommendations. There would then need to be a joint meeting between the two boards to discuss the gender neutral terminology and the thresholds. Gwen indicated that she would be in touch after the meeting on Thursday.

4. Adjournment

Sandra Pierog adjourned the meeting at 6:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

James Rupert

Please see minutes of subsequent meetings for corrections to these minutes and any corrections hereto.

Status of BOS decisions on charter proposals
As of April 8, 2021

1.4 (B) Gender neutral language: **Charter Revision Commission will come up with new terms.**

2.3 Eligibility – agreed

2.4 Breaking a tie – agreed

2.4 Vacancies in Elected Offices – agreed

Removing references to Judge of Probate – agreed

3.1 (B) changing P&Z and ZBA to appointed – agreed

3.1 (B) reconfiguring BOF – **BOS to discuss 4-12-21**

3.5

Increase term of BOS – **BOS to discuss 4-12-21**

Increase size of BOS – yes if reconfiguring BOF

Eliminate FS loser provision – **“probably no” – confirm**

5.1 (B) – changing majority in connection with increase in size of BOS – agreed

5.1 (D) administrative officer – **CRC will provide language to BOS before BOS decision**

6.1 “non voting” ex officio – agreed

7.1 (A) eliminate EDC (agreed), combine IWC and PZC (**BOS to discuss 4-12-21**), change PZC, ZBA and alternates to be appointed (agreed)

7.3 (A) non-citizens serving on appointed boards – agreed

7.3 (C) – remove “deemed resignation” – agreed

7.3(D) no automatic offer to alternate to fill vacancy – agreed

7.3 (E) and (F) term of appointment to vacancies and reporting – agreed

7.4 (B) Board of Fire Commissioners – agreed

7.4 (D) – Temporary Public Building Commission – agreed

8.2 – Term of auditor - agree but specify that BOS can set the term of the auditor.

8.3 Town Treasurer - agree but add that the Town Administrator can serve as the treasurer

8.4 – addition of terms – agreed

8.5 (B) provide simplified financial statement – agreed

8.5 (C)(1) Reduce vs. revise - agree to use "revise" but consider adding that advisory questions can be put on ballot.

8.5 (E) collecting taxes – agreed

8.6 (B) notice of transfers – agreed

8.6 (C) (3) and (5) Supplemental Appropriations thresholds - ok to change \$20K but the new percentage should to be tied to "total expenditures" not "current budget"

8.6 (D) (1) actions on supplemental appropriations – see 9.7

8.7 (A) Reserve Fund for Capital and Nonrecurring Expenditures - agreed

8.7 (C)(3) change \$10,000 to .05% - agreed

8.8 (B)(3) – borrowing – see 9.7

8.9(E) Accounting - instead of March 15 use "within 30 days of receipt of audit from auditor"- agreed

8.11 Pubic Records - agreed

9.1 (B) Voter Eligibility owners of \$1,000 assessed property – agreed

9.7 (A)(1) and (2) Thresholds for referenda – disagree. **Need to discuss with BOS.**

9.9 Paper ballots - rejected

10.2 Incompatible offices - ok except remove Town Administrator (so he or she can serve on fire dept. etc)

10.3 Conflicts of Interest - rejected all. Any weakness in Ethics Ordinance can be corrected by improving that ordinance.

11.1 (A) Organization Meeting of Elected Commissions – 1) agree to change timing of election
2) reject recording BOS, BOF, BOE meetings

Chapter 12 – ok to change title

12.1 (A) Suspension/Removal: ok to change vote needed to remove, add can suspend member for felony arrest and can remove for felony conviction

12.1 (B) Suspension process: add "law enforcement agency" to list of those who can make a credible allegation