

**TOWN OF BOLTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 3, 2021, 7:00 P.M. VIRTUAL
MINUTES**

		Present	Absent
First Selectman	Sandra Pierog	X	
Deputy First Selectman	Kim Miller	X	
Selectman	Robert DePietro	X	
Selectman	Mike Eremita	X	
Selectman	Robert Morra	X	
Interim Administrative Officer	Jim Rupert	X	
Members of the Public			

Also present: Kim Welch, Milton Hathaway

1. Call to Order:

By: Sandra Pierog

Time: 7:01 p.m.

Place: Virtual

2. Public Comment:

Milton Hathaway – Spoke of two items. He was invited to the public forum in Glastonbury for a discussion on the car thefts. There were over 200 people present. The public had two minutes each to speak and the meeting went on for three hours. The laws about minors in crimes need to be changed at the legislature. This is a call to our representative. Pierog asked Hathaway to send his three page document about the forum to J. Rupert to be shared with the BOS. The State Trooper dropped by Town Hall to welcome the BOS back although Pierog was the only person present. The Trooper said he is familiar with some of the incidents mentioned and also of one where shots were fired at a homeowner in Oxford. Vehicles are being stolen on a nightly basis. Kids are being caught numerous times each week. We need to sit and talk to people on a one-to-one basis on why we practice the polices regarding minors.

Hathaway’s second item is in regards to the Charter Commission’s report for the Economic Development Commission. Hathaway is the only person left on the EDC even though there are three people expressing interest of being on the EDC. Hathaway pays dues and attends the Tolland County Chamber of Commerce. There is a lot going on with a long and significant agenda. Coventry, Mansfield, and Tolland have very active economic development committees. It is clear that Bolton needs an EDC. Pierog said the BOS has accepted the Charter Commission’s report and has begun forming the questions to be brought to the voters. You may vote as you please and encourage others to vote your view as long as Town resources are not used. Hathaway said he did not care for the make-up of the Charter Commission as it did not need to have two attorneys on the board.

Kim Welch, Lake Commissioner, 51 Vernon Road – Was present to inform about the lake conditions and concerns of residents about the blue-green algae bloom as the days progress. Hilary will be out on August 4, 2021 for the next set of testing. The conditions are worsening. There is concern the lake is closed this early in the season. Welch’s email is full asking about the plans for the lake – treatment or no treatment. We need to be thinking along those lines as a town. She does appreciate the response last week for having the public health department out there. Pierog said her in-box is also full. We are early in the process of continuing to monitor and will take appropriate action. The visit on Thursday will provide information if the bloom is worsening or only slightly worsening. Wind, water, and rain can cause changes that adjust the counts of the algae. Welch said there is no question that it is worsening; visibly it is not nice looking. The response should be mindful and informative for the residents to be put into plan mode instead for panic mode.

3. Approval of Minutes:

A. June 1, 2021 - Regular Meeting

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen accept the minutes of the June 1, 2021, Regular Meeting as presented.

By: Morra

Seconded: Miller

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, Pierog, Miller, DePietro

Against: None

Abstain: None

B. June 21, 2021 - Special Meeting

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen accept the minutes of the June 21, 2021, Special Meeting as presented.

By: Eremita

Seconded: Morra

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, Pierog, Miller, DePietro

Against: None

Abstain: None

C. July 6, 2021 – Regular Meeting

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen accept the minutes of the July 6, 2021, Regular Meeting as presented.

By: Morra

Seconded: Miller

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, Pierog, DePietro

Against: None

Abstain: Miller

D. July 12, 2021 – Special Meeting

Pierog said this was a special meeting for the vote on the Charter revisions. We accepted the Commission's report on this date.

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen accept the minutes of the July 12, 2021, Special Meeting as presented.

By: Morra

Seconded: Miller

Voting:

For: Morra, Pierog, DePietro, Miller

Against: None

Abstain: Eremita

E. July 20, 2021 – Special Meeting

Pierog said this was the meeting that a transcript was submitted rather than minutes. This was a meeting of less than one hour and the transcript is 16 pages long. If we continue with transcripts of these meetings the Town Clerk's record space will soon be outgrown. Pierog said we will reconsider the use of transcripts instead of detailed minutes later in the meeting.

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen accept the transcript of the July 20, 2021, Special Meeting.

By: Morra

Seconded: Miller

Discussion: DePietro does not remember voting in favor of having transcripts made.

Morra said the reason for that may be that DePietro joined the July 6, 2021 meeting a bit later.

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, Pierog, Miller, DePietro.

Against: None

Abstain: None

4. Correspondence

A. Resignation Letter from K. Mike

Pierog said we have received a resignation letter from Recreation Director, Kyleen Mike. She has made the decision based on her family life.

Rupert said the young lady working as an assistant for the Recreation Department and the Senior Center is being recommended for the position of Interim Recreation Director. Stephanie deserves the opportunity to serve as Interim at least through January. She is untested about going through the budgeting process; she will need our help but she is up to the task.

DePietro asked if the BOS has any role in hiring people? Rupert said if a Selectman with an appropriate background for the open position they may be asked to sit on a hiring panel. Morra said historically where there are employees in a position to move up the Town has always looked at those first.

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen accept the resignation of Kyleen Mike with regret and recommends we send her a letter of appreciation for her service.

By: Morra

Seconded: Pierog

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, Pierog, Miller, DePietro.

Against: None

Abstain: None

5. Reports & Updates:

A. Subcommittee Report

Pierog said Rupert will be reaching out to the Subcommittees for items that require recommendations.

Rupert said we are trying to wrap up the Branding Subcommittee.

B. Properties and Facilities Report

None

C. Open Space Management & Acquisition

None

D. FY 21 Budget Report

Rupert said the report as of July 31, 2021 was sent out today as a supplemental item to the packet. Nothing was red flagged. Pierog said the BOS may be returning to the BOF more than the \$330k we committed to or we won't have any issues reaching that amount at least.

7. Ongoing Business:

A. Report on Budget Transfers

The budget transfers were shown that were approved by Pierog and Rupert. Rupert anticipates a couple of more small ones coming in.

B. Other

None

C. Consider and Possible Action on Regulation on Possession and/or Use of Cannabis on Town Property

Rupert said this is a stab at a policy for marijuana use. The fine looks like a 1987 vintage. Pierog said she likes the items in green. She would like to list Heritage Farm and any Town buildings also.

Miller asked about those that hold medical marijuana cards – if it is used as medicine versus recreational are we prohibiting that also? Rupert said his understanding is if someone holds a medical marijuana card they can transport the product but it is only allowed to be used in the confines of their home. There is no reason to be in possession of it on town property. Morra said law enforcement has not worked out how to determine inebriation in traffic stops. Morra and DePietro agree with the suggested fine of \$100.

Morra doubts that amount would put someone at a felony level of crime. The fine can be modified. We can adopt this policy in conjunction with the alcohol policy.

Pierog asked Rupert to add the additional items to locations in town, run it by the Town Attorney with the fine of \$100, and bring it back to the BOS for the August meeting after getting the opinion from the Town Attorney.

Eremita asked if the Town Attorney should be asked his opinion in separating this from the alcohol policy. In that manner we can change one policy rather than both. Pierog said this is an interesting question; it might make sense to have two policies. There is an exemption for the Heritage Farm for alcohol.

D. Consider and Possible Action on Charter Revision Questions for November Ballot

Pierog went over the questions that have been created for Charter Revisions. These questions need to be reviewed by the Town Attorney and given to the Town Clerk by the end of the month.

Discussion included:

- Question 2 was changed from ‘reduced’ to ‘revised’. The language was clarified so that it could be an increase or a decrease in the budget. DePietro would like to see some explanatory text.
- Question 4 – Morra has a problem with how this is written; he feels it is misleading as to what is written in the Charter. Critical information is missing from the question. Pierog said 3 – 4 people felt there were conflicts and the others did not. Pierog is open to suggestions as to language without making this a five sentence question. Morra said the list of four positions is where the conflict may be. Pierog said she will try to craft some new language.
- Question 5 – Eremita said it might be helpful to say that the ‘annual budget’ is being referred to by the 2%.
- Question 9 will be a list of bullets. This will be a yes or no vote to all on the list.

Miller asked how the previous Charter Revision attempt went? She wonders if I am supposed to say yes or no to these questions? How can one understand what the question is trying to revise? Pierog said most people are not going to know. For the 1988 proposed charter change people stood on the side of the road with signs saying to vote yes or no on question so-and-so. Miller said this is a lot of information and not enough information. Morra said it is important to send out an explanatory document. In the past, one or two items have been the ones people have rallied around. Miller asked if there would be other information on the ballot, such as vote yes to accept or vote no to not accept? Pierog does not know if we can do that; she will ask the Town Clerk. CVC has agreed to host two or three shows on what the questions are once the attorney approves the questions. Perhaps this could be a call-in show. Pierog said a call in live Facebook session may be held.

Pierog will recirculate the revisions by the end of the week to the Members. BOS may need to hold a special meeting after that.

8. New Business:

A. Consider and Possibly Act on Budget Cuts

Pierog said the BOF cut the Town side of the budget by \$237k. She and Rupert had a discussion about where this could come from. The biggest number is from Personnel Benefits which includes health, dental, and life insurances, pensions, and social security. Jill believes based on the supervisors settling on a 2.25% increase there will be a .5% affect on these categories for supervisors. There are savings from other items that we were able to purchase this year. The police budget is a reduction of \$10k keeping a 10% cushion for overtime and a potential change in the trooper.

Rupert said the proposed reduction in the library budget is the big one and would affect benefits. If the part-time position is made full-time Rupert understands that person would participate in health insurance. Adding health insurance with full family coverage is \$28k and increase in wages of \$13,791. Rupert recommends not changing that position from part-time to 37.5 hours.

Eremita asked if the rest of the savings are attributed to savings or cuts? Pierog said from savings with the exception of the police. Eremita said the list is appropriate and this is not nearly as painful a discussion as anticipated.

Miller asked if we can go in hot with the library budget and monitor the expenses throughout the year? Eremita said we would have to make the cuts somewhere else. Pierog said we could, in January, look if we have some savings or it looks like we will have some savings to take the library numbers for the half year which would be ~\$35k to make the change happen. Eremita said that would mean we are buying into next year's budget before we start. It is difficult to get rid of people.

DePietro said this is not a blank canvas; can we look at the quality that she provides to the library? Eremita said this is not just about the \$13k in wages as this comes along with \$28k in fringe benefits. Pierog said she could have Jill look to see if there is another place to find \$45k. Eremita said it took the budget four votes to pass; he does not think increases in personnel and programs are appropriate. Pierog said she tends to agree with that.

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen accept the cuts as discussed.

By: Eremita

Seconded: Morra

Discussion: Morra said this is a difficult position to be in. The library has presented a good argument to expanding and it has to absorb some cuts. But it took four cuts to pass the budget which tells us people want to be as frugal as possible. Miller accepts the need for the cuts and feels what Members have said it right. It just hurts her heart. DePietro said a taxpayer told him today how much she appreciates the library. Morra said this does not reduce anything. Eremita said this is cutting a new increase; it is not taking money away from or damaging programs. We cannot afford new staff. This is doing away with an increase as it is not the time for one.

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, Pierog, Miller

Against: DePietro

Abstain: None

B. Consider and Possibly Act on Increasing the Special Events Permit Fee

Pierog said Rupert put together a recommendation for the base fee to increase from \$50 to \$150 for all applicants. Any needed inspections or Town employee/police involvement would be at an additional fee to the applicant.

Rupert said he was asked to look at the special permits fee and differentiate between for profit and not for profit events. He looked at the history of some events and the staffing time it takes for each. The fees should allow us to not incur high costs. Tremendous time is required for some events from Town staff and volunteers. There have been some events with a fairly significant financial burden to the town. This recommendation allows us to be responsible and mitigate the cost to the taxpayers.

Eremita said at a bare minimum the goal is to recoup Town costs. He asked if the special events permit fee recommendation is as a base fee for every event. Rupert said yes as the current \$50 cost does not even cover the time for taking in the application. And that amount also currently goes for such tasks as inspecting tents or electrical installations. Eremita said the recommendation makes sense for the few for profit events and those that are not based in our community.

Pierog asked if we want to consider a provision that the BOS can waive certain fees? Morra said that was going to be his recommendation. Eremita said such a provision would make sense.

Pierog said no action is needed on this tonight. Farm Day will likely be the last event before the next meeting. Rupert will adjust the recommendation based on these comments and bring it back to the next meeting.

C. Discussion List of uses for Everbridge Notifications

Pierog said the list of suggested notifications was provided by Rupert. She said police incidents or suggesting lock downs also came to mind. Rupert said some language can be added to the last bullet item about those. Eremita said a caveat should be added for when a major incident occurs someone has the right to hit the button. Not all uses can be thought of. Rupert said we have used Everbridge for all of the events listed. We only got push back on the reminder to vote. Pierog said there were ~25 comments on that use; these were from what can be thought of as a 'frequent complainers list'.

Rupert will bring back an amended list based on comments tonight for the September meeting.

8. First Selectman's Report:

A. COVID-19

Pierog said Bolton is at 308 cases which is up from July 29 when we had 297. The CDC has designated Tolland County where it is recommended to wear masks in public places. Masks are required in all Town properties.

B. Other

The Farmer's Market will not be held this year at Heritage Farm. It is not worth the time and effort to set up for the financial gain. This is on hold for at least a year. Morra said it is because of the combination of COVID and general conditions. It is a loss for what the Heritage Farms gets from the market. COVID is the nail in the coffin. Crop-wise it is a

bad year. Pierog said she heard on a California radio station that crops of tomato, lemon, lettuce, spinach, and kale are down at least 40% this year.

Rupert said the fire department boat has gone out to bid three times being posted for two weeks each time. Two people expressed interest on the last bid. The two people were contacted. The bid received is from a relative of Rupert's, therefore, he and Pierog were not comfortable in making a decision about the bid. The bid was for \$300 that is coming before the BOS for decision. Space is at a premium at the fire station. The current marketplace value for the Zodiac is \$1,200. The boat leaks but the motor is in very good condition because it has low hours on it. The motor is what is of value. Pierog said if the boat sits for a while work on it may be needed. Eremita said we should take what we can get for it.

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen accept the bid of \$300 for the Fire Department's Zodiac boat.

Discussion: Eremita said this is the wrong time to be selling a boat and this is not the type of boat most people are looking for. It is a project. There is value in the motor and trailer.

By: Eremita

Seconded: Morra

Voting:

For: Pierog, Morra, Eremita, DePietro, Miller

Against: None

Abstain: None

Pierog said the one-ton flatbed received a successful bid of \$10k.

9. Re-Opening:

A. Other

Rupert said the re-opening has gone quite well. A report was included in the agenda packet. Rupert visited the Senior Center and the library to see the space usage within the buildings. The Town Hall re-opening has had a few individuals not happy with the mask requirements. It is rare that people are waiting outside to get in. The posted signs have turned out to be very helpful. The public appreciates being able to come back in although people are not coming in droves.

Pierog said to address the mask wearing – we have been clairvoyant given the current atmosphere. Pierog said there has been some social media traffic of Town Clerk's \$5.00 notary fee. Everyone is charging the same amount. Manchester and Coventry do not allow you entry. Hebron remains by appointment only.

11. Administrative Officer's Report:

A. Update on Fire Truck Repairs

Rupert spoke with Chief Dixon this afternoon. They have put the repaired truck through its paces and the department is happy with the work done on it. The vendor has yet to provide an invoice for the repair. They have been reminded this is part of the fiscal year close out reports so the reports are being held up.

Rupert said the rescue truck that was repurposed was noticed to be losing antifreeze so it was towed to the repair shop in Middletown. The shop found three leaks with hoses and ancillary items. Those were corrected and the truck refilled with antifreeze. It is now back in service and the fire department is monitoring it. That bill for the current fiscal year is pending receipt.

B. Other

Rupert reported:

- Indian Notch Park was reopened based on the report from Kim Welch. The algae bloom is being monitored; she has been great at coordinating efforts for this matter.
- During the rain events a couple of sump pumps failed in Town buildings. Those pumps have been replaced.
- The new Town website is in beta testing and should be live in a couple of weeks.
- Hartford Health Care vaccinated 13 people at a pop-up clinic at the library. One is planned for the concert on the green.
- The Farm Day event has space for 6k – 10k participants based on EHHD criteria.
- A building permit was issued for a Dollar General on Boston Turnpike.
- A connectivity grant will be used for the easement for the church next door.
- The FEMA paperwork was completed and submitted for Isaias with a total of \$115k in expenditures. Reimbursement is 75% for the expenses that are accepted by FEMA.
- Bolton has been invited by Charles Merrick, Dean of Engineering at UConn, to participate in the student's capstone program. Some projects for consideration that might be most important to the BOS are –
 - Work on the engineering to bring the Vibrant Community Study to a planning stage.
 - A potential problem with the damn failing at Bolton Lake and who we would evacuate.
 - Working out the technical difficulties of bringing water lines in from Manchester.

Rupert said these are not licensed engineers. The information provided could be used for planning purposes only.

Pierog and Morra like the idea of the water extension. The second choice for Pierog would be the Vibrant Community Study. Morra said having a fresh set of eyes look at getting water up the hill and around the corner for the water project would be enticing. Let's be innovating. Eremita agreed. It would be an enticing project for one our few commercial areas be able to have more commercial development.

Rupert said he will suggest the students work on providing a plan to bring water from Manchester to the commercial district on Route 44.

12. Adjournment:

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen adjourn at 9:11 p.m.

By: Eremita

Seconded: Morra

Voting:

For: Pierog, Morra, Eremita, DePietro, Miller

Against: None
Abstain: None

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne B. Filip

Yvonne B. Filip, Board of Selectmen Recording Secretary

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