

**BOLTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REGULAR MEETING  
7:00 PM, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2023  
BOLTON TOWN HALL, 222 BOLTON CENTER ROAD  
In-Person and Virtual (Hybrid Format)**

**MINUTES**

**Board of Selectmen Members Present In-Person:** First Selectman Pamela Sawyer, Adam Teller

**Board of Selectmen Members Present Via Zoom:** Michael Eremita, Robert DePietro

**Board of Selectmen Members Absent:** Deputy First Selectman Robert Morra

**Staff Present In-Person:** Town Administrator James Rupert

**Staff Present Via Zoom:** Recording Secretary Linda H. McDonald

**Others Present Via Zoom:** Nick Lavigne (Community Voice Channel), Fire Chief Bruce Dixon, Cheryl Udin

**Others Present In-Person:** William Anderson, Richard Hayes, Jim Loersch, Rodney Fournier, James Aldrich, Amanda Gordon, Eleanor Georges, Stephen Wierzbicki, Mather Clarke

1. **Call to Order:** P. Sawyer called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. **Public Comment:**

Cheryl Udin of 31 Keeney Drive expressed concern with the town voting in a religious building. She noted the town has two districts, with both districts voting in the parish hall at St. Maurice's. She asked if the town has a plan to offer the schools, to close the schools for a day to allow voting in a government building. She was advised to contact the Town Administrator's office or the Registrar of Voters for information.

Eleanor Georges of 19 Shoddy Mill Road explained she is here to talk about the need to increase the pay and benefits for the next First Selectman. She noted the new Town Charter will go into effect after the November election and, in that charter, Bolton has the opportunity for a stronger First Selectman position. She said the decision-making duties are ready for expansion. In addition, the term of the office has been extended to four years and the salary should be on par with the other hired personnel of the town in strong positions.

James Aldrich of 35 Hanover Farms Road asked that the pay be significantly increased for the incoming First Selectman. He said resolving many of the growing municipal issues are the domain of elected officials. He asked the board to give the new First Selectman a chance to succeed and give him/her a reasonable pay package to allow them to put in the requisite amount of time to get the job done. Before the board's time is up in November, J. Aldrich asked that the board implement an improved pay package.

Richard Hayes of 139 Vernon Road commented that the contemplated expanded power of the First Selectman in the new Town Charter comes with working more hours, expending more energy, an extended term of four years and having a leader with great communication skills. He said the time has come to increase the pay for the new leader and it would not be fair to ask the

new First Selectman to give himself/herself a raise. He provided handouts to the board of comparable salaries. J. Aldrich encouraged the board to vote on a compensation package for the incoming First Selectmen before the November election.

William Anderson of 77 French Road commented he supports an increase in the compensation package of the incoming First Selectman's position. He said this will increase the pool of qualified potential candidates and the benefits are greater than the additional cost to the town's budget. He said now is the time to do this as there is no conflict of interest as no board member is running for the position. He expressed concern with the shortage of school bus drivers causing students to arrive late to school.

Stephen Wierzbicki of 24 Meadow Road said he is in favor of raising the pay for the First Selectman. He believes, to ensure municipal government gets its fair share of the federal and state spending, management of the town, the First Selectman needs to be that voice. He asked the board to restructure the pay and benefit package of the incoming new First Selectman now so this person can succeed.

Bruce Dixon of 72 Tinker Pond Road, for information only, said the senior membership of the fire department have had continued conversations with the Town Administrator about the future of the fire service in Bolton. He said several of the senior members that respond to emergencies during the day are getting older and, as they retire out, there will be a potential void in the membership response. He said there has been discussion about having a strategic response plan from a company well versed in these studies. The goal is to look at what the town currently has and give the town options going forward that would best suit the safety and needs of the community. B. Dixon said one option that continues to come up is to add some paid staff to handle emergencies during the day as well as being tasked to handle most of the in-house maintenance associated with the firehouse building operation and detailed fire, rescue and medical equipment and vehicle checks that have to be performed on an on-time basis. He said the compensation in place for the fire chief now will not be enough for the town to attract qualified individuals. He said he will report back to the board as conversations continue.

Jim Loersch of Brookfield Road commented that the town should seriously consider a new town hall.

**3. Approval of Minutes:**

**3.a Regular Meeting Minutes -September 5, 2023:**

R. DePietro MOVED to approve the September 5, 2023 regular meeting minutes as presented.

M. Eremita SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 4:0:0.

**3.b Special Meeting Minutes–September 14, 2023:**

The following amendments (in **bold**) were made to the September 14, 2023 meeting:

3. "A. Teller asked if anyone has looked at the driveway permits for the abutters and would the slope of the proposed driveway be a problem. He noted the **subdivision** plans **do not** show an island at the end of the cul-de-sac."

"Adam Teller said he reads the deed differently and the subdivision map shows that the spur **to the Fiano property** is the 50-foot r.o.w. reference. In the reference to Enrico on the

subdivision map, he does not see how that unimproved portion of the road abutting the Paggioli property is separated out and described differently in the deed.

- 4. “Executive Session: Discussion with Town Attorney Re: Paggioli Farm/Town Easement Request: The board previously voted not to go into executive session and to remove this item from the agenda.”**

M. Eremita MOVED to approve the September 14, 2023 special meeting minutes as amended.  
R. DePietro SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 4:0:0.

- 3.c Special A/P Meeting Minutes–September 19, 2023:**

A. Teller MOVED to approve the September 19, 2023 special A/P meeting minutes as presented.  
M. Eremita SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 4:0:0.

- 3.d Special Meeting Minutes–September 27, 2023:**

A. Teller MOVED to approve the September 27, 2023 special meeting minutes as presented. M. Eremita SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 4:0:0.

P. Sawyer asked to open the agenda to add items 4.c: Resignation of Alexander Dumas from the Veteran’s Commission and 4.d Appoint Linda Rudolph to Veteran’s Commission to fill a vacancy.

- 4. Appointments:**

- 4.a Corenda Haugh: from Alternate to Full Member of Senior Commission – term ending 7/1/2027:**

R. DePietro MOVED that the Board of Selectmen appoint Corenda Haugh from Alternate to Full Member of Senior Commission for the term ending July 1, 2027. M. Eremita SECONDED.  
MOTION CARRIED 4:0:0.

- 4.b Patrice Niewinski: appoint to Alternate for Senior Commission – term ending 7/1/2026:**

M. Eremita MOVED that the Board of Selectmen appoint Patrice Niewinski to Alternate for Senior Commission for the term ending July 1, 2026. A. Teller SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 4:0:0.

- 4.c Resignation of Alexander Dumas from the Veteran’s Commission, effective September 7, 2023:**

M. Eremita MOVED to accept the resignation of Alexander Dumas from the Veteran’s Commission, effective September 7, 2023. A. Teller SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 4:0:0.

- 4.d Linda Rudolph: appoint to Veteran’s Commission to fill a vacancy:**

R. DePietro MOVED that the Board of Selectmen appoint Linda Rudolph to fill a vacancy on the Veteran’s Commission. M. Eremita SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 4:0:0.

- 5. Correspondence: Renaming of Cave at Bolton Notch Park:**

Board members reviewed correspondence from the Conservation Commission supporting the State’s proposal to rename the cave at Bolton Notch State Park. P. Sawyer thanked James Hardy for his input and knowledge on the history of the cave.

R. DePietro MOVED that the Board of Selectmen support the State's proposal to rename the cave at Bolton Notch State Park. M. Eremita SECONDED. Discussion followed. MOTION CARRIED 4:0:0.

**6. New Business**

**6.a Schedule 3-Board Meeting:**

Consensus of the board was to schedule the 3-board meeting for Wednesday, November 1, 2023.

**6.b Bid Waiver for Bolton Center School Fire Panel: (informational purposes only)**

J. Rupert said, after the new board gets seated, they need to look at changing the bid ordinance. He explained, currently, the language does not allow the board to not waive bids if the town buys off a buying consortium that is approved by the BOS or the State bid list.

**7. Reports and Updates:**

**7.a Properties and Facilities Administrator Report:**

**7.a.1 Temporary Building:**

J. Rupert reported the building is scheduled to be delivered October 16<sup>th</sup>. He has asked Willscot what interruptions this will cause for staff and visitors to the senior center that day so the town can be prepared and minimize that as much as possible. Once the three separate sections are set, Willscot will put them together, seam the roof, and then begin scurrying around the outside. He said the town is working to get the subcontractors to get electricity, water, septic, internet, and telephone. The town will install two sets of stairs and a ramp. The schedule for completion is dependent on weather conditions.

**7.b.2 Connectivity Trail:**

J. Rupert reported rainy and wet conditions have hampered efforts of Landie Construction to complete the trail. Once conditions permit, the plan is to complete construction within a week.

**7.a.3 Library Patio:**

J. Rupert reported the grant deliverables have been completed within the grant timeframe.

**7.b FY 24 Budget Report:** No action needed.

**7.c Budget Transfers:** No action needed.

**7.d A/P Report:**

R. DePietro MOVED that the Board of Selectmen accept the A/P report as presented. M. Eremita SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 4:0:0.

**8. First Selectman's Report:**

P. Sawyer reported a section has been added to the town's website with information about town grants. She reported the town received a STEAP grant totaling \$500,000 for the Herrick Park field upgrades. She said the town has achieved the bronze level recertification for Sustainable CT. J. Rupert recognized and commended the staff and community members for the effort to pull this together.

**9. Administrative Officer's Report**

**9.a Monthly Report:**

J. Rupert said the town is currently operating in the .gov domain with enhanced cyber security measures.

**9.b Other:**

Consensus of the members was to hold the next A/P meeting on Tuesday, October 17, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

A. Teller spoke to the public support to increase the First Selectman's compensation. He said that should be on the board's agenda before the next election because, otherwise, the opportunity will be lost to do it for four years. P. Sawyer responded she has asked that to be put on the agenda for the next A/P meeting. A. Teller suggested asking Madame Chair and the last two First Selectmen to give the board some sense of time they feel they have devoted to the job on average and if they think that the new position is going to take more time and a sense of what that might be. M. Eremita said he supports getting this done prior to the installation of the next board.

Adam Teller commented he continues to believe the town holding voting in a religious building is a terrible mistake. He would like the board to put on the agenda a discussion formally asking the Board of Education to make the schools available for each and every election after this one until the town finds a solution. He would task the Town Administrator to find a solution that does not have the town voting in an adjunct building of a church. M. Eremita agreed.

P. Sawyer said she will commit to putting the topic of increasing the First Selectman's compensation on the October 17, 2023 meeting agenda.

J. Rupert reported, in regard to title fraud that has been happening across the state and across the country, he learned this week that the town has the availability to implement through the system it uses for title searches, etc. known as the COTT system to enhance its ability to detect those things through their service for a one-time fee of \$700 and \$25 per month. Consensus of the board was to add this to the meeting agenda on October 17<sup>th</sup>.

**10. Adjournment:** A. Teller MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m. R. DePietro SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 4:0:0.

Respectfully submitted by Linda H. McDonald *Linda H. McDonald*

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