

**BOLTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BUDGET WORKSHOP SPECIAL MEETING
7:00 PM, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 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, Deputy First Selectman Robert Morra, Adam Teller (7:06 p.m.)

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

Staff Present In-Person: Interim Administrative Officer James Rupert

Staff Present Via Zoom: Chief Financial Officer Jill Collins, Recording Secretary Linda H. McDonald

Others Present Via Zoom: Amanda Gordon, Rhea Klein

1. Call to Order: P. Sawyer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Discussion on Budgets:
P. Sawyer polled the board members on their philosophy for the budget, to set a target.

M. Eremita commented he thought the townspeople will not vote for a budget over 3%, so the board should do everything to get budget below 3%.

R. DePietro commented the board has an obligation to educate taxpayers on how administration kept their budgets in line as much as possible with no fluff.

R. Morra commented there is a base 1.4% increase in the grand list that has to be figured in as well as unexpended revenue from this year that have been used to offset the increase in the budget. The target of under 3% increase in the mill would use budget cuts, what is left over from prior year, and the contributing factor of an increase in the tax base.

A. Teller commented the board needs to figure out what is needed to run the town in a reasonable way and present that to the public and to set a budget that meets the actual needs of the town and tell the public what it costs. He said the board should not put their names to a budget they do not think meets the needs of the town in a reasonable way. It is for the taxpayers to decide through the vote whether to approve the budget.

J. Collins said a 3% increase over last year's budget equates to \$341,000, a 2.99% increase equates to \$277,000 and a 1% increase would be approximately \$64,000.

Discussion began on the FY2024 capital reserve budget. Consensus of the board to reduce the capital reserve budget by a total of \$225,000 was reached in the following line items:

- Vehicle Replacements – Make a \$15,000 reduction from \$63,000 to \$48,000, to fund the sedan for the town and the zero-turn mower for the cemeteries.
- Road Resurfacing – Reduce from \$20,000 to zero dollars.
- Water Suppression – Reduce from \$50,000 to zero dollars.
- BHF Restoration & Code Compliance – Reduce the from \$15,000 to zero dollars.
- Skid Steer – The members suggested, with the \$60,000 in this year's capital budget, the Highway Department could purchase the skid steer vehicle from their current budget as

inflation continues to increase the cost of the vehicle. Board consensus was to remove the \$25,000 in the FY2024 budget.

- Grant Match – Reduce from \$100,000 to zero dollars.
J. Rupert explained the \$100,000 in this item was part of unanticipated revenue from the State. P. Sawyer said this is a dollar value toward an untitled grant given to the town by the State, earmarked for a specific use rather than being put into the general fund. Board consensus was to take the \$100,000 to a town meeting this year to move the \$100,000 in FY2024 and roll it into the grant match appropriation for this year.
- Assessor’s Office Revaluation – J. Collins said the amount proposed is to be put toward the next revaluation in six years. After discussion, the board decided to re-visit this line item during future budget deliberations.

The board began discussion on the Town Proper FY2024 proposed budgets. Board consensus to make no changes at this time was reached on the following budgets:

- Administration
- Board of Finance
- Finance Department
- Auditing Services
- Assessor
- Tax Collector
- Town Clerk
- Building & Land Use
- Planning & Zoning
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Insurance
- Probate Court
- Inland Wetland Commission
- Economic Development

Board consensus was reached regarding the following budgets:

- Personnel Services – The board will wait for better data before considering any changes.
- Elections – The board made no changes at this time. J. Collins will research and clarify if the \$800 in the advertising line item is already part of the Town Clerk’s budget and if the \$1,500 in the Other Contracts line item might be reduced.
- Police Protection – With information received from the State, J. Collins suggested reducing this budget by \$100,00 based on the percentage of cut in benefits. She said she feels comfortable with this cut if the town keeps the Resident State Troopers it has right now. J. Rupert added the town received this information from the State in writing. By consensus, the board reduced the FY2024 budget request from \$411,300 to \$311,300, a reduction of \$100,000.

The board reviewed the budgets for Bond & Note Expenditures, Redemption of Bonds, Interest-Long Term Debt and BLRWPCA.

3. Adjournment: P. Sawyer adjourned the meeting at 9:08 p.m.

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.