

**BOLTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
7:00 PM, TUESDAY, JUNE 6, 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

Board of Selectmen Members Present Via Zoom: Michael Eremita (left meeting at 8:24 p.m.), Robert DePietro

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), Amanda Gordon, Bessy Renya

Others Present In-Person: Jim Loersch, Barry Stearns, Bill Rady, Carol Rady, Bill Freeman, Jamie Freeman, Rodney Fournier

Call to Order: P. Sawyer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

1. **Public Comment:** J. Loersch of 3 Brandy Street commented on building a new Town hall at the old elementary school location, saying this has been neglected far too long and it is time for the town to adjust priorities and address it.

Barry Stearns of 21 Cook Drive commented it is time to get the state involved to adjust the dangerous Bolton Notch intersection and would like the town to push for that.

Jamie Freeman of 3 Daria Drive said she agrees with the statements of B. Stearns.

William Rady of 282 Hebron Road said he is here for the discussion on the possible removal of Webster Lane stop signs. He said the board knows the sentiments of the residents who attended the previous meeting.

Carol Rady of 282 Hebron Road commented that very few people stop at the Webster Lane stop signs. She said the ones who do stop are mostly the commercial drivers. She noted people going south never stop or even slow down if they are turning onto Webster Lane. She said the reason there is so much noise is that people slow up approaching the stop sign and the minute they are past the sign, they floor the gas to get back to their regular speed.

Consensus of the board was to move agenda item 6.b up for discussion at this time.

3. **Approval of Minutes:**

3.a **May 2, 2023 –Regular Meeting:** The May 2, 2023 regular meeting minutes were amended as follows:

5.f: A. Teller MOVED the BOS authorize the Town Administrator to issue a ~~dialogue~~ **directive** to all town employees instructing them not to use the entrance to 384, Route 6 and 44 from Notch Road unless there is no other reasonable alternative or there is an emergency situation.

R. DePietro MOVED to approve the May 2, 2023 regular meeting minutes as amended. A. Teller SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0.

3.b May 16, 2023 – Special A/P Meeting:

R. DePietro MOVED to approve the May 16, 2023 special meeting minutes as presented. A. Teller SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 4:0:1 with M. Eremita abstaining.

3.c June 1, 2023 – Special A/P Meeting:

R. DePietro MOVED to approve the June 1, 2023 special meeting minutes as presented. A. Teller SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 4:0:1 with M. Eremita abstaining.

4. Resignations:

4.a Diane Danna – Library: R. Morra said she has worked there for a long time and wants to thank her for her service to the community and the library. A. Teller said he is sorry to lose her. P. Sawyer thanked her for all of her efforts on behalf of the town and going above and beyond for the library programs. R. Morra MOVED to accept the resignation of Diane Danna from the Bentley Memorial Library with regret and thanks. M. Eremita SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0.

4.b Raymond Soma – Senior Citizens Commission: R. Morra said Ray has been active in the community for decades. M. Eremita said Ray and his wife were some of the first people he met when he moved to town and were very warm and welcoming. He said Ray has done a lot for the community and will be sorely missed.

4.c Jean Laughman – Conservation Commission: R. Morra thanked Jean for her time on the commission. P. Sawyer commented Jean is a real gift to the town and thanked her for all her service to the town.

5. Appointments:

5.a John Morianos – Re-appointment to the Fire Commission:

R. Morra MOVED to re-appoint John Morianos to the Fire Commission. M. Eremita SECONDED. M. Eremita said John would be sorely missed if the town lost him as chairman on the fire commission. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0.

5.b Arlene Fiano – Re-appointment to the Heritage Farm Commission:

A. Teller MOVED to re-appoint Arlene Fiano to the Heritage Farm Commission. R. DePietro SECONDED. R. DePietro said Arlene is very dedicated to the town and works hard to do the right thing for the town. P. Sawyer commented that Arlene is a dedicated worker for the farm and looks forward to her work on the encampment for Bolton 300 plus 3. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0.

5.c Beth Ann Harney– Re-appointment to the Heritage Farm Commission:

R. Morra MOVED to re-appoint Beth Ann Harney to the Heritage Farm Commission. M. Eremita SECONDED. R. Morra said Beth Ann has put in a great amount of time and effort into the farm. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0.

5.d Paula Lynn – Re-appointment to the Heritage Farm Commission:

R. Morra MOVED to re-appoint Paula Lynn as an Alternate to the Heritage Farm Commission. M. Eremita SECONDED. P. Sawyer thanked Paula for coming forward MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0.

5.e Alan Bicknell – Re-appointment to the Conservation Commission:

R. Morra MOVED to re-appoint Alan Bicknell to the Conservation Commission. A. Teller SECONDED. P. Sawyer thanked Alan for stepping up. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0.

5.f Kim Welch – Re-appointment as Bolton Lake Commissioner:

R. Morra MOVED to re-appoint Kim Welch as Bolton Lake Commissioner. M. Eremita SECONDED. R. Morra said Kim has done an incredible job and is a true steward of the lake. P. Sawyer said Kim takes the position seriously. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0.

5.g John Toomey – Re-appointment as Municipal Historian:

A. Teller MOVED to re-appoint John Toomey as Municipal Historian. R. DePietro SECONDED. R. Morra noted this is one of John's true passions. P. Sawyer said the town is grateful for all the work he does. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0.

5.h Bessy Renya – Re-appointment as Poet Laureate:

P. Sawyer read an email from B. Reyna saying how honored she is to have been selected as the inaugural poet laureate for the town.

R. Morra MOVED to re-appoint Bessy Reyna as Poet Laureate. He said he is truly impressed with Bessy's ability. A. Teller SECONDED. P. Sawyer commented the town was blessed to have a published poet to step up in this new position. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0.

5.i Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority Appointment:

J. Rupert said the board has to appoint two members to represent Bolton on the Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority.

M. Eremita MOVED to appoint James Rupert and Robert DePietro to Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority (CCSWA). A. Teller SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0.

6. New Business

6.a Northeast Aquatic Research (NEAR) July 2023 -June 2024 Lower Bolton Lake Monitoring and Consulting Proposal:

J. Rupert explained NEAR has assisted the town in navigating the issues with the lake and most of the bills from NEAR are predictable in order to preserve the quality of the lake, like testing at different times. To be transparent, he asked NEAR for a contract.

M. Eremita MOVED the Board of Selectmen authorize the Town Administrator to enter into a contract with Northeast Aquatic Research (NEAR) for the period July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 for \$14,864. R. Morra SECONDED.

J. Rupert asked, since the contract amount is over \$12,000 and there is only one other company in Connecticut that can provide this level of service, that the motion be amended to add waiving the bid process for the contract.

M. Eremita amended the motion as follows: MOVED the Board of Selectmen authorize the Town Administrator to enter into a contract with Northeast Aquatic Research (NEAR) for the period July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 for \$14,864 and to waive the bid process. R. Morra SECONDED the amended motion. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0.

6.b Discussion and Possible Action on the Removal of the Stop Sign at the Hebron and Webster Roads Intersection:

J. Rupert reported he spoke with the Resident State Troopers and they concurred that the signs did not have the desired effect to slow traffic down on Hebron Road. He said they have no issue with the stop sign being removed.

M. Eremita suggested the board re-examine the stop signs at School and Loomis.

R. Morra said his opinion is that the stop signs on Hebron Road make the intersection more dangerous and should go.

A. Teller commented he does not have a strong feeling about the removal of the stop signs.

R. DePietro said he is very sympathetic to the people asking the board to take the stop signs down but he does not like the message it sends. It could be setting a bad precedent.

M. Eremita said he agrees with R. DePietro that removing the signs could set a bad precedent. He said people not stopping at a stop sign is not a reason to take it down.

R. Morra MOVED that the Board of Selectmen remove the stop signs at the intersection of Webster and Hebron Road, the two stop signs being on Hebron Road, on the north and south sides. A. Teller SECONDED.

R. DePietro said he would only agree to the motion if the people on Webster Lane were notified of the change.

M. Eremita said it is the job of the Resident State Troopers to enforce stopping at the signs and reiterated this would set a bad precedent.

P. Sawyer said the RST's are responsible for the local roads, the state highways and public safety as well and are spread extremely thin. She said she is leaning in favor of taking down the signs if the residents on Castle Rock are notified before it is taken down.

In response to a member inquiry, J. Rupert suggested the board not take action tonight and put out a notice to those people who might be affected by the removal of the signs to give both groups (in favor of removal and in favor of keeping the signs) an opportunity to come back and have an open discussion about the issue.

R. Morra said it is important that everyone understand what is being done is to improve the situation and not make it worse for everyone that uses that intersection.

R. Morra withdrew his motion. A. Teller withdrew his second of the motion.

A. Teller MOVED to table the motion and re-visit it at a future date if there is board consensus. R. Morra SECONDED. P. Sawyer noted this motion to table is not debatable. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0.

7. Ongoing Business:

M. Eremita MOVED to add 7.c-Consider and Possible Action on Letter from Halloran & Sage to the agenda. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0.

7.a Consider and Possible Action on the Upgraded Proposal of Chelsea Groton Bank:

J. Rupert noted Chelsea Groton responded to the members' questions and the members have the new information from Chelsea Groton they requested as well as the previous information they initially provided when coming before the board at a prior meeting.

A. Teller noted there are two options in the new proposal. Discussion on the two options followed.

M. Eremita MOVED the Board of Selectmen accept option 1 in the upgraded proposal from Chelsea Groton and the Board of Selectmen review it after a year's time. A. Teller SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0.

7.b Consider and Possible Action on the Recommendation by the Ad Hoc Committee:

R. Morra explained the Ad Hoc committee was considering increasing the veteran's tax exemption and discussed a possible 5-year phase-in of the exemption. He said, for transparency, the committee thought it would be a good idea to have the public weigh in.

M. Eremita commented it makes good sense to give the residents the option to have a say.

A. Teller said this is a terrible tax policy that is randomly distributed and he will never vote for it. He said he believes veterans' policies should be national because it is a national service and whatever exemptions and benefits should be nationally created and not dependent upon where people live.

Consensus of the board was to hold an informational forum with community members on the issue of increasing the veterans' tax exemption on Tuesday, June 20th at 7:00 p.m., virtual and in-person, location to be determined.

7.c Consider and Possible Action on Letter from Halloran & Sage:

P. Sawyer said the members received a letter dated June 5, 2023 from Halloran and Sage LLP discussing the terms and what the town would be getting for service as town counsel.

A. Teller said he believes the town has not put out a request for proposals or the issue of town counsel out to bid for many years and ordinarily this is something that is put out for bid on a periodic basis. The only reason it is coming up now is because Attorney Barger switched firms and asked what to do with his files. A. Teller said his opinion is that the town continue its engagement with this new firm but, at some point, the town should go out to request for proposals or competitive bid .

A. Teller MOVED the Board of Selectmen accept engaging the firm of Halloran and Sage LLP based on Attorney Barger's work as Town Counsel, subject to annual review by the Board of Selectmen. R. DePietro SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0.

8. Reports and Updates:

8.a Properties and Facilities Report:

J. Rupert reported since the town Buildings and Grounds staff have taken over the care and maintenance of the cemeteries, there have been no complaints. The department hired a new part-time employee to be responsible for the care of cemeteries. J. Rupert thanked the staff of buildings and grounds for taking this on.

J. Rupert said there is nothing to report on the filling of the manure pit at Heritage Farm as the Heritage Farm group has not yet approached Ansaldi. He updated the members on the status of the foundation for the temporary structure.

At this time, M. Eremita left the meeting.

8.b FY 23 Budget Report: J. Rupert reported no concerns.

8.c Budget Transfers:

J. Rupert noted the transfers are from budget to budget and will require the BOS to review, act, and refer them to the Board of Finance for their approval.

J. Rupert read the following transfers into the record:

- \$200 from the Inland Wetlands Commission Advertising budget to the Board of Finance Payroll budget to cover under budgeted payroll account.
- \$53 from the Building and Land Use Payroll budget to the Assessor Advertising budget to cover shortage in advertising account.
- \$23,000 from the Building and Land Use Payroll budget to the Refuse Services Tipping Fees budget to cover under-budgeted account.
- \$825 from the Building and Land Use Payroll budget to the Assessor Training budget to cover under-budgeted training account.
- \$4,400 from the Building and Land Use Payroll budget to the Assessor Payroll budget to cover under-budgeted payroll account.
- \$536 from the Building and Land Use Payroll budget to the Assessor Dues and Fee budget to cover under-budgeted account.
- \$5,300 from the Administration Legal budget to the Refuse Services Refuse Removal budget to cover under-budgeted account.

R. DePietro MOVED the Board of Selectmen APPROVE the transfers as read and MOVE them to the Board of Finance. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 4:0:0.

7.d A/P Report: None.

9. First Selectman's Report: FEMA 8:32

10. Administrative Officer's Report

10.a Monthly Report:

J. Rupert reported the new highway foreman Shawn Bailey started this week and he is happy to have him on board. He said he spoke with Ray Hardy regarding Squaw Cave and the recommendation of SHPO is to designate it as a historic place so it can continue to be protected. Consensus of the board is to have the Town Administrator continue the dialogue with R. Hardy.

10.b Other: No other report.

Consensus of the members was to schedule to following meetings:

A/P meeting – Tuesday, June 20, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

A/P meeting – Wednesday, July 5, 2023 at 9:30 a.m.

11. Adjournment: R. Morra MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m. A. Teller 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.