

**TOWN OF BOLTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2024, 6:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL & ZOOM
MINUTES**

Board of Selectmen Present In-Person: First Selectman Rodney Fournier, Deputy First Selectman Robert Morra, Gwen Marrion, Amanda Gordon

Board of Selectmen Present Via Zoom: Mather Clarke

Board of Selectman Members Absent: Pamela Sawyer, Tim Sadler

Staff Present Via Zoom: Town Administrator James Rupert, Executive Assistant, HR Coordinator, and Emergency Management Director Kathleen McCavanaugh, Recording Secretary Kacie Cannon

Others Present In-Person: ???, Dr. James Perkins, Sylvia Ounpuu, Roy Serenson, Holly King, Richard Treat, Roy Anderson

Others Present Via Zoom: Jim Loersch

1. Call to Order: R. Fournier called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Public Comment:

Name? asked the Board to review and consider implementing a Right-To-Farm Ordinance, which is a law that protects farmers from nuisance complaints, helps to eliminate lawsuits, and informs the public that the town is a Right-To-Farm town.

Dr. James Perkins shared his concerns that there are not many safe passages on the roads for bicycling in the town. He asked the Board to consider reducing road widths to 11 feet where possible to provide adequate room for bike lanes and to implement a bike and pedestrian master plan. Dr. Perkins added that a John Hopkins study was done showing that reducing lanes prevents speeding and accidents and provides overall safety on the roads.

Sylvia Ounpuu thanked the Board for adding a ??? station at Steele's Crossing and the new paint stating "pedestrian crossing" at the crosswalk. She stated that the community has provided positive comments on the improvement and appreciates the safety enhancement for trail users and motorists.

Roy Serenson thanked J. Rupert and R. Fornier for meeting with him in July and getting the crosswalk painted at Steele's Crossing.

Holly King echoed Dr. Perkins comments and encouraged the Board to make the roads safer for pedestrians.

Richard Treat encouraged the Board to consider the Right-To-Farm Ordinance and noted that it is important to preserve the town's rural heritage.

Roy Anderson voiced his support for the Right-To-Farm Ordinance. He also encouraged the Board to put the driveway ordinance in the zoning rights under the Zoning Department to give citizens an opportunity to utilize the Zoning Board of Appeals if their driveway permit is denied.

3. Consider and Act on State Land Up for Auction

R. Morra explained that the land behind England's Hardware is owned by the State and the business has been leasing the land from the state for decades. He noted that the State is now selling the property, and Mr. England is interested in purchasing it as it is critical to his business. R. Morra explained that the \$160,000.00 asking price is steep for a piece of property that does not offer much value and noted that a fair market value needs to be determined. He stated that without the land, Mr. England would lose his entire parking area behind the building, which is a significant portion of the business, and suggested that the Board support Mr. England in the purchase of the land. He recommended working with the State to assist Mr. England with the purchase of the property.

G. Marrion explained that the State is asking if the Town of Bolton is interested in purchasing the land, and she believes the Board needs to address the offer. She suggested the Board discuss whether the Town is interested in purchasing the land and include Mr. England's interest in the discussion. G. Marrion stated that she visited the site to determine whether the land would be useful as an access point to the pathway that will be going in and found that, due to the steep landscape and the fact that the intersection may be redesigned at some point, the land is not an appealing access point to the pathway. She added that she would not support the Town purchasing the property.

R. Fournier suggested putting in a low bid offer of \$100.00 so that the State will accept Mr. England's higher offer. The Board discussed how to proceed. G. Marrion stated that the Board should decline the offer. A. Gordon asked if the Town has first right of refusal, and J. Rupert explained that after all of the bids come in, the Town has the right to purchase the land at the highest bid price.

A. Gordon MOVED to respond to the Department of Transportation indicating that the Town of Bolton Board of Selectman are not interested in purchasing a plot as outlined in the map provided. G. Marrion SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:2 Absent (Pam Sawyer and Tim Sadler).

4. Consider and Act on Changing A/P Date and/or Time for December 31, 2024 (December 30, 2024 – 8:30 a.m.):

R. Fournier stated that there is a proposal to change the date of the A/P Meeting from December 31, 2024 to December 30, 2024 and/or the time of the meeting. A. Gordon stated that the Board previously discussed this matter and had agreed to change the date to December 30, 2024. She added that the time agreed upon was at 6:00 p.m. to allow for enough work time and review. The Board asked K. McCavanaugh for clarification on whether the meeting was set for 8:30 a.m. or 6:00 p.m. K. McCavanaugh confirmed that it is currently scheduled for 8:30 a.m. R. Fournier scratched Item No. 4 since the date had already been changed to December 30th; however, he noted that the meeting would be held at 6:00 p.m. instead of 8:30 a.m.

5. Consider and Act on Approving 2025 Meeting Dates:

R. Fournier stated that the meeting dates for 2025 do not take place on the usual second Tuesday of the month because it would cause the Board to meet three times instead of two during several months of the year. A. Gordon stated that she is opposed to changing the dates from the usual second Tuesday because she believes it is important to keep the meeting days reliable and dependable for the public. A. Gordon added that efficiencies need to be implemented to assist the Finance Department in getting invoices in a timely manner to allow for enough time to prepare for the A/P Meetings. She stated that she is also opposed to the 6:00 p.m. meeting time as it is difficult to arrive at that time after a full work day.

The Board discussed whether to keep the meetings on the second Tuesday of the month, how many more meetings would be added in doing so, how the new schedule would affect the A/P meetings and processes, and the best time of day to hold the meetings. The Board compared the usual meeting schedule to the proposed

schedule and determined that the new schedule reduces the total number of meetings by five. The Board also discussed the need to improve efficiencies in the Finance Department to get invoices received, approved, and paid on time. J. Rupert noted that he and R. Morra have been meeting with the finance director to increase efficiencies, and stated that their intern is working on doing research on how to make the department more efficient. The Board discussed holding the regular monthly meetings at 6:30 p.m. and the A/P meetings at 6:00 p.m. G. Marrion agreed that the meetings should continue to be held on the second Tuesday of the month to provide consistency and transparency to the public. M. Clarke stated that he does not have a preference either way but agrees it is important to maintain consistency and reliability for the public.

R. Fournier suggested the item be tabled for future discussion and asked K. McCavanaugh to provide the original copy of the proposed dates and to change the times of the regular meetings to 6:30 p.m. and the A/P meetings to 6:00 p.m.

G. Marrion MOVED to table Item No. 5 until the meeting on December 3, 2024. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:2.

6. Consider and Act on A/P and Any Budget Transfers:

R. Morra MOVED to adopt the A/P report for a total of \$102,131.93. A. Gordon SECONDED.

Discussion: G. Marrion asked for clarification on the Town Center SSDS: Preliminary Design, the Community Connectivity Grant Study & Design and the Lotcip Sidewalk Design on Page 15. J. Rupert stated that the Community Connectivity Grant is the trail they are finishing up. He added that the SSDS is the community septic system, and the final design is being completed so it can go out to bid. J. Rupert explained that the Lotcip Sidewalk Design is for the trail that goes to Heritage Farm. He stated that there is a meeting set up with BOG for December 4th to discuss their review, and the drawings are currently at the 80 percent mark.

A. Gordon asked why the engineering company is still doing work on the Community Connectivity Grant since it is almost finished. J. Rupert stated they are helping to coordinate the mapping with the line striping company that will be putting in stop bars and crosswalks. The Board discussed where the stop bars and crosswalks will be located. J. Rupert stated that if enough money is left over from the grant, the State has provided written permission to reallocate the funds to install a beacon on the Steele's Crossing roadway.

M. Clarke asked why there are two separate basketball refunds on Pages 11 and 18. J. Rupert suggested it may be for two different children that had signed up prior to the program being cancelled.

G. Marrion asked J. Rupert if he would be commenting on the Tighe & Bond Abatement. J. Rupert stated that the charges are for testing they have done. He added that the current focus is to get the bid documents together so the project can go out to bid next week. J. Rupert explained that the brick on the front and back of the building have PCB contamination; therefore, the building has to be torn down and abated at the same time. G. Marrion asked if that would increase the cost of demolition. J. Rupert stated the cost is likely to increase. G. Marrion shared her concerns that the deadline to sign the contract is December 31, 2024. J. Rupert replied that the project is on schedule to meet the deadline.

MOTION CARRIED: 5:0:2.

7. Review Bid Ordinance Changes:

J. Rupert noted that the Town Attorney has not reviewed the changes yet but expects a response by the next meeting. He explained that the changes address some of the issues with the driveway ordinance and the bid

ordinance. G. Marrion asked what issues the auditor brought up. J. Rupert explained that the bid ordinance is being changed to allow the town to purchase things off the state bid list without taking them out to bid. G. Marrion stated that she believes \$250,000.00 is too high and that the sealed bids should be a lower price. J. Rupert stated that he chose that number because it equates to the cost of a fire truck. A. Gordon suggested including a caveat for equipment versus services. J. Rupert stated that a decision does not need to be made today and that he is just providing the information for review and further discussion.

8. Review Driveway Ordinance Changes:

R. Morra stated there are reasons not to have the driveway ordinance under zoning as Mr. Anderson had suggested earlier, because it can involve complex issues that the zoning enforcement officer may not know how to handle. He suggested that assigning the ordinance to town employees instead of the Board of Selectmen would provide citizens with the opportunity to appeal to the Board of Selectmen and noted that language should be included in the ordinance. G. Marrion suggested replacing the word “designee” with a specific person or entity to be specific about who can approve driveway permits. J. Rupert stated that all permits go through the permit department and that it would be better to remove the word “designee.” He added that when residents apply for permits online, it goes to the Land Use Office and gets directed to the appropriate person accordingly. G. Marrion suggested having the Town Attorney review and advise on the best way to handle the designation.

Prior to moving on to the minutes, R. Morra announced that he signed an Emergency Do Not Burn Declaration as part of the statewide burn ban, which only covers state properties, to make it legal and binding in the Town of Bolton due to the heightened fire risk.

9. Minutes:

a. September 24, 2024 – Special Meeting A/P

R. Morra MOVED to adopt the minutes from September 24, 2025. A. Gordon stated that the minutes from September 24, 2024 and October 1, 2024 have already been adopted.

b. October 1, 2024 – Regular Meeting

M. Clarke stated that his name is missing from the minutes although he was present at the meeting.

A. Gordon MOVED to amend the minutes from October 1, 2024 to add M. Clarke as present. G. Marrion SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED: 5:0:2.

c. October 8, 2024 – Special Meeting A/P

R. Morra MOVED to adopt the minutes from October 8, 2024 as presented. A. Gordon SECONDED.

Discussion: G. Marrion noted that Item No. 7 states that she made a motion that she did not make and added that it would not have been appropriate since there was already a motion on the table. She stated that P. Sawyer made the motion, and R. Morra seconded it. She asked for that line to be removed.

A. Gordon stated that two grammatical errors needed to be corrected. She stated that on Page 2, “Valley Drive” needs to be changed to “Valerie Drive” and, further down the page, Rodney’s comment regarding a consensus vote needs to be changed from “say I” to “say aye.”

M. Clarke stated that he is not showing as present although he attended the meeting.

R. Morra MOVED to adopt the changes to the minutes. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED: 5:0:2.

d. October 17, 2024 – 3 Board Meeting

A. Gordon MOVED to approve the minutes of the 3 Board Meeting of October 17, 2024. M. Clarke SECONDED.

Discussion: M. Clarke stated that Tim Sadler was not present at the meeting, and he should be marked as absent. A. Gordon stated that she should be marked absent as well. Susan Pike, Diana Pagano, Ben Davies, Robert Munroe, and Christopher Connelly also were not present at the meeting and should be marked as absent.

A. Gordon stated although she was not at the meeting, she noticed that the word “than” needs to be removed on Page 2, Item 4(a) to read “less the” instead of “less than the.”

R. Fournier asked if all were in favor of approving the changes to the minutes. MOTION CARRIED: 4:1:2 (A. Gordon abstained)

e. October 22, 2024 – Special Meeting A/P

A. Gordon MOVED to approve the October 22, 2024 minutes as presented. G. Marrion SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 4:1:2 (M. Clarke abstained).

10. Adjournment:

A. Gordon MOVED to Adjourn the Meeting at 7:10 p.m. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:2.

Respectfully submitted by Kacie Cannon

Kacie Cannon

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