

**TOWN OF BOLTON  
3 BOARD MEETING  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
JOINT MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF THE  
FINANCE COMMITTEE & BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
6:00 P.M., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2024  
TOWN HALL AND VIRTUAL**

**Board of Selectmen:** Chair Rodney Fournier, Deputy Chair Bob Morra, Member Gwen Marrion, Member Mather Clarke, Member Pam Sawyer, Member Tim Sadler, Member Amanda Gordon.

**Finance Committee:** Chair Ross Lally, Member Rhea Klein, Member Ashley Phelan, Member Bob Morra, Member Robert Munroe, Member Amanda Gordon, Member Christopher Connelly.

**Board of Education:** Member Andrew Broneill, Member Chris Davey, Member Diana Pagano, Member Ben Davies, Member Rhea Klein, Member Ashley Phelan, Member Susan Pike.

**Staff Members Present Town Hall/Virtual:** Town Administrator Jim Rupert, Superintendent of Schools Kristin Heckt, Chief Financial Officer Jill Collins, Board Clerk Mary Johnston

**2. Public Comment:** None

**3. Discussion on Columbia Student Count and Projections**

K. Heckt reported the numbers has dwindled as the data is clear. This has been reported for several years and began when E. O. Smith became an option. K. Heckt gave a brief background on presentations made at magnet schools the past few years. K. Heckt stated Bolton is beholden to Columbia in terms of communication and how. A. Phelan reported that is something the Board of Education continues to monitor. R. Klein asked if the numbers in Columbia are declining to which K. Heckt replied yes. B. Morra asked about the magnet schools tuition rates. K. Heckt replied each magnet school's tuition rates are different. B. Morra wondered how you call yourself a magnet school. K. Heckt explained the history of magnet schools in the Bolton area and how to become a magnet school. K. Heckt stated it was discussed last year about taking tuition students from other communities and could be a potential financial implication for Bolton. R. Lally stated, from tonight's discussion, is that Bolton cannot do anything and is frustrating. R. Lally stated he does not know what the answer is to correct the issue. K. Heckt stated she hears the frustration, and they are trying to find a solution. B. Morra discussed where the future of education is heading. K. Heckt pointed out she established a program with Goodwin College a few years ago and continues to utilize that program. R. Klein added that the cost does not disappear.

R. Lally responded the are other things that will continue to cost Bolton. C. Davey asked if there was an idea what success looks like. B. Morra discussed the history of the school district in relation to costs and the number of students. K. Heckt added the decline in population added to the issue each year. B. Morra stated this is a complex problem. K. Heckt stated it has been discussed on how to bring in businesses into the community to offset the tax base for the taxpayer. Discussion was held on other community projects that will need to be addressed in the future. A. Phelan stated she is hopeful answers will come from the School Superintendent search. C. Davey reiterated the importance of the success plan and there are multiple root causes which will lead to multiple solutions to increase student population through marketing. G. Marion added the Selectmen held a retreat in April and the top items was bringing in new businesses, future of the school and new Town offices. G. Marion would like to schedule a meeting to discuss future of school buildings in relation with the construction of new Town buildings. C. Davey stated the Board of Education will need to meet to discuss this issue before meeting with the Selectmen. R. Fournier asked the Board of Education to keep the Selectmen updated. A. Phelan asked about the current 5 Year Strategic Plan. K. Heckt replied it will expire next year so this will provide a wonderful opportunity to add the issues discussed tonight.

#### **4. Discussion on budget and related items for current fiscal year, next year, and subsequent years including:**

##### **a. Revenues, b. Expenditures, c. Debt Service**

J. Collins reported that revenues are up over projected. The Town had a return of \$376,144 and the Board of Education has a return of \$825,199 less than the \$350,000 promised equaling \$475,199. This results in an unaudited cash surplus for FY2024 of \$1,072,738. J. Collins reported the Motor Vehicle Supplement Levy is not available at this time. J. Collins shared information on the Debt Service Bonds and the Short-Term Fire Truck Loan. J. Collins also provided an update on the FY2025 Debt Payments.

##### **d. Capital Improvements Discussions – (Both Town and School):**

K. Heckt provided an update Fire Alarm System upgrade from last year which has been completed. The District Utility Plow was provided by the Town and was moved to this year. The BHS storage building is ongoing with discussing on the bidding process. K. Heckt provided additional information on other projects and the indoor air quality assessment project is ongoing and the sidewalk ADA pads project is in the process of going out to bid. Phase I of the HVAC rooftop units replacement will be moved to FY2026/2027. The District Truck/Plow is ordered and waiting delivery. K. Heckt would like to put these items on everyone's radar: Completed Phase 1 of the Energy Management System upgrade at Center School which will have grant monies available, handicap van replacement, utility BCS bell system, and the district security and buzz systems.

J. Rupert reported on the tear down of a Town facility, which has consumed a lot of time. J. Rupert also reported on the work for the Bolton Volunteer Fire Department study which he hopes to have the bid out by the end of November. J. Rupert stated they are working on the bid package for the facility study. J. Rupert pointed out that projects for next year include painting Town Hall, update Town Hall parking lot, new Town Hall at a new location, vehicle replacements, and funding for a mini excavator in this year's budget. B. Morra asked about

the schedule for the school roofs. K. Heckt replied this project has been pushed out to 2027. J. Rupert suggested that K. Heckt start the process now and he would be happy to assist with the project.

B. Morra MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 p.m. C. Davey SECONDED the motion. MOTION CARRIED 12:0:0.

Respectfully submitted by Mary J. Johnston

*Mary J. Johnston*

PLEASE SEE THE MINUTES OF SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS FOR CORRECTIONS TO THESE MINUTES AND ANY CORRECTIONS HERETO.

SEE ATTACHMENTS UNDER SEPARATE COVER.