

TOWN OF BOLTON
Town Hall Subcommittee Meeting
Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at 8:30 a.m.
Bolton Town Hall
In-Person and Virtual (Hybrid Format)

In Person: Rodney Fournier, Gwen Marrion, James Loersch
Committee Member Via Zoon: Mather Clarke
Staff Present Via Zoom: Recording Secretary, Patricia Hicks

1. Call to Order:

G. Marrion call to order at 8:31a.m.

2. Discuss Next Steps

G. Marrion – we saw three examples of Town Halls, but we are still faced with the situation of the High School. We have to merge two issues of Town Hall and High School. I don't want the town to end up with an empty school if it is determined the High School needs to change its structure and not be in the building. I don't want to end up with an empty building over there while we are under construction of a new Town Hall.

J. Loersch – We need to do some formal communication with the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education to ascertain what they think is going to happen to the High School. We can also go on with the new Town Hall and my question about that is who is going to be in the Town Hall, how big you make it and what will be involved so you can size and position it appropriately. It is crucial to contact the Board of Education about their goal and what they see in the future for the school.

R. Fournier – I don't know if we can get it built in ten years, probably going to take two years to come up with a workable plan and five years to build it and I don't think the High School is going to budge for another four or five years minimum. That's probably more of a ten-year plan. I think someone needs to have a plan on how they are going to populate the school. Where are they going to come up with the kids? I think we have to keep moving forward with a new Town Hall. Are we going to spend \$30,000 to come up with a concept for the Town Hall? We can't sit and wait for school board.

J. Loersch – Do we need to have formal communication with the Board of Education and explain what we are doing and request for some type of feedback.

Fournier – With resignation letter coming from Christian Heck from the Board of Education is her input going to be of any value?

M. Clarke – I agree at this point after we have seen some buildings, I keep hitting a stumbling block it has to have a use or purpose you have to put it to work. I am saying to myself I see this issue with the school system as linked to our decision and we should have a preliminary informal discussion with the Board of Education to ask them is it on their radar. Better to know sooner than later. It would be irresponsible to build an 8- or 10-million-dollar Town Hall and then have the High School regionalize and students come to the building in Bolton and building become useless. Next step is reach out to Board of Education and get on the same page.

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R. Fournier – The building is not paid for until 2032 I think that is when the bond is paid off, I think we are committed until then. I don't know if you can change the use with that bond in interim.

G. Marrion – That is a good question I don't know about that either.

R. Fournier – Which is eight years and the contract with Columbia kids is up in four you can have a stressful six years in there. Stressful 4 years.

G. Marrion – If we are paying off the bond whether we change the use or not I am sure someone would have to know that, but does it make a difference.

R. Fournier – I expect it would because the bond came from the state for the school.

G. Marrion – Complicated factor we need to find out what they are thinking.

J. Loersch – They might have to do a study themselves.

R. Fournier – I would hope they have been, they knew it was coming. Less than 400 kids in school system, can't operate school system per 300 kids.

G. Marrion – The services will deteriorate can't offer foreign language, music, etc., we need to get Board of Education Input, and I would like to get Christian in on it even though she will be leaving within a year. She has a good foundation of knowledge. Her Board of Education, whole Board of Selectmen or just our committee in the same room. All in agreement that is the next step. VOTE: 4 Yes

G. Marrion – I will ask Kathy to coordinate that.

R. Fournier – we have the three-board meeting within a week, we can put on the agenda.

G. Marrion – Discussion can take an hour and half we can do it on a separate night.

R. Fournier – I think we need to bring it up as a how and when at the three-board meeting.

G. Marrion – Yes, see if they have talked to other towns with the same problems. Open dialogue at the three-board meeting on the 17th.

M. Clarke – It is going to be a cost regardless; I think just being fiscally responsible.

R. Fournier – We will get the Board of Education to open dialogue.

M. Clarke - And I agree it would be important to have Chrisitan Heck at meeting her input and past knowledge.

Adjourn. G. Marrion at 8:55 a.m.

Next meeting 6:00pm-October 17, 2024, at the Three Board Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted by Patricia Hicks

Patricia Hicks

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