

**TOWN OF BOLTON  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2025, 6:30 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, Mather Clarke, Pamela Sawyer, Tim Sadler

**Staff Present In-Person:** Town Administrator James Rupert

**Staff Present Via Phone:** Fire Chief Bruce Dixon

**Staff Present Via Zoom:** Recording Secretary Kacie Cannon

**Others Present In-Person:** Lori Vernier, Jon Lender, Dan Zielenski, Holly MacDonald

**Others Present Via Zoom:** Jim Loersch, Shepard Livingston

**1. Call to Order:** R. Fournier called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**2. Public Comment:**

Lori Vernier, 50 Llynwood Drive, shared concerns about the power outages in her neighborhood, which consists of approximately 50 households. She stated that debris from the numerous trees on Colonial Road fall on the power line and create power outages lasting anywhere from a few hours to several hours four to six times per year. Ms. Vernier stated that a truck with a generator must go to each house to energize the sewer system during outages that last more than 24 hours, and she believes the matter is a town issue. L. Vernier asked the Town to assist in resolving the outages as they are becoming very inconvenient, unhealthy, and unsafe.

Jon Lender, 23 Colonial Road, echoed Ms. Vernier's comments and stated that winds over 30 miles per hour often cause outages in the neighborhood because of tree limbs hitting the wires. Mr. Lender stated that he and the neighbors intend to contact a state representative and would like the Town to work with Eversource to start a dialogue and work toward a resolution. He noted that he contacted Eversource and was told the district supervisor would call him back but he has not received a response to date.

Dan Zielenski, 15 Colonial Road, stated that he has lived in the neighborhood since 1983 and has had to buy two generators since 1985 due to the power outages. He stated that the issue originates from where Colonial Road meets Sunningdale and Sunningdale to Cubles Drive. Mr. Zielenski stated that it is unfair that he and the neighbors pay the same taxes as other residents but frequently experience power outages, especially since it is a fixable issue. He explained that one of the roads contributing to the outages appears to have been abandoned and does not receive any maintenance from the Town.

Holly MacDonald, 52 Lynwood Drive, stated that she has also reached out to EverSource but has not received any calls back. She stated that she has done research on land records for the Right-of-Way between HELCO, CLMP, and Eversource and could not find any information. Ms. MacDonald agreed that it seems the road has been abandoned as Mr. Zielenski stated and noted that there are four or five property owners on that road. The name of the road was not provided but it was described as an old cow pass. Ms. McDonald explained that a determination needs to be made on whether a Right-of-Way has been granted to the Town or whether it is private property that Eversource would need to get permission to maintain. She also raised concerns about the strange phenomenon of residents receiving different power levels through their generators during outages. Ms. MacDonald added that some residents with young children do not have generators. She stated that the Town needs to intervene and offered to help in any way she can to find a solution.

The residents provided their contact information to the Board for follow up.

### **3. Correspondence: Discussion by BOS on public comment and correspondence listed:**

- a. R. Parlee – Opposition to Expansion of Parking Lot at Bolton Notch State Park:  
R. Fornier explained that DEEP has decided to expand the parking to add up to 100 parking spaces at Bolton Notch State Park. G. Marrion stated that when the trail was being designed, the committee agreed that the commuter lot would be used as the primary parking lot for access to the trail. She stated that she agrees with Mr. Parlee that there is no need to expand the other lot and added that the access to the lot is very difficult and dangerous. G. Marrion stated that DEEP should use the money for other projects.  
  
A. Gordon agreed and asked if DEEP ever informed the Town about the expansion. R. Fornier replied that he does not recall the Town being informed. R. Morra echoed G. Marrion’s comments about the commuter being used for parking and noted that a significant amount of money was spent on building the bridgeway near the lot. He stated that he is also opposed to the expansion of the lot due to the tricky and dangerous access. R. Morra suggested that the funds should be used to expand and refurbish the commuter lot and proposed sending a recommendation to DEEP. A. Gordon agreed and noted that the funds should also be used to add parking signage.  
  
R. Fornier stated that the expansion is being done using ARPA funds, and the money could be lost if DEEP decides not to move forward with the expansion. He added that the land is state-owned. The Board discussed the potential of redirecting the ARPA funds to improve the commuter lot and came to a unanimous consensus to send a letter to DEEP. J. Rupert will prepare the letter to DEEP with a copy to legislators focused on safety, access, utilizing the commuter lot, and adding signage.
- b. J. Lender – Colonial Road Area Regarding Power Outages and Tree Trimming Help:  
P. Sawyer proposed adding this item to the agenda for the next meeting to have the BOS and Town Clerk’s office look at the issues of road ownership and Right-of-Way and other outreach to Eversource. J. Rupert stated that he would prefer to get a meeting scheduled with Eversource and report back to the BOS. R. Fournier agreed and noted that the follow-up report will be added to the next agenda. J. Rupert stated that he previously spoke with the Eversource arborist, who noted that he trimmed the trees in the area two years ago. He added that the arborist did not believe there is much that Eversource could do at this time, but he will get a meeting scheduled to work on a solution.
- c. Waiver of Justification for HVAC Upgrade at BCS:  
R. Fornier asked if there were any questions on the correspondence from the School Board regarding this item. There were no questions.

### **4. Approval of Minutes**

- a. December 3, 2024 – Regular Meeting:  
R. Morra MOVED to APPROVE the December 3, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes. A. Gordon SECONDED.  
  
Discussion: G. Marrion stated that the last paragraph of Item No. 8 needs to be corrected to read G. Marrion instead of G. Morra.  
  
MOTION CARRIED 6:1:0 (P. Sawyer abstained)

- b. December 17, 2024 – Special A/P Meeting.  
R. Morra MOVED to APPROVE the December 17, 2024 Special A/P Meeting as presented. M. Clarke SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:1:0 (P. Sawyer abstained)
- c. December 30, 2024 – Special A/P Meeting.  
R. Morra MOVED to APPROVE the December 30, 2024 Special Meeting as presented. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 4:3:0 (P. Sawyer, M. Clarke, and T. Sadler abstained)

**5. Reports and Updates:**

- a. Budget and Tax Update:  
J. Rupert stated that everything is on track for the budget.
- b. Consider and Act on Approving Budget Transfer:  
P. Sawyer MOVED to APPROVE the Budget Transfer. R. Fornier SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

**6. Ongoing Business:**

- a. Discussion on Policy and Procedures Regarding the Grand List:  
R. Fornier stated that a discussion is needed on implementing policies and procedures on the Grand List. A. Gordon explained that the committee is recommending that the Board determine whether there are any specific policies for consideration they want to implement other than document retention policies and checks and balances. She noted that more information is needed on the current retention policies and how staff is being trained. A. Gordon stated that a temporary fix for the short-term is needed while the policies are being worked on. J. Rupert suggested putting checks and balances in place immediately while working on getting global policies and procedures in place. He added that he will meet with staff in the coming week to ensure no further retention errors occur.
- b. Shep Livingston Request for Road Race for Senior Capstone Project (Feb. 2, 2025):  
Shepard Livingston, 59 Maple Valley Road, stated that he is coordinating a one-mile road race, called the Groundhog Day Mile, and shared a map of the proposed route. He stated that the route will begin at the top of the hill on Brandy Street, and runners will go left just before Hanover Farms and finish in the cul de sac. Mr. Livingston added that the event will begin at 11:00 a.m. on February 2, 2025 with an alternative Snow Day of February 9, 2025. He noted that Mr. Maselli at the high school has agreed to open the school to provide restrooms and parking for participants. Mr. Livingston asked for assistance from the Town with closing Loomis and Brandy Roads.

The Board discussed the route and asked how long it will take to complete the race and how many participants are expected. Mr. Livingston stated that he is hoping for 40 to 50 participants and expects the race to take approximately one hour. A. Gordon asked about the purpose of the race. Mr. Livingston stated that the race is part of his capstone project to demonstrate leadership and organization. He explained that participants will be charged \$15.00 to participate to cover the costs of refreshments, prizes, and paying janitors to open and close the school, and any leftover money will be donated to the Bolton Project Graduation.

R. Morra asked who will assist with closing the roads. Mr. Livingston stated that he has asked Fire Chief Bruce Dixon for assistance. Fire Chief Bruce Dixon applauded Mr. Livingston for his efforts in coordinating the race and stated that, if BOS is in support of closing the roads, a meeting will take place between the Town Administrator, State Police, and the Fire Department to come up with a plan for the road closures and signage.

Mr. Livingston stated that Bolton Boosters Club is providing insurance for the event, and waivers are also being provided. R. Morra stated that in order for BOS to approve, they would need police, fire, and the Town Administrator to provide a plan. B. Dixon stated that he has reviewed the plan and his only concerns are that Mr. Livingston would need to find volunteers to put barricades out, and he would need to notify any neighbors that will be affected by the road closures. P. Sawyer recommended that Mr. Livingston place flyers on the doors of the affected residences. She informed Mr. Livingston that the flyers cannot be placed in mailboxes.

R. Morra MOVED to APPROVE Shepard Livingston's request to hold the Groundhog Day Race on February 2, 2025 with a backup date of February 9, 2025 and with the various stipulations which include notifying residents of the event, meeting with and securing approval from the proper authorities for road closures, and putting up and taking down street barricades. P. Sawyer SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

## **7. New Business:**

- a. Consider and Act on Allowing R. Fournier to be the Certified Official to Execute Contracts for the DEMHS Cyber Security Grant Program:

P. Sawyer MOVED to APPROVE allowing R. Fournier to be the Certified Official to Execute Contracts for the DEMHS Cyber Security Grant Program. R. Morra SECONDED.

Discussion: G. Marrion shared concerns that a copy of the agreement R. Fournier would be signing is not attached to the Certification document as indicated, and it is not clear whether the BOS is voting to allow R. Fournier to execute this specific contract or all contracts. J. Rupert stated that the motion is specifically for the Cyber Security Grant Program, and the BOS has already authorized staff to apply for those grants. R. Fournier stated that it would allow him to sign the agreement if the grant is awarded. G. Marrion stated she has no issue authorizing R. Fournier to sign contracts in general, but this document does not provide information on what he is signing. A. Gordon agreed.

MOTION CARRIED 5:1:1 (A. Gordon voted No, G. Marrion abstained).

- b. Consider and Act on Date for Town Meeting (last week of January or first week of February) for ARPA funds:

R. Fournier stated that the Town has the ARPA funds and some of the approved contracts and a date needs to be scheduled for the Town Meeting. J. Rupert explained that all of the money is currently in one pot for the demolition of the Notch Road Municipal Center, and the leftover funds need to be reallocated to the approved projects in one of two ways. He explained that the Board can reallocate the funds through the budget process and wait for the budget to be approved in July or hold a Town Meeting so the money can be reallocated and expensed sooner. R. Fournier asked if there is a proposed date for the Town Meeting. G. Marrion asked J. Rupert to provide a list of all of the contracts and details to the BOS. The Board discussed various dates and agreed to hold the meeting at 6:00 p.m. on February 4, 2025. J. Rupert stated that he will check the moderator's availability for that date.

G. Marrion asked if all of the future BOS Meetings are scheduled for 6:30 p.m. instead of 7:00 p.m. R. Fournier confirmed that they are.

R. Morra MOVED to APPROVE holding a Town Meeting on February 4, 2025 at 6:00 p.m., contingent on the moderator's availability. P. Sawyer SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

c. Consider and Act on the Proposed 2025 Budget Workshop Dates

A. Gordon MOVED to ADD Agenda Item 7(c) to Consider and Act on the Proposed 2025 Budget Workshop Dates. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

Discussion: The BOS members reviewed the dates for any conflicts. G. Marrion stated that she has a conflict on February 5, 2025 due to another standing meeting she must attend. P. Sawyer proposed changing the date to February 11, 2025 after the A/P Meeting and noted there would be two budget workshop meetings that week. J. Rupert stated that the budget workshop meetings can be cancelled or added as needed.

A. Gordon MOVED to APPROVE the 2025 Budget Workshop Dates, except the February 5, 2025 meeting which will be held on February 11, 2025 immediately following the A/P Meeting. R. Morra SECONDED. Motion Carried: 7:0:0.

## **8. Town Administrators Report:**

R. Fornier distributed a copy of the Town Administrators Report which included the following highlights:

- We had a separation of employment with an employee from Buildings and grounds and will be looking to fill the open position.
- We executed all ARPA grant project contracts which include demolition and reconstruction of the
- Notch Road facility, UTV replacement for the Fire Department, removal and infill of manure pit at Heritage Farm, generators at Bolton Center School and Town Hall and reclaiming and paving of outdoor basketball courts.
- Draft of changes to ordinances was completed and sent to the Town Attorney for review. He has commented and we are implementing his recommended changes.
- The Lori Road drainage project is nearly complete but some final grading and seeding will need to be done in the spring.
- The wetlands remediation at 65 Shoddy Mill Road is completed and will need some spring planting. The new fire engine is at Atlantic Detroit and is in need of a replacement transmission. Conversations have been occurring with Allison regarding the warranty provisions.
- December events were all a success with stuff a cruiser, breakfast with Santa, Winterfaire, tree lighting in conjunction with the Bolton Congregational Church and their Festival of Trees.
- We met with CIRMA to discuss insurance and other services provided by them.
- We met with Johnny Carowan regarding finalizing use of grant funds for the Heritage Farm.
- We met with the Capitol Region Council of Governments and reviewed the Heritage Farm Trail plan.
- We conducted the pre bid walkthrough of Notch Road and held the public bid opening.
- We completed and posted the RFP for the facility study.
- We are implementing new invoicing and for out of State Board Clerks. J. Rupert explained that the clerks will now be considered independent contractors to avoid out-of-state payroll tax issues, and a new invoicing system has been implemented.
- The web page has been updated for 2025 meetings and events.
- We are working on putting together information to potentially apply for the Transportation Rural Improvement Program for a potential application to replace the Lyman Road Bridge. I have reached out to CT Department of Transportation to see if we can use Town Aid Road funds for our match. Our match would be about \$340,000.00. We would also need to fund an additional \$170,000.00 for engineering, bidding and construction inspections.

J. Rupert explained that the cost of replacing the bridge seems to increase 10-12% each year, and the project needs to be funded and completed sooner rather than later. He stated that it may be possible to spread the financing over two years and noted that the Town will need to have the funding in place to match before applying for the grant. A. Gordon asked who awards the grant. J. Rupert replied that the Department of Transportation awards the grant, CROG administers the grant, and the Transportation Committee approves the grant.

J. Rupert stated that, as an alternative, the Town could seek funding from the state and local bridge program but they only fund 50 percent, and the TRIP grant is a better option. The Board discussed the current design and proposed repairs to make the bridge more sustainable which would include concrete box culverts. J. Rupert stated that the total cost of the project would be approximately 1.7 million dollars with a required match of approximately \$340,000.00 plus an additional \$170,000.00 for engineering, bidding, and inspections.

A. Gordon asked if there are any updates on the Fire Department Strategic Plan and RFP and whether there has been any discussion on how the \$20,000.00 will be spent to improve efficiency in the Finance Department. J. Rupert stated that he and R. Fournier met with the Finance Department and determined that it would be beneficial to outsource payroll. He added that a meeting has been held with ADP and meetings with a few other payroll companies are currently scheduled.

A. Gordon asked if J. Rupert has spoken with Tyler about improving how the Town works with them. J. Rupert stated he has made multiple attempts to contact Tyler to schedule a meeting with them but he has not received a response.

J. Rupert stated that he has met with Chief Dixon and has pulled other strategic plans but has not made much progress on the strategic plan at this time due to other pressing issues.

G. Marrion asked about the Right-to-Farm Ordinance. J. Rupert stated that he will send information on the ordinances with the list of contracts he is sending out. He explained that there about 70 questions he and the staff are still trying to get answered that go back through several administrations, and they are having difficulty finding information on some of the older contracts.

## **9. Adjournment:**

P. Sawyer MOVED to Adjourn the Meeting at 8:01 p.m. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

Respectfully submitted by Kacie Cannon

*Kacie Cannon*

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

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