

**TOWN OF BOLTON  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SPECIAL MEETING – BUDGET WORKSHOP - #1  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2024  
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING A/P MEETING  
TOWN HALL & ZOOM  
MINUTES**

**Board of Selectmen Present In-Person:** First Selectman Rodney Fournier, Deputy First Selectman Robert Morra, Gwen Marrison, Amanda Gordon, Mather Clarke, Pamela Sawyer, Tim Sadler

**Staff Present In-Person:** Town Administrator James Rupert, Fire Chief Bruce Dixon, Fire Marshal William Call, Fire Commission Chair John Morianos

**Staff Present Via Zoom:** Director of Senior and Social Services Carrie Concatelli, Recording Secretary Kacie Cannon

**Others Present Via Zoom:** Jim Loersch, Amanda Balboni

The Budget Workshop began at 6:10 p.m.

**1. Fire Marshal:**

Fire Marshal William Call explained that the Fire Marshal shares the cost of ESO software, which is a reporting tool that is also used for data storage and inspection reports, and money from other line items needs to be moved for their share of the cost. A. Gordon asked why the item was not on last year's budget. Fire Marshal Call stated that it was not listed as a line item but it was paid out of the Fire Marshal budget with transferred funds.

Fire Marshal Call stated that the other change is a request to increase the payroll amount to \$2,000.00. He added that payroll will still be tight, but it would help to cover periodic call backs. He added that he can take three or four weeks of vacation to lower the impact on the budget; however, if a call back occurs while he is on vacation and Deputy Marshal Quish has to respond in his absence, the pay would then come out of the Fire Department budget. A. Gordon asked what the difference in operations is between this year and last year. Fire Marshal Call replied that there have been some extra call backs this year and noted that Deputy Marshal Quish was called to respond while he was on vacation both times last year. J. Rupert explained that a call back occurs when a Fire Marshal is called to the scene to conduct an investigation. Fire Marshal Call added that all fires have to be investigated by the Fire Marshal by statute. J. Rupert noted that minor incidents are handled by telephone to reduce the time required for investigation but a lot more inspections are being done that require additional hours.

**2. Senior/Social Services/Public Health:**

Senior and Social Services Director Carrie Concatelli stated that there are not many changes to the Senior and Social Services budget this year other than payroll and repairs and maintenance. She stated that the repairs and maintenance line item is mainly for servicing vehicles but also for conducting general inspections. C. Concatelli reported that the vehicle repairs have been expensive and she has already had to transfer money from other line items to cover those costs. She reported that the van

rides are trending upward, and payroll is expected to be tight this year based on anticipated ride usage for the coming year.

G. Marrion asked if the increase in the payroll for supervisors' contracts is reflected in the request for a payroll budget increase to \$170,643.00 and whether it includes both the union and non-union increases. C. Concatelli confirmed that both are included. J. Rupert asked how many rides were budgeted for this year. C. Concatelli replied that she based the driver hours on an average of 30 hours per week and anticipates between 1400-1600 hours this year. A. Gordon asked about the cost of physicals the drivers are required to complete. C. Concatelli replied that the physicals are paid under Other Professional Services, and there has been no problem covering those costs.

P. Sawyer asked if the department has to rely on the generosity of Bolton Seniors, Inc. to offer programs. C. Concatelli replied that they do subsidize many of the programs, especially the expensive holiday party. She added that they provide food and other assistance for four events each year and, without their help, the budget would be significantly impacted in covering those costs. P. Sawyer expressed her gratitude and appreciation for the assistance from Bolton Seniors, Inc.

C. Concatelli stated that the Public Health budget consists of the Eastern Highlands Health District contract, and there are no changes to the budget this year.

A. Gordon stated that the Town has its own food pantry and asked if the Town also provides Operation Fuel services for residents or whether the Town has to refer to MACC for the program. C. Concatelli replied that the Town has to refer to MACC. She added that the Bolton Seniors food pantry offers fresh foods such as produce, dairy, and meat that the Town does not supply. A. Gordon asked if MACC could provide specific data services being provided to Bolton residents. C. Concatelli stated that she will request the information.

### **3. Fire Commission:**

Fire Commission Chair John Morianos stated that Fire Chief Bruce Dixon will present on the budget and answer any question the Board has. Chief Dixon introduced Deputy Chief Anthony Ferrera, Lieutenant Jason Vincent, and Lieutenant Melissa LeGeyt and provided a brief, historic overview of the budget. He stated that an increase is being requested for Other Professional Services due to physicals that are required each year for members and explained that OSHA is in the process of making changes to the physical requirements that will increase costs. If the proposed changes are passed, Chief Dixon stated that an additional \$10,200.00 will be needed to comply with the proposed changes at a cost of \$600.00 to \$700.00 per firefighter. He added that there has been significant opposition to the proposed changes, and if it does not pass, the \$10,200.00 would be returned to the Town. Chief Dixon noted that if it does pass, firefighters will have six months to comply with the new requirements.

R. Morra asked if there could be delays in approving the proposal that would push the compliance requirements into the following year so that half, or possibly all, of the requested funding would not be needed until the next fiscal year. Chief Dixon stated that in the event that it is delayed to the following year, the money would be returned to the Town this year and would not be spent on anything else. R. Fournier asked if all of the members are on the schedule for physicals. Chief Dixon explained that

members have 365 days to get their physical and they get them at different times of the year; therefore, only a percentage of members would need to complete them by the time the proposal is in effect.

A. Gordon asked Chief Dixon if there were any changes from the prior year because of the new proficiency method that was implemented. Chief Dixon stated that in 2022, the Fire Department had 532 calls, and there were 1,883 responses by members. In 2023, there were 574 calls and 2,255 responses by members. This past year, there were 587 calls, and 2,427 responses. He reported that the program is working.

J. Rupert noted that it seems the retone to neutral aid calls have also gone down this year. Chief Dixon agreed and stated that there were eight retones this year. He explained that a retone is a separate, secondary tone that goes out to all members as well as the Town Administrator, Emergency Management Director, and Town Highway Foreman after the initial alert to advise members that more assistance is needed. Members simply push a button to respond and it quickly provides Chief Dixon with information on who is able to respond, their certifications, and whether they are drivers bringing apparatus, whether they will be on standby, or any other specific role they will serve or assistance they will provide. He added that it essentially serves as a call back to send more firefighters to the scene. Chief Dixon also noted that he uses an alpha pager as a backup.

J. Rupert pointed out that the retone system also provides information on where water holes and landing zones are. Chief Dixon added that it also provides information on building layouts, chemicals that are present in the building, what apparatus is needed, and other important details about the scene.

Chief Dixon stated that the minutes from February 21, 2024 do not accurately reflect the discussion regarding payroll and the decisions that were made at that time and suggested that he, R. Fournier, and J. Rupert discuss the corrections that need to be made.

#### **4. Conservation Commission:**

A. Gordon asked for an explanation on the increase that is being requested in the budget. R. Fournier stated that it is for protecting water quality. G. Marrion added that it is for professional testing and analysis of water samples. J. Rupert explained that testing is done when completing assessments but he is not sure that an assessment was ever done on Bolton Notch Pond. A. Gordon asked if the increase includes testing the new body of water, and J. Rupert confirmed that it is. J. Rupert added that volunteers test the water and drop the samples off at Phoenix Labs, and the budget pays for the analysis through the Professional and Technical Services line item. He added that reductions have been made to other line items to help with covering the cost.

J. Rupert noted that the request for an increase to payroll is to cover additional hours and wage increases.

The Budget Workshop ended at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kacie Cannon

*Kacie Cannon*

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