

**TOWN OF BOLTON  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SPECIAL MEETING – BUDGET WORKSHOP - #3  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2025  
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SPECIAL A/P MEETING  
TOWN HALL & ZOOM  
MINUTES**

**Board of Selectmen Present In-Person:** First Selectman Rodney Fournier, Deputy First Selectman Robert Morra (6:27 p.m.), Gwen Marrion, Amanda Gordon, Mather Clarke, Pamela Sawyer

**Board of Selectmen Members Absent:** Tim Sadler

**Other Board Members Present In-Person:** Bentley Memorial Library Chair Rebecca Holliman

**Staff Present In-Person:** Town Administrator James Rupert, Tax Collector Lori Bushnell, Highway Supervisor AJ Golden

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

**Others Present Via Zoom:** Jim Loersch

**1. Call to Order:** R. Fournier called the meeting to order at 6:14 p.m.

**2. Public Comment:**

There was no Public Comment.

**3. Tax Department:**

Tax Collector Lori Bushnell highlighted the following increases to the budget:

- **Payroll:** \$5,711 increase for the Tax Collector's salary
- **Professional Training:** \$250 for additional training
- **Printing & Binding:** \$4,700 for a potential second billing
- **Office Supplies:** \$150 increase for the cost of supplies
- **Dues & Fees:** \$15 increase for an employee organizational membership

A Gordon asked why a salary increase of 7.2% is being requested in comparison with other departments that are requesting 3% increases. Tax Collector Bushnell explained that it is closer to 6.3 percent as it includes a longevity payment. She noted that this will likely be her last salary increase after 30 years with the Town and believes the request is warranted.

R. Fournier asked for clarification on the second billing. J. Rupert explained that if the budget is still in the process of being passed in July, tax bills will be sent out based on the current rate. A second billing would need to be sent if the rate changes after the budget is passed. Tax Collector Bushnell stated that she would prefer to collect late rather than send out a second bill. J. Rupert stated that the options have to be weighed since several bills become due for the Town in the first quarter of the fiscal year.

#### 4. Highway:

Highway Supervisor AJ Golden highlighted the following changes to the budget:

- **Payroll:** \$12,125.00 for annual wage increases
- **Other Payroll:** \$7,000.00 decrease since summer assistance will not be needed
- **Professional Educational Training:** \$5,000.00 reduction as no CDL school is needed this year
- **Repairs and Maintenance Services:** \$9,000.00 decrease due to repairs being done in house
- **Repairs and Maintenance Supplies:** \$9,000.00 increase for repairs being made in house
- **Diesel Fuel & Gasoline:** \$2,000.00 increase due to rising costs
- **Sand & Salt:** \$10,000.00 decrease based on adequate supplies
- **Equipment:** \$3,500.00 increase to purchase dual-slope laser and 2D-MC module
- **Road Repairs:** \$4,875.00 increase due to higher cost of materials

A Gordon asked why summer assistance is not needed this year when it was needed last year. J. Rupert explained that last year was the first time a request for outside assistance was made. Supervisor Golden added that the hiring process is difficult and the help will not be needed this year. A. Gordon also asked for clarification on the dual-slope laser and 2D-MC module. Supervisor Golden explained that they are necessary tools that work together for accurate grading.

G. Marrion asked if the salary increase was negotiated. J. Rupert stated that the supervisor's contract has been negotiated, and negotiations with employees are in the beginning stages. He added that the requested amount covers the increases for the supervisor and employees.

#### 5. Library:

Library Chair Rebecca Holliman stated that there are no changes to the budget. She also noted that funds were returned to the Town last year, and the current budget is sufficient. Chair Holliman added that the Finance Department added a line item for furniture.

A. Gordon asked Chair Holliman to make salary increases more transparent in the budget since it appears the salaries will remain unchanged and could raise concerns about parity among departments. Chair Holliman explained that there is enough money in Payroll to cover the salary increases and offered to provide a written explanation to provide more transparency. J. Rupert also noted that salaries could be impacted by minimum wage changes and suggested reviewing and revising the budget to provide more transparency and ensure the library is adequately funded.

Chair Holliman distributed a bookmark outlining upcoming programs at the library as well as a sheet highlighting various data on library usage by the public. She added that downloads for books, magazines, movies, and music have increased to 650 per month. Chair Holliman reported that the library now offers technical support services to the public for assistance with their phones, laptops, and computer equipment. She added that the library partners with other departments to offer various programs such as training on soil testing and composting, school field trips to the library, health

screenings, and charitable events. The library also provides space for art displays from students and local artists and opportunities for students to work at the library. Chair Holloran noted that a new coffee bar was recently installed courtesy of Friends of the Library, and the library received \$4,500.00 from the Bolton Greater Together Grant Fund that will be used for furniture and an upgraded projector.

G. Marrion asked about the status of the e-book license issues. Chair Holliman explained that libraries were being overcharged by e-book publishers, and the legislature is currently addressing the issue. R. Morra asked if each library orders e-books or whether there is a consortium for ordering. Chair Holliman explained that the library belongs to a consortium with Bibliomation and is also a member of Hoopla, which charges the library by the download, and eGO which offers free downloads.

A Gordon asked Chair Holliman to send the handouts to J. Rupert to add to the website along with the budget.

#### **6. Town Clerk:**

J. Rupert provided an overview of the Town Clerk budget which includes a payroll increase due to longevity and raises and a decrease due to the discontinuation of software. G. Marrion expressed concerns about the software discontinuation as she finds it useful and convenient. J. Rupert stated that he will get more clarification on the change.

#### **7. Consider and Possibly Act on TRIP Grant Application:**

J. Rupert reported that the grant application is ready to be submitted, and the Capital Committee is very committed to keeping funds for the Lyman Road Bridge repairs in the budget.

P. Sawyer MOVED to APPROVE the submission of the grant application. A. Gordon SECONDED.

Discussion: G. Marrion asked what TRIP stands for and the amount of the grant. J. Rupert stated that it stands for Transportation Rural Improvement Program and noted that Bolton is one of seven towns that are eligible for the grant. He explained that the total cost of the bridge project is approximately 1.7 million dollars and the grant is for 1.4 million dollars, which covers 80% of the project. The Capital Committee has the remaining 20% in the budget as well as \$170,000.00 for bidding costs. J. Rupert stated that the grant application is sent to CRCOG prior to submitting it to the Department of Transportation and added that the TRIP grant provides more value than other grant options.

MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1 (R. Morra joined the meeting at 6:27 p.m.).

#### **8. Consider and Possibly Accept fiduciary Responsibility on Behalf of Seniors Inc. for Grant Application to Hartford Foundation for Public Giving:**

A Gordon MOVED that the Town of Bolton serve as the fiduciary for \$2,000.00 worth of grant money from Hartford Foundation for the Senior Center to fund Knox boxes and small air purifiers for the Senior Center. R. Morra SECONDED.

G. Marrion asked what the fiduciary duties entail. J. Rupert explained that the duties include accepting the funds and ensuring they are spent appropriately.

MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1.

## **9. Adjournment**

P. Sawyer MOVED to ADJOURN the meeting at 6:57 p.m. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1.

Respectfully submitted by Kacie Cannon

*Kacie Cannon*

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