

**TOWN OF BOLTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING - A/P AND BUDGET DELIBERATIONS (IF NEEDED)
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2025, 6:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL & ZOOM
MINUTES**

Board of Selectmen Present In-Person: First Selectman Rodney Fournier, Deputy First Selectman Robert Morra (6:05 p.m.), Gwen Marrion, Mather Clarke, Pamela Sawyer, Tim Sadler

Board of Selectman Absent: Amanda Gordon

Staff Present In-Person: Town Administrator James Rupert, Chief Financial Officer Jill Collins, Timothy White, Finance Committee Chair and Assistant Registrar Ross Lally, Registrar Sandra Pierog, Deputy Registrar Mary Terhune, Registrar Bernice Dixon

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 6:02 p.m.

2. Consider and Act on A/P

P. Sawyer MOVED to APPROVE the A/P Report as presented. M. Clarke SECONDED.

It was noted that there were two separate A/P reports in the packet, and a total amount was requested for the Motion. J. Collins explained that the second report is for the property tax refunds.

P. Sawyer AMENDED the motion to approve the A/P Report as presented in the amount of \$249,039.00. M. Clarke SECONDED.

Discussion: G. Marrion asked about the charges for Friar Architecture, Inc. and the Lori Road Drainage charge from Nathan L. Jacobson & Associates, Inc. J. Rupert confirmed that the charge from Friar is for the redesign of Rooms A and B and that the Lori Road Drainage project is not yet complete. He added that the drawing and budget are completed for the rooms, and the grant was submitted on time.

MOTION CARRIED 5:0:2 (A. Gordon and R. Morra Absent)

P. Sawyer MOVED to APPROVE the Property Tax Refund A/P Report as presented in the amount of \$4,553.41. R. Fournier SECONDED.

MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1 (A. Gordon Absent)

3. Consider and Act on Budget Transfers

There were no budget transfers for consideration.

4. Consider and Act on Ad-Hoc Committee for Herrick Park Fields

P. Sawyer MOVED to APPROVE the Ad-Hoc Committee Member List for Herrick Park Fields. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1.

5. Budget Deliberations

Chief Financial Officer Jill Collins and Timothy White were present to assist and answer any questions on the budget. G. Marrion asked for information on the Registrar salaries. T. White provided a table outlining the results of a wage comparison analysis he conducted with six towns on Registrar salaries and noted that the Bolton Registrar of Voters receive 3.54% below the average of the other towns, except Hebron and Willington as they pay stipends. T. White noted that approving the proposed increases would put the Registrars on par with the other towns as follows:

- Registrars \$25.00/Average \$24.13
- Deputy Registrars \$22.00/Average \$20.46
- Assistant Registrar \$18.00/Average \$16.73
- Data Entry Clerk \$18.00/Average \$17.33
- Moderator \$19.00/Average \$20.11
- Election workers \$17.00/Average \$17.06

The BOS agreed to the proposed increases. Assistant Registrar Ross Lally stated that the Registrar of Voters also did a wage comparison and came up with similar results. T. Sadler asked if the Registrars are satisfied with the proposed increases. Registrar Sandra Pierog stated that she cannot comment as she has not seen T. White's report and shared concerns about the Board taking action without input from the department. R. Fournier replied that it appears to match the Registrar's results and noted that the Board will need to find funding for the increases. G. Marrion reminded the BOS that the Registrar budget was reduced by \$17,000.00 since a primary election is not expected. R. Morra added that \$1,000.00 for advertising was reduced to \$500.00 and transferred to the Town Clerk budget.

6. Consider and Act on Department Budgets and Any Others if needed

Capital Improvement Plan: J. Rupert stated that he consulted with John Butrymovich on adjustments to the Capital Improvement Plan. The Board agreed to the proposed changes and made additional adjustments as follows:

- Defer the van replacement to 2026-2027 and keep the pickup truck replacement
- Defer the Bolton Heritage Farm Projects since no project specifics are in place yet
- Add the farm pavilion project (Est. \$130,000.00), Indian Notch Park play structure (Est. \$65,000.00), and salt shed (est. \$450,000.00) to the plan to strengthen grant opportunities
- Rename the Heritage Farm account from Code Compliance to BHF Building Restoration and remove the \$50,000.00 allocation in the account as \$47,000.00 is available from prior year funds
- Defer exterior painting of the Town Hall and keep the Town Hall door repairs
- Defer the Kubota attachment purchase

The total for Capital Improvement projects was updated to \$1,083,016.00 as a result of the changes.

Board of Education: The BOS discussed the energy management system upgrade allocation of \$407,000.00 and potential reimbursement of up to 50% of the costs from the State Board of Education.

Taxes: The members discussed automobile taxes, tax revenue, and tax exemptions for veterans.

Administration Budget: The budget is lower than last year with the exception of salary placeholder.

Finance Department: The BOS discussed the costs and benefits of outsourcing payroll through ADP and agreed to allocate \$28,000.00 for ADP payroll services under the Administration Budget.

Tax Collector: The BOS discussed Tax Collector Lori Bushnell's request for a 7.2% salary increase which includes a longevity payment. J. Rupert outlined her loyalty, lengthy service with the Town, excellent performance, and lower pay than other supervisors. He added that she was instrumental in resolving the tax issue last year and suffered damage to her reputation, although the matter was not her fault. J. Rupert recommended a 5% increase plus a bonus of \$1,000.00 for her work on the tax issue. He added that similar bonuses would be appropriate for the other staff members who assisted with the issue. The BOS tabled the item for later discussion.

Personnel Services: Payroll taxes decreased from \$232,000.00 to \$230,700.00 as a result of removing \$17,000.00 in wages from the Registrar budget. Actual figures for health insurance will be provided in March after renewal.

Town Clerk: Software costs were reduced due to the elimination of a module that was not being used.

Building and Land Use: Payroll was increased to \$310,000.00 as a result of hiring an additional inspector to provide inspections to the Town of Marlborough through a grant administered by CRCOG. Revenue from the arrangement will zero out payroll costs except for contractors.

Insurance: The budget has increased due to rising costs of cyber liability insurance, and the actual figures will be updated in July during renewal.

Fire Commission: The BOS agreed to reduce the OSHA allocation by \$7,000.00 and updated the total budget to \$296,089.00.

Highways: Payroll will be reduced upon hiring a replacement for Dennis and was reduced with the hiring of a new supervisor at a lower rate.

Town Building: The budget has increased as a result of higher electricity and communication costs.

Public Health: The budget has increased to \$29,730.00.

Senior and Social Services: Payroll increased significantly and vans are expected to be replaced this year.

Library: The salary was increased from \$248,735.00 to \$256,315.00 to ensure adequate funding. The BOS agreed to move funds from library costs to cover the increased cost of contracts.

Recreation: The BOS agreed that there is enough funding in the Recreation Round Fund to support the budget and agreed to withhold additional funding for the department. The BOS discussed Stephanie Crane's salary and performance and agreed to an increase of \$3,000.00 beginning July 1, 2025.

Redemption of Bonds: The BOS discussed the bond for the fire truck and will bond for the fire truck balance and school roof together due to the expensive bonding process.

Tax Collector Continued Discussion: The BOS continued the discussion on L. Bushnell's request for a salary increase. G. Marrion disagreed with the previous proposal of a smaller increase and a bonus and recommended approving the requested 7.2% increase. J. Rupert recommended the BOS also consider an increase for the Librarian who has been with the Town for 37 years to be fair. He added that she has not received an increase despite her requests because her salary is above average. The BOS agreed to a 5.5% increase for the Tax Collector.

P. Sawyer MOVED to APPROVE a 5.5% salary increase for Tax Collector Lori Bushnell. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1.

J. Rupert recommended bonuses for the additional employees who worked through the tax issue. He will work with J. Collins to find funding for bonuses and provide a recommendation to the Board.

Separation Fund: \$50,000.00 is kept in the fund to cover retirement costs including PTO payouts, etc.

All other budgets remained flat and unchanged. J. Rupert and the Board commended the departments for their efforts in providing reasonable budget requests. J. Rupert will provide the updated budget totals to the Board.

7. Adjourn

R. Morra MOVED to ADJOURN the meeting at 8:18 p.m. P. Sawyer 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.

Town of Bolton

Sign In Sheet

Meeting: BOS

Date: 2/25/25

	Print Name	Print Address
1.	Sandra Perrog	37 Brandy St
2.	Bernice K. Dixon	72 Tinker Pond Rd.
3.	Ross Lally	41 Notch Road
4.	Mary Terhune	40 School Rd
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