

**TOWN OF BOLTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2025, 6:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL & ZOOM
MINUTES**

Board of Selectmen Present In-Person: Deputy First Selectman Robert Morra, Gwen Marrion, Amanda Gordon, Pamela Sawyer, Tim Sadler

Board of Selectmen Present Via Zoom: First Selectman Rodney Fournier

Board of Selectmen Absent: Mather Clarke

Staff Present In-Person: Town Administrator James Rupert

Staff Present Via Zoom: Recording Secretary Kacie Cannon

Others Present In-Person: Jon Lender

Others Present Via Zoom: Jim Loersch, Shepard Livingston

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

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. NOVUS Presentation

R. Morra noted that all of the presenters for this item are out ill.

P. Sawyer MOVED to table the NOVUS Presentation. T. Sadler SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1 (M. Clarke Absent)

4. Public Comment

Jon Lender, 23 Colonial Road, asked for an update on the power outage issues on Colonial Road listed as Item No. 10(a) on the Agenda. He referenced an email from J. Rupert that was sent to one of the residents regarding a grant and the work to be done. Mr. Lender noted that someone also mentioned the idea of looping the homes in with the Vernon side. R. Morra offered to move Agenda Item No. 10(a) up for immediate discussion.

P. Sawyer MOVED to move Item No. 10(a) to Item No. 4(a) on the Agenda. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1.

a. Update on Colonial Road

J. Rupert stated that communication with Eversource remains difficult. He explained that he is attempting to coordinate a meeting between Eversource and the residents but has not received a response yet. J. Rupert reported that Eversource has agreed to generate a project and have marked approximately 15 trees with yellow ribbons that will be removed. He added that Eversource did not originally have funding available, but it is now in place. The Eversource arborist is working with the Town arborist to discuss the project, and is working on obtaining permission from property owners and the owner of Colonial Road to remove the trees. Mr. Lender stated that Carolyn Jones owns Colonial Road and thanked J. Rupert and the BOS for their assistance. J. Rupert noted that he will share any future updates with the residents.

5. Information Forum on ARPA Funding

The BOS reviewed a handout detailing the following ARPA-funded projects:

- Notch Road Demolition and Reconstruction Project

- Removal of concrete and infill of manure pit at Heritage Farm
- Reclaim and repave 3 outdoor basketball courts at Memorial Park, Herrick Park, and Indian Notch Park
- Purchase a new UTV for Bolton Volunteer Fire Department and repurpose existing for use by the Building and Ground Department
- Replace Generator at Bolton Town Center School which covers the water system for all of the Town buildings on Notch Road
- Replace Generator at Town Hall
- Demolition of Greenhouse at Bolton Center School
- Testing hazardous materials, bid document preparation and project oversight

J. Rupert noted that the projects total \$1,445,431.00 and exceed the Town's allocation by \$9.00. A. Gordon stated that the Notch Road project now exceeds \$1 million and suggested a new motion on the projects due to the change in the total.

A. Gordon MOVED to APPROVE the ARPA projects in the amounts outlined on the information sheet as listed. P. Sawyer SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1.

6. Appointment: Kimberly Fotana: Conservation Commission

P. Sawyer MOVED to APPROVE the appointment of Kimberly Fotana to the Conservation Commission. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1.

7. Correspondence

a. D. Griffin – Resignation

R. Morra reported that Dennis Griffin is retiring after 21 years with the Town and acknowledge his contributions to the Town.

P. Sawyer MOVED to accept the Resignation of D. Griffin with gratitude and best wishes on his future endeavors. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1.

b. K. Walsh – Resignation from Veteran's Commission

R. Morra reported that Kathy Walsh is resigning from the Veteran's Commission. P. Sawyer acknowledged K. Walsh's contributions to the Veteran's Commission, Memorial Day parades, and service to the Town.

P. Sawyer MOVED to accept the Resignation of K. Walsh with gratitude for her service as First Chairman of the Veteran's Commission. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1.

c. Intern Tim White Project Update

The Board reviewed an Intern Project Update submitted by Tim White highlighting various projects he has been working on for the Town. R. Morra stated that the report was very interesting and informative and shows how effective internships can be. J. Rupert agreed and praised his contributions. A. Gordon asked for a copy of the budget analysis mentioned in the report. J. Rupert will provide the analysis to the Board.

d. CT DEEP Letter

J. Rupert commended DEEP for their quick response to the letter he wrote on behalf of the BOS. He added that Rod Parlee complimented the letter and noted that Legislative Aide Matt Gilligan from Senator Rahman's office has offered to set up a meeting between DEEP and the Town. R. Morra asked if DEEP is reconsidering the parking lot expansion at Bolton Notch State Park. J. Rupert replied that they have acknowledged the safety issues and will obtain more information when they meet.

G. Marrion suggested conducting a site visit with DEEP to show them the safety issues associated with accessing the parking area. J. Rupert agreed and stated that he would like to include other stakeholders including Conservation Commission members. A. Gordon noted that it was interesting there was no mention of expanding the parking lot in the response letter. R. Morra agreed.

e. Generative AI Policies in Government

R. Morra stated that the handout on Generative AI Policies in Government is for information only and asked the Board for their thoughts. A. Gordon asked if the Town is using AI at all. J. Rupert replied that the Town is not using AI and added that the BOS would need to adopt a policy if they want to implement or prohibit its use. A. Gordon suggested placing a temporary moratorium until a policy is in place due to liability and breach concerns. R. Fournier noted that NOVUS has recommended the Town hold off on using AI for now.

P. Sawyer MOVED to add Item 7(e) to the next meeting agenda for the Board of Selectmen to act on an AI policy for the Town of Bolton. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1.

A. Gordon MOVED to implement a temporary policy which shall be a moratorium on the use of AI at any time on Town equipment or the Town network until the Board of Selectmen can establish permanent policies on the use of AI. P. Sawyer SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1.

8. Approval of Minutes

a. December 23, 2024 – Special Meeting

P. Sawyer MOVED to adopt the December 23, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1.

b. January 7, 2025 – Regular Meeting

G. Marrion requested, on behalf of Rod Parlee, that the title of Item No. 3(a) be changed as follows:

- “R. Parlee – Opposition to Expansion of Parking Lot at Bolton Notch State Park **on behalf of the Conservation Commission and as referenced in a letter submitted and received December 16, 2024.**”

P. Sawyer MOVED to adopt the January 7, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes as modified. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1.

c. January 14, 2025 – Special A/P Meeting

P. Sawyer MOVED to adopt the January 14, 2025 Special A/P Meeting Minutes. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1.

d. January 28, 2025 – Special A/P Meeting

P. Sawyer MOVED to adopt the January 14, 2025 Special A/P Meeting Minutes. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1.

9. Reports and Updates

a. Budget and Tax Update

J. Rupert stated that there are no updates, but he is monitoring the item on a regular basis.

b. Consider and Act on Approving Budget Transfer

P. Sawyer MOVED to APPROVE the budget transfer of \$293.00 from Seniors to Public Health. T. Sadler SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1.

10. Ongoing Business

a. Update on Colonial Road:

This item was moved to Item No. 4(a).

b. Discussion and Possible Action on Heritage Farm Trail Grant:

J. Rupert stated that a preliminary plan was put together and a meeting was held with the Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), who is acting on DOT's behalf as grant administrator. He noted that the plan to extend the trail from the farm to the high school is not viable as the cost of the additional work would amount to \$2 million. J. Rupert explained that the Town had applied for and received a grant of approximately \$1.5 million and increasing the amount would require a 20% match from the Town. He suggested stopping the trail at the bottom of Bolton Center Road near the second entrance to the farm and noted that would bring the cost down to approximately \$1 million and reduce the Town's match.

T. Sadler asked for further details on the proposed trail route. J. Rupert explained that it would start on Bolton Center Road between the Trooper's Office and Town Hall, go across the field and over to the barn, traverse the parking area, and resume down the hill along the driveway and end at Bolton Center Road.

T. Sadler asked if there are any plans on relocating the parking lot at the farm and whether the changes would impact the trail. J. Rupert replied that the Bolton Heritage Farm Commission has consulted with architects on a master plan that includes improving the parking area and added that the trail has been designed in conjunction with the master plan so there would be no impact. He added that he recently met the administrators of the grant for the 300th Celebration the Town applied for and learned that approximately \$10,000.00 of the funds are still available. He is checking to see if they would allow the Town to use the funds toward the parking area improvements in the master plan.

P. Sawyer MOVED to modify the original plan to end the trail at the lower part of Bolton Center Road. A. Gordon SECONDED.

G. Marrison asked if the additional funds could be used for other items related to the trail such as interpretive signage and boardwalk railing. J. Rupert replied that railings will be needed to comply with ADA requirements. He added that cable railing is being considered to maintain a minimal look. G. Marrison asked if the suggestion to include a brick walkway between the Trooper's office and the field is included in the cost. J. Rupert replied that he believes it was but is not sure if it will be accepted. T. Sadler asked if extending the trail to the middle school is an option for using the funds. J. Rupert stated that it is supposed to be included in the next phase of the Community Connectivity grant but the application has not been submitted yet. He will ask if the additional funds could be used to extend the trail.

A. Gordon asked if a public meeting needs to be held on the amended plan. J. Rupert replied that a public meeting will be held in the Spring. G. Marrison asked if the Bolton Heritage Farm Commission has been informed of the trail changes. R. Morra replied that the trail concept has not changed other than where the trail stops. J. Rupert will be meeting with Arlene Fiano on February 10th and will inform her of the changes.

MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1.

11. New Business

a. Consider and Act on Proclamation for D. Griffin:

P. Sawyer MOVED to sign the Proclamation as presented for D. Griffin. T. Sadler SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1.

b. Consider and Possibly Act on Memorial Day Parade

P. Sawyer stated that Kathy Walsh of the Veteran's Commission usually organizes the Memorial Day parades; however, with her resignation, the Board will need to find a replacement to coordinate the event. She added that she has an individual in mind but is not sure if they would be interested and asked the Board for additional recommendations. She asked that the topic be discussed at the next meeting. The board discussed ideas on who should be involved in coordinating and overseeing the parades.

c. Board/Commission Vacancy Listing to go out with July Tax Bills

P. Sawyer reported that the chair position of the Ethics Commission is vacant and needs to be filled as the Commission is required by state law. She added that there are additional committee vacancies and suggested advertising the positions on tax bills to provide the public with opportunities to serve the Town. J. Rupert noted that it would cost \$200.00 to add the item to the tax bills. The BOS agreed to add the item to the bills.

d. Discussion/Formation of Ad-Hoc Committee for Finalizing HP Plans

R. Morra suggested forming an ad hoc committee to come up with a set of plans for the field at Heritage Park. T. Sadler volunteered to chair and form the committee. A. Gordon stated that members will need to be bi-partisan or unaffiliated. J. Rupert agreed and asked T. Sadler to bring the member recommendations to the Board for approval as soon as possible and he will add the item to one of the upcoming meetings. T. Sadler will work on securing members for the committee this week.

e. Discussion/Formation of Ad-Hoc Committee for U.S. 250th (Semi Quincentennial) Celebration

J. Rupert asked the Board to think about individuals who may be interested in serving on the committee for the 250th Celebration. He added that Arlene Fiano is interested in serving on the committee but is not interested in chairing. G. Marrion suggested adding the opportunity to the tax bill; however, P. Sawyer noted that the committee needs to be formed as soon as possible. J. Rupert stated that the ad hoc committee will work in collaboration with the State's committee to coordinate the celebration.

8. Town Administrators Report

J. Rupert provided the following report and asked if the Board has any questions.

- The Selectman's Office has provided support to all department during the budget preparation process.
- We have received the bids for the Facilities study.
- Asbestos abatement has begun in rooms A and B. That area should be completed in the next day or so.
- All out of state board clerks have been moved to 1099 status to avoid taxation issues. This was competed with guidance from the auditor.
- Stony Road parking area is complete at this time unless other enhancements are needed in the spring.
- We have helped to organized and support the February 2 Road Race on Brandy Street.
- We met with ADP three times to learn about what is available to assist with payroll.

- We have coordinated moving a gas line at 104 Notch Road for the demolition project.
- The Transportation Rural Improvement Program grant application was submitted.
- We are well underway with the STEAP Grant application for renovation of rooms A and B at 104 Notch Road. We held a stakeholder meeting that included Registrars of Voters, Senior Center and Recreation staff that included our design staff from Friar and Associates.
- The wiring was completed for the POOL Grant and most of the other items we were approved for were ordered.
- The Connectivity Trail work is complete. We will be looking at how much funding is left to install rapid flashing beacons at the trail crossing on Steeles Crossing.
- We held our Virtual Chief Information officer meeting with Novus to discuss what we accomplished, what our recommended priorities are and contract costs for next year.
- We are interviewing candidates for the vacant position in Buildings and Grounds.
- We have started to work on data collection and discussions regarding Union contracts.
- Covid and other respiratory illnesses have had a significant impact on staffing.
- We are training on emergency management platforms including WEB EOC (web-based emergency reporting).
- We are communicating with Tyler regarding training for our accounting system.

A. Gordon asked what the POOL grant is for. J. Rupert explained that it is for emergency management upgrades including securing wires for safety, replacing a television that is used during emergencies, and other items that are in the works.

R. Morra asked for an update on the Notch Road Municipal Center. J. Rupert reported that dumpsters have been added for asbestos along with separate dumpsters for non-hazardous materials. He stated that Rooms A and B and the hallway have been completed, and the other sections are now being worked on. J. Rupert noted that all of the utilities must be removed. He reported that the gas line will be moved on February 11th, the water has been disconnected, the septic has been severed and capped, and they are waiting on Frontier to remove a dead phone line. J. Rupert added that the project is going very well so far.

P. Sawyer suggested commemorating the initial demolition of the building with a public event. R. Morra agreed and recommended that the Board members take the first steps of demolishing the building with sledgehammers. J. Rupert stated that both ideas are currently in the works. G. Marrion added that the building sign should be retained and turned into a commemorative bench.

A. Gordon asked about the communications with Tyler regarding training listed on the report. J. Rupert replied that he has received a quote from Tyler for approximately \$1500.00 to train staff on the accounting system. G. Marrion asked if updates on the progress of the demolition project could be added to the Town Bulletin. J. Rupert appreciated the idea and will include the updates in the bulletin.

9. Adjournment

P. Sawyer MOVED to Adjourn the Meeting at 7:44 p.m. A. Gordon 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.