

**TOWN OF BOLTON  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SPECIAL MEETING – BUDGET WORKSHOP - #5  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2025 – 6:00 P.M.  
TOWN HALL & ZOOM  
MINUTES**

**Board of Selectmen Present In-Person:** Deputy First Selectman Robert Morra, Gwen Marrion, Amanda Gordon, Pamela Sawyer (6:30 p.m.)

**Board of Selectmen Present Via Zoom:** First Selectman Rodney Fournier

**Board of Selectmen Members Absent:** Tim Sadler, Mather Clarke

**Staff Present In-Person:** Town Administrator James Rupert, Chief Building Official Rich McKinnon

**1. Call to Order:** R. Fournier called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**2. Public Comment:**

There was no Public Comment.

**3. Land Use**

Chief Building Official Rich McKinnon reported that the largest budget request is for payroll with a small increase in professional and technical services. He explained that the Building Department provides building services to the Towns of Bolton, Andover, Ashford, Marlborough, and Willington and provided an outline of the department staff positions. R. McKinnon noted that the ZEO contract increased by \$1,000.00, and a full-time Assistant Building Official was added. He also provided an overview of contributions from the towns and Bolton's expenses. J. Rupert noted that that the Land Use staff expenses should be net zero for the first time next year due to \$80K - \$85K in permit fee revenue, except for the three contract positions.

R. McKinnon thanked J. Rupert for working with CRCOG and Marlborough to obtain a grant for salary assistant to hire an assistant building official. J. Rupert explained that the grant covers nearly 80% initially but decreases over three years. In year four, Marlborough and the Town will assume the costs, and Marlborough will cover 27 hours of the 37-hour position, including the benefits package. He added that Marlborough also covers part of the salary for the Chief Building Officer as well as the plan reviewer's salary.

G. Marrion asked for more details on the plan reviewer position. J. Rupert explained that the plan reviewer works remotely, ten hours per week, and receives slightly higher pay since the position does not receive benefits. R. McKinnon added that the position reviews plans for three towns and is essential due to the workload. A. Gordon asked if raises are included in the budget. R. McKinnon replied that a 3% increase is included for every town each year.

**4. Finance Department**

J. Rupert noted that some budget figures are still pending but will be provided in next week's workshop. He added that Jill could not attend the meeting tonight but will be at both meetings next week. J. Rupert explained that the only changes to the budget include a decrease in payroll and a slight increase in professional and technical services and office operating expenses.

## **5. Administration**

J. Rupert explained that a \$50,000.00 placeholder has been included for all wage increases, including increases for paid BOS members. G. Marrion asked what percentage was used for the increases. J. Rupert replied that the increases are calculated at 2.75%. A. Gordon asked if BOS members regularly receive increases each year. J. Rupert confirmed that they receive increases annually in an amount equivalent to supervisors.

J. Rupert highlighted the following decreases in the budget:

- Professional and Educational Training: \$5,000.00 decrease
- Other Tech - \$15,000.00 decrease due to the completion of cyber security projects
- Advertising – \$2,000.00 decrease to advertising online
- Operating and Office Expenditures - \$4,000.00 decrease

J. Rupert stated that some servers and computers will need to be replaced this year. A. Gordon asked about the status of transferring to a cloud-based system and why servers are necessary. J. Rupert explained that the process is moving forward, and some servers need to be maintained for firewalls and other features. He added that a plan and budget are in place to replace computer hardware every five years, and the department is working on replacing employee computers with laptops to allow for remote work when needed.

J. Rupert provided information on the remaining department budgets and noted that a 5% cap has been set for Property and Liability and Workers' Compensation. He noted that the Police Protection budget includes a shared contract with State Police and includes \$10,000.00 in overtime. J. Rupert explained that the Town pays 85% for police, and the State pays the remainder. He also reported that the contract with the Town of Vernon Animal Control has increased from \$3,000.00 to \$6,000.00 and includes veterinary service costs for animals that are picked up. J. Rupert noted that there is a minor increase to Emergency Management Services for a 2.75% wage increase. He added that part of Kathy McCavanaugh's salary is paid from this line for the services she provides to the department.

R. Fournier asked for information on the Refuse Services contracts. J. Rupert explained that this is the last year of the contract with Casella. He added that the Town has long-lasting contracts with USA Hauling for hauling bulk waste, All American Waste for curbside pickup, and MidNEROC for hazardous waste. J. Rupert explained how the figures were determined.

J. Rupert noted that there are no changes to the Economic Development budget and added that the Connecticut's Countryside website has become an economic development tool for the Town. A. Gordon

stated that the costs for the website do not seem equitable among the towns. J. Rupert will address the issue with Patrice Carson and the other town coordinators. A. Gordon suggested sending a memo to the board members of the other towns to discuss a more equitable arrangement. The BOS discussed the success of the website and increased business participation. A. Gordon requested a report on the number of businesses that are participating from each town, the number of hits on the website, and the number of hits for each business, if possible.

P. Sawyer asked that the various commission vacancies be added to the bulletin as soon as possible.

## **6. Adjournment**

A. Gordon MOVED to ADJOURN the meeting at 6:37 p.m. P. Sawyer SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:2 (M. Clarke and T. Sadler absent).

Respectfully submitted by Kacie Cannon

*Kacie Cannon*

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