

**TOWN OF BOLTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN - SPECIAL MEETING
HUMAN RESOURCES/PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2025 – 5:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL & ZOOM
MINUTES**

Human Resources/Personnel Subcommittee Members Present In-Person: Deputy First Selectman Robert Morra, Amanda Gordon, Pamela Sawyer

Human Resources/Personnel Subcommittee Members Absent: Mather Clarke

Staff Present In-Person: Town Administrator James Rupert, Executive Assistant, HR Director, and Emergency Management Director Kathleen McCavanagh

Staff Present Via Zoom: Recording Secretary Kacie Cannon

Others Present In-Person: First Selectman Rodney Fournier, State Trooper Brian Contenta, BOS Member Gwen Marrion, BOS Alternate Kawan Gordon, Ellie King, Bryce Aaronson, and Intern Tim White

Others Present Via Zoom: James Loersch

1. Call to Order: R. Fournier called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. P. Sawyer was seated for M. Clarke.

2. Discussion and Possible Action on Recommendation to BOS for Firearms Policy

R. Fournier stated that the Town currently lacks a firearms policy. R. Morra added that there are two components to the proposed firearms policies that need to be addressed: a personnel policy and a Town ordinance. He noted that he supports a reasonable personnel policy but is opposed to an ordinance as the State already has strict and sufficient gun laws. R. Morra added that most responsible gun owners follow the law, but those who do not will not be deterred by an ordinance.

State Trooper Brian Contenta provided an overview of Connecticut's firearm laws, noting that it has changed in recent years from open carry to concealed carry. He added that weapons are prohibited at schools, and weapons stored in vehicles must be locked in a safe, glovebox, or trunk.

A. Gordon explained that she researched municipal policies across the state and shared a book summarizing various policies across Connecticut. She provided a consolidated list of ordinances from the book as well as a proposed personnel policy and Town ordinance she created for discussion. A. Gordon highlighted the increase in gun violence in the news and suggested implementing an ordinance and signage to serve as deterrents and ensure public safety. R. Morra replied that he understands the concerns for safety but noted that a sign or ordinance is not going to deter bad actors. He added that it could create a false sense of security and advocated for addressing mental health concerns instead.

P. Sawyer suggested focusing on the personnel policy. A. Gordon stated that it would be unfair to prohibit employees from carrying weapons while allowing the public to do so. R. Fournier noted that additional staff would be needed to enforce the ordinance and added that failure to enforce the

ordinance could become a liability for the Town. He also mentioned that some employees who work alone at night might feel safer carrying a weapon. A. Gordon replied that she is not recommending searches of people or vehicles and added that enforcement would consist of calling the police if someone was brandishing a weapon in a threatening manner. P. Sawyer noted that is the current procedure when someone appears to be a threat. J. Rupert confirmed that there is a policy on workplace violence and pointed out that the Town does not have a municipal police force readily available to respond if someone brings a weapon onto Town property.

R. Fournier asked how much responsibility the Town would have in enforcing the ordinance. A. Gordon stated that the Town would post signage and notify residents of the new ordinance to let them know employee safety is a priority. She added that she does not expect the Town to begin implementing punitive measures or removing individuals from public property.

Trooper Contenta agreed that a sign is not going to stop an active shooter. He noted that many responsible gun owners have stopped bad actors from committing crimes, although media does not cover those stories. Trooper Contenta added that Chicago and New York City are both designated as “gun-free zones,” yet they have very high rates of gun violence. He stated that such policies fail to stop criminals while preventing good citizens from defending themselves.

A. Gordon agreed that a sign will not stop someone with ill intent but explained that it could deter an individual, who has no intent to harm, from using a weapon if they become agitated or a situation escalates while addressing a Town matter. P. Sawyer stated that metal detectors would be required, which are expensive and not always effective. A. Gordon disagreed that metal detectors are necessary and explained that the ordinance would set a standard that the Town is against carrying weapons in public buildings and public spaces in the spirit of providing public safety.

R. Fournier noted that applying the ordinance to public spaces would be difficult, particularly for events such as the 4th of July celebration at Indian Notch State Park. A. Gordon stated that she does not expect the ordinance to be enforced through searches and explained that enforcement would occur in the event that someone is making it known they have a weapon. R. Fournier replied that they would be breaking state law if that happened. Trooper Contenta agreed that it would be very problematic to conduct searches at the park.

R. Morra stated that if an employee believes there is an issue, they can call 911. J. Rupert agreed that is typically what the employees have done. He also shared an experience he was involved in where he accompanied State Troopers during an arrest of an individual with several illegal weapons and ammunition and noted that his contact information became part of the public record in Court after the incident. J. Rupert explained that he had considered carrying a weapon to work after the incident. K. McCavanagh also recounted an experience where she had to call the police as an employee. She stated that an ordinance would not have helped in that situation and she would have felt safer if she had been armed. She added that it took 15 minutes for the police to respond.

R. Morra suggested tabling the discussion so that the members who are not present at the meeting can provide input on the discussion. A. Gordon asked the members to review the policies she is proposing in the meantime. R. Fournier reiterated that an ordinance is a very slippery slope and difficult to enforce, especially in public spaces. A. Gordon outlined an ordinance that the Parks and Recreation Department already has in place pertaining to the prohibition of weapons in parks.

The Committee agreed to table the discussion for the next BOS meeting to provide time to review the proposed policies and ensure absent members are included in the discussion. P. Sawyer suggested including Trooper Contenta in future discussions to provide information on gun rights and recommendations. The Committee also agreed to solicit staff input after the BOS discussion.

3. Adjourn

R. Morra MOVED to ADJOURN the meeting at 6:10 p.m. P. Sawyer SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 3:0:0.

Respectfully submitted by Kacie Cannon

Kacie Cannon

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