

**TOWN OF BOLTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 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, Amanda Gordon, Gwen Marrion, Mather Clarke, Tim Sadler

Board of Selectman Absent: Pamela Sawyer

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

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 6:00 p.m.

2. Consider and Act on A/P

R. Morra MOVED to APPROVE the A/P Report as presented in the amount of \$293,962.77. A. Gordon SECONDED.

A. Gordon inquired about the charges from Aptuitiv, Inc., and J. Rupert replied that the charges are for the Town website. A. Gordon asked about the late fee for telephone utilities on Page 7. J. Rupert explained that late fees sometimes occur due to the length of the A/P process as previously discussed. A. Gordon emphasized the need for more efficiencies to ensure timely payments.

A. Gordon asked about the software charge on Page 7 for eCode360 Annual Maintenance. J. Rupert explained that the company codifies the Town's regulations and the charge is for additional work that was conducted as a result of the charter change. A. Gordon asked what hydrotesting is on Page 13. J. Rupert explained that hydrotesting is completed annually on fire hoses to ensure they do not explode during fire incidents or separate from couplings under high pressure. Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) bottles are also tested under pressure in a water bath every six to eight years.

G. Marrion asked about the billing process for Stamford Wrecking on Page 16. J. Rupert explained that Stamford Wrecking submits requests for payment to Tighe & Bond. They review the requests and ensure the work is completed prior to approving the invoices and forwarding to the Town for payment. He added that requests for payment are sent upon the completion of work.

MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0.

3. Consider and Act on Budget Transfers.

A. Gordon MOVED to APPROVE the transfer within the Highway budget of \$5,000.00 from the category of Repairs and Maintenance Services to the category of Repairs and Maintenance Supplies because they have been completing more repairs in-house which allows quicker turn around times for down trucks and equipment. M. Clarke SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0.

4. BOE Written Waivers – Information Only

R. Fournier noted that the waivers the Board of Education submitted for the purchase of Chromebooks and the BCS Public Address/Bell System Upgrade are for information only and no action is required.

5. Consider and Act on Approving the Following Meeting Dates:

a. Public Hearing - Tuesday, April 22, 2025, – Immediately following the BOS A/P meeting that begins at 6:00 p.m. (Town Hall)

A. Gordon stated that it was announced at the Finance Committee meeting that the Public Hearing would take place on April 29, 2025. J. Rupert asked Kathleen McCavanagh for clarification on the correct date. K. McCavanagh confirmed that the correct date is April 22, 2025. J. Rupert indicated that the Registrar of Voters had requested that the meeting be scheduled on April 29, 2025 to allow for more time to learn about and test the new machines; however, moving the meeting date was not feasible due to notification requirements.

b. Annual Town Meeting – Wednesday, May 7, 2025, 6:00 p.m. (Town Hall)

T. Sadler and G. Marrion noted that they will be unable to attend the Annual Town Meeting.

c. Budget Referendum Dates: (Ryba Hall – St. Maurice)

1. Tuesday, May 20, 2025 – Referendum #1
2. Tuesday, June 10, 2025 – Referendum #2 (if needed)
3. Tuesday, June 24, 2025 – Referendum #3 (if needed)
4. Tuesday, July 15, 2025 – Referendum #4 (if needed)
5. Tuesday, July 29, 2025 – Referendum #5 (if needed)

R. Morra MOVED to ADOPT all of the meeting dates as follows: Public Hearing on April 22, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall, the Annual Town Meeting on May 7, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall, the Budget Referendum Meeting on Tuesday, May 20, 2025 at Ryba Hall and, if needed, additional Budget Referendum meetings on June 10, 2025, June 24, 2025, July 15, 2025, and July 29, 2025. T. Sadler SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0.

6. Consider and Act on House Bill 7067 – The Assessment of Motor Vehicles for Property Taxation

J. Rupert stated that a memo was sent to the BOS from Attorney Richard Barger outlining the details of House Bill 7067 and noted that Assessor Kara Fishman is available to answer any questions.

R. Fournier explained that the BOS has two options: 1) keep the status quo, or 2) increase the assessed value of motor vehicles by 5% from 85% to 90% for property taxation. The BOS discussed the modified depreciation schedule and the positive impact adopting the change will have on the motor vehicle portion of the grand list. K. Fishman noted that the method for valuing motor vehicles is no longer based on market value and is now based on a percentage of MSRP.

J. Rupert stated that the Town is getting a supplemental allowance from the State of approximately \$17,000.00 for motor vehicle taxes that were based on the motor vehicle tax cap that was set. He added that last year, it was in excess of \$700,000.00 and noted the tremendous loss in revenue. The BOS agreed that adopting the change would keep the grand list net neutral. G. Marrion asked about the timeline for submitting the Board's decision. K. Fishman replied that it will be done within 14 days.

A Gordon MOVED that the Board of Selectmen implement the option allowed for under House Bill 7067 – The Assessment of Motor Vehicles for Property Taxation which allows for moving the maximum on the

depreciation schedule from 85% to 90% starting with this year's current grand list. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0.

7. Consider and Act on House Bill 7067 – A Property Tax Exemption for Veterans who are Permanently and Totally Disabled

K. Fishman stated that the bill does not change anything for the Town since the current recipients are already at 100% disability. A. Gordon asked for clarification on whether exemptions pass on to living members of disabled veterans. K. Fishman replied that it does as long as the veteran was enrolled prior to death. The BOS discussed impacts to the grand list. J. Rupert explained that there is no net impact.

8. Consider and Act on Active Transportation Microgrant (up to \$5,000 no match)

J. Rupert explained that Stephanie Crane is working on a small grant for bicycles and bicycle safety equipment. He asked for approval to apply for the grant to use the funds for e-bikes and helmets. J. Rupert stated that the shed next door would be repaired to provide a location for renting the bikes and equipment. He explained that S. Crane met with Eric Anderson in Andover, who applied for and received the same grant last year, and learned that their e-bike program has been very successful.

R. Morra asked if the Town could charge for the rentals, and J. Rupert replied that he believes it would be allowed. J. Rupert noted that he would work with the Town Attorney on waiver and liability language. He added that the rental location will be adjacent to the Heritage Farm Trail and the trail that was recently completed with the Connectivity Grant. G. Marrion requested that S. Crane consider e-bikes with smaller motors so that they would be allowed on the trails. J. Rupert noted that S. Crane will purchase the e-bikes, helmets, and bike locks from a local vendor per Eric Anderson's recommendation.

T. Sadler MOVED to APPROVE the submission of the Active Transportation Microgrant to purchase e-bikes and safety equipment with the requirement that e-bikes with appropriate power limits be purchased for use on the trails. G. Marrion SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0.

9. Consider and Act on Town and BOE Portion of Capital Budget

A. Gordon stated that the BOS only approved the Board of Selection portion of the Capital Budget and needs to approve the entire budget to include the Board of Education projects.

R. Morra MOVED to APPROVE the Board of Education Capital Improvement Budget in the amount of \$492,000.00. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0.

10. Discussion on Stamford Wrecking Change Order

J. Rupert stated that Tighe & Bond will be sending a memo to the BOS with a detailed explanation of what occurred to create the change order. He explained that Stamford Wrecking originally came in with a bid that was much lower than other bidders as a result of their unique plan to take the time to separate the waste and dispose of hazardous materials at a facility in New York. The plan included trucking fees to transport the material, but a very good price was obtained from the disposal location.

J. Rupert explained that Stamford Wrecking checked regulations and had conversations with Minerva about paint on the concrete, which has a low level of PCBs (less than 50 parts per million), and determined that disposal would be acceptable at the New York location. However, the State of New York got involved and stated that the materials cannot be disposed in the state, even though there is nothing in the regulations prohibiting the disposal. Stamford Wrecking is experimenting this week with sandblasting the paint off of the concrete walls, and Tighe & Bond will be testing to ensure the PCBs are

removed so the materials can be disposed locally. J. Rupert explained that the change order includes the cost of sandblasting and a credit of \$100,000.00 for the trucking fees. The sandblasted materials would then go to Rhode Island or Ohio for disposal.

The BOS discussed concerns regarding the additional costs to the Town as a result of a failed arrangement on the part of Stamford Wrecking. J. Rupert explained that contingency fees were budgeted into the project to account for any changes. R. Morra proposed splitting the \$75,000.00 cost with Stamford Wrecking. J. Rupert suggested tabling the item to the next meeting on April 1, 2025 so he can review and discuss the contract with Attorney Richard Barger and determine how to proceed.

A Gordon MOVED to table the discussion on the Stamford Wrecking change order until the next meeting on April 1, 2025. M. Clarke SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0.

11. Discuss and choose a date for the next facilities and public safety meeting

R. Fournier stated that an RFP went out for the facilities study and bidders are calling and asking questions. He noted that the facilities and public safety sub-committee needs to schedule a meeting to review the facilities study. The meeting was scheduled for Monday, March 31, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. at Town Hall.

12. Executive Session:

1. To discuss Selectmen's Salary
2. To discuss Town Administrator's review, contract and wages

R. Morra MOVED to go into Executive Session at 7:08 p.m. to discuss the Selectman's Salary, the Town Administrator's review, contract and wages, and to invite Town Administrator Jim Rupert to attend the Executive Session. G. Marrion SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0.

13. Consider and Act on Selectmen's Salaries

The Board reached consensus to bring a First Selectman's salary of \$35,000.00 to the public as part of the Public Hearing on April 22, 2025.

14. Consider and Act on Town Administrator's contract and wages

R. Morra MOVED to grant a salary increase of 2.75% to the Town Administrator retroactive to July 1, 2024. T. Sadler SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0.

The Board tabled action on a contract extension until such time as they have the end date of the current contract.

The Executive Session concluded at 8:20 p.m.

15. Adjourn

T. Sadler MOVED to ADJOURN the meeting at 8:25 p.m. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0.

Respectfully submitted by Kacie Cannon

Kacie Cannon

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