

**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:** First Selectman Rodney Fournier, Deputy First Selectman Robert Morra, Gwen Marrion, Amanda Gordon, Pamela Sawyer, Tim Sadler, Mather Clarke

**Staff Present In-Person:** Town Administrator James Rupert

**Staff Present Via Zoom:** Library Director Elizabeth Thornton, Recording Secretary Kacie Cannon

**Others Present In-Person:** Dennis Griffin, Dom Perito, Ellen King, Barbara Amodio, Bryce Aaronson, Kim Fofana, Claire Fazzina, Tonia Tomoroga, James Perkins

**Others Present Via Zoom:** Benton Library Board Chair Rebecca Holliman, Fire Chief Bruce Dixon, Deputy Chief Matthew Perriera, Jim Loersch, Sylvia Ounpuu, Lisa Sheehan

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

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

R. Fournier led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Proclamation Presentation to Dennis Griffin**

R. Fournier noted that Dennis Griffin retired on January 31, 2025 with the Town of Bolton Highway Department and read a Proclamation honoring him for his 21 years of outstanding service with the Town. The Proclamation was adopted by the BOS on February 4, 2025. The Board members shared their appreciation and memories of working with Mr. Griffin and congratulated him on his retirement.

**4. Public Comment**

Dom Perito, 15 Vernon Road, asked the BOS to consider traffic calming measures on Vernon Road due to numerous accidents that have occurred due to speeding.

Ellen King, 149 Brandy Street, highlighted strategies in the 2015 Bolton's Plan for Conservation Development for enhancing the safety of local roads and plans for trails and connection development for pedestrians and cyclists. She stated that residents are interested in seeing these plans implemented.

Barbara Amodio, 50 Volpi Road, spoke on behalf of Bike Walk Bolton and thanked the BOS for adding their presentation to the agenda. She explained that Bike Walk Bolton focuses on safe bicycling, walking, and jogging in the town. She thanked the BOS for the numerous safety improvements they have made to several trail crossings and connections that align with Complete Streets and Vision Zero.

P. Sawyer MOVED to add Item 6(b) Matthew Wright Reappointment to the Ethics Commission and Item 6(c) Ellen Barnes Reappointment to the Ethics Commission for four-year terms. R. Morra SECONDED.

MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

**5. Bike Walk Bolton Presentation**

Bryce Aaronson, 149 Brandy Street, provided a presentation on behalf of Bike Walk Bolton to pitch a Complete Streets plan. He stated that there were 894 accidents in the town between 2015 and 2024, and eight of them

involved fatalities. Mr. Aaronson outlined the benefits of designing safe streets including a 70 percent reduction in accidents, significant savings in annual injury and collision costs, and increased property values.

Mr. Aaronson shared the Town of Andover's Complete Streets plan which focused on connectivity and had great funding success. He noted that state and federal funding is more successful when a Complete Streets plan has been adopted. J. Rupert clarified that plans have to comply with Complete Streets requirements.

G. Marrion asked who created the plan for the Town of Andover. Sylvia Ounpuu replied that Eric Anderson created the plan before he was Town Administrator. J. Rupert noted that Mr. Anderson previously stated it took him hundreds of hours to develop the plan. Ms. Ounpuu stated that he created the plan from scratch but noted there are several plans and resources available now to work from. Kim Fofana added that CRCOG has numerous resources available. T. Sadler asked how to develop specific, workable plans. Ms. Ounpuu noted that Mr. Anderson began by interviewing residents to learn where they would like to go throughout the town and how they would like to get there.

R. Fournier thanked Mr. Aaronson for the presentation and noted that the BOS will take it under consideration. R. Morra added that a sub-committee will need to be formed to consider the idea further. He noted that the interstate and two major highways create challenges and clarified that approximately 80% of the town's accidents occur on the state highways. R. Morra explained that previous boards have attempted to work with the state to initiate improvements; however, it has been difficult getting their assistance. He emphasized that implementing Complete Streets plan can be a complex and time-consuming process. Barbara Amodio suggested focusing only on town roads. A. Gordon agreed that there are numerous challenges but suggested the BOS create a sub-committee to review the possibilities.

## **6. Appointments**

### **a. Camden Soucy – Library Board – Regular Board Member**

P. Sawyer MOVED to accept the appointment of Camden Soucy as a Regular Library Board Member. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

### **b. Matthew Wright – Reappointment to Ethics Commission**

This item was acted on under Item 6(c).

### **c. Ellen Barnes – Reappointment to Ethics Commission**

R. Morra moved to reappoint Matthew Wright and Ellen Barnes for the Ethics Commission. P. Sawyer SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

P. Sawyer noted that one more vacancy on the Ethics Commission needs to be filled by an unaffiliated member.

## **7. Correspondence**

### **a. Claire Fazzina – Fine Free Libraries**

Claire Fazzina, a former librarian of Bolton High School, asked the BOS to consider implementing a fine free policy at the town library. She noted that 130 libraries have adopted the policy and provided information on the program as well as data on fines that have been collected by the town since 2020. She explained that fine free policies make the library more accessible and do not impact timely returns.

R. Fournier asked how fines are generated. Ms. Fazzina replied that they are generated through Bibliomation and added that, if the policy is implemented, Bibliomation would be notified to make the changes. Ms. Fazzina stated that the libraries continue to charge fines for CDs and electronic materials as well as lost or damaged items. R. Fournier noted that the item will be added to the next agenda.

**b. Suzanne Shippee – Request for Streetlight at Intersection of Bolton Center Road and Old Bolton Road**

Suzanne Shippee asked the BOS to consider installing a streetlight to illuminate the highly utilized intersection of Bolton Center Road and Old Bolton Road. She added that all of the other intersections in the area have streetlights.

Tonia Tomoroga, 8 Old Bolton Road, asked for a non-LED light. R. Morra stated that all of the lights are LED but noted that a less intense light with a shield would be installed. J. Rupert will provide a cost assessment at a future meeting for consideration by the Board.

**c. Consider and Act on Approving 2026 Date of March 8, 2026, for the Annual Bolton Road Race**

P. Sawyer MOVED to APPROVE the 2026 Date of March 8, 2026 for the Annual Bolton Road Race. T. Sadler SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

**8. Approval of Minutes**

**a. March 4, 2025 – Regular Meeting**

P. Sawyer MOVED to APPROVE the meeting minutes for the March 4, 2025 Regular Meeting. T. Sadler SECONDED.

Discussion: G. Marrion requested the following amendments to the March 4, 2025 minutes:

- Page 1, last paragraph: Replace G. Marrion with P. Sawyer to read “P. Sawyer noted it would be good policy to reach out to the Senior Center about the musical equipment.”
- Page 3, Item 3(c): Replace “Heber Road” with “Hebron Road.”
- Page 5, Item 11: Replace G. Marrion with P. Sawyer to read: “P. Sawyer asked if there was any feedback on the Groundhog Road Race or any discussion on changing the month of the event.”

A. Gordon requested that the NOVUS and PTA presentations be added to the website with the meeting materials. J. Rupert reserved the right to redact any proprietary information from the NOVUS presentation.

MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

**b. March 11, 2025 – A/P Meeting**

P. Sawyer MOVED to APPROVE the meeting minutes for the A/P Meeting for Tuesday, March 11, 2025.

A Gordon and G. Marrion requested the following amendments:

- Amend both of A. Gordon’s motions on Page 5 under Item 6 to add “of the Capital Budget” after “Town side” to read: “A. Gordon made a motion to approve the Town side of the Capital Budget to be presented to the Finance Committee in the amount of \$626,700.”
- Correct the spelling of G. Marrion’s name in the list of attendees from “Marion to Marrion.”

MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1. (M. Clarke abstained)

**c. March 25, 2025 – A/P Meeting**

R. Morra MOVED to APPROVE the meeting minutes for the March 25, 2025 A/P Meeting with an amendment to Item 14 to add a motion that was made regarding carrying over two weeks unused vacation pay to the following year for Administrator’s officers. T. Sadler SECONDED.

Discussion: G. Marrion requested that a change be made to her comment under Item 8 regarding purchasing e-bikes with smaller motors. She explained that there are three different sizes of e-bike

motors and she does not believe the town should buy e-bikes with the highest horsepower. She also noted that she does not support the use of e-bikes on trails and requested the following amendments to the minutes:

- Page 3, Item 8: Remove “so that they would be allowed on the trails” from the sentence to read: “G. Marrion requested that S. Crane consider e-bikes with smaller motors.”
- Page 4, Item 13: Change “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” to “The Board reached consensus to bring a First Selectman’s salary range to the public as part of the Public Hearing on April 22, 2025.”

MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1 (P. Sawyer Abstained).

## 9. Reports and Updates

### a. Consider and Act on Approving Budget Transfers (if needed)

P. Sawyer MOVED to APPROVE the request to transfer \$5,000.00 from the category of Repairs and Maintenance Services to the category of Repairs and Maintenance Supplies from the Highway Department. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

## 10. Ongoing Business

### a. Update on Colonial Road

J. Rupert stated John Butrymovich reached out to the tree warden of Eversource due to a continued lack of communication with the Eversource liaison. The tree warden advised him that Eversource is just waiting for a larger piece of equipment to complete the job that is currently in use on another project.

### b. Stamford Wrecking Change Order Request

J. Rupert provided an overview of the previous discussion the BOS held on the Change Order Request from Stamford Wrecking in the amount of \$75,000.00. He noted that he has spoken with Stamford Wrecking, Tighe & Bond, and Attorney Barger regarding the Board’s concerns and proposal to split the cost. Stamford Wrecking has agreed to reduce the cost to \$37,500.00. J. Rupert noted that Tighe & Bond will be charging the town an additional \$25,000.00 to provide monitoring and testing during the sandblasting process, and the process will create a 30-day delay.

The Board discussed the plans for sandblasting, testing, and disposal as well as concerns about the additional testing and monitoring charges. J. Rupert explained that litigating the change order and additional costs would be more expensive and cause additional delays. R. Morra added that the town generates the waste and it is the town’s responsibility to ensure it is disposed of properly. P. Sawyer agreed and noted that she is in favor of paying the costs of ensuring the disposal is conducted in the safest manner possible.

R. Morra MOVED to ACCEPT the Change Order proposal from Stamford Wrecking in the amount of \$37,500.00. P. Sawyer SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

The BOS discussed whether to approve the Tighe & Bond testing and monitoring charges in the amount of \$25,000.00 without an invoice. J. Rupert stated that he will obtain an addendum to the contract for the BOS to approve at the next meeting.

### c. Consider and Act on Contract Dates for J. Rupert (Current End Date 6/30/2026)

J. Rupert stated that the contract for the Town Administrator is typically three years; however, his current contract is only for two years ending on June 30, 2026. R. Morra explained that the original

contract ended in 2024 and was extended through 2026. He added that the BOS needs to extend it to 2027 to make it a three-year contract.

R. Morra MOVED to extend J. Rupert's contract to June 30, 2027. P. Sawyer SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

## **11. New Business**

### **a. Consider and Act on Fire Department Raises**

J. Rupert explained that a few items were missed when approving salary increases last year. He explained that the 3% increase for the Deputy Fire Chief and Assistant Chief, and an inclusion for the Engineer position, is not reflected in the Non-Union Pay Increases for 2023-2024.

Chief Dixon explained that the February 21, 2024 meeting minutes did not accurately reflect the discussion that took place and noted that he has provided a verbatim transcript to J. Rupert and R. Fournier containing the full discussion. He explained that a \$30,000.00 proficiency fund was approved but only \$29,200.00 was reflected in the budget. Chief Dixon added that the total budget of \$82,504.00 was approved and accurately reflected; however, the line items for the Deputy Fire Chief and Assistant Chief were not reflected properly in the Finance Department. He stated that the amounts have not changed but the 3% increases for those positions need to be reflected for payroll purposes. The proficiency fund amount of \$800.00 also needs to be added to reflect the correct amount of 30,000.00.

A. Gordon stated that she would like to review the transcript and take action at the next meeting. G. Marrion asked if the revisions will change the total amount of the budget. J. Rupert stated that it will remain the same, except for \$800.00 that will be added for the proficiency fund.

P. Sawyer MOVED to table the item until the next meeting. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

### **b. Consider and Act on Approving 2nd Quarter Payment to Takeuchi for \$10,016.67 without an Invoice**

P. Sawyer MOVED to put the item on the table. R. Morra SECONDED.

Discussion: J. Rupert outlined difficulties in getting a corrected invoice from Takeuchi as they continually add taxes to the bill, promise to provide correct invoices, and add unwarranted late fees to incorrect invoices. He would like to have the check ready to send once the corrected invoice is received to avoid any legitimate late fees that may occur as a result of waiting on a check. J. Rupert explained that the amount is a known number based on a monthly fee. He added that all correspondence with the company is being documented in detail and progress is being made in getting the corrected invoice.

P. Sawyer made an amended Motion to Approve the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Payment to Takeuchi for \$10,016.67 upon receipt of the invoice. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

### **c. Consider and Act on Proclamation for Retired Air Force Colonel Anthony J. Sobol II Who is Being Honored by the Honor Flight Organization for His Life Dedication in the US Air Force as a Fighter Pilot**

P. Sawyer explained that Col. Sobol II was born and raised in Bolton and has been selected to join other veterans on an Honor Flight to tour Washington, D.C. On the flight back home, the veterans will be presented with a packet of letters. P. Sawyer has provided a personal letter for the occasion from her military family and explained that Col. Sobol's family asked her if the BOS would be willing to provide a proclamation to include in the packet of letters.

R. Morra MOVED that the BOS sign a Proclamation honoring Colonel Anthony J. Sobol II in recognition of his military service and dedication as a U.S. Air Force Fighter Pilot. P. Sawyer SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

The BOS signed the Proclamation and thanked Col. Sobol II for his service.

## **12. Town Administrators Report**

J. Rupert stated that the Town is getting a reputation as a great site for UCONN APA interns and noted that 16 applicants have applied to intern for the Town, including an internal applicant whose qualifications are currently being considered. G. Marrion asked about the Public Meeting for Heritage Farm Trail in April. J. Rupert replied that he hopes to get a date for the meeting when he speaks with the Town Engineer tomorrow.

A. Gordon asked for details on the meeting with the Superintendent on transitioning payroll services to ADP. J. Rupert noted that there appears to be some hesitation from the Board of Education due to the complexity of teacher retirement benefits. R. Fournier agreed the process is complex and noted that they prefer to have a separate system. The meeting was cut short due to another obligation the Superintendent had, and a follow-up meeting will be scheduled between April 21<sup>st</sup> and April 28<sup>th</sup>. A. Gordon asked about the annual cost for ADP's payroll services. J. Rupert replied that the annual amount is \$28,000.00, which has been discounted from \$42,000.00 per year, and the funds are set aside in the budget.

A Gordon asked about training taking place in the Highway Department. J. Rupert explained that the training is to address communication issues within the department and noted that Attorney Kevin Green is providing the training. He added that the training is being paid for out of the Administrative Budget. M. Clarke asked how often Attorney Green is meeting with the department. J. Rupert stated that there is one meeting scheduled for April 9<sup>th</sup>, and Attorney Green will provide him with recommendations. A. Gordon asked if J. Rupert will attend the training, and he replied that he is undecided as he is concerned the employees will not be as open to discussion if he is present.

## **13. Adjournment**

A. Gordon made a motion to add an agenda item to address changes that were made to upcoming meeting times. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

A. Gordon MOVED to move the Budget Presentation Public Hearing from Immediately Following the A/P Meeting at 6:00 p.m. to Immediately Following the Informational Session on the Selectman's Salary which will be Immediately Following the A/P Meeting at 6:00 p.m. on April 22, 2025. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

R. Morra MOVED to ADJOURN the meeting at 8:25 p.m. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

Respectfully submitted by Kacie Cannon

*Kacie Cannon*

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