

**TOWN OF BOLTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2025, 6:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL & ZOOM
MINUTES**

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

Board of Selectman Present via Zoom: Amanda Gordon

Board of Selectman Absent: Mather Clarke

Staff Present In-Person: Town Administrator James Rupert, Registrar of Voters Ross Lally, Registrar of Voters Sandra Pierog, Town Clerk Elizabeth Waters

Staff Present Via Zoom: Recording Secretary Kacie Cannon

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. Public Comment

There was no Public Comment.

R. Morra MOVED to open the Agenda to modify Item No. 4(a) to include discussion and possible action on changing the voting location. P. Sawyer SECONDED. MOTION PASSED 6:0:1 (M. Clarke Absent).

4. New Business:

a. Discussion and Possible Action on Changing Public Voting Hours *and Venue* for the Referendum for the Rest of this Fiscal Year

Registrar Ross Lally proposed that the Board of Selectman (BOS) consider reducing referendum voting hours from 6:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. to 12:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. to save on labor and meal costs. He noted that the change is permitted by statute and a Town Resolution, which was provided to the Board. The proposed reduction would save approximately \$1,200.00. R. Lally noted that he is also able to program the tabulators himself, which reduces the cost of each referendum by \$748.00.

Registrar Sandra Pierog added that the change would inconvenience roughly 300 voters who typically vote between 6:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m., but most voters cast ballots between 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. R. Lally emphasized that continued budget reduction demands by voters are creating unanticipated expenses.

R. Lally also requested changing the voting venue to the Bolton Congregational Church due to inadequate air conditioning at the current location. He explained that elderly poll workers are struggling with the heat, and the portable air conditioning units and additional insulation have not improved conditions. R. Lally noted that the high school was initially considered and offers better parking and logistics; however, it cannot be used once school resumes if the budget fails again. He added that the church offers ADA-compliant parking and facilities, air conditioning, a kitchen for meal breaks, and a separate entrance and exit through Chandler Hall. Upon approval, voters would be notified via the Town Bulletin and signs at both the current and new locations.

G. Marrion asked if the Registrar's Office would program the tabulators for all future voting events. R. Lally explained that they could only do so for any repeat referenda where the questions and ovals from the original referenda line up. He added that the vendor charges \$750.00 to format the ballot and \$40.00 for shipping via

e-mail, and he just changes the date on the original PDF for each repeat referenda. G. Marrión noted that the ordinance requires the hours to be 12:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., unless the election is connected with a town, state, or federal election and asked for clarification on why the time is set from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. R. Morra stated that the Board sets the hours each time and set them to begin at 6:00 a.m. for this referendum. R. Lally requested that the hours for budget referenda be changed indefinitely from 12:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

A Gordon suggested that any public notices clarify that the changes to the hours are due to budget constraints as a result of failing to pass the budget and reference the Town's ordinance. She also proposed citing hot weather as the reason for the venue change.

R. Fournier stated no changes can be made to the hours or location since the Public Notice has already been published. J. Rupert confirmed that the Town Attorney advised against any modifications at this stage. S. Pierog and R. Lally expressed their disappointment in being excluded from the legal discussion and argued that the heat constitutes an emergency under OSHA standards. They stated that they would not work in such conditions. J. Rupert explained that he consulted the Town Attorney to fulfill his duty to the Board and was advised that changing the hours or location could jeopardize the referendum results.

R. Lally pointed out that state statutes authorize the Registrar to change the venue in the event of an emergency. The Board discussed whether the heat constitutes an emergency and reviewed the publishing requirements. Town Clerk Elizabeth Waters cited Section 8.5 B(3) of the Town Charter which requires notice be published at least five (5) business days prior to the referendum, which does not provide enough time for the next referendum. A. Gordon recommended referencing the August 12, 2025 to justify the emergency change.

R. Morra opposed changing the voting hours, but was open to changing the venue. The Board agreed the hours should not be changed. R. Fournier noted that he and J. Rupert considered renting a large air conditioning unit for the current venue, but J. Rupert noted that there is no guarantee it would effectively cool the large space.

P. Sawyer MOVED to APPROVE an emergency declaration that the venue for the upcoming budget referendum on August 12, 2025 will be changed for health reasons to Chandler Hall, located at 228 Bolton Center Street, with significant signage posted of the change at both the current and new locations. T. Sadler SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1 (M. Clarke Absent).

R. Morra noted that the temperature is expected to reach 90 degrees on August 12, 2025. R. Fournier asked if the venue change needs to be published. J. Rupert replied that it does not and noted that he and R. Lally will work together to clarify the notification requirements.

b. BOE Bid Waiver for BHS HVAC Energy Management System Upgrade

J. Rupert noted that this item is for informational purposes only and no action is required by the Board. He added that he has advised the Board of Education that he would not be able to sign off on a purchase order in the amount of \$410,000.00 anytime soon, and that it will have to wait until a significant amount of revenue is collected.

5. Ongoing Business:

There was no ongoing business.

6. Appointments and Resignations:

There were no appointments or resignations.

7. Correspondence:

There was no correspondence.

8. Approval of Minutes:

a. July 29, 2025 – A/P Meeting

P. Sawyer MOVED to APPROVE the July 29, 2025 Meeting Minutes. A. Gordon SECONDED.

Discussion: A. Gordon noted that her arrival time was incorrectly listed as 6:32 p.m. instead of 6:02 p.m. Board Clerk Kacie Cannon acknowledged the error and confirmed the arrival time was 6:02 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED 5:1:1 (T. Sadler Abstained, M. Clarke Absent).

9. Reports and Updates

G. Marrion referenced the Property Insurance line on the budget spreadsheet and asked if only part of the bill was paid since there is a remaining unencumbered balance of \$50,797.00. A. Gordon asked if it was carried over as part of the givebacks. J. Rupert stated that it was likely part of the givebacks as the bill was paid in full at the beginning of the year.

J. Rupert reported that trespassing is occurring at Indian Notch Park after hours, and he has asked the state troopers to enforce the trespassing rules. He explained that residents have complained and submitted video evidence of groups leaving at closing time, parking their cars at the boat launch, and re-entering with coolers and lawn chairs by crossing the dam and climbing the fence. R. Morra noted this is a long-standing issue that the Town has asked DEEP to address without success. A. Gordon suggested involving legislators and holding DEEP accountable for any incidents that occur as a result of these violations. J. Rupert stated that he is working with DEEP, who appears to be more cooperative now, and state troopers to fine violators in an effort to deter future incidents. There have also been discussions about requiring wristbands and extending park hours. P. Sawyer recommended posting signs advising violators that they will be fined for trespassing to serve as a deterrent. J. Rupert agreed and added that he is also working with the Recreation Director to provide more features and attractions to encourage patrons to use the park appropriately and set an example for others.

10. Town Administrators Report

P. Sawyer requested an update on the cemetery mapping. J. Rupert stated that the aerial imaging and ground penetrating radar are complete and a rough draft of the map is expected next week. P. Sawyer expressed her appreciation for the recent Coffee and Conversation events. R. Morra noted that they have been well attended, and R. Fournier added that there are plans to hold them every quarter.

P. Sawyer noted a typo on the Town Administrators report that stated “puck up” instead of “pick up” regarding the trees on Colonial Road. J. Rupert noted the error and reported that the trees have finally been cut down on Colonial Road after a long delay. P. Sawyer shared comments from a resident of the area expressing gratitude for the Board’s assistance in making the requested improvements to the area.

J. Rupert stated that State Trooper Contenta is certified as a Bicycle Officer and often works Indian Notch Park on his bicycle. He also rides the trails in Bolton and, although he does not have jurisdiction in those areas, it is helpful to have his presence there. State Trooper Contenta is currently collaborating with the Andover State Trooper, and they will be spending time riding on the trails in Andover and Bolton over the next few weeks.

P. Sawyer shared concerns about recent e-bike accidents and asked J. Rupert to take that into consideration when developing the e-bike rental program. J. Rupert explained that the Town will only rent e-bikes that require pedaling and do not exceed 20 mph. He added that safety policies will be put in place similar to the kayak rental program. P. Sawyer asked if there are any other small grants the Board can consider. T. Sadler replied that he is interested in participating in long-term planning for Indian Notch Park to utilize the open

space that is available. J. Rupert stated that staff is currently brainstorming and collaborating on potential uses for the space and will be soliciting input from the public.

A. Gordon requested an update on the Notch Road Municipal Building project. J. Rupert stated that the costs for the remaining work are currently being determined, including the ADA walkways, doors, and air conditioning. A meeting is also scheduled to determine where the grade will stop for waterproofing, and J. Rupert will have a better idea of the completion date in a few weeks. He added that the demolition is complete, except for pieces of the wall that were left in place while conducting PCB testing on the soil. The testing has been completed and came back negative for any contaminants. G. Marrion asked when the hole will be filled in. J. Rupert stated that it is in the contract but it will take some time before it is addressed.

11. Adjournment

T. Sadler MOVED to Adjourn the Meeting at 7:51 p.m. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1 (M. Clarke 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.