

**TOWN OF BOLTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING SPECIAL MEETING
Tuesday, April 28, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.
Town Hall & Zoom Meeting
MEETING MINUTES**

	ROSTER	IN-PERSON	ZOOM	ABSENT
FIRST SELECTMAN:	Rodney Fournier	X		
SELECTMEN:	Bryce Aaronson	X		
	Mather Clarke	X		
	David Cowles	X		
	Robert DePietro	X		
	Gwen Marrion	X		
	Tim Sadler	X		

STAFF:	James Rupert, Town Administrator
	Ross Lally, Finance Committee Chairman
	Stephanie Smigala,

1.0 Call to Order:

First Selectman Rodney Fournier called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2.0 Consider and Act on Approving Stephanie Smigala as Interim Finance Director and Town Treasurer:

Background & Process Concerns

- Stephanie Smigala was considered for interim Finance Director and Town Treasurer.
- The Finance Committee Chair, Ross Lally, praised Ms. Smigala’s work on budget preparation and her ability to simplify complex ideas but expressed reservations about the process:
 - The position was not publicly posted, limiting candidate comparison.
 - Stephanie’s resume was made public on the town website, raising privacy and procedural questions.
 - Concerns were raised about the rushed nature of the appointment and lack of transparency.

Hiring Details

- Ms. Smigala was initially brought in to assist with the budget due to staff shortages and was recommended by professional contacts after narrowly missing a similar role in Marlborough.
- No formal job posting or public search was conducted for this interim position.
- The job description used was adapted from an older Finance and Administration Intern description, with outdated references noted (e.g., references to a “Board of Finance” and an outdated budget figure).
- The Board discussed the need to review and update the job description for both interim and permanent roles, including benchmarking with other towns and incorporating feedback from current and past staff.

Role Transition

- Ms. Smigala began shadowing outgoing Finance Director Jill Collins, receiving daily training and ongoing support.
- She has started to recreate monthly financial reports and is familiarizing herself with relevant statutes and policies.

Ms. Smigala’s Background

- Holds a bachelor’s degree in financial accounting.
- 7 years in corporate accounting, 9 years in leadership (including managing a 150-person sales organization).
- Experience in contract negotiation, process improvement, and staff development.
- Seeks to bring a strategic and standardized approach to municipal finance operations.

Selectman T. Sadler **MOVED to APPROVE** Stephanie Smigala as Interim Finance Director and Town Treasurer, effective May 4, 2026, until the position is filled permanently. Selectman R. DePietro **SECONDED;**

Discussion:

- The position should be reviewed for a duration of time.
- **Compensation & Terms**
 - Ms. Smigala agreed to serve as interim Finance Director and Town Treasurer at a salary of \$95,000, effective May 4, 2026, until the position is filled permanently.
 - The board agreed to review the role, performance needs for adjustment at regular intervals but without imposing undue pressure.
 - The salary is below the outgoing director’s (\$116,000) and within the range budgeted for the next fiscal year (\$120,000).

MOTION CARRIED; 5:1:1

Yea	Fournier, Clarke, DePietro, Marrion, Sadler
Nay	Aaronson
Abstain	Cowles

3.0 Discussion on Budget Cuts:

Budget Cut Recommendations

- Following Board of Finance discussions, proposed cuts included:
 - \$150,000 from the town’s budget.
 - \$300,000 from the Board of Education.
- Cuts were not finalized, as adjustments can be made after budget approval.

Specific Reduction Scenarios

- Scenarios considered for reducing the mill rate increase to 7%, 6%, or 5%, with corresponding expenditure reductions:
 - 7% increase: \$513,000 reduction needed.
 - 6%: \$338,000 reduction.

- 5%: \$372,000 reduction.
- Cuts considered included:
 - Delaying or removing capital projects (e.g., Heritage Farm restoration, Indian Notch Park storage shed).
 - Reducing assistant finance director salary allocation.
 - Decreasing highway and building/grounds budgets, with some expenses shifted to other funds.

State Funding Uncertainty

- Governor Lamont announced potential state funding for municipalities and school districts, but specific amounts and timing for Bolton remain unknown.
- Board agreed to wait for more information before finalizing cuts.

Board of Education Impact

- Noted that similar budget cuts in neighboring towns led to detrimental effects on school programming.
- Emphasized the need for careful, balanced reductions.

4.0 Discuss Public Comment Policy:

Charter Requirements

- The town charter mandates public comment opportunities at every meeting, including special meetings, limited to agenda items.
- Discussion about balancing transparency and meeting efficiency, especially as agendas have become more substantive.

Board Practices

- Recent practice includes time-limited public comment periods, with written correspondence also accepted.
- Some members suggested keeping agendas focused to avoid overly lengthy meetings and ensure public awareness of key discussions.

5.0 Adjourn:

Consensus to adjourn at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Andrea Vassallo, Recording Clerk

Andrea Vassallo

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

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