

**TOWN OF BOLTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
Tuesday, January 06, 2026, at 6:30 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
	Andrea Vassallo, Recording Secretary

Members of the Public:

1.0 Call to Order:

First Selectman Rodney Fournier called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2.0 Pledge of Allegiance:

R. Fournier led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3.0 Public Comment: None.

4.0 Appointments:

- a. Carole Franco – Veterans Commission – Alternate
- b. Anna Spencer – Veterans Commission – Alternate

Selectman T. Sadler **MOVED to APPROVE** the appointment of both Carole Franco and Anna Spencer as Alternates to the Veterans Commission.

Selectman M. Clarke **SECONDED; MOTION CARRIED; 7:0:0**

Yea	Fournier, Aaronson, Clarke, Cowles, DePietro, Marrion, Sadler
Nay	0
Abstain	0

5.0 Correspondence:

- a. Kacie Cannon (Clerk) – Resignation
Acknowledged and accepted by First Selectman R. Fournier.
- b. Town of Vernon – Henry McSwain – New Assistant Animal Control Officer
Acknowledged and accepted by First Selectman R. Fournier.

R. Fournier stated the Town of Bolton shares Animal Control Services with the Town of Vernon. B. Aaronson asked what the shared cost amount is. J. Rupert, Town Administrator, stated that it’s lump sum annual cost of approximately \$6K to the Town of Vernon. Liability insurance costs are paid by the Town of Bolton.

6.0 New Business:

- a. Consider and Possibly Act on the Grant Application for the Playground

Accessible Playground Grant

The town is applying for a \$500,000 state grant for an accessible playground at Bolton Center School. Although the funds have been granted, the town must complete a formal application process. The town, not the PTA, must be the applicant due to state requirements and town property involvement. A meeting with the PTA and superintendent is scheduled to coordinate the application.

This is separate from the T-Mobile grant. The PTA will apply for the T-Mobile grant independently, as they have their own 501(c)(3) status.

Selectman T. Sadler **MOVED** to authorize First Selectman Rodney Fournier as signatory on the grant application on behalf of the Board of Selectmen.

Selectman D. Cowles **SECONDED; MOTION CARRIED; 7:0:0**

Yea	Fournier, Aaronson, Clarke, Cowles, DePietro, Marrion, Sadler
Nay	0
Abstain	0

7.0 Consider and Possibly Act on AFSCME 1303-126 Highway Contract Renewal:

The Board discussed the AFSCME 1303-126 highway contract renewal, which includes negotiated changes and is retroactive to July 1, 2025, with an end date of June 30, 2028.

Key changes discussed:

- The contract includes adjustments to health insurance contributions and vacation policies, such as only one person on vacation per class at a time.
- The anticipated cost increase negotiated is a 3% anticipated annual increase.
- Employee health insurance contributions increased by 0.5%.

- The existing contract is currently available online and the full executed contract will be available online after signing.

Selectman T. Sadler **MOVED to APPROVE** the AFSCME 13-0126 Highway Renewal Contract as negotiated by James Rupert, Bolton Town Administrator, with a retroactive start date of July 1, 2025, and to end June 30, 2028.

Selectwoman G. Marrion **SECONDED; MOTION CARRIED; 7:0:0**

Yea	Fournier, Aaronson, Clarke, Cowles, DePietro, Marrion, Sadler
Nay	0
Abstain	0

8.0 Consider and Act on Approval of Heritage Farm Lease February 1, 2026 – December 31, 2027:

J. Rupert stated that two bid proposals were received to lease and hay the farm field at Heritage Farm for a duration of two years from February 1, 2026-December 31, 2027. The new contract does not include Herrick Park.

- Bid #1 for approximately \$6,127/year (recommended by J. Rupert for approval).
- Bid #2 for approximately \$3K/year.

Bid #1 was the only bid available for review in the BOS meeting packet. Concerns were raised by G. Marrion about the lack of presentation of both bids for comparison. The Board discussed the need for transparency and seeing all bids before making decisions. J. Rupert stated that it was an administrative oversight and he had not reviewed the meeting packet prior to the meeting for that night.

The current farm lease amount is \$3K. The BOS inquired:

- Previous farmers expressed concerns about the field at Heritage Farm being nutrient deficient. Was the soil ever amended for additional nutrients? Were there any further discussions? Lessees needing to amend the soil prior to seeding would make the operation more costly and less a return on investment. J. Rupert stated there was no further discussion about amending the soil.

The Board ultimately accepted the higher bid, citing the quality of management in previous leases.

Selectman B. Aaronson **MOVED to APPROVE** a two (2) year farmland lease to Kyle Paggioli from February 1, 2026-December 31, 2027, in the amount of \$6,127/year.

Selectman M. Clarke **SECONDED; MOTION CARRIED; 7:0:0**

Yea	Fournier, Aaronson, Clarke, Cowles, DePietro, Marrion, Sadler
Nay	0
Abstain	0

9.0 Consider and Act on Acknowledging Don Fish Tax Abatement for Dairy Farms:

The BOS opines on the existing Town Ordinance regarding who has the authority to approve the tax abatement. There was discussion about the assessor's role in determining the qualifying components for the abatement, with some confusion about the necessity of BOS approval. Selectman D. Cowles read the Town Ordinance into the record.

- The Board acknowledged the 50% property tax abatement for the dairy farm, as permitted by ordinance.
- The ordinance allows up to 50% abatement, not exceeding \$100,000 for equipment/buildings.
- The assessor determines qualifying components and applies the abatement.
- Discussion noted the BOS approval may not be strictly required, but it provides backup for the assessor.

Selectman T. Sadler **MOVED to APPROVE** the tax abatement of a dairy farm for Don Fish.
Selectwoman G. Marrion **SECONDED; MOTION CARRIED; 7:0:0**

Yea	Fournier, Aaronson, Clarke, Cowles, DePietro, Marrion, Sadler
Nay	0
Abstain	0

10.0 Consider and Act on Approving Bolton Land Trust Holding the 2nd Polar Plunge at INP on Sunday, March 15, 2026:

- Tabled until the next BOS meeting scheduled for January 13, 2026.

The BOS considered approving the Bolton Land Trust's (BLT) second Polar Plunge event at Indian Notch Park but decided to table the discussion due to needing an updated signature from a current director.

11.0 Finance Reports:

D. Cowles stated the finance report indicated that Probate costs are at 90% of the annual budget. J. Rupert stated this department is expected to remain within its budgetary limits and further stated if there was an area of concern within the finance report the line item would be highlighted and mentioned to the BOS.

B. Aaronson commented the line item for Animal Control is \$10K, which exceeds the previously discussed amount of \$6K paid to the Town of Vernon for shared animal control services. J. Rupert stated that there are other incidents that occur such as but not limited to occasional veterinary and animal disposal costs.

The Board discussed the need for transparency in budget management and the importance of monitoring expenditure closely, however no significant budget concerns identified.

12.0 Approval of Minutes – December 30, 2025 – A/P Meeting

- Tabled until the next BOS meeting scheduled for January 13, 2026.

13.0 Town Administrator’s Report

Emergency Notification System

- A discussion arose regarding the town's emergency notification system and its usage during emergencies such as power outages.
- J. Rupert acknowledged the need for a balance in notifications to avoid overwhelming residents while ensuring critical information is communicated effectively. He further stated the system is not an emergency notification system, it is a notification system.
- Residents have the option to opt in/opt out to receive notifications.
- Consideration given to developing a standard operating procedure (SOP) for non-emergency notifications.

Consulting Firm Costs and Deliverables

- J. Rupert was asked about the overrun cost from Tighe & Bond (T&B). J. Rupert reached out to T&B and didn’t hear anything additional from his point of contact.
- J. Rupert stated the STV Study is well underway, the contract has been executed, and will provide the BOS with details at the next meeting.

Groundhog Day Road Race

The BOS inquired why the BLT’s Polar Plunge came before the BOS for approval and the Groundhog Day Road Race organizers were not required. J. Rupert highlighted the differences in the approval process for events based on their resource requirements and potential risks. Both events require organizers to secure their own insurance.

14.0 Executive Session: Contract for Director of Community Development and Advertising for Finance Director

Selectwoman G. Marrion **MOVED** to include Town Administrator J. Rupert in the Executive Session and **START** at the Session at **7:05 PM**.

Selectman T Sadler **SECONDED; MOTION CARRIED; 7:0:0**

Yea	Fournier, Aaronson, Clarke, Cowles, DePietro, Marrion, Sadler
Nay	0
Abstain	0

END Executive Session at 7:48 PM.

Selectman D. Cowles **MOVED** to ADD the A/P Item to the Agenda.
Selectman M. Clarke **SECONDED; MOTION CARRIED; 7:0:0**

Yea	Fournier, Aaronson, Clarke, Cowles, DePietro, Marrion, Sadler
Nay	0
Abstain	0

Selectman D. Cowles **MOVED** to APPROVE the A/P \$613.26.
Selectman M. Clarke **SECONDED; MOTION CARRIED; 7:0:0**

Yea	Fournier, Aaronson, Clarke, Cowles, DePietro, Marrion, Sadler
Nay	0
Abstain	0

15.0 Adjourn:

T. Sadler **MOVED to ADJOURN** the meeting at **7:58 PM**. Selectman B. Aaronson **SECONDED**.
MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

Respectfully submitted by Andrea Vassallo

Andrea Vassallo

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

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