

**TOWN OF BOLTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING &
BUDGET WORKSHOP #1
Wednesday, January 21, 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
	William Call, Fire Marshal
	John Butrymovich, Supervisor, Buildings & Grounds
	Alexander J. "AJ" Golden, Supervisor, Highway Department
	Andrea Vassallo, Recording Secretary

Call to Order:

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

1.0 Fire Marshal:

Town Staff Representative: William Call, Bolton Fire Marshal.

Board of Selectman (BOS) & Fire Marshal Budget Review & Discussion Summary

There was an increase in building fires this year, leading to higher operational costs. The fire at the commercial business, Dean Cabinetry, required extensive investigation and collaboration with the State Fire Marshal's office.

Budget Review Discussion Topic Areas:

- Equipment
- Supplies
- Fire Department Budget
- Fire Incident Costs & Responses
- Fire Response Types
- State Fire Marshal Support
- Compliance & Inspection Achievements
- Community Programs

Department Line Item Review & BOS/Council Questions

At the request of the BOS W. Call addressed the following questions about specific line items within the budget for the Fire Department:

- The difference between fire equipment and supplies.
 - Fire equipment is used for purchasing tools and testing equipment, whereas
 - Fire supplies are more categorically defined as prevention materials.
- State Fire Marshal support services when provided are often at no cost, such as advanced tools and canine arson detection.
- Typically, more investigation time accrues cost expenditures.
- There are different costs associated with different call response types such as commercial vs. residential. W. Call gave examples of different house fire types such as occupied vs. unoccupied single-family homes.
- **Commercial Fires (Dean Cabinetry Fire):** Required more investigation and immediate notification to the State Fire Marshal due to the scale and potential loss.
 - Bolton hired an external electrician for a safety review (\$190 cost). Funds were appropriated and were approved by the BOS.
 - Bolton did not incur charges from other fire departments for their response support services.
 - The Fire Department incurred expenses for warming center expenses which are typical of long-duration incidents, although they rarely occur.
 - No cost food donations were received.
- **Residential Fires:** Varied in complexity; some require external agency involvement.

Compliance & Inspection Achievements:

- The department is 100% compliant with statutory inspection obligations.
- Inspections vary by property type (businesses: every 3 years; residences, alcohol-serving, and gathering places: annually).
- W. Call acknowledged support from the BOS for adequate funding.

Community Programs:

- **Senior Lock Box:** 26+ lock boxes installed throughout Bolton for emergency access, especially benefiting seniors in single-family homes.
- **School Education & Inspections:** Annual, unannounced school inspections and fire education programs.

Fire Prevention Poster Contest:

- Fourth and fifth graders create posters, juried by seniors at the center, fostering intergenerational involvement and town pride.

2.0 Town Building Operations:

Town Staff Representative: John Butrymovich, Supervisor, Bolton Buildings & Grounds Department

Board of Selectman (BOS) & Building & Grounds Department Budget Review & Discussion Summary

J. Butrymovich stated the proposed budget for FY 26 is historically low, however, will incur a minor increase. Highlights included successful maintenance projects, and regulatory compliance. Retirement announcement of Building & Grounds Supervisor. The current staffing structure is that of:

- Six (6) core staff employees (4 maintainers, 1 custodian, 1 supervisor)
- One (1) part-time cemetery staff employee
- Four (4) seasonal lake employees

Budget Review Discussion Topic Areas:

- Budget Adjustments
- Unexpected Expenses
- Staffing

At the request of the BOS J. Butrymovich addressed the following questions about specific line items within the budget for the Building & Grounds Department:

Budget Adjustments:

- **Increase**
 - Payroll - Increase due to negotiated raises and moving longevity pay into regular payroll. FY 25 underspending was due to staff shortages.
 - Maintenance service repairs – Contractors' costs.
 - Communications – Slight increase due to the purchasing of cell phones and data plans.
 - Electricity – Currently pay nine (9) cents per kWh. Adjusting to new Supply rates and taxes.
 - Uniforms – Increase to provide additional staff clothing.
- **Decrease**
 - No annual purchase of beach sand - reallocation of \$3K.
 - Heating fuel due to lower natural gas prices
- **Maintain**
 - Training Funds and Professional Development Dues
 - Medical expenses – lifeguard and medical supplies
 - Equipment repair – small appliance and small motor.
 - Compliance costs associated maintaining statutory obligations.
 - Tree trimming operations costs.

Selectman T. Sadler asked if there was any specific reason for an increase in repairs and maintenance. Supervisor, J. Butrymovich stated the proposed FY 26 budget is at a historical low.

Selectman D. Cowles inquired if actuals budget cost are lower than projected, can money be shifted around to other budgeted line items. J. Butrymovich stated he is hesitant to shift money. The actual budget is conservatively estimated.

Selectman B. Aaronson stated there was a \$22K difference for maintenance and repairs from FY 25 to FY 26 and inquired for what purpose. J. Butrymovich unexpected repairs expenses such as (central air, boiler, fire dept. door). Monies were reallocated from payroll to pay for the differential costs.

Upcoming Leadership Change:

John Butrymovich, Supervisor, plans to retire on February 5, 2027, prompting discussions about restructuring the department. James Rupert, Town Administrator explained the historical context of the hiring process and potential finance impacts. He further encouraged the BOS to strongly consider looking at this historical information.

Consideration given to replacing the Supervisor role with a new established position, Director of Buildings and Grounds, of a similar job capacity as a Public Works Director with specific experiential and project management nuances. Consideration is further given to a series of new internal positions established across a variety of departments. Intention for the director's position to assist the First Selectman's office to oversee ongoing projects and grant administration. J. Rupert stated that additional future analysis and presentations are pending before the end of the FY 26 budget cycle review (over the next several weeks).

Selectman T. Sadler asked J. Rupert if an overall net budget increase would occur by establishing the position of Director. J. Rupert replied there would be a slight net increase, but he would work with J. Butrymovich on identifying potential financial impacts and conduct a salary survey.

Seasonal Staffing:

Potentially looking for another seasonal summer position and are valued. The FY 26 the budget should not be impacted. Student employment encouraged.

3.0 Highway:

Town Staff Representative: Alexander J. "AJ" Golden, Supervisor, Highway Department

Board of Selectman (BOS) & Highway Department Budget Review & Discussion Summary

The conversation highlights discrepancies in payroll expenditures compared to budget requests and the reasons behind them. The budget for road maintenance and repairs is discussed, emphasizing the need for careful planning and monitoring of expenditures. The budget for street sweeping is supported by Connecticut's "Nickle-Per-Nip" program, which is crucial for maintaining road cleanliness. The discussion revolves around the potential purchase of equipment for the highway department and its associated costs. Tree trimming services have been effectively managed, with a focus on maintaining town property.

Budget Review Discussion Topic Areas:

- Payroll & Staffing
- Tree Trimming
- Street Sweeping
- Road Repairs
- Road Maintenance Planning

At the request of the BOS Alexander J. "AJ" Golden addressed the following questions about specific line items within the budget for the Highway Department:

Budget Adjustments

- **Increase**
 - Minor payroll increase due to one (1) employee returning to FTE status, and longevity payments shifting from 90% pay to 100% pay.
 - Highway maintainers received a 3% increase.
 - Road repairs (minor increase)
- **Decrease**
 - Elimination of seasonal employees as there is no current need for summer help; previous funds have been reallocated.
 - Tree trimming
- **Maintain**
 - Overtime rates
 - Street sweeping

Payroll

Selectman B. Aaronson asked what reason was for the \$70K increase in payroll. A. Golden replied that there was one less FTE (full time employee) in FY 25 for half of the year. J. Rupert stated that he advised A. Golden to work with the Bolton Finance Department to confirm pay period timeframes and document the changes in payroll. He further stated that the Highway Department payroll increased by 4% but the overall budget went down \$2K and that benefits such as fringe costs, health insurance, and retirement benefits are covered by two separate contracts.

Road Repairs

The current budget request for road repairs is \$250,000, which is lower than previous expenditures of \$389K. Minor budget increase for materials and trucking costs, however \$100K was given back last year. Discussion ensued around the reliance on Town Aid Road funds from the state of Connecticut (\$100K) and that cost of road repairs is consistently going up and that the state funds do not cover the entire repair costs which is approximately \$500K. J. Rupert stated that the state funds are required to be exclusively used on town roads and shall not be used for non-town road repairs such as the Town Hall parking lot repaving project.

Selectman M. Clarke asked what the protocol is prioritizing road maintenance and repairs. A. Golden stated that there is a town road maintenance schedule and roads are categorized by numerous variables including

but not limited to usage, construction quality, catch basin and curb conditions, roadway base material deterioration rates, and full or partial reclamation.

A. Golden further stated that the average cost to mill and overlay an existing town road with no existing catch basins is approximately \$260K/mile. Replacement costs for a catch basin are approximately \$600/basin.

Several Selectman stated that prioritization, efficiency, and transparency is paramount. Discussion further ensued among all parties discussing previous local town road repairs in FY 25 and upcoming repairs for FY 26. J. Rupert stated that Bolton does a very good job at staying current with the scheduled maintenance and repairs for local town roads, he further stressed that municipalities should avoid bonding funds for road repairs to avoid long-term financial issues.

Tree Trimming & Roadside Maintenance:

Local tree trimming budget decreased due to the significant work by Eversource (electric utility company) crews. The Town is mostly caught up on hazardous tree removals on town property, citing dead Ash trees, and has been effectively managed.

Street Sweeping:

Discussion among the Selectman, A. Golden and J. Rupert ensued regarding the costs associated with town administered versus contracted street sweeping services as well as the budget for street sweeping is supported by Connecticut's "Nickle-Per-Nip" program. A. Golden presented to the BOS the cost comparison of renting a hopper broom attachment versus owning the equipment outright. Further cost analysis is to be prepared by A. Golden and presented to the BOS and Administration at a later date.

15.0 Adjourn:

B. Aaronson **MOVED to ADJOURN** the meeting at **7:15 PM**. T. Sadler **SECONDED**.
MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

Respectfully submitted by Andrea Vassallo, Recording Clerk
Andrea Vassallo

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

Originals Printed on 100% Recycled Paper – Earth Day and Every Day

