

TOWN OF BOLTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN | BUDGET WORKSHOP #5
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2026
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING BOS WITH A/P MEETING.

The Board of Selectmen held a budget workshop meeting #5 on Tuesday, February 10, 2026. In attendance were Rodney Fournier, David Cowles, Bryce Aaronson, Mather Clarke, Tim Sadler, Jim Rupert and Assessor, Kara Fishman.

Via zoom presents were Bob DePietro and Finance Director, Jill Collins.

Not Present: Gwen Marrison.

The meeting started at 6:10 p.m.

1. Assessor

The Assessor presented the proposed FY2026–2027 budget. Most line items remained the same or decreased, with the exception of software services that were previously carried in the Administration budget.

The Assessor included: Vision CAMA system (real estate tracking software) and QDS system (billing, veterans' exemptions, and exemption programs).

If these software costs were excluded, the Assessor's budget would reflect a decrease compared to the prior year.

Discussion followed regarding: Whether software costs should remain in the administration budget or be moved to individual department budgets.

Accounting and audit implications of shifting software expenses between departments. and the need for consistency if changes were made across all departments.

The impact of shared revenue from the Town of Willington, which reimburses Bolton for half of the Assessor's salary and benefits.

Consensus leaned toward returning the software expenses to the Administration budget for consistency and clarity.

2. Finance

The Finance Director presented the proposed budget.

Salary increases reflect union contracts: 3% increase for administrative assistants and 2.75% increase for the Finance Director (per supervisor contract).

Training expenses are variable depending on available opportunities.

Professional/Technical services include: OPEB actuarial study and continued disclosure filings (EMMA)

Office supplies include W-2s, 1099s, envelopes, checks, and related materials.

It was confirmed that the finance department prepares W-2s and 1099s for both the Town and Board of Education, with cost-sharing in place.

3. Administration

Payroll: A prior allocation for a potential First Selectman salary increase was removed because it did not materialize. The Salary Review Committee is actively reviewing compensation and may recommend an adjustment prior to final budget adoption. Adjustments may still be made before submission to the Board of Finance.

Professional/Technical Services: A \$25,000 reduction reflects removal of proposed payroll service outsourcing that will not proceed. Engineering expenses were discussed extensively. Significant engineering activity occurred this year due to multiple active projects (community septic system, Herrick Park fields, Town Green design, Heritage Farm Trail, Vernon Road intersection). Consideration was given to potentially hiring a future Public Works Director with civil engineering background to reduce outsourced costs.

Final adjustments may be considered once a full master budget spreadsheet is prepared.

4. Other: Insurance

The insurance budget was discussed, a 3% projected increase in property and liability insurance. The Town carries insurance through: CIRMA (primary property and liability) and McNeil (fire department coverage).

The First Selectman is reviewing policies to ensure there is no overlapping coverage.

Approximately \$10,000 for Bolton Lakes Water Pollution Control Authority insurance will no longer be paid by the Town, resulting in a slight decrease.

Police Protection

The proposed Police Protection budget reflects an approximate 10% increase that is due to salary and benefit adjustments. The Town pays 85% of the Resident State Troopers' salary and benefits and the State covers the remaining portion. Overtime costs are incurred for Town events (parades, road races, special events). But overtime worked on State patrol is paid by the State.

Animal Control

The \$3,000 Animal Control contract was discussed. The Town maintains a Dog Fund funded by licensing fees. The fund currently holds approximately \$31,000. The Finance Director confirmed with the auditor that Dog Fund revenues may be used toward animal control expenses. Historically, excess dog licensing revenue has been remitted to the State.

Emergency Management

The payroll line includes a stipend for the Emergency Management Director, currently Kathy McCavanaugh. This position requires completion of 8–10 state-mandated certification courses. It was noted that compliance with these training requirements is necessary for the Town to qualify for reimbursement through the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG). The majority of the salary allocation is reimbursed through this grant.

The operating line of \$5,000 covers emergency-related supplies and expenses associated with the required annual statewide emergency drill. Expenses may include signage, minor equipment purchases, and food for participating personnel from various departments. Historically, a portion of this line remains unspent.

Public Building Commission

The Public Building Commission budget was reinstated to support the school roof project. The proposed allocation includes funding for board clerk services, advertising for bids, and minor administrative expenses. The Board discussed the need for administrative support to manage the bidding and oversight process associated with the capital project.

Refuse Services

The Board reviewed the Refuse budget in detail. The budget includes:

- Curbside collection services provided by All American Waste.
- Hauling services through USA Hauling.
- Tipping fees paid to Casella for disposal.
- Household hazardous waste expenses.
- Part-time wages for Transfer Station operations.

The projected increase is based on CPI adjustments and prior year usage trends. The Board discussed a prior year shortfall that required mid-year adjustments and emphasized maintaining accurate projections.

Recycling contamination, particularly cardboard, was discussed as a concern that may impact future costs. Educational outreach was suggested as a possible mitigation strategy. It was noted that recycling revenues are subject to commodity market fluctuations.

The Board also discussed bulk waste revenue and acknowledged that it likely offsets a portion of Transfer Station staffing costs, though not directly tied line-by-line within the budget.

Debt and Bonding

The Board discussed timing considerations for bonding related to the school roof project. It was noted that bond issuance involves significant professional costs, including bond counsel and financial advisory fees, estimated at approximately \$75,000 based on prior bonding activity.

Fire truck refinancing was also discussed. The Town previously budgeted funds to reduce principal. The Board acknowledged that if bonding is delayed beyond the refinancing timeline, the Town may need to refinance again and allocate additional principal payments.

The Finance Director noted that debt service calculations will also depend on updated student enrollment figures from Columbia, which affect cost allocation.

Personnel / Employee Benefits

The Personnel and Employee Benefits budget was still in progress at the time of the workshop. The Finance Director indicated the remaining benefit calculations would be finalized shortly.

Workers' Compensation was noted as a separate line item within Employee Benefits. The Board also referenced the potential allocation of funds toward separation pay reserves, though no formal action was taken.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Suellen Kamara

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