

**TOWN OF BOLTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, April 6, 2021, 7:00 P.M. VIRTUAL
MINUTES**

Public Hearing on the recommendations of the Charter Revision Commission will resume at 7:00 p.m. with the regular meeting to commence immediately thereafter.

		Present	Absent
First Selectman	Sandra Pierog	X	
Deputy First Selectman	Kim Miller	X	
Selectman	Robert DePietro	X	
Selectman	Mike Eremita	X	
Selectman	Robert Morra	X	
Administrative Officer	Joshua Kelly	X	
Members of the Public			

Also present: James Aldrich, James Rupert, Pam Sawyer, John Toomey, Alexis Kahn with Chelsea Groton Bank, Nick Lavigne, Gwen Marrion, Milton Hathaway, Bruce Dixon, Emily Bradley, Harry Colonis with Chelsea Groton Bank, Richard Hayes.

1. Call to Order:

By: Sandra Pierog

Time: 7:01 p.m.

Place: Virtual

Public Hearing:

Pierog reopened the public hearing on the Charter Revision Commission's report to the BOS.

Public Comment:

No one was present to comment.

Pierog closed the public hearing.

The regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order.

Pierog thanked the members of the Commission that joined the call. The BOS will not be discussing the recommendation about the Board of Finance or the elected versus appointed recommendation this evening.

2. Public Comment:

Pierog said speakers will be limited to 3 minutes each.

Pam Sawyer – provided an update on the 300th anniversary planning and events. We have the proposed fireworks on June 26th with the Hebron Lions Club. The fireworks have been ordered. Cancellation time is one month prior to the event. We are waiting to see what the Governor’s orders are. This could be postponed again. The parade is scheduled for the first Saturday in October. We are considering a smaller parade with local participants only. All events are contingent on the rulings coming out of Hartford. Kelly was thanked for setting up the second trivia night and John Toomey was thanked for the interviews he has given to media about the Bolton 300+1 anniversary. Also thanked were Morra and Bruce Dixon for their efforts. Pierog thanked Pam Sawyer and the others working on the anniversary events for all of their efforts.

John Toomey - said they are trying to bring back historical events for the fall.

3. **Approval of Minutes:**

March 2, 2021, Regular Meeting

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen approve the minutes of the March 2, 2021, regular meeting as presented.

By: Eremita

Seconded: Morra

Voting:

For: Pierog, Morra, Miller, Eremita, DePietro

Against: None

Abstain: None

March 23, 2021, Public Hearing

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen approve the minutes of the March 23, 2021, public hearing.

By: Eremita

Seconded: Miller

Corrections:

- Calvin Trumbull of 28 Volpi Road
- Cheryl Udin of 31 Keeney Drive

Voting:

For: Pierog, Morra, Miller, Eremita, DePietro

Against: None

Abstain: None

March 31, 2021, Special Meeting

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen approve the minutes of the March 31, 2021, special meeting.

By: Eremita

Seconded: Morra

Voting:

For: Pierog, Morra, Miller, Eremita, DePietro

Against: None
Abstain: None

Pierog received consensus from the Selectmen to move items 8A and 8B up on the agenda.

4. Appointments:

Pierog said we had hoped to appoint volunteers to the Diversity Council today. Nine people have volunteered; six Democrats and 3 Unaffiliated. Pierog said Republican volunteer will be welcome. The appointments to the Diversity Council will be put off until the May meeting.

There have been three people interested in serving on the Economic Development Council. Pierog said it may be wise to hold off on appointments as she is not sure what they can accomplish in six months and with Charter changes the Council may not exist. Morra said he would like to hear from those volunteers with the potential of filling any vacancies that occur. Eremita said we may be able to convince them to serve on another committee. Kelly will circulate the interest forms to the BOS and will work with Jim Rupert to elaborate on the resumes to provide more information on the volunteers for the May meeting.

5. Correspondence:

None

6. Reports & Updates:

A. Announcement of Interim Administrator

The BOS has appointed Jim Rupert as Interim Town Administrator. He will be serving until at least January 2022. This could turn out to be a mutually beneficial arrangement. Pierog is excited about working with Rupert and will miss Kelly terribly.

B. Subcommittee Reports

Kelly said the Human Resources subcommittee meeting minutes will be available and posted in the morning. The meeting included union discussions, the appointment of Rupert, and Human Resources policies update.

C. Properties and Facilities Report

Kelly said there was an unfortunate accident at the tennis courts with someone coming into contact with the fencing. The repairs are underway after working in partnership with the insurance companies.

Morra said the work on the drainage system on Enrico Road is progressing and should be completed by the end of the week. This is quite a unique operation and interesting to view.

D. Open Space Management & Acquisition

None

E. FY 21 Budget Report

The collection rate at the end of February is at 99.82%. We are seeing a bit of discrepancy from the previous years at the same time. Pierog said Bolton is doing far better than our neighboring towns.

As of March 31, 2021 we are expensed at 59.34% which is in line with last year. This makes Kelly more comfortable with departments going ahead with some larger purchases. These will be departments getting the equipment, goods, and services needed to succeed. There is a slight uptick from the benchmark for this point of the fiscal year in Land Use. Conversations have taken place with the department to have it come to a more level range. Eremita said the income this department brings in from providing other towns with services is not recorded here.

7. Ongoing Business

A. Consider and possibly act on Budget Transfers and/or Appropriation Requests

Kelly described the proposed transfers.

Proposed FY 2021 Transfers - April 6, 2021			
\$ 1,000.00	To	Town Clerk - Office Supplies	From Town Clerk - Prof. Educational Training
		<i>Rationale: Funds needed to cover purchase of microfilm storage, land record volumes, dog licensing and paper supplies, and shipping for these materials.</i>	
\$ 15.00	To	Tax Collector - Dues & Fees	From Tax Collector - Prof. Educational Training
		<i>Rationale: "Recertification fee for CCMC designation is \$20.00. This was not anticipated for this year's budget."</i>	
\$ 8,000.00	To	Administration - Equipment	From Administration - Professional & Technical Services
		<i>Rationale: On behalf of various departments, the Administration is looking to purchase a number of tablets, laptops, and desktops in order to ensure that systems continue to function smoothly and staff has access to the software and hardware they need to get their jobs done. Impacted departments include but are not necessarily limited to the Fire Department, Library, Registrar of Voters, Land Use, and more.</i>	
\$ 8,908.00	To	Administration - Other Technical Services	From Administration - Professional & Technical Services
		<i>Rationale: Needed for three year Fortinet subscription. Expires May 23, 2021 unless renewed.</i>	
\$ 755.00	To	Administration - Dues & Fees	From Administration - Prof. Educational Training
		<i>Rationale: Will allow for Interim Administrator to receive access to ICMA and CTCMA resources as a full member.</i>	
\$ 17,630.00	To	Fire Commission - Equipment	From Administration - Professional & Technical Services
		<i>Rationale: The Fire Commission wishes to purchase a 20 ft + 30" V 9,990lb GVWR trailer that will be able to help them cut down on the total amount of space needed for an expansion to the Firehouse.</i>	
\$ 1,000.00	To	Senior & Social Services - Other Professional Services	From Senior & Social Services - Other Payroll
		<i>Rationale: Funds needed to pay for the rollout of our new partnership with UR Community Cares, which will serve as the Town's new chore program.</i>	
\$ 14,782.80	To	Senior & Social Services - Payroll	From Senior & Social Services - Other Payroll
		<i>Rationale: The Program Coordinator was made a full-time position at the beginning of this fiscal year, meaning that it should be paid for our of the Payroll line rather than the Other Payroll line. Failure to transfer this money to the Payroll line before now was an oversight and needs to be corrected.</i>	
\$ 800.00	To	Fire Commission - Office Operating Expenses.	From Fire Commission - Repairs & Maintenance
		<i>Rationale: Two desk chairs need to be purchased for the Department.</i>	
\$ 328.00	To	Town Building Operations - Equipment	From Town Building Operations - Supplies
		<i>Rationale: Will allow for the purchasing of two new copiers that have been removed from the Capital Improvement Plan.</i>	

Eremita explained the transfer request to the Fire Commission – Equipment. The trailer would be a multi-functional unit to store the UTV and as a climate-controlled volunteer rehab unit at a fire scene. The trailer will be built specifically for these uses. The storage use should cut down on the firehouse expansion needs. Either one of the utility vehicles could tow this trailer. It will serve the fire department for at least 20 years.

DePietro said the BOS is lucky to have Eremita explain the need and uses of the trailer. DePietro is curious about previous discussions about such a unit. Eremita said this is one option fire department members have thought about to keep its equipment together, safe, and stored in discussions of ways to consolidate equipment rather than requesting a fire house building expansion or as a means to request a smaller building expansion. This is a need of the department that has gone by the wayside each year; this year we have been informed there is money available for purchases. The Park Department will get the open trailer the Fire Department currently has.

Pierog has problems with this request. One being that it is proposed as coming from Professional & Technical Services that is under the BOS' purview to the Fire Commission Equipment line. Second, she went through the Fire Commission meeting minutes back through November and there is no discussion about this trailer. This purchase was not discussed with the Fire Commission and the CAPA Committee. This is the second request from the fire department that seem to be attempts to bypass the correct process. This request looks like someone saw there was some money available and the fire department wants to spend it instead of sending money back to the taxpayers. Pierog does not view this as a life-saving need. Eremita said the trailer has been discussed at the Fire Officers meeting and at other times within the department as a means to help accomplish the mission of the Fire Department. Pierog said the Fire Commission is the liaison between the Fire Officers and the BOS and that has, once again, failed to happen.

Bruce Dixon, 72 Tinker Pond Road, is the Fire Chief. He talks exception to Pierog's assessment that this is an attempt to bypass CAPA and the BOF. The Fire Department produces a fiscally sound budget each year for items that will be used and it is not filled with fluff. The department was approached by the Town about having extra money if there is equipment the department might need. This trailer will be able to store equipment outside out of the elements and the trailer the department currently has will be turned back to the Town for another use. Kelly had communication with the leadership team, which includes Dixon, encouraging the team members to suggest equipment for purchase in this fiscal year. This is the only item suggested that would require funds from outside of the department's line item. Dixon said the department does not have anything to do with how funds are moved from different accounts. Pierog said she has a problem with finding items to purchase that were not on a wish list, budgeted for future purchase, or cut from a previous budget. This is the first time we are hearing about this item. She is not sure the Fire Commission knows about this proposed purchase. Dixon should have taken this proposal to the Fire Commission first.

Morra said the intent of the purchase overall is to reduce the possibility of the expansion on the fire house. He suggests tabling this motion until information about the need for more space at the fire house is brought to the BOS. That information might help the Selectmen see how this trailer fits into the big picture. Pierog would like the information to clarify a building expansion request of one bay or two bays and describe the reasons for expansion. Pierog heard from Kelly that this trailer request may cut down the expansion from two bays to one. She did not know we were ever talking about a two-bay expansion. Eremita said the proposed expansion to increase the size of the fire house was for two bays at a minimum. The department has two vehicles going out of one bay. There are several places in the building that a person has to move between the equipment sideways. The department is dealing with extremely tight spaces which can be a safety issue. This one request would be saving 160 sq. feet. This trailer will save space within the building

while accomplishing several functions. If a study has to be done we may as well forget about this for this fiscal year. Morra said the BOS wants more details that will give a picture of the current conditions within the building. Photos could be used to illustrate the tight spaces and safety concerns. And the Fire Commission could come forward to support this. The BOS needs to know what the ramifications are. Eremita said the trailer pricing will increase by \$1,500 in two weeks. Morra is not in favor of a two-bay expansion. Based on the current conditions Eremita has described this trailer would save money in the long-term. But it is important that the BOS have all of the information presented to the public of what is being described. Morra thinks this trailer will work well. There has to be a solid case for the purchase for this to go forward. It is important that the purchase be supported with background information.

Miller said she does support the Fire Department. To Morra's point she does not know what this trailer is and would like more information. Like Morra, she would like to have more information before going forward with a purchase. Eremita said this is a big box trailer with heating and air conditioning. There is no space left in that building. Pierog said that condition in the fire house has been present for several years. This item has not been brought to the BOS previously through normal channels. Dixon said this has happened previously with money being available at the end of the fiscal year, in one case allowing us to purchase a Jaws of Life. The availability of money this year was offered to us. The information the BOS is looking for will be provided. The trailer will be a benefit to the Town if we have it. Morra said by providing the information the channel will be open to moving this purchase forward. Dixon said the fire house is closed to the public but BOS members are welcome to come and view the conditions inside. Pierog was invited to the delivery of the boat recently but she used to sit down once a year to discuss the department. In one meeting the need for a stairway to the warehouse was viewed and the stairway was purchased. Pierog said we bought the stairway through the normal channels.

Morra said this item should not be let go of. Eremita said someone asked us what the department might need because there is some money available – that is how this item came before the BOS. The department will be requesting a two-bay expansion. Miller said she thinks this is important and more information is needed. She would like to table this for now. Eremita said the information given tonight will be the same information brought at a later date.

Kelly apologizes for this misunderstanding for the method this was brought to the BOS. This is an item that should be discussed but the BOS needs a full understanding. Information brought in a month from now will be more expansive. Due diligence is needed for the BOS to give it a full review.

Motion: I move to approve the budget transfers as presented.

By: Eremita

Seconded:

With the motion not being seconded the motion dies.

Motion: I move to accept the transfers as presented with the exception of - *To Fire Commission – Equipment From Administration – Professional & Technical Services* and I further move to table the exception transfer to the May meeting of the Board of

Selectmen.

By: DePietro

Seconded: Miller

Voting:

For: Pierog, Morra, Miller, DePietro

Against: Eremita

Abstain: None

Eremita excused himself from the meeting at 8:41 p.m.

B. Other

None

8. New Business:

Consider and possibly act on the following:

A. Acceptance of Banking Proposal from Chelsea Groton Bank

Kelly provided background of the development and publishing of the request for banking proposals. Three proposals were submitted. Kelly, Pierog, and Jill Collins, Director of Finance, made the determination that this proposal would work best for the Town of Bolton. The proposals were evaluated on a holistic basis. This one has very low cost; most fees are covered if an account has a certain amount of money in it. Pierog said all the departments that handle cash were consulted for their concerns, recommendations, and questions. All questions have been answered.

Harry Colonis, Chelsea Groton Bank, appreciates starting this new relationship with Bolton. The bank has quite a few relationships with municipalities with a dedicated department for customer service. The bank also offers a state-of-the-art educational financial literacy program that can be used by the community. This program is working well in school systems. This is a way of giving back to the community as being a local bank.

DePietro said a member of the Board of Finance is extremely concerned about earning interest and getting the best possible rate. Colonis said the deposit rate environment is low right now. As we move forward we might see a shift in the interest rate environment as we are seeing a little shift with loan interest rates creeping up a bit. Alexis Kahn, Chelsea Groton Bank, said the bank does review the rates on a frequent basis. The Town would not be locked into a stagnant rate reflected on the money market account. The bank is headquartered in Groton with all senior management local. Escalations to senior management are not difficult.

Eremita said local banks have been bought out by larger banks over the past 15 – 20 year and they no longer give the same service. It seems to him that Chelsea Groton is a hometown bank that is probably ripe for the picking of a merger or takeover. Does the bank have a long-term projection on this? Colonis said the bank was founded in 1854 with the purpose of providing consumers a safe place to put their money and to offer money loans. That model has not changed. Chelsea Groton bank has grown to fourteen branches, primarily in New London County. It is invested in the community. The Board of Directors have no intention of merging or being bought out. Kunis added the bank's charter is

written such that it cannot be bought or sold without a change to the charter and that requires sign off of the customers. Pierog asked if Bolton would be one of the voting shareholders as a depositor. Kunis believes so and she will confirm that.

Pierog reminded the BOS the reason for the bid is that the current banking relationship has deteriorated badly over the last six years. It is no longer responsive and nothing is being done on the bank's side to resolve issues. They have grown to the point that Bolton is small potatoes. She is excited to be moving the relationship to Chelsea Groton Bank.

Motion: I move to accept the banking proposal of Chelsea Groton Bank.

By: Eremita

Seconded: Morra

Discussion: The bank will be calling us to check in as they are that kind of service house. Eremita asked how long the arrangement is for. Pierog said she does not believe there is an end date; this is a mutual agreement. We can break it at any time if necessary. Kelly said he conducted a full reference check. He has never heard higher praise of a business from municipalities or businesses.

Voting:

For: Pierog, Morra, Miller, DePietro, Eremita

Against: None

Abstain: None

B. Adoption of Banking Resolution with Chelsea Groton Bank

Motion: I move to adopt the banking resolution as follows:

RESOLVED, Pursuant to Sec. 7-402 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the following depositories are designated for use by the Town of Bolton:

Chelsea Groton Bank	Citizen's Bank
Bank of America	United Bank
Webster Bank	M B I A
First Niagara Bank	TD Bank
Connecticut State Treasurer's Short-Term Investment Fund	Farmington Bank
	Sovereign Bank

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Chelsea Groton Bank be and hereby is designated as the primary depository of this Town and that the officials of this Town be and hereby are authorized to deposit any of the funds of this Town in said Chelsea Groton Bank; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, until further order from the Board of Selectmen, any funds of this town deposited in said Chelsea Groton Bank be subject to withdrawal or change at any time and from time to time upon checks, notes, drafts, bills of exchange, acceptances, or other instruments for the payment of money or upon directions for the wire transfer of money when made, signed, drawn accepted, endorsed or orally directed on behalf of this Town, by any two of the following:

Jill F. Collins, Chief Financial Officer
James Rupert, Interim Administrator
Sandra W. Pierog, First Selectman

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, until further order of the Board of Selectmen, Kristin Heckt, Superintendent of Schools, shall be an authorized signature on the checking accounts of the Board of Education in addition to those individuals authorized above; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Chelsea Groton Bank is hereby authorized to pay any such instrument or make any such change and also to receive the same from the payee or any other holder without inquiry as the circumstances or issue or the disposition of the proceeds even if drawn to the individual order of any signing person, or payable to said Chelsea Groton Bank or others for this account, or tendered in payment of his individual obligation, and whether drawn against an account in the name of this town or in the name of any official of this town as such; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Clerk or Assistant Town Clerk of this Town be and hereby are authorized to certify to said Chelsea Groton Bank that these resolutions have been duly adopted and that they are in conformity with the Connecticut General Statutes and the Charter and Ordinances of the Town of Bolton, CT.

By: Morra

Seconded: Eremita

Voting:

For: Pierog, Morra, Miller, Eremita, DePietro

Against: None

Abstain: None

C. Approval of Resolution Appointing Board of Education as Public Building Commission with regard to Full Roof Replacement and other repairs at Bolton Center School (For SCG-1045)

Pierog said this is required by the Department of Administrative Services with the BOE applying for grants for the roof replacement. This may also qualify us for the engineering work as well.

Motion: I move to approve the resolution as follows:

- (1) **RESOLVED**, that the Bolton Board of Selectmen authorizes the Bolton Board of Education to apply to the Commissioner of Administrative Services and to accept or reject a grant for the Full Roof Replacement at Bolton Center School.
- (2) **RESOLVED**, that the Full Roof Replacement at Bolton Center School Temporary Building Committee is hereby established as the building committee with regard to the Full Roof Replacement at Bolton Center School.
- (3) **RESOLVED**, that the Bolton Board of Selectmen hereby authorizes at least the preparation of schematic drawings and outline specifications for the Full Roof Replacement at Bolton Center School.

By: DePietro

Seconded: Morra

Voting:

For: Pierog, Morra, Miller, DePietro

Against: None

Abstain: None

D. Setting a referendum date for the FY 2022 Budget

Pierog said the Governor has issued a new Executive Order that permits no-excuse absentee ballots for local referendums until May 20, 2021. Further the order allows municipalities such as Bolton to alter their budget adoption dates provided such vote is taken before May 20 and the final budget is approved by June 30, 2021 or at a minimum the first meeting of the Town Meeting or budget referendum that may be required to approve such budget is conducted by June 30. Some larger communities are expecting significant dollars from the federal government. The concern is that the federal government may say money from the ARP cannot be spent on items that were otherwise budgeted for. The allocation of ARP funds for Bolton is \$48k. Pierog is suggesting May 18, 2021 be set as the referendum date. If there is a pandemic surge or Bolton finds out it is qualified for more money we can still change the date.

Motion: I move to set the referendum date for May 18, 2021.

By: Morra

Seconded: DePietro

Discussion: Pierog said the BOS will discuss where the referendum will be held at the May meeting. She asked Dixon if there is the possibility of moving out the fire equipment from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and open the doors at each end of the fire house for an open-air voting place. Dixon said the equipment can be moved and secured elsewhere and the remaining equipment secured with the public accessing the building. His understanding is

that weather will be a key factor with the polling equipment in humid conditions. That should be checked with the voting registrar. John Toomey said rain or moisture off of clothing is what presents a problem with the voting machines.

Voting:

For: Pierog, Morra, Miller, DePietro

Against: None

Abstain: None

Pierog asked Rupert to see if Jim Dwire, Democrat Registrar, or Bernice Dixon, Republican Registrar, have suggestions for voting locations. There are banquet facilities that may fit the bill, such as Georgina's Restaurant or Villa Louisa, since the schools are not available but she is not sure if it is legal to take the voting off of public property. Rupert said he had been told that we can hold it anywhere.

E. Appointment of Town Treasurer

Pierog asked that this item be on the agenda for the meeting to be held on Thursday, April 8, 2021.

F. Charter Revision Commission's recommendations

Pierog asked that this item be on the agenda for the meeting to be held on Thursday, April 8, 2021.

9. First Selectman's Report:

A. COVID-19

Pierog said Bolton is up to 256 cases. We have had five cases in last two days among high school students due to spreader events. The Senior Center does maintain a vaccine availability list. You must have a cell phone, an email address, and be able to get to Mansfield within 30 minutes of the call of available doses.

B. Other

None

10. Administrative Officer's Report:

A. Administrator's Goals

Kelly said Jim Rupert is uniquely positioned to take over in the interim. There is a wealth of knowledge out there that has been useful to Kelly. He thanked everyone for the transition support.

Rupert thanked the BOS in having faith in him to carry the ball forward. He is learning what he does not know from Kelly. It is fortunate there is a good staff in place that will bridge the gap as he forges forward.

Pierog said on behalf of the BOS we wish Kelly well.

B. Administrator's Transition

C. Other

11. Adjournment:

Pierog adjourned the meeting at 8:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne B. Filip

Yvonne B. Filip, Board of Selectmen Recording Secretary

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