

BOLTON BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2020– 7:15 p.m.
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM WEBSITE PLATFORM
Minutes

BOF Members Present: Chairman Emily Bradley, Richard Tuthill, Vice-Chair Robert Munroe (7:28 pm), Charles Danna Jr., Ross Lally (7:23 pm) and Kristen Gourley

BOF Members Absent: Robert DePietro

Board of Education Members Present: Christopher Davey and Superintendent of Schools Kristin Heckt

Staff Present: First Selectman Sandra Pierog, Administrative Officer Joshua Steele Kelly, Chief Financial Officer Jill Collins, and Board Clerk Linda McDonald

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman E. Bradley at 7:15 p.m.

2. Public Participation:

First Selectman S. Pierog shared information on the Governor's two executive orders (7C and 7I) issued regarding municipal budgets. The 30-day exception is mandatory for towns whose budget process must be completed by 5/15/2020. Bolton has until 5/24/2020 to complete the budget process per Town Charter. First Selectman S. Pierog said the BOS will reschedule the budget referendum to occur after 5/15 and before 5/24, the Charter deadline.

After conferring with Town Counsel, First Selectman S. Pierog was informed that neither executive order 7C or 7I cover Town meetings. The Town budget meeting cannot be held in a virtual format due to the need for the public to vote on the budget and will probably be rescheduled when a meeting could actually be held. First Selectman S. Pierog said she is waiting for additional information from governor's office and will keep the board informed. She said the budget public hearing can be held using the virtual format per the Governor's executive orders 7C and 7I. The public hearing on the budget is scheduled for 4/28/2020.

Superintendent K. Heckt reported the students and staff started with distance learning last Monday and commended her staff for their hard work. She shared that the schools have received a generous donation of \$20,000.00 from Simonize USA (Foundation?) toward the purchase of 85 larger Chromebooks for the teaching staff. The Chromebooks the teachers are currently using will be collected, cleaned up, and re-distributed for student use.

3. Presentation and Discussion of Board of Selectmen's FY2021: General Government, Capital & Debt budgets:

Details of the FY2021 Town budgets can be viewed on the Board of Finance Town website page at www.bolton.govoffice.com under 2020 BOF Agendas and Minutes.

Administrative Officer J. Kelly presented a general overview of the proposed FY 2021 Town budgets to the board. He said the goals the Town is striving for are transparency, accessibility, modernization, efficiency and resourcefulness. The proposed BOS Town budgets reflect a 1.78% total increase.

General Government- Town Proper: Administrative Officer J. Kelly shared the following Town proper budget highlights:

- Majority of Staff see a 2.75% wage increase; Medical Insurance costs up 19.5%.
- Addition of Full-Time Program Coordinator for Recreation and Senior Center.
- Money appropriated to allow for Ordinances and Regulations to be electronically codified and maintained.
- Deputy Town Clerk being made full-time to allow for more record-related projects to move forward.
- Fire Marshal's budget raised to bring town into greater compliance.
- Decreased Administration budget will still allow for more services to be offered, including the development of a town magazine and the hiring of a graduate research assistant.
- Tax Collector's Office transitioning from a year-round, part-time position to seasonal staff.
- Fire Commission budget raised to allow for more cancer-preventing protective gear.

Board members emphasized to the public that the Town and BOE are doing due diligence in keeping medical insurance costs down.

The top five increases by dollar proposed in the Town budget are in the personnel services, (\$66,896), Land Use & Emergency Management (\$25,904), and Town building operations (\$23,145), Fire Commission (\$20,684) and Senior & Social Services (\$20,355) line items.

The top five decreases by dollar are in the Recreation (-\$33,185), Refuse services (-\$22,094), Tax Collector (-\$20,816), Highway Department (-\$19,842), and Administration (-\$19,228) line items.

E. Bradley asked if any major changes to the Town proper side of the budget could be seen due to the COVID-19 crisis. Administrative Officer J. Kelly responded possibly in the Emergency Management line. R. Lally commented many town residents have less or no income due to the reality of the current health crisis situation and the BOF needs to be mindful of this during the budget process. K. Gourley commented some things can't be compromised on and part of the BOF responsibility is to consider safety, consider liability, and to take into consideration the return on investments.

Debt Costs: Administrative Officer J. Kelly reviewed Bolton's debt outlook and current debt obligations. The debt costs total \$1,090,995, an increase of 0.87%.

Capital (CIP): Administrative Officer J. Kelly reported the Town has a five-year FY 2021-2025 Capital Improvement Plan. For FY 2021, the total cost the Town and BOE are hoping to fund is \$1,399,969.00 with a \$567,969.00 taxpayer ask after using \$832,000 in funds proposed for re-allocation from "stale"/completed CIP projects. Per Ch 8.7 (C)(1)(b) of the Town Charter, the Capital Reserve Fund must have between 1-4 mills allocated to it each year.

The proposed Capital Improvement items for FY 2021 total \$25,720.00. Discussion followed on the Fire Suppression Water Supply Town Project funding of \$50,000 yearly in the five-year plan. Administrative

Officer J. Kelly referred the Board to the detailed document of the proposed capital improvement plan available in their meeting packet.

In FY 2022, Town is expected to bond out for several items totaling \$2,120,000. Over the five-year CIP period the total taxpayer ask is projected at \$3,054,931.00. Administrative Officer J. Kelly shared the list of the CIP items with proposed funding in FY 2021.

Members of the board noted the public should understand the capital reserve fund is money in the bank that can only be withdrawn for a large capital project and is not new money the town would be asking for.

The top five capital projects are for Bolton High School (BHS) Tennis courts (\$580,000), roof replacement and masonry (\$236,000) at Bolton Center School (BCS), Town Garage paving (\$70,000), highway plow truck replacement (\$70,000) (paid over 3 payments – this is year 2 of 3) and purchase of a BOE stake body truck (\$55,000).

Questions/board comments on budget proposal:

R. Lally thanked staff for the presentation. From the point of view of the public, he asked if there is a need for a separate fleet stake truck for the BOE and could consideration be made to consolidate the BOE and Town fleets. Superintendent K. Heckt responded usually both the Town and BOE use the stake truck. First Selectman S. Pierog added the vehicle would be used sometimes by the town to move equipment around and would probably be used daily.

K. Gourley commented the tennis court repair at BHS is a safety and liability issue.

E. Bradley thanked everyone who put time and effort into this budget presentation.

4. Discussion on FY2021 Budget:

Chief Financial Officer J. Collins reported said she is still looking at revenues since departments have been closed to the public and revenues are expected to be down. Going forward, she will look at next year's revenues as though everything will be back to normal.

Administrative Officer J. Kelly reported all town facilities are opened for staff, with most working from home. Beginning Monday, March 30, 2020, residents will be able to request and take out library materials online for pick up outside the library at designated times. All returned books will be isolated offsite for 4 days before being put back into circulation. He said the Town is not planning for library staff layoffs during the virus outbreak.

5. Review of Budget Calendar: E. Bradley said next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 31, 2020 at 7:15 p.m. using the zoom meeting platform. Superintendent K. Heckt noted the next BOE regular meeting is scheduled for April 8th and the BOE members would not be available to participate in the BOF meeting scheduled that night.

Administrative Officer J. Kelly will reach out to members having difficulty connecting to virtual meetings. E. Bradley is looking for feedback to make this type of meeting easier and more effective for everyone.

6. Adjournment: E. Bradley adjourned the regular meeting at 9:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Linda H. McDonald

Linda H. McDonald, Board Clerk

Next Meetings:

March 31, 2020 – Special Meeting – 7:15 pm - Virtual Platform **(THIS IS A TUESDAY)**

April 2, 2020 – Special Meeting – 7:15 pm – Virtual Platform (If necessary)

April 8, 2020 – Special Meeting – 7:15 pm – Town Hall or Virtual Platform **(THIS IS A WEDNESDAY)** (If necessary)

April 9, 2020 – Special Meeting – 7:15 pm – Town Hall or Virtual Platform if necessary)

April 16, 2020 – Regular Meeting – 7:15 pm - Town Hall or Virtual Platform

PLEASE SEE THE MINUTES OF SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS FOR THE APPROVAL OF THESE MINUTES AND ANY CORRECTIONS HERETO.