

**BOLTON BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 16, 2023 – 7:15 P.M.
HYBRID MEETING VIA ZOOM WEBSITE PLATFORM &
TOWN OF BOLTON, 222 BOLTON CENTER RD, BOLTON
MINUTES**

Board of Finance Members Present: Ross Lally – Chairman, Robert Monroe – Vice Chair, Kristen Gourley, Mather Clarke, Ashley Phelan, and Charles Danna Jr.

Board of Selectmen Members Present: Pam Sawyer – First Selectman and James Rupert – Town Administrator.

Board of Education Members Present: Kristin Heckt – Superintendent, Susan Pike – Vice Chair, Christopher Davey, and Rhea Klein.

Staff Present: Jill Collins – Chief Financial Officer and Ashleigh Johnson – Board Clerk

Others: Nick Lavigne (CVC)

1) Call to Order: R. Lally called this meeting to order at 7:15 PM.

2) Public Participation:

Nicole Sullivan voiced her support for the BOE budget. N. Sullivan explained to the Board that the school system is what attracted her family to Bolton or they would not have considered moving here. N. Sullivan mentioned that language being cut from the BOE budget is concerning and the deteriorating school system, and now having to look for other options for language for her children.

Chris Duffy also voiced his support for the BOE budget and growth and improvement in Bolton. C. Duffy said other parents are considering other schools and said we should not be taking cuts from the school and our children.

Eileen Rhodes said her family moved to Bolton for many reasons including the schools. The draw to this town was the school system. E. Rhodes mentioned the cut to foreign language and that it is disappointing for her children as they expressed interest in foreign language.

Lindsay Fraine voiced her support for the budget and said if their needs to be cuts in the budget that they should not be made to the BOE.

Ashley Paggioli showed her support to the budget. A. Paggioli voiced her concern for cuts to education and said we should be prioritizing the school and education.

William Gorra voiced his support for the budget. W. Gorra said there should be more say in where the money goes for the budget. He also mentioned that his inner circle believes that their voice isn't heard due to voting and then going on to another referendum.

C. Danna explained that the public has to show up to BOF meetings and to the voting booths as this helps the public be heard and get what they want to happen as far as the budget goes.

K. Gourley reminded people that every time a budget fails, the budget gets reduced as per charter.

3) Approval of Minutes:

a) February 16, 2023 Regular Meeting:

A. Phelan MOVED to approve the February 16, 2023 minutes as presented. K. Gourley SECONDED. By roll call vote, PASSED 4:0:2.

4) New Business:

a) Presentation and Discussion of Board of Education's FY2024 Budget:

K. Heckt started the BOE budget presentation by going over the overview of expenditure plan FY24, which included 63% salaries, 20% benefits, 7% operations & services, 4% administration & business, 4% student support (SPED), 2% regular instruction. She explained why the numbers are what they are and what drives those increases. She then showed what was cut in the budget over FY23. K. Heckt said FY23 BOE budget is 9% below what it would have been if the budget kept pace with inflation. She explained what impact it will have if additional potential reductions are needed. For example, BCS sports, BCS extracurricular activities, BHS sports, BHS extracurricular activities, and 7 teacher positions (including World Language for grades 7 & 8). The total for additional potential reductions if they are needed would be \$900,176 or 5.94% of the budget ask. K. Gourley asked K. Heckt to explain how cutting sports and AP classes would affect students and families. K. Heckt explained that colleges look for sports or AP classes on resumes and if they don't have them on their resumes they risk not receiving scholarships and this costs families more money for college tuition.

K. Heckt then discussed capital proposals/potential referendum items, which included, BCS roof replacement, BHS soccer field, BCS library remodel, and others. J. Rupert discussed potential grants for a track field. R. Lally asked if the track field would be only for BHS. K. Heckt said that it would primarily be for BHS

after school, but nights and weekends when it is not in use it can be open for the town people to use.

K. Heckt continued by stating that enrollment is expected to go up in the Elementary and Middle school but decrease in the High school. Columbia enrollment is projected at 16, which is a decrease in enrollment.

5) Elected Official and Town Staff Reports:

a) Board of Education Update:

K. Heckt explained that as of February 28, 2023, the budget was 56% expended compared to last year when it was 55% expended. In Special Education, changes continue with Net of excess cost being \$199,814. K. Heckt says we will be able to cover this due to unfilled positions. Salaries/wages has taken in \$87,000 of savings. The total education budget will be able to cover costs with remaining amount of \$80,186, however, BOE voted to transfer \$30,000 from salary/benefit to capital equipment. The reason is that in CAPA there is \$20,000 to go towards BCS Fire Curtains. The school failed the annual inspection and the Fire Marshall said the fire curtains must be replaced as soon as possible. They have up to 6 months to replace them as this is a safety hazard. The total cost is +/- \$50,000. They are waiting to receive bids.

b) Tax Collection Summary:

J. Rupert discussed the tax collector report and announced that the percent collected is at 100.87%. He then discussed the revised revenue statement explaining that we have collected more than expected, what has been expected, and some that are close to expected.

c) Town Update:

J. Rupert explained there are problem line items that they are keeping their eye on and will be expecting transfers.

d) Other:

P. Sawyer invited BOF to tour any of the Town buildings tomorrow March 17th, 2023 at 9 AM.

6) Ongoing Business:

a) Budget Calendar:

J. Collins updated the calendar due to the BOS selecting the referendum date, which will be May 23rd, 2023. C. Danna expressed concern with the date being late and if we run into having multiple referendums. J. Collins said we have dates planned for 4 referendums in case we need them and the date planned for the referendum is typical.

b) Discussion on Public Communication/Outreach:

R. Lally said we have to figure out how to get information out and how to get people to vote. He said it is getting to the point to where we need to start planning and gathering ideas. R. Lally then asked the public that attended the meeting if they had any ideas on how to get the word out, but no one commented.

7) Adjournment: R. Lally adjourned this meeting at 9:05 PM.

Next Meetings:

March 21, 2023 – Special Meeting (THIS IS A TUESDAY)

March 23, 2023 – Special Meeting

March 28, 2023 – Special Meeting (THIS IS A TUESDAY)

Respectfully submitted by Ashleigh N. Johnson, Board Clerk

Ashleigh N. Johnson

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

SEE ATTACHMENTS UNDER SEPARATE COVER.