

**BOLTON BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 21, 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, Amanda Gordon, and Charles Danna Jr.

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

Board of Education Members Present: Kristin Heckt – Superintendent and Rhea Klein.

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

1) Call to Order: R. Lally called this meeting to order at 7:25 PM.

2) Public Participation: R. Lally called for public participation, but there was none.

3) New Business:

a. Presentation and Discussion of Board of Selectmen’s FY2024 General Government, Capital, and Debt Budgets:

J. Rupert began the presentation of BOS FY24 with the Town’s mission which is to provide additional identified services, continue to provide existing services, provide additional recreation areas, and maintain and provide town residents and employees with meeting and working areas. J. Rupert then elaborated on each of these and how they intend to implement this. J. Rupert explained they applied to multiple grants to help achieve gathering and recreation areas, already securing STEAP, Community Connectivity Grant, LOTCIP Grant and Hartford Foundation for Giving. K. Gourley asked what the average is of these grants. J. Rupert said the typical ask is not more than 2.5 million dollars.

J. Rupert continued by going over the 2022 Grand List changes. The grand total being \$462,530,748 to \$468,709,209, which is an increase of 1.34%, but keep in mind that this is before Board of Assessment Appeals adjustments. J. Rupert stated that there was a 5.31% increase (\$341,290) in the Town Proper, 27.59% increase (\$128,090) with \$100,000 potential funding from surplus in capital items, and 4.42% increase (\$60,317) in debt costs, the grand total coming out to \$8,792,629. C. Danna asked J. Rupert to clarify what the \$100,000 is in Capital Funding. J. Rupert explained that we received

\$114,000 in revenue from the State that was unanticipated. He said he would like to transfer unexpended funds from the current year to next year for matching funds for the grants. He explained he would like to bring this plan to a Town Meeting.

J. Rupert went on to discuss the breakdown of what percentages of the budget would go into the Town Proper. R. Lally asked what Professional and Purchased Services are. J. Collins said Professional services are the maintenance contracts for the systems the Building and Land Use, Tax Collector, Selectman's office, Town Clerk, and Assessor use, i.e. OpenGov. She then explained that Other Purchased Services includes repairs to the furnace or the building, etc.

J. Rupert then announced the top 5 town budget increases. He explained that these are not enhanced and they preserve the current service. They include, Highway Department (+\$64,950), Transfer Out (+\$50,000), Building and Land Use (+\$44,184), Personnel Services (+\$34,574), and Assessor (+\$29,859).

J. Rupert then went over the 4 town budget decreases which included, Police Protection (-\$19,750), Administration (-\$7,756), Emergency Management (-\$3,693), and Public Health (-\$469). J. Rupert explained that we have a total of \$1,426,198 debt costs, not including bond debt.

J. Rupert reported that the total cost of Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is \$592,320. If we do transfer those unexpended funds of \$100,000, it would be an ask of \$492,320, with 13 projects funded in FY24.

b. Discussion of FY2023 Budgets (expenditures & revenues):

K. Gourley asked J. Rupert about the skid steer and how she had thought we had to pay this off at \$25,000. J. Rupert said a selectman had an idea to see if we had the funds in this year's budget so we don't have to fund it in next year's budget. We were able to buy a skid steer with 25 hours of use almost for the amount we had in the budget. We should see it in April and it's nice that we didn't need to pull funds for a brand new machine.

R. Lally made a recommendation to the BOS to do what the BOE did with their presentation and put in what their cuts were and what people would lose if they made cuts beyond that.

A. Gordon made a recommendation to plan for costs over periods of time for things that cost more and will need to be replaced eventually, i.e. a town car.

R. Lally mentioned hearing many people in town stating how expensive it is living in Bolton especially on fixed income. He explained his own situation and how he had applied for property tax relief, but missed the income qualifications by \$300. He was wondering how we could help those people who need the help and don't qualify for tax relief through the town. J. Rupert said last year BOS allocated additional funding to help our seniors and will be recommending to do it again this year. These funds were largely provided by other town's people who were able to donate to the funding.

A. Gordon asked why there was an increase in the ask for next year for the Assessor if we already have the Assessor. J. Collins explained this is due to not having the Assessor at the beginning of the year. J. Rupert added that the former Assessor received her training through her other employer, whereas our current Assessor works for Bolton and Willington and we split the cost with them.

4) Ongoing Business:

a. Budget Calendar:

R. Lally asked if the meeting scheduled on March, 23, 2023 was necessary. The Board decided to keep this meeting for discussion on the budget.

b. Discussion on Public Communication/Outreach:

A. Phelan created a PowerPoint presentation, but it will be presented at the next meeting.

5) Adjournment: R. Lally adjourned this meeting at 8:59 PM.

Next Meetings:

March 23, 2023 – Special Meeting (if necessary)

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

March 30, 2023 – Special Meeting (if necessary)

April 4, 2023 – Special Meeting (THIS IS A TUESDAY) (if necessary)

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.