

Bolton Board of Selectmen
Special Meeting
7:00PM, Tuesday, December 19, 2017
Notch Road Municipal Center – Room 9
Minutes

The Board of Selectmen held a special Meeting on December 19, 2017, at the Notch Road Municipal Center, with the First Selectman, Sandra Pierog presiding. In attendance were: Selectmen Michael Eremita, Robert Morra and Nicole Sullivan; and members of the public.

1. **Call to Order:** S. Pierog called the meeting to order 7:00PM.
2. **Public Comment:** S. Pierog noted that there are two items on the agenda. She asked that public comment be restricted to tax deferral only until the beginning of the next subject. She then opened up for comment.

Pam Sawyer spoke first citing her experience with the Connecticut State Legislature stating that for this tax program, section A.2., seventy five thousand dollars per year or fifty thousand dollars per year for single as gross income level, in the past, when a fixed number was placed in statute it came back to bite them. It had to be revisited within five years or it wasn't revisited and it would be a problem for many people. She recommended tying something to this number, perhaps the poverty level associated with the state of CT or partial inflation and/or putting a sunset after five years that forces the board to revisit.

3. **Consider and Act on Tax Deferral Program for the Elderly Ordinance:**

S. Pierog suggested a tie to income levels to the low income limits as set by HUD which for a family of two would be fifty four thousand four hundred dollars as of the year 2017 for the eighty percent of the median income limits. Median household income for a family of eight is eighty nine thousand seven hundred dollars for 2017. As HUD changes it, the Board would refer back to it. Most people in the age categories here are a family of two, three or four members.

M. Eremita stated that tying this to HUD income levels for person and family is acceptable. Since this is something people will have to apply for every year, there is no reason the board can't revisit the numbers every year also.

S. Pierog reflected on the eight nearby towns in similar situations, the largest being Hebron, Connecticut with twenty three participants. Each town adjusted the percentages annually.

R. Morra commented that there was question regarding if excess acreage is included, section 8.4.a. and it is not. It only includes the house and the house lot.

S. Pierog added that she would like the residency requirement in Section A,3 to be changed to two years instead of the current language of five. N. Sullivan suggested tying the interest rate numbers to federal interest rates. S. Pierog stated that this is something that can be reviewed after two years in November 2019. She suggested adding to Section G "Beginning December 15, 2019 and every year thereafter, the Board of Selectmen shall review and approve the applicable income levels."

M. Eremita made a motion to approve the tax program with the language as changed S. Pierog seconded.

S. Pierog repeated the motion on the floor - to approve the ordinance as proposed with adjustments to section a.3 with the change from 5 years to 2 years and the additional language for Section G.

Vote 4:0:0

4. Consider and Act on Board of Selectmen Vacancy:

S. Pierog opened the subject by stating the board received a resignation letter from elected official Elizabeth Krueger. In accordance with Connecticut General Statute Section 9-222 the board has 30 days to fill the vacancy following which the town clerk will notify selected officers of the same political party elected at the same election. Those elected officials then have sixty days from the date of resignation to appoint, after that there is the opportunity for a special election. She then opened to public comment.

Paula Meyers 57 Country Club Road commented first asking two things of the board. First being that the voters have a right to choose who the selectmen are, second that both candidates won the vote equally. She referenced M. Eremita's comments regarding the cost of a special election. She continued to say that the voters of Bolton don't consider the politics, they vote for what is best for the town and invest in what is best for friends and neighbors.

M. Eremita commented regarding the insults he felt were directed at him at the last meeting.

A. Teller 23 Elizabeth Road followed up with M. Eremita's comments suggesting that they were taken out of context. He suggested that M. Eremita follow through with his words of the losing candidate being a fine addition to the board. He asked that if they cannot all agree on a candidate that they can all work with, then they open the opportunity for a special election so the decision can be returned to the voters.

R. Morra suggested that in the past, when there is a vacancy, the same party would fill the seat. If this were sent to a special election, it would be costly for the town. Speaking for himself and M. Eremita, he asked that the board get together and compromise on an unaffiliated candidate. Someone whom the board feels would be an asset to the community. Asked his other board members to agree so they can show the community that they are looking out for the over interest of the town.

Barbara Amodio Volpi Road spoke up stating that the candidate does not necessarily have to be unaffiliated. She asked that they consider the next best candidate.

Pete Bradley 22 Norma's Way found it troubling to see board members personalizing things. He asked that they do not let their anger towards comments affect the town. He suggested that taking the next person in line from a vote count is a reasonable solution. He stated that having someone on the board that they can all work with is important so things can be achieved affectively. The political party of the candidate should not matter as much as the town of Bolton.

Richard Tuthill Bolton Center Road asked what the reasoning would be for discussing and deciding amongst themselves and what the process would be.

R. Morra suggested that the board would bring forward several names for an open discussion. He agreed that the process would be unique but suggested that it would bring in the best candidate. He does not want to see two parties getting pinned against each other.

Karen Bergin South Road brought up the fact that running for office takes a toll on the candidate and their family. She stated that the losing candidate was someone who has already been willing to do that. She said she is more comfortable with the people deciding than with the four board members choosing. She said that the purpose of an election is to see who is willing to take the risk and do the work, they already have someone who has done that and that is the

person that the board should be supporting. The losing candidate was someone who already put in the work and demonstrated her interest, she is the nonpartisan option.

Jackie Steele Williams Road asked when this process will take place but S. Pierog asked to hold off on answering until later in the meeting..

John Toomey 44 Hebron Road agreed with everyone that was saying the people of Bolton have already spoken on who should fill the vacancy. When there is a rookie candidate running against an incumbent and comes within only two votes, the people have spoken.

N. Sullivan weighed in stating that she has been listening to what the public has been saying. She stated that she was sorry M. Eremita felt personally attacked at the last meeting. She stated that the candidate in question had not made any of the comments he felt insulted by so it was bold to say he would not vote for a Democrat based on broad statements made by different persons. She stated that she appreciated the compromise that M. Eremita and R. Morra put forward; however, it was not a compromise because it was an attempt to bring a candidate forward that hasn't been chosen by the voters. The candidate that won the election knew she would not stay on the board, she had ample opportunity to withdraw.

N. Sullivan made a motion to nominate Kim Miller for the board. S. Pierog seconded.

R. Morra responded by saying that he had nothing against the candidate in question but it was the Republican candidate who won to the point where she was going to be seated. He said that by putting the Democratic candidate on the board, it would disenfranchise all those who voted for the Republican.

N. Sullivan agreed that if this had been six months from now, the board suggesting new candidates would suffice, however the winner of the seat resigned two weeks from the election, after being sworn in and without attending a meeting..

R. Morra held firm on his position stating that the proper way to go about this was his suggestion to bring forth a compromise candidate.

S. Pierog called for a vote on the nomination of Kim Miller to fill the vacancy. Vote 2:2:0, Pierog and Sullivan voted in the affirmative, Eremita and Morra voted in the negative..

Pete Bradley, Norma's Way stated that it seemed like the argument was going nowhere. He asked if the board had any thoughts on how to resolve this and work together. He said that the election results should mean something and asked if a special election was really necessary to answer that question. He asked that they recognize that the voters have spoken.

S. Pierog reminded that the board has until January 2nd to take positive action. Going back and forth with R. Morra, S. Pierog gave an example from the town of Somers who tried to avoid a special election which ended up being very costly for the town. In the end, the losing candidate took the case to court and ended up being seated for the last fifteen years. She asked who his proposed candidate was for a compromise which R. Morra said he did not have one.

Bruno Simonetti Brian Drive stated that upon first hearing about the coin flip, he thought it was unique and good to show bipartisan fairness between the two parties. He stated that it's difficult for someone to put themselves out there and willingly want to do this job. He said that if they're willing to put in the work, they should be given the work. In the past, he has had to twist arms to get people to join and the process for this should be cut and dry. He applauded R. Morra for his attempt at compromise but asked that they get on the same page.

Leslie Shea Green Hill Drive spoke up about her run against B. Simonetti and being beat by four votes. She asked that they hold a special election.

Kim Welch Vernon Road said that she is embarrassed of the fact that they aren't able to let democracy rule. She said it's difficult to explain to her two young voters the situation.

R. Morra moved to table to subject until the regularly scheduled January meeting. N. Sullivan Seconded. Vote 4:0:0.

5. Adjournment

S. Pierog adjourned the meeting at 8:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,


Kelly Martin, Recording Secretary

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