

**TOWN OF BOLTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN, REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2020, 7:00 P.M. - VIRTUAL
MINUTES**

		Present	Absent
First Selectman	Sandra Pierog	X	
Selectman	Robert Morra	X	
Selectman	Mike Eremita	X	
Deputy First Selectman	Kim Miller	X	
Selectman	Robert DePietro	X Arrived 7:11	
Administrative Officer (Staff)	Joshua Kelly	X	
Members of the Public			

Also present:
Bruce Dixon
Nick Lavigne
Chip White
Emily Basham
Mackey Dykes

1. Call to Order:

By: Sandra Pierog

Time: 7:03 p.m.

Place: Virtual

2. Pledge of Allegiance:

Bypassed for this virtual meeting.

3. Public Comment:

Bruce Dixon presented the usage of the electric sign at the fire station. This information board will be privately funded. Dixon received nine letters from the public endorsing the idea. Organizations and businesses sent in letters also. The neighbors of the Fire Department will be able to see the sign at all times although it will be relocated to between the driveways to be more visible to Notch Road and less visible to the neighbors. An electrician will do the wiring for the sign. Pierog stated this item is on the agenda for later in the meeting.

4. Approval of Minutes:

March 3, 2020 Regular Meeting

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen approve the minutes of the March 3, 2020 regular meeting.

By: Morra

Seconded: Eremita

Voting:

For: Pierog, Eremita, Morra, Miller

Against: None

Abstain: None

April 7, 2020 Regular Meeting

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen approve the minutes from the April 7, 2020 meeting.

By: Morra

Seconded: Eremita

Voting:

For: Pierog, Eremita, Morra, Miller, DePietro

Against: None

Abstain: None

5. Appointments:
None

6. Correspondence:
None

7. Reports & Updates:

A. Subcommittee Reports

Pierog reported the Properties and Facilities subcommittee met today with Tim Sadler about the proposed net metering opportunity for the Town to purchase a certain number of kilowatt hours at a certain price and receive credit of ~five centers per kilowatt hour. Discussions with continue with Sadler and a presentation possible for the June meeting. Initially the discussion was to have the panels on Brandy Street but it was determined it would cost \$100,000 to upgrade the Eversource infrastructure. Here it was thought the installation would remain zoned as agricultural land and Sadler not be faced with commercial property taxes. It has not been completely determined if the facility will be in Bolton. We could still take advantage via virtual net metering. Mr. Sadler is exploring a location in Waterbury. This is a commercial property where there may already be the correct Eversource infrastructure.

The subcommittee met on April 16, 2020, with the CT Green Bank to discuss and do a walk-through for solar panel topped carports at the high school. It is thought these could supply between one-quarter and one-third of the electricity for the high school.

This project is expected to save the Town one cent per kilowatt hour. This subject is on the agenda. Representatives from CT Green Bank are on this meeting call.

B. Properties and Facilities Report

Staff reported the Town Garage project is waiting for one window to be installed. The window was broken in transport. The final inspection will occur. Paving will occur in the new fiscal year. Chip reported the lower knee wall of concrete was cut for the doorway between the old and new sections. There is some loose leftover steel that has to be removed. Drainage has not been connected from the old side to the new so when it rains there is a mote between the buildings. The engineer was out for inspection but could not gain access.

C. Open Space Management & Acquisition

A property owner near Bolton Center approached the Town. Discussion will take place under Executive Session.

D. Lower Bolton Lake Report

Nothing was received from Kim Welch.

E. FY 20 Budget Report

Staff reported the Fire Commission is over 10/12s of the budget or 82-84%, which is also over the expenditures at the same time in the 3-year lookback. The Commission did a great job in reining in and deciding on how to best spend their funds. All other categories are under expensed or under what had been expensed in the 3-year lookback. This is for period ending April 30, 2020.

F. Other

There was nothing for this item.

8. Ongoing Business

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

Pierog reported the Board of Finance has cut the budget for the Board of Selectmen by \$30,000 for next fiscal year. Four items were found in this year's budget to be accomplished now to offset the cut in the 2021 budget. One item was the replacement of several windows at Center School. Kristin stated a number of windows are failing and these are part of a multi-year replacement cycle.

Proposed Transfers - May 2020

\$ 15,720.00	Firehouse Storage Garage · Capital Improvements	From	\$ 15,720.00	Prof/Tech Services · Admin
	<i>Rationale: As a means of mitigating the Board of Finance's \$30,000 cut to the Town's budget, funds in the Prof/Tech Services line of the Administration budget have been made available to help tackle projects, including this one, that would otherwise have been completed next fiscal year.</i>			
\$ 10,000.00	Center School Windows · Capital Improvements	From	\$ 10,000.00	Prof/Tech Services · Admin
	<i>Rationale: As a means of mitigating the Board of Finance's \$30,000 cut to the Town's budget, funds in the Prof/Tech Services line of the Administration budget have been made available to help tackle projects, including this one, that would otherwise have been completed next fiscal year.</i>			
\$ 2,000.00	Rentals · Admin	From	\$ 2,000.00	Professional/Tech. Services · Admin.
	<i>Rationale: The Town has rented two RVs for use as first responder quarantine zones. This transfer will permit us to extend the rental through the end of May.</i>			
\$ 1,900.00	Vendor Maintenance & Supplies · Fire Dept	From	\$ 1,900.00	Professional Business & Training · Fire Dept
	<i>Rationale: "Annual service on Tanker 234. R124 A/C Repairs." -Chief Dixon</i>			

Motion: I move that the Bolton Board of Selectmen approve the budget transfers as presented.

By: Morra

Seconded: DePietro

Voting:

For: Pierog, Eremita, Morra, DePietro, Miller

Against: None

Abstain: None

B. Other

Staff met with department supervisors and they have been able to identify almost \$315,000 that may not be spent this year. BOS has already committed \$100,000 in give back to the BOF. Pierog would like the BOS to approve moving \$60,000 to the Separation Fund. The State Police bill for overtime was received of just under \$30,000. That leaves us with an additional \$125,000 to give back to the BOF in addition to the amount previously committed. Morra stated that will get the Town to a zero increase. Savings were found in heating and electricity not being used because town facilities have been shut down. Eremita does not remember us having \$300,000 in savings previously; Pierog stated we have. We are reasonably confident we will not be spending the money although we do understand where the hiccups could be.

Motion: I move that the Bolton Board of Selectmen commit an additional \$125,000 from this year's expenditures to next year's budget.

By: Morra

Seconded: DePietro

Voting:

For: Pierog, Eremita, Morra, DePietro, Miller

Against: None

Abstain: None

9. New Business:

A. Consider and possibly act on a prospective drive-thru voting budget referendum

Pierog reported the governor's office clarified an Executive Order disallowing drive-through voting. The BOS postponed a vote last month on ratifying the BOF to set the budget for FY 2020-2021.

Motion: I move that the Bolton Board of Selectmen ratify the Board of Finance to set the budget for FY 20-21 and to set the mil rate as appropriate due to the Governor's order that we cannot hold a referendum.

By: Morra

Seconded: Miller

Discussion: Morra is reluctant about this as he is a true believer of allowing the public to vote. However, we have no choice. There are no legal means that will allow us a public vote this year. Morra feels it is the wrong thing to do. But that is the law and we follow the laws. This is purely based on the Governor's mandate.

Voting:

For: Pierog, Eremita, Morra, DePietro, Miller

Against: None

Abstain: None

B. Consider and possibly act on a letter of intent for solar carport installations at Bolton High School to the Connecticut Green Bank

Motion: I make the motion the Bolton Board of Selectmen authorize Sandra Pierog to sign a letter of intent with Connecticut Green Bank.

By: Eremita

Seconded: Pierog

Discussion: Morra asked for a synopsis about this. Emily Basham from CT Green Bank was on the call. Ms. Basham stated the signed letter would signify Bolton would like to move forward with the project on the property listed in the letter, being the high school. This allows the bank to secure utility incentives for the project to move it forward. There are no repercussions from CT Green Bank if Bolton decides not to move forward. The incentives would simply expire. Morra confirmed with Basham that if there are any financial changes Bolton can pull out of the project. Eremita commented this is a good project, it is good for the environment, and it makes fiscal sense although the savings is not a ton of money. Pierog agrees after reading the information provided and speaking with Basham. The Town cannot lose and there is a lot to be gained. Kristen thinks the project is great. She is surprised the prospective savings was not more. Joe Miselli was asked about graduations as one area the carports are proposed is where the ceremonies are held. He indicated it would not be a problem. Morra added that is one critical reason for the placement. Conceptually it is a good idea. Is it in a practical sense? How will snow be removed? Kristen indicated the plow truck operator was part of the walk-through and snow removal was talked about. Mackey Dykes with CT Green Bank spoke about the ownership, maintenance, and life-cycle of the solar panels and equipment. The bank would be the owner and therefore responsible for any maintenance or replacement during the 20-year warranty period. The life-cycle of the panels is said to be 20 years and likely to last longer although perhaps be less efficient. After 20 years Green Bank would take the panels off, extend the term, or Bolton can buy the system from the bank. A key element is finding someone to build the carports and install the panels. We are estimating what the build ceiling will be.

Voting:

For: Pierog, Eremita, Morra, DePietro, Miller

Against: None

Abstain: None

Pierog asked what the next step is? Ms. Basham the letter be signed and forwarded to the bank. The bank will complete the letter from their end and return a copy to Bolton. A plan was shared showing the placement of the panels. The location of the panels at the north side may not be final and may be move farther north. The parking lot will have to be restriped. DePietro asked who is responsible if there is vandalism? Dykes believes CT Green Bank will be responsible for damage to the system, but he will confirm this is the case.

C. Consider and possibly act on setting 2020 admission fees for Indian Notch Park

Staff provided an agenda item summary on this matter. The budgets of the departments responsible for the park were developed based on the projected incomes using the current fees. There was not a specific ask to increase fees. A resident contacted Staff about the non-resident day pass fee possibly being too low. How should that be balanced between those joining in use of the park from other towns and the taxpayers of Bolton. If Unified Command in Bolton and the Governor's office allow the park to be opened we want to be sure the park is ready for visitors.

Morra stated we are limited on how much we can charge residents based on the agreement when Bolton took over the park. The vast majority of weekend passes go to non-residents. Historically, residents use the park on the weekdays.

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen maintain the 2019 fees for the summer of 2020.

By: DePietro

Seconded: Eremita

Voting:

For: Pierog, Eremita, Morra, DePietro, Miller

Against: None

Abstain: None

D. Consider and possibly act on referring the matter of electric signage installation at the Bolton Firehouse to the Planning & Zoning Commission

Pierog stated Town zoning regulations prohibit any local businesses from having a lighted sign in any form. The Town is not subject to the zoning regulations, however. She understands the concerns of the current sign and the advantages of this new sign, but she cannot support this unless the PZC changes the regulations to allow lighted signs. Otherwise, Pierog feels allowing the sign at the fire station will be a slap in the faces of businesses that are already being beat down recently.

Eremita stated the sign regulations may be one thing that is negative to some businesses and the regulations should be changed. Having the sign at the fire house may be a way to change those by showing lighted signs can have a nice look and will be good in the community. The fire department has the private funding to buy this now. Businesses should have this type available for their use. This sign will be good for the community and the neighbors. The fire department would not have people chasing loose letters around the neighborhood. Emergency messages can be posted quickly. This is a good idea; we should see what it is like. The regulations should change.

Morra recalls when Simonize had to jump through to get their sign so it was not considered a lit sign. This is an opportunity to see that a modern lighted sign can be tasteful. This could set the standard for the PZC to modify sign regulations. The fire department can set the standard. What is proposed here is tasteful. DePietro agrees with Morra.

Motion: I make the motion the Bolton Board of Selectmen recommend the signage with comments to the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

Discussion: Eremita stated we are moving from really rural dark ages but not into neon like the Las Vegas strip. We are talking about a transition. BOS should permit this to move forward and approve the sign. We have people willing to donate the money for the sign. Miller is torn. She is in support of the sign as it is important for public safety. She is torn about the feeling of businesses in town if we show them the Town does not have to follow the rules. Miller does not have enough information about why these kinds of signs are not wanted in town. Maybe Bolton should take a look at changing the zoning regulations. Eremita commented Miller is justified in being torn. The Town is always asking what can we do to stimulate growth. Yet everything seems to fly in the face of doing so. And Bolton has limited commercial. Miller stated that is why the zoning laws have to be looked at. Eremita thinks having this sign at the fire station is a way to prompt that giving the PZC the impetuous to take another look. Miller added the difference is businesses are trying to attract customers where this sign is about communication, including town events, children's events, community events, and scouting events. Pierog agrees except she feels we are saying we really don't care about you because we don't have to follow the rules and you are on your own. She agrees the current sign is outdated. The way to do this is to have PZC change the sign regulations and then have the fire station install the sign.

Staff provided some experience he has seen in other communities where he has worked. It has not always been a positive experience when towns go against the regulations that they are exempt from. Perhaps a middle ground here is to make a motion to recommend the PZC take this up at the same time this sign is being allowed. This would not leave it up to the PZC to read between the lines that sign regulations should be reconsidered. That approach may go a long way with the PZC and businesses. Eremita is in favor of making a motion to formally recommend the PZC take another look at this issue and move towards this sign type. Pierog is opposed to allowing this sign before the regulations are changed, period. If Three J's can't have it, neither can I. Morra feels this sign will set the standard to move the regulations forward. Eremita stated we have donors and neighbors that support this public information sign. Pierog stated there is no regulation that carves out signs of purely information. There is a prohibition to all electronic and lighted signs.

Chip White stated Bolton has two lighted commercial signs on the gas stations. Pierog stated those individuals had to apply for a specific permit from PZC. Morra added the Shell station was an existing non-conforming sign prior to sign regulations being created. Morra does not understand what the objection is. To him, this is a project that would set the standard on how to properly have a lighted sign. It could take six months or two years to change regulations. Bolton is not doing this as a slap in the face of businesses. We want to promote businesses. This is a help, not a hinderance. Morra wants to go forward with this; it is a good idea. The importance of information and not having misinformation going flying everywhere. This is the board for emergency and information purposes. It will be highly effective and provide far more than it does now. Eremita feels this going forward will give the PZC a reason to change sign regulations. The PZC should be looking to the future to meet the needs and how the town will appear. Pierog restated her feeling that allowing this before PZC zoning changes is saying we don't care about you because we don't have to. DePietro opined that the sign be allowed temporarily because of COVID-19. Eremita said a temporary

installation is not realistic. This sign is \$10,000 - \$15,000 and we have people who are willing to donate that cost to put the sign up.

Voting:

For: Eremita, Morra, DePietro

Against: Pierog

Abstain: Miller

Pierog will notify the PZC we are going forward and request they consider changing the regulations.

Motion: I make the motion the Bolton Board of Selectmen recommends the Planning & Zoning Commission review the regulations on lighted signs.

By: Eremita

Seconded: DePietro

Voting:

For: Pierog, Eremita, Morra, DePietro, Miller

Against: None

Abstain: None

E. Consider and possibly act on authorizing the Administrator and First Selectmen to jointly approve transfers of \$5,000 or less for the remainder of FY 2020

Motion: I make the motion the Bolton Board of Selectmen authorize the Administrator and First Selectmen to jointly approve transfers of \$5,000 or less for the remainder of FY 2020.

By: Morra

Seconded: DePietro

Discussion: Pierog stated this is similar to what has gone in past fiscal years. Anything more will come to the BOS for review and possible approval.

Voting:

For: Pierog, Eremita, Morra, DePietro, Miller

Against: None

Abstain: None

F. Other

None

10. First Selectman's Report:

A. COVID-19 Preparations

Pierog reported the Emergency Operations Committee has been meeting weekly and are in contact with the Governor's emergency operation team on a weekly basis. Jim Rupert, Joshua Kelly, the Fire Chief, the Deputy Fire Chief, and Sandra Pierog have been participating. Rupert appointed Carrie Conitelly as Bolton's Recovery Coordinator. She will be the liaison to the community for not-for-profit and faith-based

groups as we prepare to come out of lock down. Patrice Carson has been appointed as Deputy Coordinator to liaison with the local business community.

Eremita reported Bolton has had thirteen confirmed positive cases, four hospitalizations, and three deaths (from nursing homes). Bolton has half of the deaths in the 10 towns of the Eastern Highlands Health District.

B. Charter Revision

The committee continues to meet. Morra spent 1.5 hours speaking with them. They covered the spectrum and are obviously committed to doing an effective job.

C. Sustainable CT

Patrice Carson has submitted a first draft for initial certification. We expect to hear back in June with what we might have to do to make a qualifying application. The committee has had many hours put in by Patrice Carson and Joshua Kelly.

D. Other

Pierog reported a Zoom meeting will be held with the Manchester Chamber of Commerce on May 15th on reopening the state and the effect on individual business. The meeting information will be sent out.

11. Administrative Officer's Report:

A. COVID-19 Preparations

Staff commented Eremita pointed out some misinformation on the website regarding the Transfer Station. This has been addressed through social media and the website. and website.

B. Administrator's Goals

Overarching goals have a key theme of increasing communications in general and improving communication. This Monday the new media coordinator will be starting. Gary Silver will be graduating from UConn this Saturday. He has a lot of ideas and have to effectively getting out information. He will be an asset for Bolton as we pursue transparency and increasing communication.

There has been some movement with final stages of a regional brand identify for the four towns participating in the economic development research. The report has been delayed because of the health crisis.

DePietro missed the presentation of Town Administrator vs. Town Manager. Can someone report on the presentation. Pierog stated the Charter Commission has town management being considered. The presentation was given in February. John Elsesser, Town Manager of Coventry, and Tom Walter, Town Administrator of Andover, spoke about the nuances of the differences. This was videotaped and can be shared with DePietro.

Morra asked about the May 20th opening and the impact to operations at Town Hall. Staff has thought of what this should look like. There are a number of health factors with individuals he has to factor in. He does not see May 20th as the specific day for Eastern Connecticut as compared to the rest of the state. We don't have to blindly

endorse that date. Jim Rupert took steps in March to step down operations and we will try to walk back up the steps. Plexiglass and sneeze guards may be installed in some areas. Eremita feels we need to look at respiratory protection as being permanent. Staff stated we want to move forward offer as many services as possible and to do it safely.

C. Other

None

12. Adjournment:

Motion: Move to adjourn at 8:49 p.m.

By: Eremita

Seconded: DePietro

Voting:

For: Pierog, Eremita, Morra, DePietro, Miller

Against: None

Abstain: None

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.