

**TOWN OF BOLTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2021, 7:00 P.M. VIRTUAL
MINUTES**

| | | Present | Absent |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| First Selectman | Pam Sawyer | X | |
| Selectman | Adam Teller | X | |
| Selectman - remote | Robert DePietro | X (arrived 7:13 p.m.) | |
| Selectman - remote | Mike Eremita | X | |
| Selectman | Robert Morra | X | |
| Interim Administrative Officer | Jim Rupert | X | |
| Members of the Public | | | |

Also present: Kim Welch, Nick Lavigne

1. Call to Order:

By: Pam Sawyer

Time: 7:05 p.m.

Place: Hybrid

2. Pledge of Allegiance:

The pledge was recited.

3. Public Comment:

Kim Welch, Lake Commissioner – reported it was an active and discouraging lake season, including having an algae bloom until last week. The Town has had a \$250k STEAP grant that expired on 12-31-2020. The grant has paid for lake monitoring since 2012. We do not want the services to lapse so Bolton needs to put monies in the budget for lake monitoring. In the near future we will be spending more on lake services than in past years. Welch has been working with and will continue to work with Jim, the Town of Vernon, and the Friends of Bolton Lakes on a watershed management plan for the purpose of a federal funding grant. Also expiration of permits for treatment for Lower Bolton Lake expire on 1-31-2022. Bolton will have to submit an application to DEEP for a multi-year permit. Welch has found there is a need to review and revise the communications when algae blooms occur. Rupert said the Health District has committed to making those communications better. There is a lot to coordinate and Welch is committed to improving that process. Welch thanked town staff for helping to survive the tumultuous summer.

Sawyer thanked Welch for her work as Lake Commissioner.

4. Approval of Minutes:

A. November 9, 2021 - Regular Meeting

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen accept the minutes of the November 9,

2021, Regular Meeting as presented.

By: Morra

Seconded: Eremita

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, DePietro

Against: None

Abstain: Teller, Sawyer

B. November 23, 2021 - Special Meeting

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen accept the minutes of the November 23, 2021, Special Meeting as corrected.

With the following correction:

- Page 3 – Motion was by R. Morra and seconded by B. DePietro.

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, Teller, Sawyer, DePietro

Against: None

Abstain: None

C. November 30, 2021 – Special Meeting

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen accept the minutes of the November 30, 2021, Special Meeting as presented.

By: Morra

Seconded: Eremita

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, Sawyer, Teller, DePietro

Against: None

Abstain: None

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen move to agenda item 8.C. at this time.

By: Morra

Seconded: DePietro

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, DePietro, Teller, Sawyer

Against: None

Abstain: None

5. Appointments

A. Heritage Farm Commission

Rupert said it was an error in bookkeeping as this commission is full. Morra confirmed with Rupert that the applicant was notified and Sawyer suggested sending the applicant the list of vacancies on other boards and commissions.

B. Fire Commission

An interest form was received from Daniel Moquin. The form details his background.

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen appoint to Daniel Moquin to the Fire Commission. He is a very good diesel repair mechanic.

By: DePietro

Seconded: Eremita

Discussion: Teller said he has no objection to this appointment and will support it. It might not be a bad idea to email the commission involved as a courtesy as the commission may have someone they have approached. The person who spoke up should be given consideration. In some of the boards and commission it takes coaching to have someone come forward. DePietro said the chairman of the commission may have someone in mind. Morra said the chairman will be pleased with this person. Teller did not mean that we have some concerns with this person.

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, DePietro, Sawyer, Teller

Against: None

Abstain: None

C. Ethics Commission

Sawyer said some of the terms have expired with two members left with active terms. There will be some names brought to the next meeting for reappointments or some new people with interest in this commission. This commission has not met since 2017. They only meet on the request of the Board of Selectmen (BOS). Sawyer said members of this commission cannot be an elected officer but it can be someone who has sat on a board. No person can be a sitting member of a board or commission while serving on this commission. The BOS will ask the Ethics Commission to meet annually to review any laws to review or issues or cases that have come up in the state.

Morra sits as alternate to the Health District and his term expires in January. Morra will continue unless Rupert has other interested people. Rupert said no one has expressed interest.

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen add agenda item 5.D. Alternate to the Health District.

By: Eremita

Seconded: Teller

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, DePietro, Teller, Sawyer

Against: None

Abstain: None

D. Alternate to the Health District

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen reappointment Bob Morra as Alternate to the Health District.

By: Eremita

Seconded: Teller

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, DePietro, Teller, Sawyer

Against: None
Abstain: None

6. Reports & Updates:

A. Subcommittee Reports

No current reports from the subcommittees.

B. Properties and Facilities Report

No current reports from these committee.

DePietro would like this committee to come to the BOS meeting so the committee charge can be discussed. Rupert said their first meeting is next week and will be an organizational meeting. After that we could meet with them to refine their direction and charge. The charge was narrowed down to two projects, Notch Road and the Fire Station, so it is a more defined scope. DePietro likes the idea of giving them their marching orders beforehand. Morra concurred with DePietro saying it is critical when we create boards to give them a defined mission. This committee has always been made up of the First Selectman and two other people. DePietro would like to see Eremita on this committee due to his background. Teller will temporarily be the third member. This committee will meet on Friday at 12:30 via Zoom.

Teller and DePietro volunteered to be on the Personnel Subcommittee.

C. Open Space Management & Acquisition

No report.

D. FY 21 Budget Report

Sawyer met with the Finance office and talked about the accounts payable where BOS approval is necessary. We are now paying invoices every two weeks and there may be delays if BOS approval is needed. It is important to pay our bills on time for our credit rating. A suggestion was made that the BOS have a second Zoom meeting to approve any accounts payable.

Teller said he is okay with that suggestion as long as the invoice has been publicly posted. Rupert said the process will be the same for the regular meeting with the agenda being posted. Eremita suggested holding this meeting on the third Tuesday of the month.

There was consensus of the Selectmen to hold the second meeting for this purpose.

Rupert reported the budget is in the right place of spending for the year with no red flags raised. We are doing well with tax collections. Supplemental bills were sent out because the original bills went out at the old mil rate.

7. Ongoing Business:

A. Consider and Possible Action on Alcohol and Cannabis Ordinance

Rupert said the BOS worked hard on this ordinance. We currently have an alcohol policy. Comments received included it was thought the BOS did a good job with crafting the ordinance and that it is enforceable. It was revised somewhat based on the Town Attorney's feedback. Sawyer said matter this will be taken to a public hearing as the first item at a regular meeting.

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen hold a public hearing on the proposed marijuana ordinance on January 4, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

By: Morra

Seconded: Eremita

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, DePietro, Teller, Sawyer

Against: None

Abstain: None

B. Report on Budget Transfers

There is one transfer request.

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen approve the budget transfer request of \$418.28 from Prof. Educational Training to Advertising in budget 1005-041-4147.

By: Eremita

Seconded: DePietro

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, DePietro, Teller, Sawyer

Against: None

Abstain: None

TO
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

BUDGET: Town Clerk

Transfer \$ 418.28 from category Prof. Educational Training to category Advertising

(within budget) from # 1005-041-4147-000000-53200-00000
to # 1005-041-4147-000000-55400-00000

Transfer \$ _____ from Budget _____ to Budget _____

from category _____ to category _____

from # _____ - 000000 - _____ - 000000

to # _____ - 000000 - _____ - 000000

Other \$ _____

Explanation: To cover cost of election warning due to extensive questions on ballot driving the price of notice up more than usual.

Elizabeth C. Water Signature
Town Clerk Title

Both the Hartford Courant and Journal Inquirer have similar readership in town. The cost of public notices is reviewed annually and we go with the cheapest. The Legislative has not approved attempts by towns to advertise via the internet which would save considerable money. The newspapers fight this every time.

C. Discussion on Draft Charter Revision

Sawyer said the Charter Revision Committee did a great job. Former First Selectmen directed Rupert to forward the changes to Rich Roberts to incorporate the changes into the document. This has been forwarded to the Town Attorney with his office making minor

changes. These final changes will be incorporated into the document and then posted to the website. We are days away from having this completed. This is a job well done and the group who worked on this tremendous task was thanked.

D. Discussion on South Road Truck Traffic

Sawyer said there is a new business on Route 44 that have very obvious large trucks using South Road. Staff called the company and those have stopped using South Road, at least for now. Sawyer said this is a small road and not built for 18 wheelers. The bottom of the road does have a sign saying no thru trucks but Bolton cannot ban trucks from the road. The packet includes signage options that Bolton can use.

Rupert said there is a group of residents he hears from often; they are not pleased that trucks continue to use the road. Rupert explains this is not under the authority of the BOS rather it is for the state Traffic Division. If the BOS feels it is important to ban truck traffic they can make a request to the traffic division. These types of requests are seldom approved.

Teller suggested putting more stop signs along South Road. Sawyer said the one at Stoney Road is regularly ignored. There is a straightaway here with Stonehedge and Fern Wood that do not line up. Stop signs in the opposite direction and installing speed bumps were discussed. The advantage with stop signs is if there are reports of trucks not obeying them we can ask the police to sit out there; a stop sign violation for truckers is a big deal. Therefore, truckers will stop at stop signs and will use the road less.

Rupert said based on concerns of residents the State Trooper has spent time out there and ended up giving out warnings to residents of Bolton and South Road.

Morra said we have had this same issue with the same results – the speeding is generally by motorists. This is a way too windy road for trucks. Morra suggested having the State Trooper look at it and give options for traffic calming. The speed limit of 25 is controlled by the state Traffic Commission.

Consensus was reached to have the State Trooper look at this location and have the matter back on the agenda in February. In the meantime, we will move the electronic sign there.

E. Purchase of Engine Tanker

Rupert said there has been a request from the fire department to approve the purchase of the tanker that has already had a price increase of 1.5%. It is proposed to use HGAC Purchasing Services; this is a great program. We have \$180k budgeted for the truck but do not have the balance of the purchase price yet. It is suggested we find the funding mechanism at a later date.

Eremita said the delivery window after order is 12 – 14 months. There will be a price increase of 5% at the beginning of 2022. There are other incentives to move forward on a quicker basis. FEMA thinks HGAC is the way to go. There are problems with the other truck but the department will keep that with the caveat for as long as it remains running for a 30-year old truck. People on the committee have been working on the specs and comparisons of the trucks for nine months. The committee has picked out a fantastic truck.

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen proceed with the recommendation to purchase this truck.

By: DePietro

Seconded: Morra

Discussion: Morra asked if the BOE uses the same bid process? Staff said it does or has used HGAC for purchasing. Morra wants to get the best buy for the dollar but is not a fan of not using a bidding process involving equipment purchases but he believes the State uses a similar service as HGAC in this type of situation. Eremita said that is correct; it is how the State bids. If we went out to bid it would be higher than 1.5% with HGAC. DePietro is more concerned about the safety liability of something happening before we get this new unit. Teller asked if there is a fee for the HGAC service? Eremita believes their fee comes from the manufacturer. HGAC is highly recommended by FEMA for the purchase of vehicles. We have to join the service but the fee is not significant and we can use it for other purchases. This is access to a large buying consortium. The voters have authorized this purchase; we have \$180k to put down and have to figure out a way to finance what the town has approved.

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, DePietro, Teller, Sawyer

Against: None

Abstain: None

F. Other

None

8. New Business:

A. Consider and Act on Election of Deputy First Selectman

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen nominate Bob Morra as Deputy First Selectman.

By: Eremita

Seconded: DePietro

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, DePietro, Teller, Sawyer

Against: None

Abstain: None

B. Consider and Act on Budget Workshop Dates

Sawyer said the workshop dates are included in the packet. The department heads meet with the BOS with the Board of Finance (BOF) being invited to the meeting. The BOS then justifies the budget to the BOF.

C. Bolton Winterfest

Karen Cordero – The Land Trust would like to hold a WinterFest on February 26, 2022 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Bolton Heritage Farm. Events will include snowshoeing, x-country skiing, possibly sledding, and snowman building. If there is no snow a bonfire will be built. We have spoken to Bruce Dixon and town staff about this. We've asked about

electricity for urns of hot water and a speaker. It will be a fun afternoon to spend at the Farm. We have spoken to Arlene Fiano of the Heritage Farm Committee and they love the idea and approve of use of the farm. We will survey the site two weeks before the event for the conditions. The location does have a fire ring.

Rupert said wind direction could affect the bonfire and the Land Trust will make sure they have water on site to put the fire out. Cordero can bring in Gatorade jugs for this purpose.

Ms. Cordero said they may try to bring in snowshoe rentals. A release of liability form will be signed by guests.

Sawyer asked if the Land Trust has considered parking and port-a-potties. Cordero said parking will be along the side of the entrance with four rows of parking. Port-a-potties were not considered due to the short time frame. The Health Department might require it and it should be an accessible unit. Cordero will look into this matter; Sawyer suggested they might find a booster for this expense.

Morra thanked the Land Trust for taking the initiative with this giving residents something to do in the winter.

D. A/P Detail list

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen approve the bills to be paid.

By: Morra

Seconded: Eremita

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, DePietro, Sawyer

Against: None

Abstain: Teller

E. Discussion on Possible New Committees: Cemetery and Veterans

Cemetery:

Sawyer said there is a new contract for maintenance of the cemetery. The idea of a new committee is to have three to five people on the committee that are the eyes and ears to the town about the cemeteries.

Eremita likes the idea of having oversight of the cemeteries and the head of Parks or Public Works is more than capable to oversee the subcontractors working on the cemeteries. This falls under the Parks department in his opinion.

Sawyer said there is competent staff to provide oversight but they are already stretched thin. There have been thoughts of beautification, such as there is no closure at the end of the cemetery – a small stone wall on the backside would be attractive. There is the issue of replacement of the flagpole at Quarry Cemetery. This could be a temporary commission to allow members of the community to step forward and add pride and respect of the cemeteries; they have had a rough go of it for the past ten years.

Morra said temporary commissions in the past have been given a specific charge. They could be directed to look at the cemeteries and suggest what is needed. Those that visit cemeteries may have suggestions of what can be approved upon. The cemeteries are

properly funded. The commission's recommendations would be given to the BOS. Morra responded to Teller's question about who has been responsible for oversight saying that has been the BOS. Teller asked if there is not town staff responsible for periodic inspection or oversight of the contractors or if it is on an ad hoc basis? Morra said Buildings and Grounds have done some of the oversight and their job was to fix what may be broken and/or needed repair. Morra does not recall there ever being a charge given of examining the cemeteries and come back to the BOS for overall improvement suggestions.

Teller said the town took over private cemeteries so they took over the maintenance for the facility. The town should have someone designated to be responsible for a list of tasks and held accountable. The town has the ultimate obligation. Teller wants to be clear on what the town is doing before giving a commission a charge.

Sawyer said a broad charge can be given including asking for a report to the BOS on a quarterly basis. Eremita said when an issue arises a staff person can take care of a situation rather than a commission. Town staff should be making things happen on a timely basis with personnel and budget. Sawyer said the past history is that maintenance has been put out to bid and the town has sat back. Sawyer believes we have a competent staff but they are stretched thin right now. With community eyes on the hallowed grounds we should be respectful to our residents. Eremita said we hired private contractor and never gave John oversight of it. Therefore give him the oversight and see how it goes and hold the contractor to task and do what is necessary. Volunteers cannot direct staff to get things done. Sawyer respectfully disagrees that staff or BOS have a good track record in taking care of the cemeteries.

Morra said we all want the same goal. We could make a modification for this matter to be part of the Buildings and Grounds subcommittee with volunteers to meet with the BOS to make suggestions about the cemeteries.

Teller said hopefully there would be volunteers to be on such a committee and not get frustrated after making suggestions to the BOS for improvements. The town took the cemeteries over as a public facility and they should be dealt with as other public facilities. As a committee we would be asking interested members of the public to be involved in a committee that is just advisory to the BOS or the Parks department.

DePietro tends to agree with Eremita and Teller. No boss ever said we are not going to give you more work because you are already stretched thin.

Rupert said this happens to some degree when issues arise at a cemetery. John or his staff take care of it but no department has been tasked with the oversight. Building & Grounds makes sense.

Sawyer said in other towns they are in a different group. Sawyer asked Morra and Teller to convene a meeting and to bring forward ideas or walk the cemeteries as a subcommittee with people who have expressed interest in having respect of the cemeteries. Consensus was reached to move forward this way.

Veterans:

Eremita said veterans are putting flags on veterans' graves. They look out for themselves. The veterans have different concerns than the Parks department which needs to oversee the

maintenance.

Morra said there are veterans' issues that go beyond the cemeteries. Bolton has never had a group of veterans for current veterans and future veterans. Our veterans may be depleted but there are still people serving. Placing flags is one aspect of veterans affairs. This would be providing an agency to be made up of men and women who can understand the issues and what is important. Morra is in favor of creating such an organization. Eremita agreed this is a broader topic than the cemetery.

Teller asked if there is enough working space for a veteran's affairs or advisory committee? If we do have such a committee there should be some topics for them handle that are not duplicating staff services. Teller does not like to confuse what the town, state, or federal staff are doing and what the committee is doing.

Consensus was reached to have this committee be formed with membership of five people.

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen create a Veteran's Committee of five members with a four-year term.

By: DePietro

Seconded: Morra

Discussion: Sawyer said she has a married history of being a veteran's wife. She was on the first state committee for veterans and it was successful. For the 300th history it was suggested to have small monuments on the green to recognize the other wars and have a small piece of road to be called Veterans' Way. Teller asked if creation of a commission has to be done by ordinance? Rupert said this might be temporary for 18 months with the ability to continue it after that or create it as permanent.

There was consensus to postpone this until the January meeting.

9. First Selectman's Report:

A. COVID-19

We are in the red category. There are five cases in the schools. There are no new deaths. Mr. Miller believes there will be no changes in the near term. Many of the hospitalizations are of people who have not been vaccinated.

B. Other

None

10. Administrative Officer's Report:

A. Monthly Report

- Closed out FEMA reimbursement for Isaias having received \$75k.
- Submitted for recurring grants
- Completed settlement for opioid settlement.
- Completed review with supervisors.
- UConn student is working on the Fair Housing Plan and has been engaged with the budgeting process.
- Contract was finalized with the cemetery.
- Finalized the lease for the farm with L. Pease.

- Holiday gathering for town staff is on 12-16 around noon at Georgina's.
- The first meeting of the Diversity Commission was held.

B. Other

None

11. Executive Session: Interim Administrative Officer Agreement

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the Interim Administrative Officer Agreement with Mr. Rupert in attendance.

By: Teller

Seconded: DePietro

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, DePietro, Teller, Sawyer

Against: None

Abstain: None

The BOS entered Executive Session at 9:34 p.m.

12. Consider and Act on Interim Administrative Officer Agreement

13. Adjournment:

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen adjourn at _____ p.m.

By:

Seconded:

Voting:

For: Morra, Eremita, DePietro

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.