# TOWN OF BOLTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY, JULY 6, 2021, 7:00 P.M. VIRTUAL MINUTES

		Present	Absent
First Selectman	Sandra Pierog	Х	
Deputy First Selectman	Kim Miller		Х
Selectman	Robert DePietro	X arrived 7:15 p.m.	
Selectman	Mike Eremita	Х	
Selectman	Robert Morra	Х	
Interim Administrative Officer	Jim Rupert	Х	
Members of the Public			

Also present: John Toomey, Nick Lavigne, Paula Meyers, Amanda Gordon, Kawan Gordon, Jennifer Cyr, Dr. Rhea Klein, Cheryl U., Kathy McCavanagh

### 1. Call to Order:

By: Sandra Pierog	Time: 7:02 p.m.	Place: Virtual

# 2. Public Comment:

<u>Paula Meyers, 270 Country Club Road</u> – Wants to take this opportunity, even though we are still in the gray area of not being out of the woods, to thank the BOS, BOE, BOF, Town employees and volunteers who have gotten us here (through this pandemic) considering the fact there was not a notebook to follow. As a citizen of Bolton she thanks all of you. Pierog added thank you to our first responders who have provided services during these trying times.

### 3. <u>Approval of Minutes:</u>

### A. May 4, 2021, Regular Meeting

Corrections mentioned at the previous meeting before a vote on the matter was postponed:

- Page 1, Also present add "Dixon" after "Bernice"; correct "Udine" to "Udin".
- Page 5, line item Capital Improvement Trailer the correct dimensions are 20' x 8.5'.
- Page 6 after the voting Pierog stuff missing in that paragraph. Go back for a rewrite of this section. Proposed rewrite or addition from Eremita. Postpone until next the meeting.
- Page 10, item C, second paragraph, last sentence change "Prestredo" to "Pistritto".
- Page 11, item B, second sentence add "Heckman" after "Randy"; add "Palazzini" after

"Danielle".

• Page 11, item B, third sentence – add to the beginning of the sentence "Rupert said".

Pierog had a question for the Selectmen – do you want minutes or transcripts of the meetings? Should the minutes of the May 4, 2021 meeting stand as is or reflect the changes submitted by Eremita? If the vote is in favor of Eremita's correction Pierog will ask that the meetings of the current fiscal year be transcribed and transcriptions submitted for every meeting hereafter. Eremita said he thinks the minutes should be transcripts because there are recordings. He thinks the BOS should have actual transcripts. Eremita was displeased with what went on at that meeting and he did the transcript of that portion of the meeting. He takes this as an isolated incident. The meeting was unpleasant. Eremita feels the entire discussion of item 7B be included in the minutes

Correction submitted on July 6, 2021 by Eremita for item 7B:

Following vote on budget transfers:

Audio Tape Time 44 Minutes and 50 Seconds

First Selectman Sandra Pierog:

I do want to mention to the Fire Department that I voted yes because and I'd like the minutes to reflect this, that I voted yes because of Bob Morra's and Bob DePietro and Kim's suggestions that this was a temporary solution to a long-time problem. It is not a free pass to future expenditures like this, in my mind. It is also not a free pass to willy-nilly coming up with expenditures that you expect the town to fund.

Fire Commissioner Cheryl Udin:

I think that is an inappropriate comment Sandy, the willy-nilly. I don't think as Fire Commissioner, and I have been on the Fire Department and Fire Commission a number of years and Chair of that Department that we willy-nilly come up with things for the Town to purchase for us. I find that comment totally inappropriate! Selectman Michael Eremita:

I agree

First Selectman Sandra Pierog:

Perhaps I was out of line, I will ask that the minutes not reflect that comment. But I do want to make it very clear to the Fire Department that I expect procedures to be followed and the correct procedure is to bring... and I know Mr. Rupert shared that with at your last Fire Commission meeting Because I listened to the entire tape. That if you have a request for a capital item, please put it in your Five-Year Plan. Please put it in the Five-Year Plan. Even if you decide it's something the town cannot afford at that point in time. Please put it in the Five-Year Plan so it is not a surprise to the voters, to the Board of Selectmen and to the Capital Improvement Plan Commission. Selectman Michael Eremita:

Sandy, can I comment on that? I completely agree that everything should go in the Capital Plan. But will also comment that when the Town Administrator, who you supervise comes to the Fire department and says we have some money/funds this year left over what do you need, and we (the Fire Department) give him an answer or her an answer that it's not us (the Fire Department) circumventing the process. The Town circumvented the process by coming to the Fire Department and asking what do you need. Had that not happened then we would not be in this situation. So, I would recommend that the Town Administrator whoever it may be either Jim or whoever not make those comments to staff anymore. Unless they want staff to request items they need.

First Selectman Sandra Pierog: That item has been addressed with the former Administrator and the current Administrator and future expenditures will have a cost limit. Future items like that will have a cost limit attached to them. As long as I am first Selectman. Audio Tape Time 48 Minutes and 20 Seconds

**Motion:** I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen add the entire transcript, with some language corrections, for the portion of the meeting as submitted by Eremita.

By:	Eremita
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Seconded: Morra

Discussion: Morra said it reflects what occurred. Pierog said Eremita's childish reactions of the previous meeting were not recorded in the minutes. Eremita said let's not bring up childish actions because that is why we are here. He was unhappy and angry at that previous meeting.

Voting: For: Morra, Eremita Against: Pierog Abstain: None

Pierog asked the Recording Clerk to provide transcripts for all BOS meetings from January 1, 2020 through the current date including this meeting.

DePietro was present at 7:15

### B. June 1, 2021, Regular Meeting

This item was postponed.

### C. June 21, 2021 – Special Meeting

This item was postponed.

### 4. <u>Correspondence</u>

### A. Letter from Bolton Republican Town Committee

Pierog said the letter is asking the BOS to open all Town buildings. There will be a discussion on this later in the meeting. Herrick Park has been open for a month and is available for rental. The Notch Building will not reopen during the cooling season as the fans are not a good way of circulating air. Morra said the request for the town to open the facilities is geared more toward the library, Senior Center, and Town Hall. Eremita said we are getting closer to opening buildings but it is best to err on the side of caution. We can't

let our guard down because people are upset buildings are not opening.

Pierog said there was one case reported over the weekend bringing the total cases to 297. Vaccination rates have not increased in 22-44 age range keeping us 10 percentage points below the State average. Morra said the most vulnerable people by age are at almost a 100% vaccination rate. Eremita said you will not get 100% protection. The 20 - 40 year old age group coming into contact with senior citizens keeps them at risk. The more people we can get vaccinated the safer it is.

### **B.** Memo From BOF Regarding Meeting Dates for the Remainder of 2021

Pierog said this memo reflects the BOF moving the remainder of the meetings through the end of the year to Wednesday instead of Thursday. The Chairperson of the BOF has returned to graduate school causing a conflict with the regular meeting schedule.

### 5. Appointments:

- A. Conservation Commission
- **B.** Heritage Farm Commission
- C. Bentley Memorial Library Board
- **D.** Senior Citizen's Commission
- **E.** Fire Commission
- F. Inland Wetlands Commission
- **G. Energy Committee**
- H. Diversity Committee
- I. Lake Commissioner
- J. Interim Building Official

### K. Interim Zoning Agent



**Motion:** I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen appoint all of the individuals to their respective Commission, Committee, or Board. The Diversity Commission continues to accept volunteers. Those will be limited to one Democrat and four Republicans or Unaffiliated.

Interim Building Official – Randy Heckman until January 2022. Interim Zoning Agent – Michael D'Amato who is willing to offer his contracted services for zoning matters for \$2,000 until January 2022. These interim positions are to provide support for these duties as Jim Rupert acts as the Interim Town Administrator.

By: Pierog

Seconded: Morra

Voting: For: Pierog, Morra, Eremita, DePietro Against: None Abstain: None

### L. Assessor

**Motion:** I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen reappoint Helen Totz for a period of one year.

By: Morra

Seconded: Pierog

Voting: For: Pierog, Morra, Eremita, DePietro Against: None Abstain: None

### 6. <u>Reports & Updates:</u>

**A. Subcommittee Report** None

**B.** Properties and Facilities Report None

**C. Open Space Management & Acquisition** None

### D. FY 21 Budget Report

Pierog said restrictions have been placed on all expenditures that are not necessary and on open purchase orders. We currently have ~\$4 mill. available in cash with a bond payment of \$3 mill. due in mid-August.

The Expenditures report included in the packet is through the end of April per Rupert.

### 7. Ongoing Business:

### A. Report on Budget Transfers

There was no discussion nor were there any questions about the reported transfers.

# **B.** Other None

### 8. <u>New Business:</u>

### A. Consider and Possibly Act on Setting Tax Due Dates

Pierog said the BOF sets the mil rate; the BOS is charged with setting the tax due date. Jill Collins and Lori Bushnell are recommending a due date of September 1, 2021. If there is no budget by the beginning of the fiscal year the BOF has to set a temporary mil rate no higher than the current mil rate. If the budget passes that requires a higher mil rate an extra tax bill is sent out. If the BOF sets the mil rate lower than the current we are in a world of confusion. Certified letters will have to go out to everyone who has paid their tax bill, a form signed indicating they want a refund must be returned, and then a refund is made. Pierog spoke to Chairman to BOF about this process. Morra said keeping the current mil rate would be best.

**Motion:** I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen recommends to the BOF that the temporary mil rate be set at the current mil rate.

Friendly amendment: Recommends to the BOF that the mil rate be set no lower than the current mil rate and a supplemental bill be sent in January.

By: Morra

Seconded: Eremita

Discussion: Eremita asked what happens if the budget continues to not pass and the mil rate has to be reduced. Morra said there is a lesser chance of that happening. Institutions will not pay without a mil rate. This course of action should not affect too many people.

Voting: For: Morra, Eremita, Pierog Against: None Abstain: DePietro (due to technical difficulties)

**Motion:** I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen set the tax payment date without interest as September 1, 2021.

By: Pierog

Seconded: Eremita

Discussion: Eremita said if the budget passes on the next round do we want the due date set for September. Pierog said we have to give people 30 days. As long as we can pay the bond bill and the employees we can loan ourselves money.

Voting: For: Morra, Eremita, Pierog Against: None Abstain: DePietro (due to technical difficulties)

### C. Preliminary Discussion on Budget Cuts

Pierog said as of this point the BOF has reduced the BOS ask by \$217k, which drops the proposed expenditures to \$9k less than this year. The BOE has a large increase. At the next meeting or a special meeting the BOS will suggest/discuss where cuts can be made.

# D. Legal Opinion from R. Barger on Meetings

Pierog said the Conservation Commission held a meeting a private residence. Pierog asked Rupert to check with the FOI Commission and Town Attorney if a public meeting can be held in private residence. Rich Barger's opinion is that as long as it is advertised that the public can attend it should not be a problem. Meetings can be held anywhere as long it is properly noticed and anyone can attend. We have heard no complaints about that instance. Eremita asked does ADA compliance come in when it says no hinderance? Pierog replied that is a good question.

# E. Holding Meetings in Person

Pierog said the unified command of Emergency Operations Director, the First Selectman, the Schools Superintendent, the Health Director, the Safety Director for the Schools, the Fire Chief, and the Resident Trooper is recommending that we open all buildings except Notch Road on July 19<sup>th</sup>. This is the day after the Executive Order expires.

Reopening the Senior Center will have separate paths for entering and exiting the building so people are not passing each other going in and out. All will have to wear masks. The consumption of beverages and coffee will be allowed.

We are working on proposal for the library.

We are making the finishing touches on the plan for Town Hall. We are putting signs up at every door to indicate which door they should enter to visit a particular office. As part of ongoing issues with public safety people who visit Town Hall will be required to ring the bell. Employees can see and answer the bell from their workstations. This is to restrict access for those who should not be there. Masks will be required at every building and masks will be available at every door. Rupert said ambulatory need exceptions will be made at the Senior Center.

Pierog asked what the Members preference is for the August BOS meeting? Morra said he prefers to meet in person but a hybrid meeting should be offered. Pierog and Eremita are comfortable with in person or hybrid. DePietro prefers to stay in his home. Rupert said OWL technology has been added to Town Hall.

# F. Consider and Possible Act on Selectmen's Wage for FY22

### G. Consider and Possibly Act on Wage Increase for Non-Union Staff

Pierog went over the Combined 21-22 Wage Proposal 7-6-21 spreadsheet. Pierog proposes that we forego the Selectmen's raises for the next fiscal year. The Supervisor's union did accept the last best offer.

Eremita said the Selectmen foregoing raises is an empty gesture and has no impact because the employees don't do the same thing. Five people in the community of all Town employees foregoing raises serves no purpose. Other people do not follow suit. Morra said he understands where Eremita is coming from - it is a positive gesture with this caveat. Morra thinks we should structure the Selectmen's salaries to reflect who is doing the most work.

Eremita said if the unions and others followed suit that would be one thing. Pierog said the savings from the Selectmen not taking raises is \$445, which has no effect in the entire scheme of things. Morra said this point was addressed a number of years ago with asking employees to forego increases for a six month period. We may be in a position to go back and say this is where we are - can we all do this?

Rupert said no increases for the Supervisor's union was on the table but we did not have to do that at the time. Morra said he thinks the BOS can make that decision as part of budget deliberations. Pierog said we would have to go back to the unions and get permission; she is not averse to that in making considerations. Eremita said ~90% of budget is personnel salaries and fringe benefits; let's look at the biggest culprit.

**Motion:** I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen accept the proposed wages with the change to the BOS of a 2.25% increase and to change those salaries below minimum wage to minimum wage.

Friendly amendment: With the caveat that the BOS revisit this budget after the budget is approved.

By: Eremita

Seconded: Morra

Voting: For: Pierog, Morra, Eremita, DePietro Against: None Abstain: None

### H. Consider and Possibly Act on Resident Trooper Contract

Pierog said the new contract is the standard contract. The changes are listed on page one of the letter. Item 1 only applies to Town Officers or Constables under the supervision of Resident Troopers; this will not affect Bolton. The cost of the contract for this coming year without overtime \$340k which is less than budgeted for last year. That is due to the current Trooper having less seniority than the recently retired Trooper

**Motion:** I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen authorize Pierog to sign the contract between the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Protection and the Town of Bolton for the coming year

By: Morra

Seconded: Eremita

Eremita said he would like to figure out some way to coordinate coverage with other communities that have Resident Troopers in adjoining areas. There has to be some way to coordinate or combine with other services to have a police officer within a reasonable time or distance from the borders. Pierog said the Supervisor of Troop K has indicated the trooper for Bolton will spend all of his time in Bolton when on overtime until a call comes in from another town. The State Police have 5/3 or 4/2 schedule making it difficult to do some type of coordination.

Voting: For: Pierog, Morra, Eremita, DePietro Against: None Abstain: None

Jim Rupert asked if the BOS discussed what the Town wants to put forward as a policy to other Boards and Commission regarding in-person meetings. Rupert would like to have that guidance from the BOS.

**Motion:** I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen set as Town policy the adoption of the hybrid model for meetings.

By: Eremita

Seconded: Morra

Voting: For: Pierog, Morra, Eremita, DePietro Against: None Abstain: None

### I. Discussion on ARPA Funds received

Pierog said we have received a check from the feds of \$748k. We do not have any additional information on what it can be spent on. Rupert came up with the idea of working with Manchester to see if we can extend the sewer line up to Carlyle Johnson on Route 44. This would cover the drive-in, Dean's property and the Ansaldi property to make this area more attractive for development. It will also help with the other businesses because of the cost of annual water testing. The sewer extension would be ~\$1/3 mill. Morra said an issue in the past was about putting a pump station in to help with pressure. Pierog said that was the larger number in the proposal. Manchester and the water company wanted to extend into Bolton but the cost was too much. If Bolton partners with Manchester we may be able to put something together. This could be a real game changer. Pierog said the BOS will be talking about this at a future meeting. Rupert will do some preliminary work for the engineering portion of the project.

We also talked to Kristin about adding a ground mounted air conditioning system to Bolton Center School. Right now we rent air conditioners in the fall and spring which is money out the door. If the extension of the water project is around \$1.3 mill we will have money to spend on this.

Pierog said this money is in a separate interest bearing account.

# J. Consider and Possibly Act on ARPA Funds for EHHD

Pierog said we have received a request to help EHHD pay for the rental of the Mansfield Community Center Community Room for the vaccine clinic they held. EHHD is asking for a voluntary contribution of participating towns for the \$20k bill. EHHD did not anticipate receiving a bill from Mansfield.

Rupert said the first request was not very tactful. Town Managers and Administrators of the participating towns were upset about receiving this because many had asked to host a clinic at their town's expense. The Town of Mansfield is asking each participating town, with the exception of Mansfield, to pay a per capita portion.

Eremita said this is b.s. The other towns were more than willing to hold a clinic. It is ridiculous. I would send them a big fat zero; this is wholly out of line. DePietro agreed with Eremita's statements.

Morra said Mansfield put the health district in a tough position. EHHD did not know there would be a bill. Rupert said the EHHD did not know a bill would be generated from using the Community Center.

**Motion:** I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen send a letter to the Town of Mansfield to pony up and suck up the cost. I strongly recommend that they withdraw the bill to EHHD.

By: Eremita Seconded: DePietro Voting: For: Pierog, Morra, Eremita, DePietro Against: None Abstain: None

Pierog asked Kathy McCavanagh to send a letter to the Town of Mansfield saying sorry we aren't voluntarily paying. McCavanagh may phrase the letter as Eremita stated.

### K. Consider and Possibly Act on Increasing the Special Events Permit Fee

Pierog said Members probably know about the special event recently held at Fish Family Farm. A huge number of individuals attended the event that took a lot of Town Staff time, fire department time, and State Police time. Although the State Police time was paid for by the hosts the Resident Trooper spend most of his time that day controlling the crowds.

Rupert said events have been happening for a number of years at the Farm. Most of those were for the Lutz Museum which is a non-profit. The \$50 permit fee seems reasonable for a non-profit. This recent event was clearly for profit for the promotion company and benefited a local business, Fish Family Farm, as it sold out of 700 gallons of ice cream. Taxpayers dollars went to supporting the event. EHHD gets a fee from every vendor that they have to inspect. Currently our fee for a Special Permit is \$50 that was set in the 1970s.

Eremita suggested looking at a graduated fee based on profit or non-profit and on the number of anticipated guests. There would be a different scale for non-profit or profit.

DePietro asked what the event was. Pierog said it was a strawberry festival sponsored by the same promoter that does the East Windsor festival. DePietro said we should get back what it costs for the Town to support the event with the services used at for profit organizers.

Morra, Eremita, and Pierog suggests that Rupert come back to the BOS with a proposal for the Board to consider.

**K.** Consider and Possibly Act on RiMaConn Relay Marathon (August 28, 2021) Pierog said this relay ran last year. A detailed COVID protocol plan was submitted. **Motion:** I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen authorize the use of the trail for that day for the RiMaConn relay. Should they need assistance from Bolton Volunteer Fire they should reach out to them

By: Pierog

Seconded: Morra

Discussion: Morra said extensive protocol was received and it is a good route. There is only on road crossing at Steele's Crossing Road. Who has responsibility for the safety here – the race organizers or the Town? Eremita said he thinks the Fire Police manned the road crossing. Pierog said this will be mentioned in the note indicating approval by the BOS.

Voting: For: Pierog, Morra, Eremita, DePietro Against: None Abstain: None

### L. Consider and Possibly Act on Signs from FBL

Pierog said the Friends of Bolton Lake have proposed four locations of signs. Two are on State roads and two on Town roads. The town roads are 27 Quarry and 26 Tolland. The packet has a copy of what the signs will look like which is vivid green with white lettering. Pierog suggests the FBL work with Barbara Kelly to determine if the four locations are the best locations for the signs because that is not the edge of the watershed. Once locations are agreed on the Town will go ahead and get the State approval for them.

Eremita said what about the use of road salts? Pierog said Kelly can guide us on that.

FBL will be notified to get together with Barbara Kelly for locations and the content of signs and to come back to the BOS.

# M. Discuss Removing Existing Sign at Sr. Center and Replace at Front of Building and Place Refurbished FD Sign Where Existing Sign was

The Fire Department gave the Senior Center the old sign that was at the fire department. The BOS never accepted it or approved the installation. This is to formally accept the sign and installation approval. The view of the refurbished sign is in the packet. The three blank lines will be filled in by Senior Center Staff for current events.

**Motion:** I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen accept the sign and approve the installation.

By: DePietro

Seconded: Morra

Voting: For: Pierog, Morra, Eremita, DePietro Against: None Abstain: None

### N. Discuss Use of Everbridge Notifications for Non-Emergency News and Events

Pierog said at the last BOF, the Board discussed at length using the Everbridge notification system to get out information about the referendum. This was pushed out early in the morning and mid-afternoon. We received many calls about this notification saying they did not sign up for notification about voting. Do we want to continue using the system for non-emergency notices? A notice went out about the severe thunderstorm watch.

Morra said this was initially intended for emergency notifications. It is not clear if it can it be used for other things that are important for the town. Pierog said Rupert and McCavanagh checked with Everbridge when we purchased the software. It is not restricted to emergencies. Eremita said if we are going to do this for non-emergency notices, such as a flu clinic, a list should be put together, to the best of our abilities, of what the potential notifications may be letting people know up front when they sign up.

Pierog said this warrants further discussions on this. It is a matter of information to the public. Pierog had McCavanagh research for cost of the every door delivery when we moved the presidential voting location; it was \$2,200. We will put this in another agenda and talk about it further.

### **O. Discussion of Local Cannabis Sales**

Pierog said this is about the BOS prohibiting the use of marijuana on Town property. Some feel the woods at Herrick Park Woods is their personal bodega.

**Motion:** I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen prohibit the use of marijuana on Town property or facilities.

By: Pierog

Seconded: Morra

Discussion: Eremita said we already prohibit the use of alcohol on Town property. Both these substances alter your state. We should mirror the alcohol policy. Pierog said the use of marijuana is to be prohibited completely. She knows of no insurance today that would provide a use rider for marijuana whereas there is an alcohol rider for special events.

Voting: For: Pierog, Morra, Eremita, DePietro Against: None Abstain: None

Pierog said the policy will mirror the alcohol policy but leave out special events.

### 9. First Selectman's Report:

### A. Update on Board of Finance Actions on Budget

Pierog said this matter was discussed earlier in the meeting.

### B. COVID-19

Pierog said we have had 297 cases rating us below the state average. Rupert has arranged with EHHD a pop-up clinic to be held on the Town Green during the Night Moves concert, which is the best attended concert of the year. This will be on August 18 and the Johnson & Johnson vaccine will be used.

Rupert said a pop-up clinic is being planned between the library and Hartford Health Care during the month of July. McCavanagh said the date for this is July 22.

# 10. <u>Re-Opening:</u>

A. Other

Pierog said this matter was discussed earlier in the meeting.

# 11. Administrative Officer's Report:

# A. Update on Employee Health Benefit Change

Rupert provided a written report. There were no questions from the BOS.

### **B.** Update on Fire Truck Repairs

Pierog said she hopes all Members saw the email from Bruce Dixon. Rescue 134 was towed to Middletown due to an anti-freeze leak. Towing a large vehicle is not cheap.

### C. Other

None

### 12. Adjournment:

Motion: I move the Bolton Board of Selectmen adjourn at 8:47 p.m.

By: Morra

Seconded: Eremita

Voting: For: Pierog, 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.