

**BOLTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
7:00 PM, TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2024
BOLTON TOWN HALL, 222 BOLTON CENTER ROAD
In-Person and Virtual (Hybrid Format)**

MINUTES

Board of Selectmen Members Present In-Person: First Selectman Rodney Fournier, Deputy First Selectman Robert Morra, Mather Clarke, Gwen Marrion, Pamela Sawyer, Tim Sadler, Amanda Gordon

Staff Present In-Person: Town Administrator James Rupert

Staff Present Via Zoom: Recording Secretary Linda H. McDonald

Others Present Via Zoom: Nick Lavigne (Community Voice Channel), Jim Loersch, and one other

Others Present In-Person: Frances Rokicki, Jay Brudz, Aya Hoffmann

1. **Call to Order:** R. Fournier called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

P. Sawyer MOVED to open the agenda under New Business and add item 7.a.1: Discussion and Possible Action regarding the supplemental packet received today on the solar farm. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

2. **Public Comment:**

Jay Brudz of 25 Hanover Farms Road commented he plays in a band that sometimes performs at the town gazebo. He said it is awkward to set up the band at the gazebo because of the large shrubbery. Bands cannot set up in the gazebo because no one can see them. He proposed the removal of several shrubs and moving the garbage can to allow for equipment placement and to enhance the usefulness of the gazebo.

3. **Correspondence: Planning and Zoning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals Training Completion Letters:** The Selectmen recognized receipt of the Planning and Zoning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals training completion letters.

4. **Appointments:** No appointments.

5. **Approval of Minutes:**

P. Sawyer MOVED the Board of Selectmen approve the February 6, 2024 regular meeting minutes, February 8, 2024 special meeting and budget workshop minutes, February 13, 2024 special A/P minutes, February 20, 2024 special meeting and budget workshop minutes, and February 29, 2024 special A/P meeting minutes as presented. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

P. Sawyer MOVED to rescind the vote on the previous motion.

- P. Sawyer MOVED to approve the February 6, 2024 regular meeting minutes, February 8, 2024 special meeting and budget workshop minutes, February 13, 2024 special A/P

minutes, and February 20, 2024 special meeting and budget workshop minutes as presented. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

P. Sawyer MOVED to approve the February 29, 2024 special A/P meeting minutes as presented. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 4:0:3 with A. Gordon, R. Morra, and G. Marrion abstaining.

A. Gordon MOVED to approve the February 21, 2024 special meeting minutes. R. Morra SECONDED.

The following amendments were made (in italics) to the February 21, 2024 special meeting minutes:

Agenda item #2-

The Selectmen deliberated the requested budgets for the following departments and decided on the changes noted for each at this time:

- **Fire Commission:** *The changes were made to the Option 1 budget presented by the Fire Commission*
- **Police Protection:**
 - Reduce Payroll line item to \$300,000 based on figures from the State. This figure also includes \$10,000 for requested overtime.
- **Senior & Social Services:** *The money was added in to adjust for wages that the BOS had previously voted on.*
- **Recreation:** *The BOS completely reduced the Recreation Director's request of \$4,156 and added funds in for the Director's \$6,000 salary increase.*

MOTION to approve the minutes as amended CARRIED 6.0.1 with P. Sawyer abstaining.

6. **Ongoing Business:** No ongoing business.

7. **New Business:**

7.a.1 **Discussion and Possible Action regarding the Supplemental Packet received Today on the Solar Farm:**

Fran Rokicki of 19 Anthony Road spoke on behalf of concerned residents of Bolton and explained a company from California sent notice to the Connecticut Siting Council to waive exclusion from Connecticut Siting Council jurisdiction and petition for a declaratory ruling for the construction, maintenance and operation of a 0.999-megawatt AC solar photovoltaic electric generating facility located at 250 Carter Street in the Town of Manchester. The residents want a stay on the project. She said the company plans to cut down 8 acres of trees to install the raised panels and clear 12-15 acres around the panels to make sure the sun hits the panels. She said this effects Bolton because the project would be 500 feet from the Bolton line and is close to residential properties. There are several sites under consideration for this project, but the Manchester location is favored. F. Rokicki noted local approval is not needed for this project. She said some concerns raised by Manchester residents include the negative effect on property values, environmental impact, endangered species, water management, and safety and health concerns. The deadline for the public to request the CT Siting Council hold a public hearing on this proposed project is March 7, 2024.

The Selectmen discussed the impacts this project could have on the town and options available to the board.

A. Gordon MOVED that the Board of Selectmen draft an email to send to Melanie Bachman at the Connecticut Siting Council specifying that the Board of Selectmen would like to request that Petition NO. 1609 go to a public hearing to be held by the Connecticut Siting Council on behalf of the Board of Selectmen and other residents that may be impacted by proximity to the proposed solar farm. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

The members proposed notifying the Connecticut Siting Council by phone and letter as well.

P. Sawyer MOVED the Board of Selectmen reach out to Melanie Bachman at the CT Siting Council and ask for standing for the Town of Bolton on this particular issue (Petition NO. 1609). R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

**7.a Consider and Act on Herrick Park and Indian Notch Pricing:
Herrick Park Fees:**

J. Rupert explained the town just about breaks even with the current rates for paying staff overtime to come in, unlock, clean and lock the building. The period to rent the building currently runs from 9 a.m. to midnight. He is proposing have a five-hour rental limit since demand is high and this would generate additional income for the town. That could free up the space for more than one rental per day. Any change in the rental period would have to be negotiated with union staff. The Selectmen discussed rate and rental time proposals.

P. Sawyer MOVED the Board of Selectman increase the rate to rent Herrick Park for a 5-hour event for residents of the Town of Bolton with a \$200 deposit for use of the facility for a \$300 rental fee. The \$200 deposit to be refunded if conditions are met. For non-residents, the rate to rent Herrick Park for a 5-hour event would increase to a \$300 deposit and a \$450 rental fee.

P. Sawyer amended her motion.

P. Sawyer MOVED the Board of Selectman increase the rate to rent Herrick Park for a 5-hour event for residents of the Town of Bolton to \$300, with the current \$200 deposit for use of the facility to remain the same. The \$200 deposit to be refunded if conditions are met. For non-residents, the rental fee for Herrick Park for a 5-hour event would increase to \$450, with the current \$400 deposit for use of the facility remaining the same.

A. Gordon SECONDED.

J. Rupert commented that the proposed rate increases are based on comparable rates from other towns and the cost of labor, maintenance, and utilities as well. A. Gordon asked if there is a cancellation policy. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

P. Sawyer MOVED that the effective date be July 1, 2024, concurrent with the new fiscal year and those people who have already contracted to rent with deposit paid be grandfathered in under the old rate. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

Indian Notch:

P. Sawyer MOVED to table discussion and action on Indian Notch pricing. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

7.b Finalize FY2024-2025 Town Budget:

7.b.1 Assessor's Request for Cloud-Based Services:

The Selectmen discussed the Assessor's request for Cloud-based services. Consensus of the board is not to include Assessor's request for Cloud-based services in the budget at this time.

7.b.2 Part-time Help Request for Finance Department:

J. Rupert noted a decision of whether this request is in or out of the budget has to be made tonight in order to meet the March 15th deadline to get the budget to the Finance Committee.

J. Rupert said the Finance Director has told him the team is overwhelmed and noted there are things he needs from the department that often get pushed to the back burner that he does not get in a timely fashion because of the regular workload that happens. It prevents him from moving forward on some things as fast as he could. Automating some of the accounting paperwork would improve efficiency and free up the team.

To improve efficiency, J. Rupert explained he has been trying to get more department heads into the electronic finance system but that requires someone to set up the systems for every user, training every user, and that is efficiency he would like to bring into the town for all department heads and to the Finance Department.

A. Gordon MOVED the Board of Selectmen allocate \$25,000 to hire a part-time temporary intern for one year to be reassessed next budget season to free up the Finance Director's time to implement these changes. P. Sawyer SECONDED.

A. Gordon amended her motion and MOVED the Board of Selectmen allocate \$20,000 to hire a part-time temporary intern for one year to be reassessed next budget season to free up the Finance Director's time to implement these changes. P. Sawyer SECONDED the amended motion.

A. Gordon rescinded her motion. P. Sawyer rescinded her second.

Consensus of the board is to add \$20,000 into the Finance Department budget.

P. Sawyer MOVED to open the agenda under New Business and add item 7.b.3: Other Additions or Deletions to Finalize the Budget to Put before the Finance Committee by March 15, 2024. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

7.b.3 Other Additions or Deletions to Finalize the Budget to put before the Finance Committee by March 15, 2024:

Elections budget: After discussion, the consensus of the board is to reduce the Payroll line item in the Elections budget item by \$5,776 requested for referendums and \$2,352 requested for recounts.

Personnel: J. Rupert reported the insurance increase for the town's participation in the State medical insurance program is only 2%. The board had budgeted for a 3% increase. The

consensus of the board is to reduce the Medical (Town) line item in the Personnel budget by \$5,980, reflecting this updated information.

Fire Commission: A. Gordon recapped the adjustments previously made during the budget workshops, which included:

- Reducing Professional Education Training line item by \$4,000 to \$8,800
- Reducing Payroll line item by \$29,200
- Adding \$29,200 to Proficiency Fund line item
- Reducing Payroll line item by \$2,153.73, funding one less Lieutenant

The budget proposed by the Fire Commission included a 3% raise for the officers and an increase in the salary for the Chief from \$15,205 to \$29,500. The Selectmen had a meaningful conversation on the proposed raise for the Fire Chief, with the proposed raise remaining in the budget.

Bond & Note Expenditures: J. Rupert clarified that the Finance Director said she put the correct amount of money the town needed for interest and loan expenses for the fire truck for another year into the debt budget. A. Gordon asked if the board still needed to make the increase in the Bond & Note Expenditures if it is already in the Interest-Long Term Debt budget. A. Gordon noted an issue on the Outstanding Short-Term Note Interest budget sheet. The appropriation for FY2023-2024 is listed at \$30 (it should be \$30,000), as well as for the FY2024-2025 request. The board corrected the Interest-Long Term Debt budget sheet to reflect a FY2024-2025 Outstanding Short-Term Note Interest line-item budget request of \$30,000 and reduced the Bond & Note Expenditures budget line request to \$20,000.

Including the changes made at the meeting tonight, R. Morra MOVED the Board of Selectmen approve a total budget of \$9,254,066 and allow the staff to make any modifications as more data comes in, not to exceed the proposed number. P. Sawyer SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

7.c Discussion on Congressionally Directed Spending Grants:

A. Gordon explained the grants are open right now. She proposed the town apply for a grant for the Herrick Park lodge roof replacement for \$28,000 and the roof for the library for \$65,000 and possibly add an awning for the library not to exceed \$20,000.

A. Gordon MOVED that the Board of Selectmen authorize the Town Administrator to draw up a grant application for the Congressionally Directed Spending process for the Herrick Park roof and the library roof at about \$93,000 and potentially add on an awning for the library not to exceed \$20,000, grant not to exceed \$113,000. G. Marrion SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

8. Reports and Updates:

8.a Properties and Facilities Administrator Report: J. Rupert reported the Finance Department has moved into the town hall annex. He said the Registrars of Voters are waiting for approval this week from the State to move into the annex. He said the building is not yet ready for a scheduled public walk-through, although it is open to the public.

8.b FY 24 Budget Report: J. Rupert said the report is the same as last month, with the only area of concern in the waste collection budget.

8.c Budget Transfers: No transfers.

9. First Selectman's Report:

R. Fournier reported he attended the wastewater meeting and has been attending Finance Committee meetings.

10. Administrative Officer's Report:

10.a Monthly Report:

J. Rupert reported the mandatory walk-through for Notch Road Municipal Center with the contractors interested in bidding on the demolition project is on Thursday at 10 AM. He updated the Selectmen on the status of the grant funding for Connectivity Trail. He reported the grant amount at the start was \$186,110. To date, \$97,438.43 has been spent on planking, catch basins, topsoil, grass seed, hay, engineering services, renting an excavator to do some of the work, and \$20,000 to a contractor to do some of the work. There is also \$11,744.66 encumbered. This leaves a balance of \$76,926.977, which he noted is enough to complete the project.

10.b Other:

The consensus of the board was to schedule the next A/P meeting for Tuesday, March 19, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

11. Adjournment: R. Morra MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 p.m. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

Respectfully submitted by Linda H. McDonald

Linda H. McDonald

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

Town of Bolton

Sign In Sheet

Meeting: Board of Selectmen Date: 3/5/24

Print Name	Print Address
1. Frances Rokicki	19 Anthony Rd
2. JAY Ruck	25 Hester Ferry Rd
3. Aya Hoffmann	29 Rolling Hills Trail Bolton
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