

**BOLTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
7:00 PM, TUESDAY, JANUARY 2, 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, Amanda Gordon, Mather Clarke, Gwen Marrion, Tim Sadler, Pamela Sawyer

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), Rhea Klein, Sandra Pierog

Others Present In-Person: Jim Loersch, Sylvia Ounpuu, David Keating, Tatiana Keating, Barbara Amodio

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

2. Public Comment:

Jim Loersch of Brookfield Road commented that the town needs a new town hall. He believes the perfect location is at the old elementary school location. He said this current facility is obsolete.

Sandra Pierog reported that the Registrars met with the Board of Education (BOE). The BOE voted to change the current year calendar so there will be no school on April 2, 2024 so the Presidential Preference primary can be held at Bolton Center School (BCS) for District 1. She said federal law requires that the Presidential Preference primary and the Presidential election be held in the same location. That means, for District 1, that location will be BCS and District 2 will remain at St. Maurice Church. S. Pierog asked for an update on the status of the planning of the proposed trail to come through the Heritage Farm and down Brandy Street. She said, as a former First Selectman, she is opposed to delegating the approval of pistol permits to anyone other than the First Selectman. She said the First Selectman has knowledge of the community and the residents that are not shared by the Town Administrator or any other member of the BOS. Working with the Resident Trooper, she doubts the Town Administrator would have that kind of knowledge. S. Pierog noted there has been a lot of talk about the First Selectman's salary and taking duties away from First Selectman is not the way to impress the community with the need to increase that salary. She commented that the costs of the pension and health insurance should be kept in mind when the BOS is looking at benefits. S. Pierog stated she believes a small increase of several thousand dollars would be appropriate for a First Selectman.

Sylvia Ounpuu of 48 Stonehedge Lane said she is representing Bike Walk Bolton (BWB) and read the following document into the record:

"In an effort to understand how we can reduce lane widths and improve safety for all road users on state roads in Bolton, Bike Walk Bolton attended the CT Bike Ped Advisory Board meeting on December 15, 2023 and requested information in the public comment section of the meeting.

We were referring specifically to Rte 44 in Bolton which has just been repainted with lane widths up to 17 feet in many sections.

Stephen Hall, Transportation Engineer at the CT DOT provided the following information:

- An updated Complete Streets Controlling Design Criteria went into effect 9/1/2023.
- The re-striping that recently occurred on Rt 44 was probably authorized before 9/1/2023, which explains why the DOT didn't reduce the lane widths. The next time re-striping occurs, the updated Complete Streets Criteria will apply. This will result in narrowed lanes and increased shoulder width on state roads.
- The updated Complete Streets Controlling Design Criteria applies for re-striping projects and does not require repaving to be part of the project.
- It is the responsibility of the DOT to execute the updated criteria on state roads, with no requirement that the towns request a change. The towns will be notified when DOT plans to make changes per the new criteria, but the towns cannot simply say they don't want the changes. If a town does not want the reduced lane widths, there must be a valid technical reason and the DOT Chief Engineer would need to approve a waiver.

Bike Walk Bolton hopes that the Town of Bolton will also apply the Complete Streets criteria on any new painting of town toads in Bolton wherever possible to improve the safety of all Bolton road users and reduce motorist speeding.”

Barbara Amodio commented she never knows why the BOS cannot ask questions during public comment and where does a comment from public go from there. J. Rupert responded that a topic brought up during public comment could be put on a future agenda.

Dave and Tatiana Keating of 17 Brandy Street said they heard about sidewalks coming in and asked when that would happen.

3. Correspondence: No correspondence.

4. Approval of Minutes:

4.a Regular Meeting Minutes -December 5, 2023: The minutes of the December 5, 2023 regular meeting were amended as follows:

5.a A. Gordon proposed that the board could hear from ~~prior the~~ First Selectmen at the public hearing and suggested the board members consider tracking and documenting what they do, believing it is important **for town residents to understand the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Selectmen.** ~~to the future of Bolton.~~

P. Sawyer MOVED to approve the December 5, 2023 regular meeting minutes as amended. G. Marrion SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

4.b Special A/P Meeting Minutes–December 19, 2023: The minutes of the December 19, 2023 special meeting were amended as follows:

Responding to a question from A. Gordon, he said the total cost is less than renting the unit for ~~three years.~~ **J. Butrymovich said the ramp would be about \$600 per month, which would equal \$21,600, which was actually less than the amount to purchase, but because of**

projecting to extend the lease beyond the three-years, it will end up being the more economical option.

R. Morra MOVED to approve the December 19, 2023 special meeting minutes as amended. T. Sadler SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1 with P. Sawyer abstaining.

5. Ongoing Business:

5.a Consider and Act on Giving the Town Administrator the Authorization to Perform Various Firearms Permitting and Administrative Functions:

J. Rupert reported he had spoken with the Town Attorney since the last meeting. The attorney is working on a clarifying memo which includes answering the question, does the Charter give the BOS the authority to delegate those types of activities.

P. Sawyer MOVED to table consideration and action on giving the Town Administrator the authorization to perform various firearms permitting and administrative functions to next month's regular meeting. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

5.b Consider and Act on changing BOS Meeting Date of October 8, 2024 to October 1, 2024:

P. Sawyer MOVED the Board of Selectmen change the BOS regular meeting date of October 8, 2024 to October 1, 2024. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

6. New Business

6.a Consider and Act on the Grant for the Parking Lot near Munson's:

G. Marrion MOVED to re- apply for that grant. A. Gordon SECONDED.

G. Marrion provided background information on the prior grant application by the town to the Recreational Trail Program through the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). She said the grant was for the construction of a parking lot on Route 6 in order to gain access to 153 acres of open space owned by the town. The grant was submitted and the town did not receive the funding. G. Marrion said there is a new round of funding under the same program being offered. She acknowledged there are some concerns about this location. She described the location of the proposed 6 to 8 car parking lot and said not a lot of heavy construction would have to be done.

Discussion followed regarding the safety of cars entering and exiting the parking lot and possible options.

P. Sawyer MOVED to table consideration and action on the grant for the parking lot near Munson's to the next meeting with the desire to have outreach to the State Traffic Commission to look at this particular item. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

No action taken.

7. Reports and Updates:

7.a Properties and Facilities Administrator Report: J. Rupert reported the ramp for the town hall annex building is scheduled to be installed this week and work is continuing for computer and internet connectivity.

R. Morra commented that the prior BOS hired Landie Construction to do the walkway and then extended the contract to have them complete the work on the trail. J. Rupert explained there were two different projects that was not made clear in the minutes. He asked the BOS to consider a clarifying motion. The two actions taken were initially for Landie Construction to do the drainage work for the amount of \$19,850. The BOS later discussed that they would like Landie Construction to finish the trail in the amount of \$17,000. J. Rupert said there was a bid waiver for both projects. There was also a bid waiver for the purchasing of stone. The clarifying motion would allow Landie Construction to be paid for the initial project for the drainage work.

R. Morra MOVED that the Board of Selectmen approve the \$19,850 to Landie Construction for completion of the drainage work as part of the Connectivity Trail and waiving the bid process for such. G. Marrion SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 4:0:3 with A. Gordon, G. Marrion and M. Clarke abstaining.

7.b FY 24 Budget Report: J. Rupert reported the tax collection report indicates the town is right on track with the tax collection rate as of 11/30/2023. He noted the Tax Collector does an amazing job. He reported he is watching the waste collection budget and is concerned there may be some underbudget there, partially due to higher disposal costs and fluctuations in the commodities market for recyclables. All other categories within the budget are on track.

7.c A/P Report:

P. Sawyer MOVED that the Board of Selectmen accept the A/P report as presented. R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

7.d Budget Transfers:

P. Sawyer MOVED that the Board of Selectmen approve a \$3,500 budget transfer from category Repairs to category Fire Service Maintenance in the Fire Commission budget . R. Morra SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

8. First Selectman's Report:

R. Fournier reported he participated in a meeting with the Registrars of Voters and ROV will be moving into the annex building where they will conduct early voting. He said he attended a press conference at the firehouse announcing a bill passed by the U. S. Congress dubbed the Sargeant First Class Michael Clark TRICARE Reservist Parity Act. Sargent 1st Class Clark, from Bolton, was killed during a training exercise in 2022 while serving in the U.S. Army Reserve. The families of those who die while training within the U.S. Army Reserve and the National Guard will now receive the same health benefits as those received by the families of active-duty soldiers.

9. Administrative Officer's Report :

10.a Monthly Report:

Highlights from J. Rupert's report include:

- Interviews were conducted for Fire Marshal, Assistant Building Official and Library I position and offers are being finalized
- There was storm damage heavy impact from recent December storm (trees down, power outages)
- FOIA training was conducted on 12/14
- Web EOC training was conducted for the Selectman's office staff

- The Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) was updated to meet new guidelines from Homeland Security
- UCONN Technical Assistance for Brownfields (TAB) presentation on the re-use of the Notch Road space. When available, a copy of the presentation will be shared with the BOS
- Information has been posted for the farm lease at the Heritage Farm
- J. Rupert met with the Town of Vernon mayor and Town Administrator along with Friends of Bolton Lake to discuss the drawdown policy of the Bolton Lakes and Bolton watershed. He acknowledged the Friends of Bolton Lake, made up of persons from Bolton and Vernon, for all their volunteer work on all three lakes. He said they are a tremendous asset looking out for the lakes.

9.b Other: J. Rupert commented that, at the last meeting, G. Marrion brought up the idea of having a workshop meeting for members to come together to see if they have common goals and ideas the BOS would like to work on. He said this would be a public meeting with an agenda and available to the public. He said the members have to determine when and where this workshop would occur and decide if they would like to have a facilitator.

J. Rupert reported the Town Engineer walked the Heritage Farm site with G. Marrion and put forth some ideas on how to traverse that property. He noted there have been several meetings with those who have concerns to try to address those concerns. After a setback from an injury, a draftsman from Nathan L. Jacobson and Associates is wrapping up the plans so the town can hold a second informational meeting.

The consensus of the board was to schedule the next A/P meeting for Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

10. Adjournment: P. Sawyer MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 p.m. R. Morra 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.