

**BOLTON BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18 , 2021– 7:15 pm
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM WEBSITE PLATFORM**

Minutes

Board of Finance Members Present: Chairman Emily Bradley, Vice-Chair Robert Munroe, Ross Lally, Charles Danna Jr., Kristen Gourley, Robert DePietro, and Richard Tuthill

Board of Selectmen Present: First Selectman Sandra Pierog and Selectman Robert DePietro

Board of Education Members Present: Superintendent of Schools Kristin Heckt (joined meeting at 7:27 p.m.)

Staff Present: Administrative Officer Joshua Steele Kelly, Chief Financial Officer Jill Collins, and Board Clerk Linda McDonald

Others Present: Nick Lavigne CVC

1. Call to Order: E. Bradley called the meeting to order at 7:18 p.m.
2. Public Participation: S. Pierog reported updates from the Health District recorded 222 total cases of coronavirus in Bolton since 2/15/2021, an increase of 111 cases since 1/1/2021. She said 70% of the over 75 population have received one dose of the vaccine and 12% of the overall population, including first responders and nursing home residents have been vaccinated.
3. Approval of Minutes:
 - 3.1 Approval of January 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes: The January 21, 2021 regular meeting minutes were amended as follows (in bold):

~~5.~~ **6. New Business:**

~~3.1 R. Tuthill MOVED to approve the December 17, 2020 regular meeting minutes as amended. C. Danna SECONDED. By roll call vote, MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0.~~

R. Tuthill MOVED for unanimous consent of the December 17, 2020 regular meeting minutes as amended. The Chair asked for any objections. Hearing no objection, the Chair said the minutes are passed.

R. Tuthill MOVED for unanimous consent of the January 21, 2021 regular meeting minutes as amended. The Chair asked for any objections. Hearing no objection, the Chair said the minutes are passed.

4. Elected Official and Town Staff Reports
 - a) BOE Update: Superintendent Heckt reported, as of January 31, 2021, the BOE budget is 49% expended for FY 2021. She said the students are doing as well as they can be doing. She is concerned with each student and are they making progress, doing well socially and emotionally.

Superintendent Heckt emphasized that even when we come out of this pandemic in education, there will be a number of years where we will have to play catch-up for kids. Resources will be needed to support what we need to do to make sure the kids are ok. She said, as a collective society, we have the moral and ethical responsibility to do that for our students.

Superintendent Heckt said she is so proud of the teachers, paraprofessionals, administration, custodians, cafeteria staff, and bus drivers. They continue to focus on what is right and best for the students.

Regarding CT CHIP, J. Kelly said the town had a proposed 17% increase from Cigna for the upcoming year health insurance coverage. Since then, the largest entity in the CT CHIP program has tentatively decided to bail out for the upcoming fiscal year and the increase has been adjusted up to 23%.

Superintendent Heckt added that upward proposed adjustment caused the rest of the entity to go out to bid. The town has asked CIGNA for a re-quote as a whole entity and as individual entities as well as asking other insurance carriers for quotes.

The BOE and Town have currently budgeted at the 17% increase for health insurance for the upcoming fiscal year. E. Bradley asked that the BOF be kept posted as they go through the process.

b) Revenue Summary: J. Collins reported, as of January 31, 2021, the current tax levy collected was at 100.37%. The current motor vehicle levy collected was at 95.85%, supplemental motor vehicle levy collected was at 71.33%. The Governor's Executive Order has extended the time to pay supplemental motor vehicle levy to 4/1/2021.

S. Pierog reported the town has a preliminary figure for the grand list from the Assessor, which is subject to Board of Tax Review, who will meet in two weeks. Final grand list numbers should be available for the March BOF meeting. S. Pierog noted personal property and real property percentages are up and the effects of crumbling foundations are still affecting the grand list.

J. Collins reported the town has received the 2nd payment of ECS and the total grants anticipated amount is on target. E. Bradley noted the Town will probably not hit the budgeted target of \$75,000 on interest revenue.

c) Town Update: Administrative Officer Joshua Steele Kelly reported the town is 45.79% expended as of January 31, 2021. He said staff continues to be fiscally responsible. The Elections line item is 58.33% expended and over-expended compared to all three prior fiscal years due to this having been an election year with additional costs associated with the pandemic. As requested at the January meeting, the Highways and Streets budget has been broken out into "snow/storm" budget and "other".

K. Gourley asked what a referendum costs the town. J. Collins responded costs have been between \$2,000 -\$2,500 per referendum. She added the cost would probably be more now due to additional staff, PPE and other precautions needed for COVID protections.

d) Other: No other discussion.

5. Ongoing Business:

a) Refunding Update:

R. Tuthill asked why the term “refunding bonds ” and not “refinancing bonds ” is used. For clarification, J. Collins explained it is called refunding because the town is not actually refunding the bonds it has. What happens is the town sells the original bonds and the money from that sale is used to purchase lower interest rate bonds. The town is technically selling and then buying bonds. J. Kelly said it is common nomenclature in municipal bond issuance that it would be considered a refunding.

S. Pierog explained the current bonds that are outstanding had a call feature which allowed the town to call them in, essentially buy them back and now the town is selling a new round of bonds at a much lower interest rate.

J. Kelly noted the bond sale was completed yesterday. J. Collins reported the town saved \$27,930 in interest payments this year with the sale and \$23,238 will be saved next year. The interest rate is fixed for the life of the bond, not a variable rate.

J. Kelly reported on February 10, 2021 Moody’s Investment Service upgraded the town’s general obligation debt to Aa2 from Aa3. The opinion stated: “While the tax base is limited and small relative to similarly rated peers, resident income and wealth levels are strong. Long-term liabilities are very low, as are fixed costs, providing the town with notable operating flexibility. On February 10, we upgraded the town's outstanding general obligation debt to Aa2 from Aa3. Concurrently, we assigned a Aa2 rating to the Town of Bolton, CT’s \$2.7 million General Obligation Refunding Bonds, Issue of 2021.”

S. Pierog thanked J. Collins and J. Kelly on their hard work relating to the bond rating upgrade.

b) Charter Revision Discussion:

E. Bradley reported the Charter Review Committee (CRC) has been reviewing and making suggestions for changes to the Town Charter. The CRC recently held a public hearing and will evaluate comments made from the public at their next meeting and then submit their recommendations to the Board of Selectmen (BOS). E. Bradley explained the CRC has proposed replacing the Board of Finance with a Finance Committee comprised of 3 BOS members and 3 BOE members and one member appointed by BOS and one member appointed by BOE. Also, currently, if a budget fails at referendum, the budget can only be revised down. The CRC proposal is that the budget could go up or down after a failed referendum vote. K. Gourley noted the verbiage in the Town Charter would be to “revise” the budget after a failed referendum. C. Danna asked who would set the mil rate if the BOF did not exist and that would have to be addressed by the CRC in the Charter revision.

S. Pierog explained the BOS will get a report from the CRC and then hold a public hearing. The BOS will get a chance to revise the Charter after that and then build and write the referendum ballot question(s). September 3, 2021 is the last date to submit the ballot question to the Secretary of State.

Discussion followed on forwarding comments to the BOS as individuals or as a statement from the whole board. S. Pierog said comments can be made by elective officials until the referendum ballot questions are set by the BOS. The BOS will hear the comments from the CRC on March 2, 2021.

R. DePietro MOVED the Board of Finance Chair draft a united position on behalf of the Board of Finance in response to the Town Charter revisions the Charter Revision Committee presented at their public hearing and submit the position to the Board of Selectmen. R. Lally SECONDED.

After discussion, the motion was amended as follows:

R. DePietro MOVED the Board of Finance Chair draft a united position on behalf of the Board of Finance in response to the Town Charter revisions the Charter Revision Committee presented at their public hearing for review at next regular Board of Finance meeting on March 18, 2021. R. Lally SECONDED.

R. Tuthill called for unanimous consent. E. Bradley objected. By roll call vote, MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

c) CAPA Update:

J. Kelly reported CAPA has met twice and has a preliminary draft that they were moving forward to the BOS for approval. But given new information, the CAPA committee will re-convene in a few weeks to discuss the possible track project addition that may be installed at Bolton High School. The Town is waiting on an up-to-date cost estimate from the town engineer to figure out how and where it might fit into the capital plan.

R. Tuthill noted there is a line item in the capital budget of 1.25 million to fix drainage problem at the school. He said the project is larger than just drainage issues and includes preparations for increasing the playing size and lighting at the soccer field.

d) FY2021 Budget:

J. Collins shared the foreseeable problem of anticipated lower interest revenue. She said, currently, Columbia student enrollment is less than anticipated resulting in \$45,635 lower tuition revenue than what was budgeted. She reported the revenue from the Town Clerk's office is running above what was budgeted.

e) Budget Calendar: No changes were made to the budget calendar.

6. New Business:

a) Consider and Possibly Act Upon Fund Balance Policy Changes:

E. Bradley said one thing that has come to light through the Moody process of bond rating is they take a look at the town's fund balance, where it needs to be and that factors into the bond rating. She said J. Kelly has identified that some work might have to be done on the Unreserved and Undesignated Fund Balance Policy to strengthen it and make it more attractive in the future.

J. Kelly explained, according to the Moody's bond rating, they calculated the available fund balance for the town totals 4 million or 18.4% of revenue. This is below the national median of 42.6% for the rating category and the state median of 20.1%. He said, he and J. Collins have

been able to collect a number of fund balance policies adopted by other municipalities in the state that are considered to be more robust.

J. Kelly said he would like to have a consideration of reviewing the fund balance policy to bring it in line with something that has demonstrated effectiveness and will help the town propel itself forward.

Consensus was for J. Kelly to prepare a draft policy for the March meeting, possibly using a power point or executive summary presentation highlighting the significant changes from the current policy so the board can do a comprehensive review.

7. Adjournment: E. Bradley adjourned the regular meeting at 9:18 p.m.

Next Regular Meeting: March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting - 7:15 p.m.

Upcoming Special Meetings: March 25, 2021 and March 30, 2021 – 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Linda H. McDonald, Board Clerk

Linda H. McDonald,

PLEASE SEE THE MINUTES OF SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS FOR THE APPROVAL OF THESE MINUTES AND ANY CORRECTIONS HERETO.

**BOLTON BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2021– 7:15 pm
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM WEBSITE PLATFORM
Minutes**

Board of Finance Members Present: Chairman Emily Bradley, Vice-Chair Robert Munroe, Ross Lally, Charles Danna Jr., Kristen Gourley, Robert DePietro, and Richard Tuthill

Board of Selectmen Present: First Selectman Sandra Pierog and Selectman Robert DePietro

Board of Education Members Present: Superintendent of Schools Kristin Heckt, Christopher Davey, Anne Decker, Rhea Klein, Scott Rich, Susan Pike, and Director of Business and Finance Kusal Huynh

Staff Present: Administrative Officer Joshua Steele Kelly, Chief Financial Officer Jill Collins, and Board Clerk Linda McDonald

Others Present: Nick Lavigne CVC

1. Call to Order: E. Bradley called the meeting to order at 7:17 p.m.
2. Public Participation: S. Pierog reported a total 238 total cases of coronavirus in Bolton, an increase of 6 cases in the last two weeks. She said about 1 million or more people in the state have received first doses of vaccine, and 500,000 who are considered completely vaccinated. Eighty percent of those over 75 are fully vaccinated. She noted the governor's executive powers expire April 20 and the governor's office is meeting tomorrow with Democratic legislative leaders and then with all legislative leaders next Monday to work through the need for quick legislation on future meetings, whether towns can continue to do them in a hybrid manner or all electronically, Per the governor's office, after March 19th, there will be no restrictions on in-person meetings but capped at 50 people in attendance and socially distant. S. Pierog said she would keep the board up to date on meetings. She said many local leaders, mayors, who are concerned that the only facility they have large enough in their community to hold a socially distant meeting is an education institution and then adding stress on the education environment and that is the case in Bolton.

Superintendent Heckt added that the school does not even let visitors into the school buildings and the idea that there could be many people in the building, many of whom may not be vaccinated or could be carriers of the virus, is a great stressor.

Superintendent Heckt reported, through the Eastern Highlands Health District (EHHD), a closed COVID 19 vaccine clinic was on March 10, 2021. A clinic to administer the second dose of the vaccine for participants is scheduled for April 7th. She said a large portion of staff took advantage of the vaccine clinic. She said, this week, the 6-12th graders returned to 4 days a week in the classroom and Wednesday is still a distance learning day for all students. She said the food service staff have been amazing, working through out summer as well as during the school year. They are still handing out meals twice a week.

3. Approval of Minutes:
 - 3.1 Approval of February 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes: Approval of minutes was tabled to next regular meeting.
4. New Business:

a. Presentation and Discussion of Board of Education 's FY 2022 Budget:

The BOE power point FY 2022 budget recommendation presentation can be viewed on the town's website www.town.boltonct.org on the Board of Finance page, in the March 18, 2021 meeting packet.

Superintendent Heckt explained the FY 2022 budget is totally driven by the Bolton Public School 2020-2025 strategic plan. The BOE has a new mission statement and a new vision statement. The budget represents a 2.6% increase over this year's budget, an increase of \$388,108. She explained employee benefits are driving this year's increase.

Projected grant awards total \$641,885.

Capital improvements total \$190,000. There are some additional capital proposals for potential referendum items.

Columbia student enrollment numbers are anticipated to decrease.

2020-2021 accomplishments include quality education for all students during COVID-19, one to one chrome book devices for all students, ViewSonic interactive boards in all classrooms, integration of interactive online services, and advanced BPS technology plan, expanded coding instruction, embedded PD on blended learning and equity, and employment of new learning management systems.

Budget highlights include a shared service partnership with EastCONN, a shared service partnership with the town of Bolton, a new three-year contract with BEA, a new three-year contract with custodians, a new five-year contract with M&J bus company, and online services that support access for all students.

The future focus of the BOE budget includes implementation of the Bolton Public Schools (BPS) 2020-2025 Strategic Plan to respond to post-pandemic schooling, to guide the work of teaching and learning, and maintain BPS as a high performing district. Other focus will be on the return to the integration of transferrable skills at all grade levels, to support teacher leadership and curriculum development, and provide job-embedded professional learning.

Discussion on employee health insurance followed. Superintendent Heckt said the increase from CIGNA had gone from 17% to 23%, because one of the entities had officially left CT CHIP. Other entities have since pulled out of CT CHIP, so CT CHIP will now be defunct. The BOE was now need of seeking its own health insurance quotes which they have done.

S. Pierog said the town has been working with their insurance consultant and went out to bid as a stand-alone unit and also explored the State Partnership Plan (SPP). She has had concern with the SPP's ability to sustain the benefits it is offering at the price that it does so. However, if Bolton joins the SPP, the town will see an overall decrease in costs this year for both the town and BOE employees across the board, while continuing to offer similar benefits. The town is still in the process of negotiating with the unions because it is a union benefit that says the town must offer CIGNA or a better plan. CIGNA was a high deductible plan, so, with multiple unions having competing interests, there have been all sorts of issues. To this point, there have been

three meetings with union leadership. A meeting is scheduled for next week with the general union population, inviting any town or BOE staff that are not members of the union to get their questions answered. S. Pierog explained, if the town fails to move to the SPP, the costs will be an increase of 17% to the Town of Bolton. She said the FY 2022 budgets of both the town and BOE reflect a 17% increase for health insurance. It is the hope of the town that the unions will accept the transfer to the SPP, after which, the town will realize a significant savings in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Town and BOE staff continue to work on these numbers and the goal is to reach the best deal possible for all.

Superintendent Heckt said one piece not budgeted for is, if in fact town moves to SPP, it is possible that additional education staff will come on to the insurance. She said she will have to wait until open enrollment to determine the number of employees who opt for the insurance plan.

S. Pierog said the town can leave the SPP after three years, or sooner, if premiums change. Health insurance independently with CIGNA is a one-year plan.

R. Munroe complimented staff on their work and continued attention to this matter on this volatile component of the budget.

E. Bradley commented that Choice student enrollment may drop as well, as Coventry and Tolland are now accepting Choice students.

In response to questions from the BOF, Superintendent Heckt said the federal stimulus grant monies total \$76,019. Some of the grant has to go to addressing learning loss due to pandemic over the summer, technology, PPE and safety, and HVAC and ventilation. She also responded, based on Title I funding, Bolton will get a lot less because the town does not have a lot of Title I students.

Superintendent Heckt said this has been a struggle for kids and is concerned about the students' emotional needs. She noted that, since returning to four days of in-person learning, 17% of 8th graders are doing remote learning, down from 33%.

E. Bradley thanked the BOE members for the presentation and the work put into it.

5. Elected Official and Town Staff Reports

a) BOE Update

Superintendent Heckt reported, as of February 28, 2021, the BOE budget is 56% expended for FY 2021. The BOE has committed \$275,000 towards the FY 2022 budget. The revised under expenditure is \$106,593 after this commitment. She said she anticipates additional savings but at this moment, the BOE is comfortable with this figure of \$275,000. She noted the chrome books ordered last July for the students have finally arrived. She explained there is a projected decrease of \$105,000 in expenditures for salaries, wages, and employee benefits from vacancies the BOE was unable to fill. Some of the federal funds the district will receive will have to go to replace teachers' desktops in order to maintain school in the home and school in the classroom.

She said more PPE will have to be purchased as kids return and temporary AC units will need to be rented for spring and summer learning.

R. Tuthill suggested, in order to save time, to only hit the highlights when reviewing the BOE revenue and expenditure reports. Everything else in the reports would be considered in accordance with expectations, similar to how the town reports are provided to the board.

b) Tax Collection Summary: J. Collins reported, as of February 28, 2021, the current tax levy collected was at 100.43%. The current motor vehicle levy collected was at 96.48%, supplemental motor vehicle levy collected was at 86.72%. The Governor's Executive Order has extended the time to pay supplemental motor vehicle levy to 4/1/2021. She said the town is doing very well in tax collection.

c) Town Update: Administrative Officer Joshua Steele Kelly reported the town is 52.70% expended as of January 31, 2021. The Land Use Department line item is 68% expended and over-expended compared to all three prior fiscal years. He said this is not of real concern and has been addressed. He noted, some requests for larger purchases are coming in as the town gets closer to the end of the fiscal year, including some equipment items.

d) Other: No other discussion.

6. Ongoing Business:

a. Charter Revision Discussion:

E. Bradley reported the Charter Revision Committee presented their draft charter revision recommendations to the Board of Selectmen on March 2, 2021.

S. Pierog said the BOS will hold a public hearing on the charter revision recommendations next Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. via zoom.

E. Bradley asked how the members feel now that the Charter Revision Committee proposal is on the table. Members expressed their personal views on the proposed changes to the charter revisions regarding changes to the Board of Finance. E. Bradley asked the board members what they want her to do to move forward.

After considerable discussion, consensus of the board was to individually email their questions for the public hearing next week to Chairman Bradley, who will compile them and ask the questions at the public hearing. All board members were encouraged to attend the public hearing.

b. Consider and Possibly Act on Fund Balance Policy Changes: Discussion was tabled to the regular meeting on April 15, 2021. J. Kelly will annotate a copy of the proposed policy changes to the members.

c. Discussion of FY 2021 and FY 2022 Revenues: J. Collins had nothing new to report.

d. FY 2022 Budget Calendar: No changes were made to the budget calendar. S. Pierog said no budget referendum date has been set as the town is waiting for an answer from the state on allowing in-person budget referendums.

7. Adjournment: E. Bradley adjourned the regular meeting at 9:26 p.m.

Next Regular Meeting: April 15, 2021 Regular Meeting - 7:15 p.m.

Upcoming Special Meetings: March 25, 2021, March 30, 2021, April 1, 2021 – 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Linda H. McDonald, Board Clerk

Linda H. McDonald.

PLEASE SEE THE MINUTES OF SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS FOR THE APPROVAL OF THESE MINUTES AND ANY CORRECTIONS HERETO.

TOWN OF BOLTON BOARD OF FINANCE
Regular Meeting
March 25, 2021 – 7:15 P.M.
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM WEBSITE PLATFORM
Meeting ID: 882 4359 0062

Board of Finance Members Present: Chairman Emily Bradley, Vice-Chair Robert Munroe, Ross Lally (arrived at 7:20), Charles Danna Jr., Kristen Gourley, Robert DePietro, and Richard Tuthill

Board of Selectmen Present: First Selectman Sandra Pierog, Selectman Robert DePietro, Selectman Robert Morra and Selectman Kimberly Miller

Board of Education Members Present: Superintendent of Schools Kristin Heckt

Staff Present: Administrative Officer Joshua Steele Kelly, Chief Financial Officer Jill Collins, and Board Clerk Michael Stankov

Others Present: None

1) CALL TO ORDER

E. Bradley called the meeting to order at 7:17 P.M.

2) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

E. Bradley called for public participation, but there was none.

3) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. February 18, 2021 Regular Meeting

E. Bradley requested the matter of the approval of minutes to the end of the agenda, and the Board agreed with unanimous consent. After discussion of other matters, the minutes were taken up for discussion, with R. Tuthill noting that the strikethrough version of the document should have no bolded text for replacement language. The minutes were then approved with unanimous consent.

4) NEW BUSINESS

a. Presentation and Discussion of Board of Selectmen’s FY2022 General Government, Capital and Debt Budgets

J. Kelly opened the Presentation of the FY2022 budget with highlights of the accomplishments of the town for the FY2021, especially highlighting the deft navigation of the town through the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis as well as the implementation of multiple new programs and initiatives. He then highlighted the changes to the grand list that have occurred over the past year, noting the 0.81% total growth across the previous fiscal year, with most if the increase in the total coming from a 12.7% increase in

personal property. It was also noted that the valuation of real estate in Bolton has seen a .002% decrease in assessed value across FY2021 due to the number of structures in Bolton with crumbling foundations, a known problem at this time. He then contrasted the changes in the grand list with the 4.61% increase in total town expenditures in the same period of time.

J. Kelly next presented the proposed budget for the Town Proper for FY2022, first noting changes to staff compensation: these changes include, but are not limited to, a 2.75% increase in wages for most staff alongside a significant 17.0% increase in medical insurance costs. The Fire Commission's budget was raised to a greater percentage than that of the general 2.75% increase for wages to incentivize volunteerism among town residents, while the library received additional funding to hire an additional full time staff member.

J. Kelly next noted the Top Five Increases in the budget by dollar value, which were Personnel Services (mostly driven by the aforementioned medical insurance increases), Recreation, Town Building Operations, Library Services, and Fire Commission. The Board Members spent some time asking questions concerning the nature of the budgetary increases in Town Building Operations, Library Services, and the Fire Commission, and S. Pierog noted the small decrease in the budget allocation for the Planning and Zoning commission.

The presentation next shifted to focus on Bolton's Debt Outlook, with J. Kelly drawing attention to the fact that debt is level for the next several years after which there is a significant drop in expected debt payment in 2028 and again in 2032. Individual debt category expenditures remained largely the same from FY2021, with increases in Bond and Note Payment offset by reductions in Long-Term Debt Interest driven by a payment of the principle on existing bonds.

On the topic of Bolton's Capital Improvement Plan, the proposed plan would have a non-bonded cost of \$581,000, of which \$516,584 is requested from the taxpayers pending approval of the reallocation of previous year funds. This value is split between the expenditures coming from the Capital Improvement Fund (CIF), which handles projects over \$20,000 dollars in cost, and the Capital Reserve Fund (CRF), which handles all projects with a value of less than \$20,000. Per the Charter, the CRF must have 1-4 mills allocated to it each year, with each mill translating to ~\$450,000 for FY2022, while there is no such requirement for the CIF. The \$516,584 taxpayer ask for FY2022 includes \$25000 from the CIF for the replacement of windows at Bolton center school and renovation of the Library conference room. Meanwhile, planned projects that fall under the jurisdiction of the CRF total \$491,584 and include but are not limited to revaluation of the assessor's office, natural gas infrastructure expansion, and several improvements to the high school.

The FY2022 CIP also includes several projects that the BoS intends to bond for, including a replacement to fire engine assets, several repairs and renovations to town hall,

a series of major renovations to Bolton Center School including but not limited to HVAC improvements, roof remodeling, remodeling of the library, and improvements to science labs; the construction of a track at the high school's and improvements to the soccer fields. The total bonded cost of these various projects totals ~\$3,800,000, with the precise number and date of bonding to be determined after some final variables on the roof repairs and town hall renovations were finalized.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the board members spent some time discussing the various projects that were proposed for the FY2022. It was noted the J. Kelly, S. Pierog, and K. Heckt would all be in attendance at the next BoF meeting, and would thus be able to answer any questions on the plan as presented at the next meeting as well.

5) ONGOING BUSINESS

a. Charter Revision discussion

It was noted that the public hearing regarding the charter revision changes current under consideration by the BoS was currently in recess, and the BoS would be taking public comment until the 6th of April. The recording and minutes for the public hearing are not yet posted, but will be posted by the 6th of April when the next regular meeting of the BoS convenes. The Board members discussed whether or not to send a collective letter or memo to the Board of Selectmen regarding the proposed changes to the charter currently being debated, but chose to refrain from sending a letter until the proposed revisions were finalized.

b. Consider and possibly act on Fund Balance Policy changes

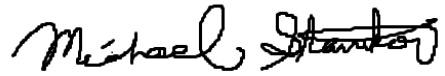
E. Bradley asked J. Kelly for clarification on several items related to the proposed changes to Fund Balance Policy. E. Bradley noted that policy strives for a ratio of net annual debt service expenditures to total budget expenditures of 6-8%, and asked about the origins of this value and its consistency with other communities. J. Kelly indicated that this was a common value used by surrounding municipalities and is a standard range to aim for and be achievable going forward. E. Bradley next asked if these policy changes would have any impact on the significant bonding that the town expects to do over the next several years, but J. Kelly and S. Pierog both noted that this policy should not have any negative impact and adoption could lead to improvements in bond rating.

R. Tuthill asked if a full version of this policy would be made available to the BoF, and J. Kelly confirmed that it would be. B. Munroe asked if the town's relationship with bond agencies would be improved by increasing the contribution the town made in this year's budget, to which J. Kelly noted that the primary method by which bond agencies would gain confidence in the town would be the adoption of this policy.

6) ADJOURNMENT

E. Bradley adjourned the meeting at 9:03 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Stankov". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and a stylized "S".

Michael Stankov, Board Clerk

Please see future minutes for revisions and corrections to these minutes.

**BOLTON BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 30 , 2021– 7:15 pm
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM WEBSITE PLATFORM
Minutes**

Board of Finance Members Present: Chairman Emily Bradley, Vice-Chair Robert Munroe, Ross Lally, Charles Danna Jr., Kristen Gourley, Robert DePietro, and Richard Tuthill

Board of Selectmen Present: First Selectman Sandra Pierog and Selectman Robert DePietro

Board of Education Members Present: Superintendent of Schools Kristin Heckt, Anne Decker, Christopher Davey, Rhea Klein (joined meeting at 7:50 p.m.)

Staff Present: Administrative Officer Joshua Steele Kelly, Chief Financial Officer Jill Collins, and Board Clerk Linda McDonald

Others Present: Bentley Memorial Library Director Elizabeth Thornton

1. Call to Order: E. Bradley called the meeting to order at 7:18 p.m.
2. Public Participation: C. Danna commented he attended a virtual discussion last night sponsored by the Bentley Memorial Library on crumbling foundations which included 51 participants. He said he found the discussion to be very informative.
3. Ongoing Business:

a) Discussion of FY 2022 Budgets:

E. Bradley welcomed Library Director E. Thornton to the meeting and asked her about the budget proposal to make a part-time position at the library full time.

E. Thornton responded one long-time staff member retired this past summer and the position was re-envisioned to focus on technology and programming. She explained there has been demand for technology and increased use of social media and the library needs extra assistance. This past year, all programming has been online and has increased. The library has a Facebook account, presence on the town's website, and provides a newsletter to patrons. E. Thornton noted the position is currently 25 hours per week. She said the reason for the request for this position to be full-time is that she wants to be able to continue with online needs when library re-opens and this would be impossible to do with the position at 25 hours. She said the patrons love the curbside service, downloadable items, and still like to browse the stacks.

E. Thornton noted the library has been providing delivery service to seniors during the pandemic as well. She said the person hired in October has never worked in the library when it is open and would be unable to provide the online and technology services at their current levels, in addition to other duties once the library re-opens. Other part-time employees have their own duties. She informed the board members that the Bibliomation network has converted to web client and the new hire was able to get the online training set-up and operating for the employees.

E. Thornton said, currently, she is the only full-time employee, and things take triple the time to complete with COVID measures in place. The needs of the library have changed.

E. Bradley thanked E. Thornton for her comments. Discussion continued on the FY 2022 budgets.

J. Kelly said the Board of Selectmen (BOS) looked at last year's budget and reduced several line items in the FY 2022 budget before sending the budget to the BOF.

S. Pierog said the BOS reduced the special administrative services line item by \$11,000. The remaining \$25,000 in this line item was moved to capital and non-recurring. The Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) was reduced by \$1,600. She commented that the BOS has not yet determined what the giveback amount to the Town will be.

Discussion followed on town spending during 2020 with the pandemic and its influence on determining the FY 2022 budget. A two-year averaged budget cycle lookback was suggested and discussed.

S. Pierog commented there is \$8,000 for hardware and software upgrades in the Communications budget. There will be a \$5,500 annual fee to run the software after that.

Superintendent Heckt and S. Pierog provided updates on the status of employee health insurance options.

Superintendent Heckt reported the BOE hopes to have a definitive answer next week after the BOE meeting. Procedurally the BOE has to discuss the MOA's in executive session and then come out and vote on them because they are official changes to negotiated contracts. She added the BOE still does not have the official rates from the partnership plan.

J. Kelly reported he has heard only positive things directly. The Town is requesting all of the different union groups sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and submit it back to the Town. Tomorrow is the deadline for submittal of questions or return of signed MOA's. J. Kelly said he will be following up with each of the union presidents tomorrow.

J. Kelly noted the increase in the Refuse Services line item was due to an increase in tipping fees as well as the increase in the amount of trash disposed. He said the Mid - NEROC consortium has fees that are rising.

S. Pierog said the Town building operations line item was increased because the Town had to move to a new alarm monitoring system provider that is more expensive.

E. Bradley said at the special meeting on Thursday April 1, 2021 the board will take a look at the initial view of next year's budget with everything put together at this point. No action was taken.

b) Consider and Possibly Act Upon Fund Balance Policy Changes:

Members reviewed and discussed proposed changes in the Debt and Fund Balance Policy, focusing on the sections of the policy relating to unassigned balance percentage target and replenishment of reserves fund balance.

In response to feedback from the board, J. Kelly said he will get some real numbers, using the current fiscal year as a staple and create a calculator within excel to allow the members to adjust percentages to see how much the Town would need to pay in the next fiscal year if the BOF were to adopt with 10%, 5%, 15%, whatever the case might be. He will email this to the members.

In response to the discussion, J. Kelly said his reason for bringing forward this policy the bond rating is the perfect example of immediate payback for having a good policy in place. He said he would not be recommending this to the board unless he believed, from a professional perspective, that this was the right thing to do. He said bond rating agencies are not looking at this as some kind of superficial exercise in order to get towns to squirrel away more money that is never going to be touched. He said they want to see that in place because it speaks to the financial vitality of the town; it speaks to the town's ability to pay off its debts in the event there is a catastrophic event; and it speaks to the town's ability to handle any such catastrophic event that might come up. So, having those monies set aside, while 10% is maybe too much to handle right now, that does not mean that the town should not strive to have a percentage of reserves that are seen across the country as being an ethically and financially correct number to aspire to for an undesignated fund balance.

E. Bradley said it is important to have something in place before next spring's bonding projects.

R. Munroe noted a change would be adding on significant ongoing additional annual expense to budget. The fund balance percentage has to be attainable.

No action was taken.

4. Adjournment: E. Bradley adjourned the special meeting at 9:19 p.m.

Special Meeting – April 1, 2021 7:15 p.m.

Special Meeting (if necessary) – April 6, 2021 – 7:15 p.m.

Special Meeting (if necessary) – April 7, 2021 – 7:15 p.m.

Next Regular Meeting: April 15, 2021 Regular Meeting - 7:15 p.m.

Public Hearing – April 27, 2021 – 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Linda H. McDonald, Board Clerk

Linda H. McDonald.

PLEASE SEE THE MINUTES OF SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS FOR THE APPROVAL OF THESE MINUTES AND ANY CORRECTIONS HERETO.

**BOLTON BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING
THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 2021– 7:15 pm
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM WEBSITE PLATFORM
Minutes**

Board of Finance Members Present: Chairman Emily Bradley, Vice-Chair Robert Munroe, Charles Danna Jr., Kristen Gourley, Robert DePietro, and Richard Tuthill

Board of Finance Members Absent: Ross Lally

Board of Selectmen Present: First Selectman Sandra Pierog and Selectman Robert DePietro

Board of Education Members Present: Superintendent of Schools Kristin Heckt, Christopher Davey, Susan Pike

Staff Present: Administrative Officer Joshua Steele Kelly, Chief Financial Officer Jill Collins, and Board Clerk Linda McDonald

Others Present:

1. Call to Order: E. Bradley called the meeting to order at 7:16 p.m.
2. Public Participation: R. Tuthill asked for a preliminary review of page four of the fund balance policy at the top of the agenda as to where the Town stands on non-spendable, restricted, committed, assigned, and unassigned fund balances.

E. Bradley reported the BOS had a meeting yesterday to discuss the Charter Revision Committee (CRC) recommendations. S. Pierog said the BOS did not get to discuss changing the wording of “revise” to “reduce” in relation to budget referendums, appointed vs elective positions, any changes to the BOS or the Administrative Officer position, and the structure of the BOF. A special BOS meeting will be held Thursday, April 8, 2021 to continue the discussion of CRC recommendations.

3. Ongoing Business:

- a. Discussion on FY2021/2022 Revenues:
- b. Discussion of FY2022 Budgets:

J. Collins said these preliminary figures are subject to change and have not been reviewed. With zero contingency, the full ask (expenditures) for FY2022 is \$23,372,993. Total revenues are \$4,261,470 (not including property and motor vehicle tax levies) resulting in a difference of \$19,111,523 between revenues and expenditures.

Discussion followed on the preliminary budget figures which show a decrease of approximately 2 million dollars in cash surplus available for appropriation between the revised FY2021 and FY2022 budgets.

R. Tuthill requested staff put together a power point slide that explains the difference between the cash surplus available for appropriation in the revised FY2021 budget (\$2,560,618) and the proposed FY2022 budget (\$537,078).

The board reviewed the preliminary budget revenues. J. Collins noted these figures are relatively conservative because of all the unknowns.

Discussion followed on the large projected reduction in interest on investment revenues and the unknown of if, and when, interest rates could be going up to possibly have a significant impact on the budget. Discussion will continue.

Discussion followed on moving more than \$25,000 from the existing contingency fund into the adoption of the new fund balance policy language.

E. Bradley said she will work with J. Collins to better understand the difference between the adopted FY2021 budget and the revised FY2021 budget and report back to the board.

S. Pierog explained the increase in the expenditure from \$0 in the revised FY2021 Recreation budget to \$32,000 in the proposed FY2022 budget. She said, prior to 2020, the town subsidized the recreation programs. In 2020 a recreation round fund was created and fees helped support the programs, with the goal of the recreation programs becoming self-sustaining. This past year there were no recreation receipts to put in the round fund and allocating the \$32,000 will allow the round fund to continue to operate and work back on the road to be self-sustaining.

c. Consider and possibly act on Fund Balance Policy changes:

E. Bradley said, at the last meeting two days ago, the board reviewed and discussed proposed changes in the Debt and Fund Balance Policy, focusing on the sections of the policy relating to unassigned balance percentage target and replenishment of reserves fund balance. She asked for clarification of the language: "The Target: The Town will endeavor to keep the Unassigned Balance at between eighteen (18) to twenty-five (25) percent of the current year General Fund budgeted expenditures." She asked what the figure for the unassigned fund balance is.

J. Kelly explained that, because these monies are set aside, the Town's Finance Director and auditor determine that they are, in fact, assigned for the purpose of being a rainy-day fund. This is different from the language in the revised policy. He suggested a way to bridge this divide would be to change "unassigned fund balance" to "rainy day fund" in the revised fund balance policy. That would help clarify that the Town is in fact, assigning this to be, what other towns might call unassigned fund balance, but what the Town is actually considering to be funds that are designated (assigned), in this case, for the purpose of being set aside for the rainy day.

J. Collins provided the following fund balance figures from the audit report:

Non-spendable fund balance - \$3,969
Restricted fund balance - \$0
Committed fund balance - \$149,753
Assigned fund balance (Rainy Day Fund) - \$1,736,344
Unassigned fund balance - \$522,886

J. Collins noted that past practice is that the unassigned fund balance goes to the next year's budget.

E. Bradley said her understanding is, from the board's perspective, the proposed goal in the policy is to have a rainy-day fund at between eighteen (18) to twenty-five (25) percent of the current year General Fund budgeted expenditures.

In addition, currently there is \$522,886 in unassigned funds and \$250,000 in contingency funds. E. Bradley explained the monies in contingency can either go to the rainy-day fund or go to fund next year's budget. \$25,000 of the contingency fund must go to the rainy-day fund.

Discussion followed on the adoption of \$75,000 each year to the rainy-day fund in the policy language. E. Bradley suggested language of "a minimum of \$75,0000 with a goal of x%".

J. Kelly shared the excel annual fund balance replenishment calculator he developed. He noted 18% would be the goal to work toward. He said possibly 15% could be used or the language could be changed to an actual dollar amount like \$75,000. He said it is important to show some forward progress.

Following discussion, J. Kelly proposed the following language change in the revised fund balance policy:

"Replenishment of Reserves - If the Rainy-Day Fund balance falls below the minimum Target level, the Board of Finance will, at a minimum, replenish the fund balance during the annual budget process by appropriating funds in the amount of \$75,000. The Board of Finance shall be permitted, but not required, to appropriate an amount greater than this minimum."

E. Bradley suggested the board could re-visit the policy annually to make adjustments to the target, if necessary.

E. Bradley said, in general, the Target at between eighteen (18) to twenty-five (25) percent of the current year General Fund budgeted expenditures is acceptable and the replenishment clause proposed by J. Kelly earlier seems to satisfy everybody. She said the next steps would be for J. Kelly to make all the edits and send back out to the members so the board could do a final read on, have further discussion and possibly move forward at the next meeting.

J. Kelly said he would reach out to Mark Chapman, the Town's bond consultant coordinator and the Town's auditor for feedback on the proposed policy language revisions. He said he would notify the Chairman if their comments were not available for the next meeting.

4. New Business

a. Consider and possibly act on: FY2022 Proposed Budget for Public Hearing: No action taken.

K. Gourley MOVED to add a special meeting to the budget calendar for Tuesday, April 13, 2021.
R. Tuthill SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0.

5. Adjournment: E. Bradley adjourned the regular meeting at 10:00 p.m.

Special Meeting – April 13, 2021 – 7:15 p.m.

Next Regular Meeting: April 15, 2021 - 7:15 p.m.

Special Meeting – April 20, 2021 – 7:15 p.m.

April 27, 2021 – Public Hearing

Respectfully submitted by Linda H. McDonald, Board Clerk

Linda H. McDonald.

PLEASE SEE THE MINUTES OF SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS FOR THE APPROVAL OF THESE MINUTES AND ANY CORRECTIONS HERETO.

TOWN OF BOLTON BOARD OF FINANCE
Special Meeting
April 13, 2021 – 7:15 P.M.
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM WEBSITE PLATFORM

Board of Finance Members Present: Chairman Emily Bradley, Vice-Chair Robert Munroe, Ross Lally, Charles Danna Jr., Kristen Gourley, Robert DePietro, and Richard Tuthill

Board of Selectmen Present: First Selectman Sandra Pierog (arrived 7:20) and Selectman Robert DePietro

Board of Education Members Present: Superintendent of Schools Kristin Heckt, BoE member Christopher Davey,

Staff Present: Chief Financial Officer Jill Collins, Building Official J. Rupert, and Board Clerk Michael Stankov

Others Present: Rhea Klein, Anne Decker, and Susan Pike

1) CALL TO ORDER

E. Bradley called the meeting to order at 7:17 PM.

2) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

E. Bradley called for public comment, but there was none.

3) ONGOING BUSINESS

a. Discussion on FY2021/2022 Revenues

E. Bradley noted that the proposed budget will need to be sent to the finance department by 4/22 such that it can be presented at the public hearing scheduled for 4/27, which will be held via zoom. The referendum vote for the budget is currently planned to be in-person, however.

E. Bradley next presented the revised grand list for the 2021/22 FY, noting the total increase in the grand list of .81%. Discussion then turned to a presentation of the total revenues and budgets for FY 2020/21 and how these values would inform the budget for FY 2021/22. E. Bradley went through the changes made by J. Collins to the revised budget for 2021, which included a \$15,000 increase to Building Official fees due to a large number of projects currently before the Planning and Zoning Commission and a reversion of selectman's fees to the adopted value of \$12,745. The total unexpended budget for the town, BoE, short term and loan/bond expenditures, and contingency fund totals \$975,000, some of which (particularly the contingency balance of \$225,000) may be able to be rolled into the budget for FY 2021/22 if they are not expended by the year's end.

b. Discussion of FY2022 Budgets

In total for FY2021/22, expected revenues sit at \$21,609,428, and the town's total means of financing for the year come to \$24,370,046. Meanwhile, total expenditures come to \$23,102,693, which leaves the town with \$1,267,353 in available cash going into FY2021/22. The anticipated budget for FY2021/22 totals \$23,397,993, which can be achieved by adjusting the mill rate to 41.64.

The Board next spent some time discussing the expected expenses and revenues for FY2021/22. S. Pierog and K. Heckt noting that some expenses, such as the insurance costs for members of all town unions, are expected to come down due to acceptance into the state partnership plan. Meanwhile, revenues for tuition are expected to decline slightly in 2021/22. It was noted that the contingency fund for FY2021/22 is currently set very low compared to previous years (\$25,000 compared to \$250,000), which is partially due to stabilization of several state-level financial situations. This low dollar value contingency fund was noted by several board members, though B. Munroe also noted that there were multiple revenue sources that are likely to come to the town that are unaccounted for in the budget at this moment that would serve as a cushion to town finances. After some discussion, the board came to a consensus that the lower contingency values was not a problem for further discussion at this time.

R. Lally noted that the budget for the upcoming year involves a significant increase (7%) over the values that have been spent to this point in the 2020/21 FY, and that it seemed to be a big ask to request a mill rate increase from the taxpayers when so much money has gone unspent this year. The Board spent some time discussing this concept, with BoE member C. Davey noting that one of the reasons that expenditures are lower than expected this year is the large amount of Covid relief money that came in as additional revenue that could not have been budgeted for.

In attempting to understand the necessity of the increase in the mill rate to 41.64, the board calculated the amount of money that would be taken in using the current mill rate adjusted for the increases in the grand list. Doing so yielded an approximate deficit in the budget of approximately \$1,400,000. The board then spent some time discussing any other ways to close this gap without raising taxes, such as solidifying the exact value that would be saved due to the aforementioned insurance rate reductions for town employees, but reached no conclusive agreement by the end of the meeting.

c. Consider and possibly act on Fund Balance Policy changes

Due to the lateness of the hour, discussion of Fund Balance Policy changes was tabled until a subsequent meeting.

4) NEW BUSINESS

a. Consider and possibly act on: FY2022 Proposed Budget for Public Hearing

Due to the lateness of the hour,

5) ADJOURNMENT

E. Bradley adjourned the meeting at 9:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Stankov". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael Stankov, Board Clerk

Please see future minutes for revisions and corrections to these minutes.

**BOLTON BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 2021– 7:15 pm
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM WEBSITE PLATFORM
Minutes**

Board of Finance Members Present: Chairman Emily Bradley, Vice-Chair Robert Munroe, Ross Lally (joined meeting at 7:23 p.m.), Charles Danna Jr., Kristen Gourley, Robert DePietro, and Richard Tuthill

Board of Selectmen Present: First Selectman Sandra Pierog and Selectman Robert DePietro

Board of Education Members Present: Superintendent of Schools Kristin Heckt, Christopher Davey, Rhea Klein, Scott Rich

Staff Present: Interim Town Administrator Jim Rupert, and Board Clerk Linda McDonald

Others Present: Community Voice Channel (CVC)

1. Call to Order: E. Bradley called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

2. Public Participation:

R. Munroe apologized for being too rigid in regard to the number the board was solving for as it related to the 1.22 million at the April 13, 2021 special meeting.

3. Approval of Minutes:

3.a Approval of February 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes

3.b Approval of March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

3.c Approval of March 25, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes

3.d Approval of March 30, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes

3.e Approval of April 1, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes

Consensus of the board was to table approval of minutes to a future meeting.

4. Elected Official and Town Staff Reports:

4.a Board of Education Update:

Superintendent Heckt reported, as of March 31, 2021, the BOE budget is 64% expended for FY 2021. The BOE approved a transfer of \$50,000 from Personnel Benefits to Instructional Technology to purchase 150 replacement Chromebooks to provide equitable access to content for all students in blended and remote learning environments. Some of the cost may be reimbursable through ESCR2 funding. The Chromebooks will be used next year and for a program over the summer set up for students experiencing learning loss. She explained the school has been doing assessments along the way of where students should be in their development of learning, specifically in the language arts and mathematics to determine which students need the most support. Funding for the summer program will come from ESCR2 funding.

She said the BOE, at their March 11, 2021 meeting, committed \$275,000 towards the FY 2022 budget. The revised under expenditures is \$56,593 net of this budget commitment and approved budget transfers. The BOE would have to vote to release the additional \$56,593 under expenditure at their May meeting.

R. Munroe noted the BOE has been carrying several vacant positions over the year that have gone unfilled. He asked if the BOE will be building up more unspent funds from now to the end of the school year. He asked if there is some consideration that the BOE might be able to look at those numbers carefully enough to say they could put more money in as a consequence of those unfilled positions before the end of the year. He said these unspent funds could impact BOF discussions of the FY 2022 budget.

Superintendent Heckt responded the BOE would have to convene a special meeting and she would have to discuss this with the Chair. She confirmed the BOE will continue to accumulate a savings of unspent funds between now and the end of the fiscal year. Her concern is that what the BOE does return goes into next year's budget which could potentially mean that there will less to put forward towards next year's budget.

E. Bradley said if new information comes in from the BOE after the BOF public hearing, the board will still have time to adjust the budget before the referendum.

4.b Tax Collection Summary: S. Pierog reported the Town continues to do an excellent job in tax collection. As of March 31, 2021, the current tax levy collected was at 100.49%. The current motor vehicle levy collected was at 97.05%, and supplemental motor vehicle levy collected was at 94.12%. Since the supplemental motor vehicle payments were not due until April 1, she said there may be more collections to report.

4.c Town Update:

S. Pierog said she doesn't believe there is anything on the March 31, 2021 revenue report that the town will not get that is of any significance.

S. Pierog reported the town is 59.34% expended as of March 31, 2021. The only category over expended is the Land Use Department which is 75.27% expended and over-expended compared to all three prior fiscal years. S. Pierog said the BOS has moved expenses for Jim Rupert from this budget to the Administration budget. She noted construction season has just started and highway projects have not been started at this point. A significant portion of the public works budget is expected to be used over the next three months for road repair and resurfacing. There will also be large expenditures in the parks department after the opening of Indian Notch Park.

Discussion followed about possible additional givebacks from the BOS and BOE.

Superintendent Heckt said she is working to schedule a special BOE meeting for April 29, 2021 and commented hopefully, the state will release health insurance premium rates by the end of the month.

E. Bradley noted the budget has to be finalized by May 10, 2021.

4.d Other:

5. Ongoing Business

5.a Charter Revision Discussion:

E. Bradley updated the board on the status of the Charter revision process. She said the BOS held a public hearing on the proposed Charter revisions and have discussed all the CRC recommendations. Regarding changing the structure of the BOF going forward, the majority consensus of the BOS was to support the CRC's recommendation to create a Finance Committee composed of two members of the BOS, 2 members of the BOE and three additional elected people. S. Pierog said the BOS has not yet submitted their working document report to the CRC. A formal vote will be held after the CRC responds to the questions sent to them by the BOS.

5.b Discussion on FY 2021-2022 Revenues: No discussion.

5.c Discussion of FY 2022 Budgets:

E. Bradley shared two draft working document scenarios as a starting point for budget discussion in preparation for presentation at the public hearing scheduled for April 27, 2021.

Scenario #1:

Calculations for keeping the mill rate the same as for FY 2021 (38.86) show \$20,910,437 for total revenue and non-revenue receipts, \$22,127,790 as a total means of financing and a total of \$23,397,993 in expenditures. This leaves a gap of \$1,270,203 between revenues and expenses.

Calculations for raising the mill rate to 41.74 show \$22,180,640 for total revenue and non-revenue receipts, \$23,397,993 as a total means of financing and a total of \$23,397,993 in expenditures.

Scenario #2:

Calculations for increasing the current mill rate by one mill to 39.86 show \$21,350,937 for total revenue and non-revenue receipts, \$22,568,290 as a total means of financing and a total of \$23,568,290 in expenditures. This leaves a gap of \$829,703 between revenues and expenses.

Calculations for increasing the mill rate to 40.00 show \$21,413,437 for total revenue and non-revenue receipts, \$22,630,790 as a total means of financing and a total of \$22,630,790 in expenditures. This leaves a gap of \$767,203 between revenues and expenses.

Calculations for increasing the current mill rate by two mills to 40.86 show \$21,792,437 for total revenue and non-revenue receipts, \$23,009,790 as a total means of financing and a total of \$23,009,790 in expenditures. This leaves a gap of \$388,203 between revenues and expenses.

Members weighed in with alternate scenarios, suggestions, and concerns to close the approximately 1.2 million gap.

One large unknown on the revenue side in regard to determining next year's budget is that the Town does not yet know how much it will be receiving from the federal government in American Relief Funds.

The large unknown on the expenditure side is the cost of the new medical insurance. The BOS and BOE are waiting on the final premium costs from the state. Once they have that, they may be able to revise the medical insurance expenditure numbers. This information will not be available before the public hearing.

E. Bradley said the board will have no new information on additional givebacks from the BOS or BOE or on revenues for the next budget meeting on Tuesday, April 20, 2021.

Discussion followed on the approach for the public hearing. The general feeling was to present the facts and reality of the unknowns in the budget being proposed and hearing the public feedback.

K. Gourley stressed the importance of the board being prepared for the public hearing, taking notes, and all members on the same page when responding to questions from the public.

6. New Business

6.a Consider and Possibly Act on FY 2022 Proposed Budget for Public Hearing: No discussion.

7. Adjournment: E. Bradley adjourned the regular meeting at 9:38 p.m.

Upcoming Special Meetings: April 20, 2021 – 7:15 p.m.

April 27, 2021 – Public Hearing – 7:15 p.m. with Special Meeting immediately following.

May 6, 2021 – 7:15 p.m.

Next Regular Meeting: May 20, 2021 Regular Meeting - 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Linda H. McDonald, Board Clerk

Linda H. McDonald.

PLEASE SEE THE MINUTES OF SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS FOR THE APPROVAL OF THESE MINUTES AND ANY CORRECTIONS HERETO.

**BOLTON BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING
THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2021– 7:15 pm
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM WEBSITE PLATFORM**

Motions

Board of Finance Members Present: Chairman Emily Bradley, Vice-Chair Robert Munroe, Ross Lally, Charles Danna Jr., Kristen Gourley, Robert DePietro, and Richard Tuthill

Board of Selectmen Present: First Selectman Sandra Pierog and Selectman Robert DePietro

Board of Education Members Present: Susan Pike

Staff Present: Interim Town Administrator Jim Rupert, and Board Clerk Linda McDonald

Others Present: Reporter Skyler Frazer from the Journal Inquirer

1. Call to Order: E. Bradley called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.
2. Public Participation: None.
3. Ongoing Business
 - 5.a Discussion on FY 2021-2022 Revenues
 - 5.b Discussion of FY 2022 Budgets
 - 5.c Budget Calendar
6. New Business
 - 6.a Consider and Possibly Act on FY 2022 Proposed Budget for Public Hearing:

R. Lally MOVED to adopt the proposed budget with \$130,000 in reductions with \$30,000 to come from the Board of Selectmen and \$100,000 to come from the Board of Education.
R. DePietro SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:1:0 with R. Tuthill opposed.
7. Adjournment: E. Bradley adjourned the special meeting at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Linda H. McDonald, Board Clerk

Linda H. McDonald.

**BOLTON BOARD OF FINANCE
PUBLIC HEARING
TUESDAY, APRIL 27, 2021– 7:00 pm
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM WEBSITE PLATFORM
Minutes**

Board of Finance Members Present: Chairman Emily Bradley, Vice-Chair Robert Munroe, Charles Danna Jr., Kristen Gourley, Robert DePietro, and Richard Tuthill

Board of Finance Members Absent: Ross Lally

Board of Selectmen Present: First Selectman Sandra Pierog, Selectman Robert DePietro, and Selectman Robert Morra

Board of Education Members Present: Superintendent Kristin Heckt and Christopher Davey

Staff Present: Interim Town Administrator Jim Rupert and Board Clerk Linda McDonald

Others Present: Paula Meyers and two unidentified others by phone

1. Call to Order: E. Bradley called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.
2. Public Hearing for the Town of Bolton Fiscal Year July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 Budget:

E. Bradley introduced the board members and opened the public hearing with a power point presentation of the budget process.

She explained this year's budget deliberations involved considering the current and future impacts of the COVID health crisis; assessing learning loss for students during the pandemic and determining how best to support them and incorporating online services into general operating procedures. She said the Town is expecting several reductions in revenues that have a direct impact on the budget; revenues from interest is expected to be considerably less than prior years and the number of Columbia students attending BHS is less than prior years, a portion of the received tuition goes to paying down Town debt.

E. Bradley said the budget presented tonight is based on what is known at this time. Unknowns at the current time are:

- health insurance costs and employee enrollment numbers,
- State grants will be less than planned, but final numbers have not been released, and
- The Town has not been notified if any additional COVID funds will be given to Bolton and what those funds can be used for

She concluded the presentation saying the board spent a significant amount of time discussing how best to finance the budget; balancing, maintaining, and improving Town and Education Services vs tax revenues for the taxpayers. Reductions in Town and Education budgets were made by the board. Increase in tax revenues will be required to balance the proposed budget. The Board of Finance is proposing an increase in property and motor vehicle tax revenues from \$16,984,153 (FY21) to \$18,262,203. To achieve this increase in tax revenues, this would translate to an increase in the mil rate from 38.86 to 41.45, a 6.67% increase.

E. Bradley noted, over the past five years, there has been a 3.6% total increase to the town's mil rate, well below the cost-of-living increase. The mil rate stayed level for three years and went down last budget cycle.

E. Bradley opened the floor to questions and comments from the public.

Bob Morra of 15 Tinker Pond Road asked if the board considered a rough idea of what the reduction in expenditures would be based upon the change in the medical expenses or is that simply too early to give a projection.

E. Bradley responded it is too early to tell. She said the board does not have those numbers yet as to what the final costs are and what the enrollment projections are to even know how big an impact it has on expenditures.

B. Morra asked if the board would hold off as long as possible as far as setting a final number and any mill rate modification that it currently has.

E. Bradley confirmed that is the plan and what the board put together tonight is based on what is currently known. The board will wait as long as it can before referendum to incorporate as much information available as possible.

Christopher Davey of 21 Mount Sumner Drive expressed his appreciation to the BOF. He said he sat in on quite a few of the budget meetings and this is clearly an unusual budget season this year given the number of balls that are still up in the air and do not know where they might land. He said he watched the board grapple with what that means for the townspeople. He is appreciative of the decision of the board to cut the BOS and BOE budgets slightly, but to present to the taxpayers a fairly significant tax increase and allow them to have the final word. He said we all hope that mill rate increase will not be anywhere near as large as what is currently projected to be and are looking for good numbers on the health insurance front. He said he appreciates the route the board has taken.

Hearing no other comments, E. Bradley closed the public hearing for the Town of Bolton Fiscal Year July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 Budget at 7:32 pm.

3. Adjournment: E. Bradley adjourned the public hearing at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Linda H. McDonald, Board Clerk

Linda H. McDonald,

PLEASE SEE THE MINUTES OF SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS FOR THE APPROVAL OF THESE MINUTES AND ANY CORRECTIONS HERETO.

**BOLTON BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 27, 2021– immediately following the public hearing
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM WEBSITE PLATFORM
Minutes**

Board of Finance Members Present: Chairman Emily Bradley, Vice-Chair Robert Munroe, Charles Danna Jr., Kristen Gourley, Robert DePietro, and Richard Tuthill

Board of Finance Members Present: Ross Lally

Board of Selectmen Present: First Selectman Sandra Pierog, Selectman Robert DePietro, and Selectman Robert Morra

Board of Education Members Present: Superintendent Kristin Heckt

Staff Present: Interim Town Administrator Jim Rupert and Board Clerk Linda McDonald

1. Call to Order: E. Bradley called the special meeting to order at 7:37 p.m.
2. Public Participation: There was no public participation.
3. Ongoing Business
- 3.a Discussion on FY 2021-2022 Revenues and Expenditures:

First Selectman Pierog reported the Town did get numbers from the State late last week but the BOS has not completed their analysis of what the cost savings will be. A lot of the ultimate savings will depend on whether employees who currently do not take Town insurance decide that this is a better option for them than their current coverage. S. Pierog said there are less than ten employees on the Town side that opt out of town insurance. She believes there will be some additional savings even if all opt in. The State Partnership Plan premiums came in slightly lower than expected for health insurance, however slightly higher than expected for dental and vision coverage. Overall, there will probably be a decrease in insurance costs to the Town. She added the Town has offered a \$700 stipend to employees to opt out of the Town's insurance and some employees, single and under the age of 26, may opt to stay on their parents' health insurance plan.

J. Rupert said open enrollment is May 10-24.

K. Gourley said there is also an unknown about employees who have spouses that may have lost health insurance over the year.

S. Pierog responded, from an insurance perspective, if your spouse was employed, became unemployed and lost their health insurance, this becomes a qualifying life event for an employee to elect into the Town's plan without waiting for open enrollment. She said the Town has not seen any of that on their side. She expects the number for savings over what is currently in the asked for budget, on the Town side, to be a minimum of somewhere around \$50,000.

Superintendent Heckt said she should have more information after the BOE meeting on Thursday.

R. Tuthill asked when someone switches from individual to family insurance, does their contribution raise. Superintendent Heckt responded the cost share remains the same, but the cost of the plan goes up, so their actual cost goes up, but so does the board's.

C. Danna asked for clarification of the scheduling situation. His understanding is, if the referendum passes and the board establishes the mil rate, but later the information about additional monies becomes available, that mil rate is set. If the budget does not pass the board may end up having changes available if additional funds become available before the next referendum.

R. Tuthill asked if it is correct that, at referendum, the Town is establishing an expenditure level. If the Town gets revenues or reduced costs after the referendum, the board can adjust the mil rate down but still have to produce the same amount of revenue.

E. Bradley expanded on this and said he is correct that, at referendum, the Town is approving the expenditures number. If the referendum were to fail, the board can adjust the expenditures number down. If the board has more information because the Town has additional savings, that is an easy way to bring the numbers down and then it goes to the next referendum. Based on the expenditures number that passes referendum the board then determines what the revenue number, the mil rate, will be; what tax number the Town needs to balance that budget and determine the mil rate from there.

S. Pierog recommended the board postpone setting the mill rate as long as they can in the event more information that becomes available about the health insurance cost. The swing has the potential to be very significant and also has the potential to not be beneficial at all, especially on the BOE side. She reminded the board, that should the budget fail at referendum, the board cannot adjust revenues. The board can adjust the amount of surplus that is applied against the mil rate and can adjust expenditures.

Discussion followed on postponing setting the mil rate to the end of May and still allow enough time for tax bills to be printed and sent out on time.

R. Tuthill asked for confirmation from S. Pierog that the board cannot present to the townspeople that the town has additional revenues if there is a second referendum and that will color the discussion the board will have when they decide on a level of expenditures.

S. Pierog said the only thing the board can change is the contribution from fund balance to make the mil rate. She added the board can consider all the revenues at their disposal in adjusting the mil rate. However, what if effects is the amount of contribution the board assigns to balance the budget.

E. Bradley reported the Town was notified on Friday there will be a cut in state revenues of approximately \$47,939, so that is another revenue number the board will have to lower. On the plus side, she said one thing the board can do is at the May 6, 2021 meeting, take a look at where we stand with this year's revenues and, if the Town has brought in additional revenues that would flow into next year's budget and might offset some of the \$47,000 cut.

3.b Consider and Possibly Act on FY 2022 Proposed Budget Revenues: No action was taken.

3.c Budget Calendar: The members reviewed the budget calendar. No changes were made.

4. New Business
- 4.a Consider and Possibly Act on Ballot Question: No action taken.
5. Adjournment: E. Bradley adjourned the special meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Next Meetings:

May 6, 2021 – Special Meeting
May 10, 2021 - Special Meeting (if necessary)

Other Important Dates:

May 10, 2021 – BOF must adopt the budget on or before this date
May 18, 2021 – Budget Referendum

Respectfully submitted by Linda H. McDonald, Board Clerk

Linda H. McDonald.

At its May 10, 2021 special meeting, the Board of Finance of the Town of Bolton, Connecticut voted the following:

“Shall the Annual Budget for the Town of Bolton, Connecticut for the fiscal year 2022 as recommended by the Board of Finance in the amount of \$_____ be adopted?”

Emily Bradley,
Chair, Board of Finance