



Town of Bolton
3045 Theodore Roosevelt Highway
Bolton VT 05676

TOWN MEETING MINUTES
Smilie Memorial School
March 2, 2020
7 p.m.

- Announcements prior to calling Town Meeting 2020 to order:
 1. Leslie Pelch, moderator welcomed all and introduced herself.
 2. Representatives Tom Stevens and Theresa Woods:

Theresa Woods:

 - Many thanks to all of the dinner cooks, it's a pleasure to join you for dinner.

We are addressing/working on:

 - A bill around supporting parent child centers, which are key components of our communities and support young families. We are working to codify their existence.
 - Addressing the Woodside Juvenile Detention Facility. The Governor submitted a proposal to close and repurpose Woodside as a secure residential facility. There has been no decision to date, and there is concern about the timeline for the implementation plan and the lack of replacement.
 - Researching Rural TIP Districts - trying to boost economic development.
 - Receivership laws for long term care facilities; strengthening protection for those with disabilities and our older residents.
 - Older Vermonters Act, a bill of rights for our older residents taking into account COLA and rates paid to support them in the community.
 - This is a busy time as we move things over to the Senate next week.
 - Thank you, it's nice to be here this evening.

Tom Stevens:

 - We are wrapping up some things for last year – the paid family leave bill, we did not override the veto, we did override the minimum wage veto.
 - The House passed a reform of ACT 250, which has been in the works for several years; it's a compromise.
 - In the Global Warming Solution Act, we are joining MA and NY and are holding ourselves to a standard in climate change policies.
 - In the General Housing and Military Affairs Committee, we are addressing the Abenaki relations, and the dark period in our state's history; the eugenics survey in the 1920s and 30s which impacted the Abenaki. A joint resolution is being put forward to apologize for that. Has the state of VT ever apologized for anything it has done at this level? No. We are trying to implement restorative justice for actions that our forefathers had a part of. This is a difficult and important piece of legislation.
 - Our Town Meeting reports are available in the foyer.
 - As always, if you have any questions, please get in touch, our contact information is in our report.

Thank you.
 3. Good Citizen of the Year 2020 presentation by Paula Gervia, the 2019 Good Citizen of the Year, to Chuck and Sue Rooney.

Moderator Leslie Pelch reviewed the process for the meeting, Roberts Rules of Order, welcomed new residents, and those new to town or to town meeting, and requested that non-residents/non registered voters identified themselves, noting there were not allowed to speak unless permitted by the body, and could not vote.

The Moderator asked if there were any other questions, there were none.

Call to Order

- Moderator Leslie Pelch called Town Meeting to order at 7:18 p.m.

Article 1 ~ Shall the voters of the Town of Bolton accept the FY 2018 – 2019 Town Report?

Motion: Andrew Pond

Second: Paula Gervia

No further discussion. The moderator called for a vote. All were in favor. Article 1 passed unanimously.

Article 2 ~ Shall the voters of the Town of Bolton establish expenses for the members of the Select Board?

Motion: Joss Besse made the motion to establish expenses for the Select Board \$30 per person per meeting

Second: Sharon Murray

No further discussion. The moderator called for a vote. All were in favor. Article 2 passed unanimously.

Article 3 ~ Shall the voters of the Town of Bolton vote a budget of \$1,075,855 to meet the expenses and liabilities of the town and authorize the Select Board to set a tax rate sufficient to provide the same?

Amy Grover: An error in the excel spreadsheet, which did not correctly total four allocation request cells, and was noted in my report in the annual report, was identified after the warning was signed. Correcting this error increases the overall budget from \$1,075,855 to \$1,079,264.

Motion: Craig Metz made the motion to vote a budget of \$1,079,264.

Second: Andrew Pond

Ralph DesLauriers: What was the budget last year and how much is the increase?

Janet Metz: The budget is an increase of \$41,940 and 4%.

Ralph DesLauriers: I don't think that's right.

Tony Barbagallo: It's right, if Excel is right that is (laughter).

Ryan Farrell: I noticed a big increase on the Assessor line item, going from \$16K up to \$25K; could you explain that please.

Janet Metz: Bolton's assessor is retiring, and we will have to contract for Assessor services. That current rate is \$85/hour for 6 hours a week, 50 weeks per year.

Tony Barbagallo: We are in the process of drafting an RFP for an Assessor to replace Kermit Blaisdell, it will be a competitive process. That is what we are anticipating what the cost will be, but we will not know definitively until the process is complete. We are also drafting an RFP for a town re-appraisal.

John Devine: If we vote the \$150K in uncommitted funds, will we have to go back and amend the budget?

Tony Barbagallo: No, we do not need to amend the budget. These are excess uncommitted funds that we are moving from the previous fiscal year.

Adam Tuznik: I just moved to Bolton a year and a half ago and live on Wentworth Road. My understanding is that repaving has been in the works for some time. Wentworth Road should be looked at as a liability, it's like Dukes of Hazard on ice up there (laughter). Can we add 175K to the budget for paving?

Mica Cassara: The paving budget for this year is \$80K and that was for Wentworth and Thacher, we are planning to pave in the spring. It is budgeted.

Wendy Hoffman: I feel your pain as I also live on Wentworth Road. My understanding is that it may not be sufficient to simply pave over Wentworth and Thacher, it may be a reclamation project. The road condition has gone beyond simply laying another surface over it.

Adam Tuznik: I suggest working with the Bolton Valley water and sewer authority, it would be awesome to work with them instead of making the road nice and them tearing it right up again.

Katerina Lisaius: I was wondering what is going on with the parking arrangement for the Potholes.

Leslie Pelch: Was that something that was included in the budget?

Amy Grover: No that is not a budgeted item, and the parking arrangement is between VT Riverlands, LLC and the MMUUSD.

Amy Ludwin: I'm not sure that Katerina got the answer she was looking for.

Leslie Pelch: We can come back to this at the end of the meeting.

No further discussion. The moderator called for a vote on Article 3. The majority was in favor. Article 3 passed.

Article 4 ~ Shall the voters of the Town of Bolton vote to pay real and personal property taxes to the Town Treasurer in four (4) installments with due dates of September 15, 2020, November 15, 2020, February 15, 2021, and May 15, 2021?

Motion: Judith Bergeron

Second: Chris Moore

No further discussion. The moderator called for a vote. All were in favor. Article 4 passed unanimously.

Article 5 ~ Shall the voters of the Town of Bolton authorize the Select Board to borrow money for the necessary needs of the Town as they arise?

Motion: Rod Wheelock

Second: Henry Corse

No further discussion. The moderator called for a vote. All were in favor. Article 5 passed unanimously.

Article 6 ~ Shall the voters of the Town of Bolton appropriate \$150,000 in uncommitted general funds to the following reserve fund, in addition to those reserve contributions included in the FY 2020 - 2021 Proposed Municipal Budget: Highway Reserve Fund: \$150,000.

Motion: Sharon Murray
Second: Virginia Haviland

William Donahue: Is this \$150K in addition to the budgeted \$74K for reserves?

Tony Barbagallo: Yes, this is in addition to the budgeted \$74K for reserves. It is excess in uncommitted funds from the last fiscal year.

Lynda DesLauriers: I'm not clear on this, does the \$150K get added to the budget?

Tony Barbagallo: No, it does not get added to the budget, this is a surplus from the last fiscal year. We are asking to move those funds from the general fund to the Highway Reserve fund to supplement our paving budget at the Select Board's discretion. We anticipate we will go beyond the \$80K budgeted for paving. Wentworth Road needs more than just paving; a sub-base. We will likely pull dollars from this reserve fund to subsidize that project.

Joss Bess: Could you clarify where that \$150K goes relative to the highway?

Tony Barbagallo: On page 35 of the Town Report, it is the combined resurfacing/guardrails re-named the Highway Project Fund. If approved, that \$150K will be transferred into that fund. The Capital Planning Committee is reviewing these types of capital expenses to save in advance for them, using these reserve funds to borrow less.

Lela McCaffery: What is the number of the uncommitted funds?

Amy Grover: It is noted in the full audit report on the website.

(While the Select Board was accessing that number, more questions were answered.)

Amy Ludwin: Is there any chance Highway Reserve Funds will be put to use in the Notch Road tunnel?

Mica Cassara: No town funds will be used in the Notch Road Tunnel, it will be all VTrans funds.

Kaelyn Modrak: How is the amount of debt and interest decided?

Tony Barbagallo: How much to borrow and how much to withdraw from reserves goes back to the Capital Planning Committee, with a general policy of a 50/50 split and their recommendation to the Select Board.

Wendy Hoffman: The uncommitted fund amount is \$521K.

Sharon Murray: As chair of the Capital Planning Committee, \$521K is the unassigned fund balance as of end of June 2019. The Select Board also adopted a policy of keeping 20% of the annual operating budget as a contingency fund, which stands at a little over \$200K. We also looked at anticipated engineering costs for the Notch Road damage; this is all considered by the committee on what amount of uncommitted funds should be transferred to reserves. The town policy is that any excess funds go to voters for approval, to be transferred to the reserve fund. This year given the needs of our highways, we felt it was best to allocate 100% of the uncommitted funds to the Highway Project reserve fund. This does not come out of your property taxes. We recommended that the Select Board do this and we are asking you, the voters, to re-allocate this amount to the Highway Project reserve fund.

Jen Dudley-Gaillard: As a member of the Capital Planning Committee, regarding loans and the 50/50 split, this takes into account vehicle trade in to provide equity to the tax payers; those who have paid in the past and those who will pay in the future.

No further discussion. The moderator called for a vote. All were in favor. Article 6 passed unanimously.

Article 7 ~ To transact any other business thought proper when met.

The Moderator noted this was the opportunity to bring up non-warned issues and that binding votes were not allowed.

Andrew Pond (MMUUSD Chair and Bolton Representative): The proposed school budget is a 2.7 % increase, and we do not expect an increase prior to the CLA being applied. At Smilie School we are going from 5 classes to 4 with 16.5 students per grade. We will complete the grade configuration after the Kindergarten registration is completed. Smilie School is in great shape with a new sidewalk. District-wide we have a district committee for Professional Development, and we are expanding the Spanish immersion program to Richmond Elementary School next year. With respect to Potholes parking in the Smilie School parking lot, MMUUSD does not have a MOU with VRC now; we are limited in what we can do here, we have no one to patrol the parking lot. We do have an agreement with the town in terms of towing vehicles that are blocking access in the fire lane, or access to the dry hydrant. There is not a MOU for this coming summer. I don't know that the district has an interest in signing that agreement. We encourage folks to come use school facilities and most are responsible, but some are not, and that has been a quandary for a number of years.

Wendy Hoffman: To all interested in the parking at Smilie School, keep an eye on the Select Board agenda, we will be meeting with Lydia Menendez of VRC/VT Riverlands this spring and reviewing issues.

Megan Fitzpatrick: I have a letter to read addressed to Sister and Brothers Investment Group, the company that purchased "Chuck's." Listen, and if you are so inclined to, sign on as a concerned resident. I think I will post it on Front Porch Forum, you can sign on and leave your name, and I will leave a copy at the Town Office. (The letter was read, applause.) I felt like this was a good place to present this letter. I'm happy to send it along. I don't know what type of response I will get, but the more that express their concerns the better. Maybe you have heard more than I have.

Allison Smith: This is an update from the Economic Resource Committee. We had a successful Community Fair in 2019, will not be holding the Fair in 2020, and are always looking for new members, there is a sign-up sheet on the table by the door.

Amy Ludwin: I'm with the Conservation Commission and just want to ask for your support of the 1/4cent on the ballot tomorrow toward the Conservation Fund. That works out to \$2.50 for 100K house, \$5.00 for a \$200K house. The Conservation Commission can always use a hand as "friends" working on specific projects, or by becoming a new member. Please see our report on page 44 of the Town Report. We welcome visitors at our meetings, and as part of the trail crew for trail work.

Joss Besse: I have two questions on Notch Road: the underpass repairs, is that going to happen this summer, and the north end slump, can you update everyone on the status of that. There is concern that with the frost coming out, we are going to lose more of the road.

Mica Cassara: VTrans is planning to do the work on the tunnel this summer, it was planned for last year but no contractor signed on. I don't know if repairs will require closure.

Phil Harrington: I work for VTrans and can speak to the tunnel project as I am the engineer in charge of that. Parent Construction will be doing the \$770K bid repairs. That includes the concrete repairs, painting the tunnel white, adding lighting and anticipating that there will be a gain of 1 – 2” of clearance. There will be daily night time closures.

A person in the audience asked what the night time closure meant and about detours.

Phil Harrington: The tunnel will be closed every night and re-opened every morning, and will have a full marked detour. \$770K buys you a lot of detour (laughter).

Mica Cassara: The storm on Halloween night caused significant washout on Notch Road. The town hired an engineer for repair estimates and design work both inside and outside of the town ROW and we have submitted those two proposals to FEMA. FEMA will only do work within the ROW, and that proposal will require steel piles and backfill at \$600K. Repairing as it was with filling in the slide and armoring is estimated at \$300K. We are working through the required process with FEMA and are waiting to see their response. We have had some contact with CCRPOC on this, we may be able to work with them to help secure funding. But we don't have clear answers as we have to wait for FEMA.

John Devine: The Development Review Board is one of the town's very important volunteer positions. Last week we couldn't muster a quorum, which is difficult when applicants arrive with their lawyers, engineers and technicians. We need two alternates and a clerk. If you are interested, see Amy to get the ball rolling.

Kim Kilpeck: We own the farm on Duxbury Road and this is on a fun note. We held the first annual Bolton Community Network picnic last year on a really hot day. We had 70 people come and we had a great time in the river, and with fun events - the corn pool, bubbles, floating picnic table, cornhole and the frying pan toss.

Leslie Pelch: Do you want me to demonstrate (holding up a frying pan – laughter)?

Kim Kilpeck: The frying pan toss was a really fun thing, and I ate my words because I said no-one could break the frying pan, and wouldn't you know the handle broke. We are hoping to host it again this year in an effort to bring the community together in a fun way, with neighbors, fun, and food. We had a really fun time and I want to invite you all to come, to float, relax and meet your neighbors, a good day all the way around: July 25th, noon – 5 p.m. We are looking for volunteers and there are save the date notices on the front table, please spread the word. Thanks.

Leslie Pelch: There is a sign up for Bolton Community Network volunteers in the entry way, including the picnic Kim just mentioned.

Willa Pelschoen: In the hallway is the BOLL table, Bolton's Own Little Libraries which are spread throughout Bolton. You can take a book and leave a book. Nothing to do on a Saturday? Grab a book! Amy Ludwin can answer any questions on the BOLLs.

Tony Barbagallo: In addition to the Kilpeck picnic we will be having a Bolton Valley Hometown Appreciation Day, which will be a really fun time. As a token of appreciation for working on the \$1 million grant Bolton Valley agreed to start hosting appreciation day. It is scheduled for March 29th and includes free alpine and Nordic skiing, snowshoeing, the sports center, pool, skatepark, and bouncy house. Ralph do you have anything to say about that?

Ralph DesLauriers: Not much (laughter). My whole family is happy to be back (at Bolton Valley), and we never really left. We love to have the Smilie kids come up and appreciate the town and all of you folks for all that all that you do for us.

Steve Barner: I'm not on any Green Up Day Committee and just want to say some folks go out a week or two ahead, and you'll see full green up bags on the sides of the roads and think someone already picked up the road. Well, they haven't picked up the entire road. Some parts of town don't get picked up. Come on out and help, bags when available, are outside the town office.

Moderator Leslie Pelch: If there is no objection, Bryan Farnsworth would like to speak at this time (not a registered voter).

Bryan Farnsworth: The Bolton History Group is planning to hold the Green Up Day BBQ at Smilie School, like last year, hopefully with music again. Our cemetery restoration project will move on to the West Bolton Cemetery this year, and volunteers are greatly appreciated. The History Group is meeting this Saturday, right here from 11 – 12:30 p.m.

Moderator Leslie Pelch: Bryan Farnsworth co-ordinates both Green Up Day and the Bolton History Group. There is information in the Gazette and on the town website. If there is no objection, Jody Lavanway from the Waterbury Senior Center would like to speak (not a registered voter).

Jody Lavanway: I am the new director of the Waterbury Senior Center. We provide Meals on Wheels to the Bolton area and served at least eight residences. We also serve lunch in our center Monday – Friday from noon to 1 p.m. Our menu is on our website, and our report is in your annual report. Thank you for your wonderful and gracious support, and if you have any questions please call or stop in. Thank you for opportunity to speak and introduce myself,

Moderator Leslie Pelch: Tomorrow we will be voting on Article 8 and Article 9; the election of town officers and the ¼ cent to the Conservation Fund. Are there any questions?

There were no questions.

Moderator Leslie Pelch: Hearing none, is there any other business?

No further discussion.

Motion to adjourn the meeting: Henry Corse
Second: Kathy Costello

All were in favor and the motion to close the meeting passed unanimously.

Moderator Leslie Pelch adjourned the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Attest: Amy Grover
Town Clerk & Treasurer

These minutes were accepted on March _____, 2020