

**Kingston, New Hampshire  
Board of Selectmen  
Meeting of March 4, 2024  
FINAL MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by the Chairman.

**PRESENT:** Chair Chris Bashaw; Vice Chair Chuck Hart; Glenn Coppelman, Laurie Szwed, Ellie Alessio, Select Board Members

**MOTION:** by Selectwoman Alessio, to adjourn public session and enter non-public session at 6:01 PM, per RSA 91-A:3, II, (a) to discuss personnel.

**SECOND:** by Selectman Hart

**All in favor via roll call vote**

**The Board returned to public session at 6:27 PM and voted to seal the non-public session minutes:**

Motion made by Selectman Hart, seconded by Selectman Coppelman, because it is determined that divulgence of this information likely would...

X Affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board.

Render a proposed action ineffective

Pertains to preparation or carrying out of actions regarding terrorism

**Roll Call Vote to Seal Minutes:**

Chris Bashaw	Y	Charles Hart	Y
Laureen Szwed	Y	Glenn Coppelman	Y
Electra Alessio	Y		

**Motion: PASSED**

**APPOINTMENTS:**

**Greg Clarkson, North Shore Swing Dance -Request to include alcohol during event at Town Hall**

Chairman Bashaw explained that Mr. Clarkson had been given approval for the swing dance event, which is to be on March 16, but without alcohol service. He said the Board had given him the option of coming back to ask to add a cash bar.

Mr. Clarkson spoke about the event, saying they had held it in Newburyport for the last 2 years, and had a cash bar. He said the person that does the catering is licensed and an insurance certificate naming the Town will not be a problem. He said it is a formal event and does not attract rowdy drinkers. Asked about the number of people and where they would park, Mr. Clarkson said there would be 70-80, and they will all park in the Town Hall lot.

The option of having it as a Bring Your Own Bottle event was mentioned; Mr. Clarkson said he would rather not do that as it is harder to police.

Selectman Coppelman asked if the Police Chief had weighed in, as Chief Johnson was present. He had signed the application without comment but joined the conversation to say he would require one officer and would send another if needed. He said no smoking will be allowed.

**MOTION:** by Selectman Bashaw, to amend the previous approval for the Swing Dance event on March 16, to allow for a cash bar, providing proper insurance and indemnification documents are received, and providing the group pays for one detail officer.

**SECOND:** by Selectman Hart  
**All in favor**

**PUBLIC COMMENT 1: None**

### **COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS**

Selectman Hart reported that the firefighter that had a medical event at the scene of the Scotland Road fire is now recuperating at home.

Selectwoman Szwed said that there was a Fairgrounds meeting last Wednesday, and members of the Folly Brook Road area attended. Minutes are being prepared, and a hearing will be planned soon to bring information to the Board.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **5 Exeter Road**

At the February 12 meeting, the Board gave the Building Inspector authorization to consult with the Town's engineer, Dennis Quintal, and a report has been received with Mr. Quintal's observations. He recommended property line stakes and sediment control devices, and minor edits to the plan to clarify the existing runoff onto abutting property, as well as noting that waiver(s) or variances may be needed. He did not otherwise observe impediments to building. Chairman Bashaw said that there will be some challenges to building on the lot, but that in the current housing market, people will find it worth pursuing.

Rick Korn, the property owner, and Joseph Nichols, his engineer, were present and said they had reviewed the Town engineer's letter. Mr. Nichols said that regarding the waiver Mr. Quintal mentions will be required, he already has it, and also mentioned that the septic plan has been approved by the Town's Health Officer. Mr. Nichols also said, in reference to the concern about storm runoff, that the elevations would mean there is no runoff to the abutters, that the lot drains to the rear, and also that there is a drainage swale on Exeter Road.

Selectman Coppelman said that his concerns have been covered. The Chair noted that as the vote on changing the designation of the property to "buildable" already took place, no further action is required this evening.

#### **Audio-Visual contract and troubleshooting**

Selectwoman Szwed said she had contacted Adam Faulconer, the AV technician, to have him review the contract with Audio Video Experience to note if all equipment included has been received. It was noted that this agreement is from 2022, and that there were changes in the type of microphones received due to supply chain issues. However, Mr. Faulconer identified several items that are missing, such as a lapel microphone, or parts for present mics, and additional power docks as there are more mics than docks. He said there are 14 mics but only 12 can be used at a time without them cutting out. He also said that one piece of equipment from the agreement list that he can't locate is worth \$5,600.

Selectwoman Szwed said that the contract has a clause that includes troubleshooting, and she thinks this should be pursued. She also said that four different people were involved in dealing with the company over the last 2 years, and that was bad contract management.

DPW Director Phil Coombs said that coordinating with the company became his task when two Select Board members that were involved were no longer here. He said there are two issues, the AV equipment and the old equipment in the broadcast booth; he said they do not always talk to each other. He said that an expert is needed that can help to integrate the systems.

Mr. Faulconer said he has reached out to Gordon Parks, who is the technician for the school, and he is hoping they will be able to get together next week.

### **Cloudpermit software cost estimate**

The Chairman read from this quote from Cloudpermit, the permitting software recommended by the Building Inspector, which will include components for Building, Code Enforcement, and Planning. The first year, to include implementation, will cost \$11,500; the next two years will be \$9,500 per year. He said that, as discussed, this is to streamline tracking of permits, and will include online submittals for the Planning Board. Selectman Hart expressed concern about spending this money at this time. Selectman Coppelman said that the first two years are to be paid for with ARPA funds and the third year will be budgeted for. He said that during the budget process for the third year it can be evaluated if this software is value added; he said this allows for the software to be tried with no cost to the Town.

Selectman Hart said he is concerned that expenses keep being added to the list for ARPA funding, and that some large expenses still need to be accounted for. Chairman Bashaw said that at the last meeting the DPW Director had given some direction to the Board on the major Town Hall maintenance expenses, and the Board had chosen those that they felt fit within the parameters of the existing funds. He said there is also the ability to use some capital improvement funds but agreed that those expenses will consume most of the remaining ARPA funds. He said that he still thinks the permit software is an appropriate use of the funding to move the Town forward.

**MOTION:** by Selectman Coppelman, to enter into a contract with Cloudpermit for three years of permitting software; Years one and two, totaling \$21,000 to be paid through ARPA funds; Year three to be placed in the 2026 budget. This is to be contingent upon the software integrating with the existing Assessing system and electronic property files.

**SECOND:** by Selectman Bashaw

**In favor: Alessio, Bashaw, Coppelman, Szwed; Opposed: Hart; Motion passes**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Barn Preservation Easement Checklist**

The Administrative Assistant had prepared a draft checklist based on another town's document, to aid the Board in coming to decisions on percentage of tax exemptions to apply when approving barn preservation easements. She commented that the Heritage Commission had been working on this too; Ernie Landry and Bob Bean were present to join the discussion.

Mr. Landry said that they had come up with a similar draft based on a different town's checklist. He said that he and Mr. Bean had worked with the Administrative Assistant in

2021 when several barn easement applications had come forward, and at that time created a flow chart of the processing of barn preservation easement applications. He described the timeline and the basic idea of the checklist, saying it is not yet ready to use. A final draft for use by the Select Board will be prepared.

There followed a discussion of procedures and timelines for barn easements. A public hearing will be needed soon for the barn at 108 Exeter Road, as it was received by the Select Board on February 21, and the Board has 60 days to act.

It was agreed that the Heritage Commission should be involved in the initial assessment of barn easement applications and bring recommendations to the Board.

## **BOARD BUSINESS**

### **Department Post Office boxes**

Two responses have been received to the request for information about mail boxes for town departments aside from the main PO box, and what sort of items are sent to them. The Board reviewed the responses from the DPW and the museum. There was a discussion in which it was clarified that the focus of the request is to be sure that invoices get to the Finance office for payment in a timely manner. The Administrative Assistant will reach out again to get more specific information.

### **Official Town Facebook page**

Selectwoman Szwed said that the new Facebook page is to be launched today. She is drafting a policy for it, but in the meantime, an email will be sent to all departments with the information that Adam Faulconer will be the administrator, with Susan Ayer and Caitlin Milhomme as backups. Information to share will be posted on Monday mornings; meeting calendars will be pulled from the Town's website, so all departments and committees should check that their calendars are up to date.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT #2**

Ernie Landry, 17 Thorne Road, also Heritage Commission Chair, said he was here to talk about the renovations to be done on the Town Hall, having heard the DPW Director's presentation at the Department Heads meeting. He said he would have liked to have this as an agenda item, but is commenting now rather than waiting two weeks. He said that the Town Hall is a focal part of the Town; it is 95 years old and a key architectural element of the downtown area. He said his concern from a Heritage standpoint is that the proposed work to the stairs will change the whole face and nature of the building, probably permanently.

Mr. Landry showed pictures of the front of the building as it is and as proposed, with the 8-foot cast concrete stairs. He said it is a dramatic change and wondered if there are options to help retain as much of the edifice as possible. He said his depiction of the smaller stairs does not show the proposed handicapped accessible ramp, which would change things even more.

Selectwoman Alessio said that one of the issues with the stairs is that they have been fixed twice before but expanding and contracting with the winter weather has caused them to be unsafe, which is why they are currently barricaded. She agreed the stairs are beautiful but asked if the Town should keep spending \$40,000 to \$50,000 every 5 to 10 years. Mr. Landry questioned if there is a better way to repair the stairs so that this doesn't happen.

Whether the current stairs are the original stairs was questioned; Chairman Bashaw said that during the presentation it was shared that the original stairs were brick with concrete caps. Mr. Landry said that he has a postcard from 1930 that shows the stairs as they are now.

Mr. Coombs came forward to speak on this issue. He said he has the original drawings for the building that show the stairs as brick, but lack of regular maintenance caused water to get in and cause cracking. He said the other issue is the subbase, which is very unstable here, and frost heaves up and sinks and breaks the stairs. He said the option he had brought forward was meant to address all those issues. He said by using both the original brick and granite he felt it could appease both parties.

Chairman Bashaw said he does appreciate the scale change, but there would be landscaping added. He said the stairs would be significantly narrowed and may not be the most aesthetically pleasing thing, but the steps have been barricaded for 4 years. He said the town is hemorrhaging money and right now there is an opportunity to get this done with ARPA funds. He also said that while the addition of handicapped access may not please everyone, the building is not just a historic landmark, it is the main building where the Town functions, and needs to be accessible.

Mr. Landry questioned whether the elevator provides enough accessibility as it is. He asked if 40 or 50 feet of ramp are placed outside, will that work when there are still the five interior stairs to get up. He asked if this is redundant with the elevator already there, and also if the ramp is needed, whether it needs to be aluminum.

There was further discussion of details and options for the stairs. It was decided to hold a discussion as a publicly noticed agenda item and solicit the input of the public.

Virginia Morse, Vice Chair of the Historic District Commission, said that, speaking as a citizen, input is very important. She said handicapped accessibility is important, but that it is also a real challenge to make it blend in. She said she was unsure if the current elevator meets ADA compliant since it is accessed from the back door. She said legal aspects need to be looked into, but that she agrees with Mr. Landry that what it looks like is also important. From the HDC standpoint, she said it should stay as close as possible to the original materials. She said an aluminum ramp would not be the way to go for that. She noted that there had been instances where access has been accomplished without detracting from the look of the building.

Chairman Bashaw commented that aesthetics may cost more money than is available.

Ms. Morse said that including the public in a public listening session is a good idea.

Mr. Coombs said that based on a previous discussion, and questions on how he is approaching road work, he has obtained a quote from an engineering firm to perform a pavement condition assessment. He left it with the board to review.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE, APPLICATIONS, PURCHASE ORDERS:**

- **Two appointments for returning members to the HDC were signed, on a Motion by Selectman Coppelman and second by Selectwoman Alessio. One was for Susan Prescott, and the other for Susan DeHart as Alternate Member.**
- **One veterans credit application was approved.**
- **An intent to cut form, for Map R12 Lot 27, was signed.**
- **Purchase orders provided by the Finance Director were reviewed and signed.**
- **Payroll was reviewed and approved.**

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

**MOTION:** By Selectman Coppelman, to approve the public and non-public meeting minutes of February 26, 2024, as submitted.

**SECOND:** by Selectman Hart

**All in favor**

**Motion: PASSED**

**Boston Post Cane**

There was a discussion of reviving this tradition, of presenting the oldest citizen with the Boston Post Cane. Kingston has not done this since last awarding the cane in 2009. The original cane has been lost, but there is a replica in the Select Board office that needs the Town's name engraved on it. The best ways to reintroduce the procedure were briefly discussed. The Administrative Assistant will approach the Museum Committee and Heritage Commission to see if one of those groups may want to take this on.

**Chairman Bashaw - last meeting as Select Board member**

The Board presented Chairman Bashaw with a gift and thanked him for his service to the Town.

Chairman Bashaw expressed that the job is not always pleasant or easy, but he has had the opportunity to meet a lot of people in town, made more friends than enemies, and that it has been his pleasure to serve. He addressed anyone listening to say that if they have been hesitant to join a board or committee that they should start somewhere, doing whatever they can, as it is very rewarding. He said his reasons for stepping down are related to spending more time with his children while they are still at home.

**Meeting Adjourned at 8:17 PM**

Respectfully submitted:

Susan H. Ayer, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board