

**Kingston, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting of November 28, 2022
FINAL MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by the Chairman.

PRESENT: Chairman Richard Wilson; Kevin St. James, Vice Chair; Electra Alessio, Christopher Bashaw, Charles Hart, Select Board Members

DEPARTMENT INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION:

Department Heads present: Police Chief Joel Johnson, Finance Director Paula Mahoney, Town Clerk Tammy Bakie, Library Director Melissa Mannon, Recreation Director Paul Butler, DPW Director Phillip Coombs, Fire Chief Graham Pellerin, Human Resources Director Marissa Federico

The Chairman began by discussing the date and timing of the next Department Heads meeting; it was agreed to hold the meeting on December 19, 2022 at 8:30 AM, at the Fire Department.

Fire Department - Chief Graham Pellerin

Chief Pellerin said he had received \$50,000 in grant money for ambulance equipment, and the items have been installed. He said that the forestry skid unit for which a grant has been received has been ordered. He said that the department has been called out several times to the South trails to assist with hikers, so the unit will be useful. Chief Pellerin also said that the open house for the new fire station went well, and 80-90 people attended.

Public Works - Director Phillip Coombs

Mr. Coombs said that he has been working to familiarize new staff with the plowing routes. He said he is currently fully staffed, with contract trucks with wings.

Mr. Coombs said he signed the contract with Innovative Surface Solutions for the pre-treatment he had talked with the board about at a prior meeting. He also said that Bell and Flynn are back to complete several roads; it had taken a lot of time to get all the leaves out of the roadways.

To date there have been no applications for a second trash bin; Mr. Coombs said that so far it seems the onslaught predicted is not happening.

A shredding event is set for December 6 at the Town Hall and State shed. The Highway Administrative Assistant is to get the information out to everyone. Ms. Bakie reminded all that when destroying documents, a destruction log needs to be created.

Mr. Coombs said he has set up an ongoing online auction that department heads can add items to themselves. Items go out to bid and the Town Clerk's office will receive payment. The company used to post the auction is Municibid.

Finance and Personnel- Director Paula Mahoney

Ms. Mahoney said she had attended the NHMA conference two weeks ago and attended sessions on Human Resources and labor law. Otherwise, she continues to work on the budget and get up to speed.

Recreation- Director Paul Butler

Mr. Butler reported that about 100 people attended the recent Christmas tree lighting; he said the Key Club and High School Band attended and helped.

He then said that he is beginning early to look for counselors for next summer; he said he attended a conference of Recreation Directors, and a topic of conversation was the statewide problem finding personnel. He said he only has 3 or 4 people coming back and may lose his camp director. He said he hires from age 15 and up, and no experience is necessary, but applicants must enjoy working with kids. He said it is a good job compared to other summer jobs in that it does not involve evenings or weekends.

Mr. Butler said another meeting was held with the state representatives about the playground grant, also attended by Mr. Coombs. He said he had spoken with Primex and they had no issue with keeping some of the old equipment, and this was presented. Mr. Coombs said that the problem with the grant was that the state personnel seem to want to point out all that can't be done or what won't work. He said that the \$29,000 approved in the 2021 warrant can be spent on what new equipment is needed; he said he does not see that the grant will help much. Selectwoman Alessio said that the grant would also tie up the land for recreational use in perpetuity, with no firm commitment on what expenses will be covered. Selectman St. James said he did not think the Town should turn down the grant just yet.

Chief Pellerin said that the playground and Comeau Field will be assigned #50 Folly Brook for 9-11.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector- Tammy Bakie

Ms. Bakie reported on tax collections totals to date, and said they are normal for this point in the collection period. She also said she will be certifying a home birth for only the third time. Ms. Bakie suggested that the plexiglass divider between her service windows might now be removed. She also suggested that the Town should work on communication and team building in the coming year,

Human Services- Director Marissa Federico

Ms. Federico said that her department is running smoothly. She said she distributed food and gift certificates for Thanksgiving and received a donation of 8 turkeys. She said that the Christmas giving tree is now up in the Town Hall lobby and that the level of generosity and participation is overwhelming. The first pick up day for Christmas items will be December 12.

Ms. Federico also said she is working on reviewing and updating Human Services forms.

Selectman St. James asked about requests for fuel assistance and the time frame for eligibility; Ms. Federico said that it is per heating season rather than per year. She said she has heard that the state has more applications than aid and ran out of money. She said she has fulfilled three oil requests and it seems early. State resources will be exhausted before spending local funds. She said that all residents should have information about assistance by now.

Library - Director Melissa Mannon

Ms. Mannon distributed a calendar of library events, thanking Paul Butler for the idea. She said that the library is distributing Giving Tree tags and the Friends of the Library have voted to provide \$400 toward books along with toys.

Ms. Mannon then said she is working on a survey to distribute to residents to ask what they want from the library; she is working with UNH for advice on how to get the information needed. She asked for input on how best to get a survey out to residents, and there was a discussion of options.

Chairman Wilson mentioned during this discussion that people think the Kingston Facebook page is run by the Town, and it is not. He suggested that the Town may want to start its own informational Facebook page that does not accept comments. On the subject, Selectman Bashaw said that he had looked at the social media policy that the library director had drafted for the library and said she had done a good and comprehensive job. He said that if it is to be adapted for Town use, he would suggest some language from the Sheriff's department's policy.

Police- Chief Joel Johnson

Chief Johnson commended Mr. Coombs on the help with building the carport near the police station; he said a lot of the materials were donated and the work done in-house, so that a \$75,000 building is costing \$18,000. A roof still needs to be added. He said this will help keep police vehicles out the weather (stating that one hailstorm could take out his entire fleet) now that the former bus garage across the street is no longer available for overflow.

91-A requests

Selectman Bashaw said that the Finance Director had received a large 91-A Freedom of Information Act request for information and commented that there is a 4-hour class available via Zoom for municipalities and police departments that addresses how to handle these requests. He said it is not required to respond by creating a record, but to make the records on hand available for viewing. He said that offering this can help to prevent some predatory requests.

BOARD BUSINESS:

The Chairman began a discussion of the 2023 budget by asking that each department head submit raise requests as part of their budget. These raises are independent of the cost of living or performance increases. He said that COLA is still a debated topic, and that he doesn't think it should go on the ballot, as then if the voters turn it down nothing can be done. He said he thinks this should be in the budget. He added that some nearby towns are including up to 8% for COLA increases. Selectman Bashaw said that the budget committee will want to include what will pass; he suggested that 4% can be put in across the board, but then the Budget Committee will recommend what they think may pass the voters.

Departments were advised to put raises in their budgets by position, not person, and to explain why it is recommended. Ms. Mahoney said she had found the salaries spreadsheet used in the past and will update it.

There was a brief discussion of the Personnel Policy in which it was noted that the provisions in the new policy for COLA, longevity pay and tuition reimbursement were approved, but Selectwoman Alessio pointed out that steps are not in place to implement these payments. She said language outlining procedures needs to be added to the policy.

The Chairman opened the following Public Hearing at 10:09 am:

PUBLIC HEARING to accept a Moose Plate Grant in the amount of \$20,000 through the NH Division of Historical Resources. This grant will be used to assist in funding the rehabilitation of the Grace Daley Barn.

Heritage Commission Chair Ernest Landry was present and said the Board needs to take the step of accepting this grant, which it had formerly agreed Heritage could seek. He said it is not official until the Executive Council meets and recommends it to the Governor, but at this time he is asking that a certificate of authority to accept the grant be signed, and the grant money formally accepted. He said the contract language is standard; it is for work to replace the roof on the Grace Daley barn which will be completed by October 31, 2024. The work will be paid for 50% up front with the balance due upon completion. Heritage will then submit a final report to the Division of Historical Resources.

There were no questions from the public. The Board had no further questions. The Chairman closed the hearing at 10:15 am.

MOTION: by Selectman St. James, to accept the grant from the NH Division of Historical Resources in the amount of \$20,000, to be used for the Grace Daly barn roofing project.

SECOND: by Selectman Hart

All in favor

MOTION: by Selectman St. James, to authorize the Chair to sign all documents related to the grant from the NH Division of Historical Resources in the amount of \$20,000, to be used for the Grace Daly barn roofing project.

SECOND: by Selectman Hart

All in favor

Discussion of budget matters resumed, and Selectman Hart asked that Department Heads identify any items in their budgets that may be paid through ARPA funds.

BOARD BUSINESS, cont.:

Liquor Commission notification

The Chairman said that a letter has been received from the Liquor Commission informing the Town that California Burritos, LLC has applied for a liquor license for the Cigar Bar, at 92B Route 125. At this time, the Town is invited to comment on the application. There was a discussion of whether this constitutes a subdivision, as 92B does not currently exist. The Chairman will follow up.

Bids for Town Planner

Two bids had been received for the position of Planning and Land Use Consultant, which had been reviewed by the Board and the Planning Chair.

MOTION: by Selectwoman Alessio, to have Glenn Greenwood continue as Town Planner

SECOND: by Selectman Hart

All in favor

Rockingham Planning Commission membership

MOTION: by Selectwoman Alessio, to continue membership in the RPC and to pay dues for 2023 in the amount of \$6353 (based on population)

SECOND: by Selectman St. James

All in favor

Abatement requests

Two property tax abatements had been recommended for approval by the town's Assessor. Assessed value for 15 Pillsbury Pasture Rd. was abated by \$6,700, resulting in a refund of \$152.16; assessed value for 21 Wadleigh Point Rd. was abated by \$16,200, resulting in a refund of \$367.90. Both were abated based on condition of the property set by field assessors and contested by the owners.

MOTION: by Selectman St. James, to approve the two abatements based on the Assessor's recommendation.

SECOND: by Selectman Bashaw

All in favor

The Chairman opened the following Public Hearing at 10:30 AM:

PUBLIC HEARING to accept an ARPA Planning Grant for Kingston Lake -Great Pond Watershed Management Plan Development, in an amount up to \$100,000

Present to discuss this grant were Forrest Bell of FB Environmental, Kimberley Meyer and Reid VanKeulen of Camp Lincoln, Dave Lovely-Taillon, Camp Director, and Muriel Ingalls of the Kingston Lake Association.

Mr. Bell said that this project was 5th in the state out of 30. He summarized the purpose of the grant, which is to create a Watershed Management Plan to evaluate pollution

sources, set a water quality goal, and set a roadmap going forward. He said that this will make Kingston more eligible for grants going forward to implement the plan to improve water quality. Mr. Bell said that the Town will have an administrative role but there will be very little to that; the Town will need to follow the procedure to hire a consultant for the project and complete paperwork.

Ms. Meyers said that Camp Lincoln has served the community for 100 years and she has worked with Ms. Ingalls for many years. She said the grant is great news and that it is a grant and not a loan shows that the state recognizes the importance of the lake.

Mr. VanKeulen said that this is an opportunity to educate the residents, and work with others to improve runoff into the lake.

Ms. Ingalls said she has lived on the lake for 50 years and she is delighted to have this opportunity to improve and protect it. She said they would like to retain FB Environmental as they have done this work before. Selectman St. James said the Town has a bidding policy; Mr. Bell said a quality-based request for proposals is to be sent out.

There was a discussion of formation of a steering committee and who should be involved; Ridgewood Association, the DPW and the MS-4 Committee were mentioned.

Comments:

Evvy Nathan, Chair of the Conservation Commission, said this is a big plus for the MS-4 stormwater permit. She also said that Kingston Lake is the Town's biggest draw, and anything that can be done to keep it healthy should be done. She said that this lake is a poster child for stormwater management in the state. She said that clean water is imperative for tourism and camps.

The Chairman closed the Public Hearing at 10:50 AM

MOTION: by Selectman St. James, to accept grant funds in the amount of up to \$100,000 for the formation of a Watershed Management Plan for Kingston Lake.

SECOND: by Selectman Hart

All in favor

MOTION: by Selectwoman Alessio, to authorize the Chair to sign all grant paperwork regarding this Watershed grant from the State.

SECOND: by Selectman St. James

All in favor

A steering committee will be formed, and a Select Board liaison will be named; this committee will start work in the Spring.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:55 AM

Respectfully submitted:

Susan H. Ayer

Administrative Assistant to the Select Board