

**Kingston, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting of December 5, 2022
Final MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by the Chairman.

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

APPOINTMENTS:

Friends of Kingston Open Space

Rick Russman introduced himself and several other members of FOKOS (Ernie Landry, Peter Coffin and Walt Roy) who were present. He said that the Kingston Master Plan calls for 20% to 30% of the Town's land to be protected. He said that with currently protected land (much of which had been acquired via warrant articles facilitated by FOKOS) along with land currently in the works, the Town is down to about 327 acres to acquire to meet the goal of the Master Plan.

Mr. Russman said that there are 10 properties in town with trails, and that the Fire Department, recognizing the need to access the trails to rescue hikers, put in a grant to purchase a forestry skid unit. He said the department received grant money to cover half (\$2500) of the cost of the skidder, and FOKOS would like to contribute toward the cost of the balance with a donation of \$500. This check was accepted and given to the Finance Director to process.

Deed and Conservation Easement - Map R1 Lots 6 & 7 - Southeast Land Trust

(Selectwoman Alessio recused herself from this discussion and stepped down from her seat at the Board table to join the audience.)

Duane Hyde of SELT, and Rick Russman, were present to explain the status of this easement. Mr. Hyde said this is a total 29 acre parcel off of Hunt and Lefevre Roads that abuts the South Kingston Town Forest. He explained that this land was part of wetland mitigation for the project at 266 Rte.125. He said that it had been difficult to find a property, especially one that would keep the money for the purchase in town, but at the last minute this one came up as a possibility.

Mr. Hyde said that the Phase 1 hazard study had been done, and a boundary survey has been completed and recorded at the Registry of Deeds. He said there had been some trouble with the chain of title, that the title researcher could not find the prior owner. It turned out that in the mid-70s when the Town first created tax maps, if the owner of a lot could not be found, they held it three years and then sold it via tax collector's sale. Mr. Russman concurred that in the past, people would buy lots such as this at a tax sale. He said that he sees no risk whatsoever after this parcel has been in the same hands for over 40 years.

Selectman St. James questioned why one abutting lot was not surveyed; he was concerned the Town was landlocking the parcel. Mr. Hyde explained that the property had been bought by a brother and sister in the early 90's, and that after several deaths and splitting among family members, at this time the family has no interest in owning the land and may be interested in conserving it.

Chairman Wilson said that the choice of this property for the wetland mitigation purchase took place several years ago, before Ms. Alessio was on the Select Board. He said she is not a signor as a Board member on the deed paperwork. Mr. Russman said that at the time, about 25 properties were brought forward and none were suitable as there are strict criteria for acceptance by DES. This property was last, and he said he reached out to Ms. Alessio to see if she would want to sell.

MOTION: by Selectman St. James, to authorize the Town to accept the title to the properties (map R1, Lots 6 and 7) and grant a conservation easement deed to Southeast Land Trust, and to authorize the Chair to sign all necessary documents.

SECOND: by Selectman Bashaw

All in favor

Kingston Days Core Steering Committee - Appointments

Selectman St. James said that it had been decided to appoint a steering committee to help reorganize the Kingston Days committee going forward. Seven appointees were present. Greg Santos, Becky Santos, Bonnie Hall, Stacy Dion, Kathy Walsh, Glen Milhomme and Robert Augusta each introduced themselves and gave reasons for their interest in serving on this committee.

There was a question-and-answer period with the Board. Selectwoman Alessio applauded the efforts of the original committee members and said she hopes they will stay on for 2023.

Stacy Dion, who will be chairing this committee, said that they had met and voted to continue with the 3-day festival for 2023. She said they also would like to move it to the second week in September, when people will be back from vacations and when the weather may be less hot. There was some discussion of this, including that the information needs to be gotten out to the public, because people are accustomed to Kingston Days being held on the first weekend in August, and they make plans around that.

MOTION: by Selectman St. James, to approve the recommendation of the Kingston Days Committee to change the date of the 2023 Kingston Days event to September 8, 9 and 10.

SECOND: by Selectman Hart

All in favor

Ms. Dion said the next meeting of the committee, open to the public, will be on December 15, 2022. She said they will start to break down tasks and form subcommittees. She emphasized that volunteers are still needed for every aspect of the event.

COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS:

Selectman St. James reported that the **Historic District Commission** will meet on Wednesday. He said he had talked with Chair Susan Prescott about the town's

attorney's interpretation of the HDC's jurisdiction when it comes to the use of a building. He said Ms. Prescott had asked for the attorney's opinion in letter form, and Selectman St. James will request this of Attorney Grandy.

Selectman St. James said that he had contacted the **audio** company about the problem with one camera and the status of the work and had instructed them to coordinate with DPW Director Phil Coombs and video technician Adam Faulconer.

Selectman Hart said the **Budget Committee** is close to the end of their work and have scheduled an additional meeting for December 7.

PUBLIC COMMENT 1: None heard.

OLD BUSINESS:

2023 Budget

Selectman Hart said that the Budget Committee appreciated that all five Selectmen attended the meeting on the executive budget last week. He said that the biggest concern now is pay for performance raises, which he said the committee thinks are unnecessary along with cost-of-living increases and other raises. Chairman Wilson said that the process in the past has been that the Department Heads review their own employees and come to the Select Board with recommendations. He said that if the performance raises are taken out this year, the Department Heads would be looking for more raises because they were anticipating PFP in addition. Selectwoman Alessio said she thinks it makes sense to leave PFP in place for 2023. She said that because the cost of living has gone up so much, the PFP increases are needed so that the salaries don't lose ground. Selectman St. James said that this board has granted a number of increases already. Selectwoman Alessio said that just because the PFP funds are allocated, it doesn't mean they will all be spent. But the budget needs to include up to the maximum to be spent.

Selectman Hart said he did not see the PFP line in the budget. Finance Director Paula Mahoney said that just like the COLA increases, the budget line does not indicate actual expenditures; the money goes into the payroll lines.

There was a discussion of the need for a pay matrix.

Stacy Dion, representing the Budget Committee, said that clarification is needed. She said that some raises are in the budget already, some are being added, and different departments are handling things differently. She will meet with Ms. Mahoney tomorrow at 1:00 to discuss further.

NEW BUSINESS:

Town Report printing estimate

An estimate for printing the Town Report as it was last year, with 200 copies, was received from R.C. Brayshaw. The cost will be \$833. Selectman Hart said that the budget line was for \$1800, and that line was reduced to \$1,000.

MOTION: by Selectman St. James, to approve the printing cost for the Town Report and authorize the Chair to sign the agreement.

SECOND: by Selectwoman Alessio

All in favor

BOARD BUSINESS:

Personnel Policy

There was a brief discussion about when the revised policy will be approved and put into effect. It was agreed that the committee needs to reconvene to work out details on how certain benefits will be implemented. April 1, 2023 was given as a date to finalize the policy. The budget will reflect funding for the various benefits such as tuition reimbursement and longevity pay.

Boat Launch funding

Funding is available from the state through ARPA funds to pay for improvements and repairs to municipal boat launches. The DPW Director will review the details and come back with his thoughts on whether this should be pursued.

Request for trash barrel at business

This request, for a trash barrel to be issued to a business because there is an apartment in the building also, was discussed. Mr. Coombs said that this is a commercial business and that was converted from a residence in 1988. He said there is no indication of a legal apartment, but more research may be done. He said that if anyone reports that because of an apartment they should have trash pickup, they are asked to provide proof that the apartment is legal. If so, they will provide a barrel.

PUBLIC COMMENT 2:

DPW Director Coombs spoke to the Board regarding the dog park at the old fairgrounds. He said that what the prior Road Agent had authorized to help out with parking lot work (etc.) there has grown into more than initially intended. He said that not many people from Kingston are involved in the park. He also said that the park infringes on the area that his department uses for a brush dump. He said that as a taxpayer he is concerned.

CORRESPONDENCE, APPLICATIONS, PURCHASE ORDERS:

- Three applications for veterans' tax credits were approved.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

MOTION: By Selectwoman Alessio, to approve the meeting minutes of November 21, November 28 and November 30, 2022, as submitted.

SECOND: by Selectman Hart

All in favor

Meeting Adjourned at 7:55 pm

Respectfully submitted:

Susan H. Ayer, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board