

**Kingston, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting of December 19, 2022
FINAL MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 AM by the Chairman. This meeting was held at the Kingston Fire Station meeting room.

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

APPOINTMENTS:

Scott Bogle, Rockingham Planning Commission re: Age Friendly Communities

Mr. Bogle introduced the “Age Friendly Communities in the Rockingham Region” project, explaining that this is being done using grant money received in partnership with other organizations, including AARP NH and Meals on Wheels. He said that the project builds on work done by other agencies and communities and is meant to look at the needs of the senior population now and in the future.

Mr. Bogle described 8 dimensions of an age friendly community, including outdoor spaces, health and nutrition services and transportation. The idea is to allow the aging population to age in place and control long term care expenses. He said that the projection for over-65 residents in New Hampshire by the year 2040 is 408,522, up from 220,672 in 2015. He said that this would mean about 75,000 non-driving adults by 2030, or one in five people over 65, based on federal calculations. He said this may be a little high for New Hampshire, and work on a New Hampshire needs-based assessment is being done; however, transportation is a big worry for seniors. This could be addressed by starting a new volunteer driver program or asking that an existing one expand into the Kingston area.

Mr. Bogle said that the process would be to form a local steering committee, create, distribute, and collect a survey, hold a community forum to discuss the needs identified, and then prepare a report. He said this is a commitment of 4 meetings.

Library Director Melissa Mannon asked what the time frame would be, as the library is working on a strategic plan and this project would go along well with that. Mr. Bogle said that the grant goes through June 30; the survey would be produced in mid to late January. He said that many libraries are taking the lead, and that in Fremont, for example, the library serves as a community center and senior center.

Selectwoman Alessio commented that she is hesitant to take this up at this time, as the Select Board has so much on their plate. Ms. Mannon asked if the library takes a role in the work on this project, what the burden to the Town would be beyond four meetings. There was a discussion of the process, and who would be involved (Library, Recreation, Welfare, community leaders).

Mr. Bogle was asked about the amount of grant money involved; he said that the grant for the full two years was for \$100,000. This is the second year, and there is \$40,000 to conduct three assessments. Peter Coffin, representing the Planning Board, said that there would be no requirement for staff time by the Select Board members. The Chair said that the Board would talk about this and get an answer to Mr. Bogle.

DEPARTMENT INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION:

Department Heads present: Police Chief Joel Johnson, Finance Director Paula Mahoney, Town Clerk Tammy Bakie, Library Director Melissa Mannon, DPW Director Phillip Coombs, Fire Chief Graham Pellerin

Finance and Personnel- Director Paula Mahoney

Ms. Mahoney said that she needs health plan election sheets in from all full-time employees by Wednesday.

On the topic of the budget, she said it was at a 9% increase overall, the last she knew, but that the Budget Committee had met since then. The most current budget was shared by Budget Committee liaison, Selectman Hart.

She then said that after completing the default budget, she became aware that there was some question of whether employee wage increases made after the Town election could be included in the default budget. She said she had learned that the only employment contracts that would stay under default are union contracts, and therefore none of the new salaries set during the year that were not voted on can be included in the default budget. She said for this reason everyone needs to work with the budget committee to get a budget that will pass. She also said that pay for performance funds could be used to offset the wage increases if they are dropped.

There was a general discussion of the budget, and a sheet of utility cost analysis done by Stacy Dion was shared.

Solar project update

Selectwoman Alessio said that the Solar Committee had met and are considering a proposal to place solar panels on the roof of the Fire Station. It is estimated that this would cover 60% of the energy costs of the Fire Department. She said that the original plan to place a solar array at the landfill is no longer cost effective, mainly because the school has 80% of the usage needed to make such an array viable, and they are voting on switching to LED lighting. This would cut their usage in half. She said that other locations were considered but at this time the fire station roof project looks best.

Details shared were that the cost of the project would be \$178,000, offset by a \$53,000 tax credit and \$10,000 in state money. American Rescue Plan funds would be considered to pay the balance.

In discussion, it was noted that the savings to be had will be evaluated more completely as the new building has not reached peak efficiency. The time frame to recoup the expense was debated, and also if the roof will handle the weight of the panels. Mr. Coombs asked if the Town Hall roof might be a better candidate. Revision Energy will be invited to the January 9, 2023 Board meeting to do a presentation, along with members of the Solar Committee.

Library - Director Melissa Mannon

Ms. Mannon said that she has rewritten the mission statement for the library and is embarking on a strategic plan in the coming year that will involve a large-scale survey. She said this will be to identify where the library is now, where they are going, and where it fits in to the community as a whole. She said that the age-friendly communities survey proposed by Mr. Bogle would fit right in.

Town Clerk-Tax Collector - Tammy Bakie

Ms. Bakie said that tax collection has been completed and the amount unpaid for the second billing period totals \$810,000. She said this is fairly normal. She said she and the Finance Director are working on reconciling Clerk revenues and liens, etc.

Ms. Bakie said that the time period for candidates to put their name on the ballot for empty elected positions is from January 25 through February 3, 2023. This will be posted on the website along with the list of openings that will appear in Article 1.

The Clerk then reminded everyone that she needs to be given hard copies of all meeting minutes. She also reminded everyone that all appointees need to be sworn in by her before voting or acting in their role on a committee or board.

Finally, Ms. Bakie requested that Department Heads give their administrative assistants time off to attend a lunch on a date to be determined, so that those working other than in Town Hall can get to know their counterparts in town. All present agreed that this would be a good idea.

Department of Public Works- Director Phillip Coombs

Mr. Coombs said that the \$29,000 earmarked for the playground has been spent or is invoiced. He said they are measuring decking and will pay for as much in this budget as possible. He said a decision needs to be made on the playground grant as soon as possible. Pros and cons of accepting the grant money were briefly discussed.

Mr. Coombs said there have been two snow/ice events so far; he thanked the police department, especially Officer Takesian, for their assistance with getting vehicles removed from the roadways.

Mr. Coombs said that the Kingston Public Works Association is establishing a scholarship in memory of Rich St. Hilaire.

With regard to plans for renovations at the Town Hall, Mr. Coombs said he will wait and see how the office moves go that are currently underway. He said work on the roof and heating system upgrades are still to be done, but other than those, he will hold off to see what is actually needed or decided on.

Mr. Coombs then discussed the heating system at the museum building. He said Plumbing inspector Dave Fields went in to look at the boiler, which has been red tagged

by the state. He said it should be left in service until spring, as they will need a warm week to take everything out; he said it can't be safely done now.

The sprinkler system was also questioned, and whether it is needed in that building. Chief Pellerin said it is based on fire loading. Ms. Mannon said she will do research on sprinkler system needs. An energy audit will be done next year on all buildings.

Selectman St. James questioned whether a temporary boiler could be put in and not have to wait until spring. Mr. Coombs explained the problem with that is that there are settings on each radiator, making it hard to regulate the heat in all the areas of the building. He also said to drain the system would take 2 days or more, and 2 or 3 days to hook everything up. He said the boiler works; it just looks bad.

Pre-treatment for the roads should be received shortly, now that the DPW crew is trained in its use.

Fire Department - Chief Graham Pellerin

Chief Pellerin asked about the process for encumbering funds. This led to a budget discussion; it was agreed that everyone should be helping to get the budget passed through getting information to the residents. Selectman St. James said that commitments made to the employees will be honored.

Selectman Hart reported from the Budget Committee that they had requested a reduction of \$143,000, as an amount but not tied to specific line items. He had a list of how much was being asked to be taken out of different lines and departments, which included removal of pay for performance increases. After some discussion of these changes, it was agreed that the Board and Department Heads should hold a joint meeting with the Budget Committee to work out some of the differences. This was set for December 28 at 6:00 pm at the Fire Station. The Budget Committee may meet again before Decision Day #1, which is on January 7.

BOARD BUSINESS:

Warrant Articles - draft

The Board reviewed and discussed the Warrant articles so far identified. Two draft articles submitted by the DPW Director previously will be added.

Ginger Way

The Chairman said he had asked Planner Glenn Greenwood to pull the information on this private road. He said it had been added by the Police Department in order to assign 911 addresses to the three residences on one lot; the question is whether to include it on the tax maps or whether it needs to be formally accepted.

Town Facebook account

Chairman Wilson said that he wanted to be sure there is no objection to starting a Town Facebook account strictly for public announcements. No comments will be allowed. All agreed this would be a useful tool.

Seekamp Environmental - request for trash receptacle

Research on this property shows that the house was built as a residence with an office, and that the apartment upstairs was listed on property cards. In discussion it was noted that this is a commercial property and the apartment is not owner occupied, so if a barrel is supplied, the owner would have to pay for it. The arrangement made when the property was converted will be looked into.

Finance Office

With Finance now located upstairs in the old Planning office, it was recommended that that door be fitted with a keypad, and also possibly with an alarm.

Mr. Coombs informed the Board that Reinhold Security is handling the alarm systems and taking over from the company that had been handling the library's security system.

Total Notice

The Chairman signed the annual agreement with Total Notice, the company that takes care of tax lien work for the Town Clerk/Tax Collector. Nothing has changed from last year.

CORRESPONDENCE, APPLICATIONS, PURCHASE ORDERS

Drummond Woodsum rates

A letter has been received from Drummond Woodsum, who are now acting as the Town's attorneys in most cases. The firm's rates are being adjusted, but the lawyers that serve the Town on a regular basis will remain at \$220 per hour.

Letter re: mailbox vs. plow

A letter from a resident whose mailbox was destroyed by a plow has been received. There was a discussion of the post office rules that apply to all mail boxes, which are reflected in the Town's ordinance, that the face of the box is no closer than five feet to the edge of pavement. It was noted that this is not possible in some areas. However, the plow driver can't be responsible when a mailbox is in harm's way.

Mr. Coombs went on to express his concern that the school staff that drive Town plowing equipment are not required to submit to random urinalysis testing as the Town's drivers are. He said that he feels training and testing should be required, to reduce liability to the Town.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

MOTION: By Selectman St. James, to approve the meeting minutes of December 12, as submitted.

SECOND: by Selectwoman Alessio

All in favor

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Coffin asked for a decision on whether or not the Town would like to go forward with participating in the Age Friendly Communities project as presented by Mr. Bogle.

All were in agreement to have the Recreation, Library and Human Services Directors lead this project for Kingston.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:55 AM

Respectfully submitted:

Susan H. Ayer

Administrative Assistant to the Select Board