

**Kingston, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Town Hall Meeting Room
Meeting of January 30, 2023
Final MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 AM by the Chairman.

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

APPOINTMENTS:

Phil Coombs, Public Works Director

Mr. Coombs approached the board to discuss appraisal of utilities. He said this is a very specialized field and the Town's contract with KRT Appraisal does not include utilities. In the past, the Town has utilized the state Department of Revenue Administration numbers when completing the tax warrant, and he feels that is not in the Town's best interest. He said he had done some research which had indicated that Sansoucy & Associates is a respected firm specializing in utility assessment. He then had the Selectman's Administrator send all the utility property cards to them in order to get a quote.

Sansoucy has responded with two options; for one year the cost will be \$35,500 and for a 5-year contract term the cost will be \$22,700 per year.

Mr. Coombs said that this is a revaluation year, and he feels that the Town's utilities are massively under-assessed. He said the two biggest taxpayers in Town are Eversource Energy, who paid \$519,565 in 2022, and Unitil, who paid \$389,075. He said their assessed values are \$24,404,200 and \$18,275,000. He said he thinks that there is large potential for recouping the cost of the assessing contract by correcting these and other utility assessments. In addition, he said there have been multiple lawsuits by Eversource and prior entities over the years challenging the assessments for a group of towns, and Sansoucy would attend court if needed, as a qualified expert, as part of the contract.

There was further discussion of various issues with utilities such as double poles and new fiber optic equipment that has not been accounted for.

There was also a discussion of where the money would come from to pay for this additional expense. Selectman St. James said it could be paid out of Contracted Services. Other suggestions were the infrastructure fund and the Comcast franchise fees paid to the Town each year.

MOTION: by Selectwoman Alessio, to go forward with a 5-year contract with Sansoucy Associates in the amount of \$22,700 per year, for utility assessment services.

SECOND: by Selectman Hart

Selectman St. James said he would caution the board not to be too quick, that maybe a week should be taken to look at alternatives. The point was made that this is a

specialized field, and also that the company had been recommended by Kingston's assessor when the matter came up in the past.

All in favor

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

Department of Public Works - Phillip Coombs

Mr. Coombs said that there has been a concerted campaign to keep people from plowing snow across the roadway; he said that with trees limbs down and snow piled against them, it was a problem. Aside from that, he said the law is in place for a reason. He said the police department helped with enforcement, and there was a lot less in the last storm.

Mr. Coombs said that the online municipal auction is open for anyone who has unused items to sell. He said this is an ongoing auction for all types of items, but that smaller items should be boxed together if possible. Payments will be received by the Town Clerk.

On another topic, Mr. Coombs said that he thinks there should be some exemption in the personnel policy regarding sick time, to address overtime vs. straight time for those employees who are held over regular work hours to an extreme degree when called out to take care of the needs of the Town, then not compensated correctly. He said that employees hesitate to take sick time, then end up using vacation time, which is not right. Selectwoman Alessio said that once the new personnel policy is in place, all time will be accrued and this should not be an issue. She said the benefits committee will reconvene in April to complete the policy.

The plotter/printer/scanner ordered for the Public Works Department is in place and soon large plans and maps will be able to be scanned to other departments.

Mr. Coombs then said he would like to have a "requirements contract" in place to cover downed trees on fences and HVAC emergency repairs. He said these go out to bid every year and it would make more sense to get three quotes now, and save having to do it in the future.

Mr. Coombs said that Reinhold will be placing cameras on the Town Hall and Public Works buildings. He said the Police and Fire stations are already done, and the library will be next. (Ms. Mannon said that the Library Board of Trustees will need to approve this.) These cameras will be external, plus one in the Town Hall hallway.

Lastly, Mr. Coombs said that destroyed trash barrels are an issue; he suggested that the Town charge \$70 for a replacement barrel, which is what Waste Management will charge.

Fire Department: Kelly Muldoon, Administrative Assistant and EMT; Chief Graham Pellerin

Ms. Muldoon gave a demonstration of the Automated Electronic Defibrillator that is kept on the wall near the Clerk's office. She said this machine is about 10 years old and replacement parts are unavailable; others such as the one at the library are of the same vintage. She said she is working on a grant to replace the machines in cruisers and ambulances as well as in buildings.

In the course of the demonstration, Ms. Muldoon stressed that the first thing to do is to call 9-1-1, and to enlist help with the steps to take while waiting for EMTs to arrive. She went over these steps, including how to do chest compressions and how to use the AED machine.

Chief Pellerin followed with Fire Department matters. He said that there is a shower leak at the station, and it has been found that the shower was never properly sealed. The construction team is aware of this; as the plumbing contractor left midway through the project, Bauen will need to handle this. He said it needs to be done correctly with professional mold mitigators.

Finance and Human Resources- Director Paula Mahoney

Ms. Mahoney said she had finalized submittal of the budget and warrant to the state. Copies will be posted today as required, at the Town Hall and at the polling place (Swasey Gym).

She informed the Board that Marissa Federico will begin training on payroll next week as backup for when Ms. Mahoney is away.

Ms. Mahoney then went through several items that are not in the personnel manual that need to be added:

- Benefits offered by the town.
- The option of not taking the Town's insurance, and in return receiving \$2,000 per year. She said the employees are given this option when hired and every year when insurance options are renewed; the employee needs to show that they have another insurance plan.
- The end-of -year sick time bonus, paid in increments depending on how many sick days were taken. This has been done back at least as far as 2010, but is not spelled out in the personnel policy.

Ms. Mahoney said that sick time needs to be accounted for on all time sheets.

Selectwoman Alessio said that this will be referred to the benefits committee when they reconvene. Chief Pellerin asked if they can meet before April 1, as this is not contingent on the budget passing. It was agreed that a meeting will be set soon.

Banking matters, which bank is used for which purposes, was briefly discussed. Ms. Mahoney said that certain things are remaining with TD bank, but most of the Town's business is now at Partner's Bank.

Selectman St. James commented that PF Pope offers savings plans beyond the State retirement plans, and employees should be aware of this benefit. It was mentioned that many of the newer employees have enrolled; PF Pope will come to talk to employees if invited.

Police Department - Chief Joel Johnson

The Chief reported that this is the fourth week with his new officers, and everything is going well.

Library - Director Melissa Mannon

Ms. Mannon reported that the first meeting of the Age Friendly Communities committee took place; members include Library, Recreation, Human Services and Planning Board personnel, along with three Town residents. They are working with the Rockingham Planning Commission through Scott Bogle to prepare and distribute a survey about how services for seniors can be improved. This survey will be going out to residents soon.

Ms. Mannon distributed the library's calendar for February, as well as a mission, vision and values statement. She said the Board of Trustees will be working with the Board on an MOU for shared responsibilities for the library building. This is being drafted for 2024.

Recreation - Director Paul Butler

Mr. Butler shared a listing of upcoming events.

There was a discussion of the grant for the Stepping Stones playground, which he said he does not believe is needed. He and Mr. Coombs described the modified plan, which is to fence the area and refurbish some of the old equipment. They said that donations received, on top of the money set aside in a warrant article, will be sufficient to complete the playground without taking grant money that would cause obligations in perpetuity to the state. Material for resurfacing parts of the playground equipment has already been purchased, and labor will be done by the Public Works crew. All agreed the main focus is safety.

Mr. Butler said that pickleball continues to be very popular; he has 65 players that play 5 evenings and 5 mornings per week. The charge is \$50 per year for residents and \$60 per year for non-residents. Chairman Wilson said he thought \$60 is cheap for non-residents. Mr. Butler said he can look at that, but there are not a lot of expenses related to pickleball.

Mr. Coombs said that there has been discussion of adding pickleball courts to the area at the corner of Wadleigh Point Road and Main Street, which had been set aside for a ballfield. He said if they are to be added anyplace, he would prefer the Fairgrounds. He said he thought anything at the Recreation Center should be multi-purpose, as appetites for various activities can change over time.

Town Clerk-Tax Collector - Tammy Bakie

Ms. Bakie said that the time period to sign up to be on the ballot for open positions ends on Friday. She said she will be open from 3:00 until 5:00 that afternoon for taking sign-ups. She said Deliberative Session is on Saturday February 4 starting at 9 am. School

Deliberative session is on the 8th, after which she can order the ballots. She also mentioned pending legislation on provisional ballots, which she is not in favor of. Mr. Coombs will moderate Candidates Night which will take place on February 27.

The Clerk's office is licensing dogs; all 1600 are to be registered between now and November 30. As for Tax Collection, Ms. Bakie reported that she will be sending out delinquent notices for the \$531,000 in tax payments that are past due; this is the step taken each year before liens can be placed.

Ms. Bakie suggested that there should be a credit card machine in the assessing and permitting office as an option for paying some of the higher permits and fees. She also mentioned the recent training for the new document management system, and said that the question has been raised about whether documents are being scanned to pdf-a format. She said the state requires this before records can be shredded.

Mr. Coombs asked if there is still a tech committee. He said a lot of questions end up in limbo.

The Chairman ended the Departments discussion and announced that the Department Heads meeting on March 27 will be opened up to all Committee and Board Chairs along with the Departments, for a review of procedures. He said that the Town Clerk, Finance Director and Select Board Admin will work on various topics to address, such as purchase orders, submittal of minutes, and communication. He said everyone needs to adhere to policy.

BOARD BUSINESS

Demolition of Science Building:

There is state grant money available for demolition to make way for new housing. Chinburg Properties is interested in utilizing this grant for demolition of the old Science building on the Sanborn Seminary property. Town Planner Glenn Greenwood has been authorized by the Board to work with Chinburg to prepare an application for this grant, for which the Town needs to be the applicant.

Contract for Development of Kingston Lake Watershed Management Plan:

The Select Board Admin reported that Forrest Bell (FB Engineering) was the only firm to respond to the request for qualifications posted for this contract. This is work to be done with the \$100,000 in grant money received by the Lakes Association, but requires town participation. The contract paperwork has not yet been received; when it is, it will be sent out for review by Primex and town counsel.

Block 5 Contract renewal:

This contract is expiring in March, and the renewal was sent to the Finance Director. In discussion, it was decided that this should have gone out for bids. Selectwoman Alessio suggested a bridge contract of 6 months in order to have time to send out for bids. The Chairman will call Block 5 to discuss options.

Abatements:

Two property tax abatements were recommended by the Assessor, one because of a pool being removed, the other for discrepancies in the property's description.

MOTION: by Selectman St. James, to approve abatements on 9 North Road and 96 North Road, as recommended by the Assessor.

SECOND: by Selectman Hart

All in favor

Land Use Change Tax:

MOTION: by Selectman St. James, to approve the land use change tax levied on property at Tax Map R42 Lot 1 due to removal from Current Use.

SECOND: by Selectwoman Alessio

All in favor

CORRESPONDENCE, APPLICATIONS, PURCHASE ORDERS

- John's Truck and Auto has applied for their annual junkyard license. The Chairman asked if Mr. Coombs would like to go out to inspect the business with the Code Enforcement Officer, in an advisory capacity as he has done these inspections in the past.
- A facilities use application from the Congregational Church to use the Plains and bandstand for a sunrise service on April 9 was approved.
- Two requests to purchase second trash barrels were approved.
- One veterans tax credit was approved.
- One Yield Tax levy was approved.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

MOTION: By Selectwoman Alessio, to approve the meeting minutes of December 19, 28, 29, and January 7, 9 and 14, as submitted.

SECOND: by Selectman Hart

All in favor

LIAISON REPORT

Selectman St. James thanked Selectman Bashaw for attending the Kingston Days meeting in his absence. He said he was sad about all the negativity on social media. Selectman Bashaw said that the none of that negativity was at the meeting, that some people needed questions answered and one good outcome was that there were a lot of new faces. He said he thought it was a productive meeting.

There was some discussion of the car show and about snow fencing that the DPW Director believes was bought by the Town. He said that the DPW assisted with the motorcycle show, not the car show, as clarification.

Selectman Bashaw said that it needs to be made clear that the Town is not trying to make money on the Kingston Days event, that the goal is to sustain itself to be able to continue, and also to set money aside for the larger anniversary events.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

MOTION: by Selectman Bashaw to enter non-public session for the purpose of discussing a legal matter

SECOND: by Selectwoman Alessio

All in favor

The Board adjourned to non-public session at 10:39 AM.

MOTION: by Selectman St. James, to return to public session at 10:50 AM

SECOND: by Selectwoman Alessio

All in favor

Discussed in non-public session: Legal advice from counsel

Motion made to seal minutes of non-public sessions?

Motion made by Selectman Bashaw, seconded by Selectman St. James, because it is determined that divulgence of this information likely would...

☐ 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:

Richard Wilson	Y	Charles Hart	Y
Kevin St. James	Y	Electra Alessio	Y
Christopher Bashaw	Y		

Motion: PASSED

Meeting Adjourned at 10:50 AM

Respectfully submitted:

Susan H. Ayer

Administrative Assistant to the Select Board