

**Kingston, New Hampshire  
Board of Selectmen  
Meeting of September 26, 2022  
FINAL MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 AM by the Chairman.

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

**ABSENT:** Charles Hart, Select Board Member

**DEPARTMENT INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION:**

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

**Recreation**

Director Paul Butler reported on recent events hosted by the Recreation Department, including a Seniors trip to Lake Winnepesaukee. He said that pickle ball courts have been added at Swasey Gym, which expands the program. Mr. Butler shared a list of upcoming events.

Mr. Butler then said the grant for the Stepping Stones playground is still in the works, and the next step is going to the federal level. He said that they will need to have a survey done to keep the process going, clarifying that the survey the Town had on file was for the entire old fairgrounds property; they need one just for the portion that will now be Recreation property. There was a discussion of how to pay for the survey; it can be paid for as part of the grant. A price for the work needs to be obtained. Selectman St. James said that \$29,000 had been voted on in the March 2021 election and the funds encumbered for 2022. He said that a request for proposals for the work should be posted, because a contract should be in place to be sure the funding isn't lost.

Mr. Butler then asked the Board for guidance on a proposed BYOB craft night planned for the Rec Center. Selectman St. James said they had asked the State Liquor Board about it, and they have no problem with it if no one is selling alcohol. He said they then reached out to the Town's insurance company; he said Primex indicated that if the Town is not doing it, it's not a problem. It was agreed this needs to have a Special Event permit because otherwise alcohol is not permitted on Town property.

**Human Services**

Director Marissa Federico said she has been refreshing the Human Services website page. She also said she is working on Thanksgiving and Christmas details and asked if it is okay to put the blank donation forms on the website. It was agreed this will be fine. She confirmed that she will be putting up the Christmas tree in the hallway as in the past.

Ms. Federico said she had spoken with the Library Director to see if clients who do not have a printer can have their documents printed there. The Board agreed she can work out an arrangement with the library.

Ms. Federico said that she has been working with Finance Director Paula Mahoney about the Welfare accounts. She said she has already been talking to people about fuel and heating assistance, as she expects there to be high demand this year. She also said she is looking into setting up the food pantry as its own non-profit, which may not be easy as the account has quite a bit of money in it.

### **Library**

Library Director Melissa Mannon spoke about the Imagination Festival set for October 8 between 10 am and 1 pm. She said there will be comic book artists, comic book stores, cotton candy and popcorn, and Spiderman will be attending. Other activities planned include a jack-o-lantern jaunt like last year, and after school activities.

### **Town Clerk/Tax Collector**

Ms. Bakie thanked DPW Director Phil Coombs and his staff for helping with the recent Primary election, setting up and cleaning up.

Ms. Bakie then said she had taken an informal survey of 11 Towns, to ask if Select Board members all must attend every election for the full day. She said she had learned that don't have to all be there at once during the day, but they do need to be there at night. She said she has set up a meeting with the Moderator and Supervisors of the Checklist to work out some of the problems experienced at the primary, to improve the process for the general election, and will also meet with the poll workers.

Ms. Bakie said she had alerted the Secretary of State's office about a mailing by the State Democratic Party that had a return address in East Kingston on some of them. She said a cease and desist was issued; she said the problem was that the absentee ballots would never have reached her.

On the topic of Records Retention, Ms. Bakie said she would like to get rid of old records in the "condex" box on Highway property that belong to her and the Fire Department. Mr. Coombs said that he would like to look into renting a mobile shredding unit once the digitization of Town records has been completed. Chief Johnson said that burning them at a facility is another option and not as costly. He said that what is destroyed, when and how, needs to be documented. Ms. Bakie said the Records Retention Committee will go down to the condex box to assess how much is there to be destroyed.

### **Police**

Chief Johnson submitted paperwork to be signed by the Board to apply for a Highway Safety Grant in the amount of \$8,200 from the NH Dept. of Safety.

**MOTION:** by Selectwoman Alessio, to authorize the Chair to sign the grant paperwork and accept Highway Safety Grant money in the amount of \$8,200.

**SECOND:** by Selectman St. James

**All in favor**

### **Finance and Personnel**

Finance Director Paula Mahoney thanked Ms. Bakie for help with the transition; she said she is getting acclimated. She said she is trying to meet with all Department heads to talk about their budgets and what reports they need. She said she has upgraded Quickbooks. She said she can now do direct deposits through Quickbooks, which would reduce the time it takes to process them by half, because with TD Bank she needs to set up and change each account manually, and they allow up to 5 accounts per employee. Quickbooks only allows for 2 accounts, so she would need to inform employees that they can only have up to two deposit accounts. Another advantage is that the accounts would be viewable online. There was some discussion about making it a policy to only allow two deposit accounts. Ms. Mahoney will contact those employees with more than two.

### **Public Works**

Mr. Coombs said that the Town will be switching to automated trash bins with the new Waste Management contract. He said he is currently working on discovering any discrepancies between residential and business properties to ensure the town is only paying for contracted services. He said his department is trying to identify single-family vs. multi-family homes and who has private trash collection; they may default to not delivering a can, so that the resident would need to request one. He said that there are many accessory dwelling units that will potentially need a trash can; the Town will need to pay \$85 per can and \$129 per year for service, so he is looking into whether impact fees may be collected for Solid Waste collection. An information campaign will be mounted by the Solid Waste Committee, as all the changes will be a challenge.

The report for Year 4 of the MS-4 Stormwater Permit has been submitted. He said that up until now, the paperwork has been signed by the Highway Agent, but in future should be signed by the Select Board.

Mr. Coombs then discussed funding for the Main Street Bridge project; the money in the Highway account is not enough for the \$3,000 needed to match the grant funds and using another account that was originally earmarked for a traffic light on New Boston Road is possible; use of that fund is being researched.

Mr. Coombs then asked what the current guidance on COVID-19 is, for length of quarantine, etc. It was agreed that at this point the Town's policy should be to follow CDC guidance, because it changes so frequently. Employees will have to use sick time when out of work because of COVID exposure or illness.

The DPW Department is building an 8-bay carport at the Police Department, which will free up the Police garage for use as a training room. Chief Johnson concurred that this will eliminate the need for a new building for at least 10 years. Fire Chief Pellerin said that there is still furniture available at the Sears Logistics building that they need to get out. Chief Pellerin will send out an invitation to all departments to see what they may be able to use.

As to the proposal recently discussed, to change the traffic pattern around the Plains to one-way, with two-way traffic on the bisecting streets, Mr. Coombs said he has put information on the Town's website. He said this is in response to the feedback received after the meeting in which it was proposed. He said this is a major change that should be decided by the voters.

### **Fire and Emergency Management**

Chief Pellerin noted that if anyone still has items for auction, they should let him know now. He also said that the generator grant went through and the work is moving along. He reported that keeping sufficient personnel continues to be a challenge, and for that reason his overtime budget is \$20,000 over. However, he said his overall budget is okay.

New employees introduced themselves and were welcomed: Jess Nisbet, Code Enforcement Officer, and Robin Carter, Planning Board and ZBA Administrative Assistant.

The meeting then adjourned for lunch and the opportunity to meet new employees, at 11:50 AM.

Meeting resumed at 12:25 PM.

### **BOARD BUSINESS:**

- Review budget YTD: Selectman Hart had reviewed this at the last meeting, and no questions had been identified to ask the Department Heads; the numbers showed about 68% spent overall.
- Employee benefits revisions:

Changes to the policy in the areas of cost-of-living increases, vacation time, bereavement, longevity, and tuition reimbursement have been reviewed by the personnel policy committee and Selectwoman Alessio has brought forward their recommendations. She said that the cost-of-living adjustments proposed to be included (minimum 2% per year), if adopted in the policy, would be ensured in the case that the budget failed and the default budget was put in place. She said the Town is just starting to get more competitive with salaries and pointed out that employees without contracts could lose their cost-of-living increase.

Selectman St. James said he agrees that even one year without an increase will take away from the progress in pay rates; however, he said he thinks the COLA percentages should not be a personnel manual item but instead a warrant article.

**MOTION:** by Selectwoman Alessio, to approve the adjustments to bereavement, longevity, vacation time and tuition reimbursement allowances in the Town's personnel policy as recommended by the personnel policy committee.

**SECOND:** by Selectman St. James

In discussion, Selectman St. James pointed out a redundancy in the schedule for vacation time; it will be amended by taking out the 1-year line so that employees will receive one week of vacation time after 6 months, and at 2 years will go up to two weeks.

**All in favor**

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

**MOTION:** By Selectman St. James, to approve the meeting minutes of September 19, 2022, Public and Non-public, as written.

**SECOND:** by Selectman Alessio

**In favor: Alessio, Hart, Bashaw, Wilson; Abstain: St. James; passes**

**CORRESPONDENCE, APPLICATIONS, PURCHASE ORDERS**

- A Facilities Use application for use of the Plains for a celebration of life was approved. The regular fee of \$100 will be charged, along with a \$40 clean up fee that will be refunded if the area is left clean.
- An appointment to the Museum Committee was approved; the new member will be asked to attend the next meeting to meet the Board.
- There was a discussion of a request by the Police Chief to include 15 Police radios in ARPA funding. Board members felt this should have been budgeted, but that they are overdue for replacement; they will be placed on the list for ARPA but it will be determined if some may be paid out of the budget.

**Meeting Adjourned at 12:46 PM**

Respectfully submitted:

Susan H. Ayer

Administrative Assistant to the Select Board