

**Kingston, New Hampshire  
Select Board  
Meeting of September 25, 2023  
FINAL MINUTES**

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

**PRESENT:** Chair Chris Bashaw; Vice Chair Charles Hart; Glenn Coppelman, Laurie Szwed, Ellie Alessio, Select Board Members

**APPOINTMENTS:**

**Fire Chief and DPW Director re: Exploratory Committee for use of Fairgrounds**

DPW Director Phil Coombs said that there seems to be no long- term plan for use of the old Fairgrounds, which is a 15-acre parcel. He said there have been discussions of wanting more events in town, and also concern about Plains damage; he also wondered if the Fairgrounds could be a potential income generator. He said he and Fire Chief Graham Pellerin are suggesting that a committee could be formed to look at options to bring back to the Board.

Fire Chief Graham Pellerin said that in the past, Police Chief Briggs had suggested bringing the Army Corps of Engineers in to clear timber and begin to manage the property. He said he and Director Coombs had walked the property and said a lot of it is clear, but some would still need to be cleared. He said that back in the day bonfires were held that would make hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenue. He said they are not suggesting that, but there could be extra events, concerts, maybe monster trucks out there, off the main stage of the Plains, that would be beneficial to the Town and local businesses.

Chairman Bashaw said that he doesn't mind a committee being formed, but he doesn't feel in a position to commit money. He agreed with Chief Pellerin that Kingston Days should remain on the Plains.

Selectwoman Alessio said she remembers some big concerts at the Fairgrounds but also some challenges behind the scenes. She also said that if money is required to be spent, it will not be next year.

Chief Pellerin said they are proposing a committee just to look into whether it is possible to use the property in this way, and they are not looking at anything to happen next year. He said that they are looking at a committee comprised of him, Director Coombs, some members of the public, maybe some budget committee members just to get together and share some ideas. He said it is not feasible to have money-making events on the Plains as it is all open; at the Fairgrounds, with single points of entry and egress it is possible to charge per carload or per person such as the State Park does. He said that while they may want to look at bathrooms, electricity and running water in the future, they can start with food trucks and porta-potties. He said this could be a way for the Town to sustain itself.

Mr. Coombs said that it is an open field so infrastructure would not require a large outlay of funds; electricity would be the cheapest addition to start with and other improvements could be added incrementally. He said this would not be just for town events, but for such events as the Vintage Bazaar that was held on the Plains a few years ago. He said

it had been hard to get a head count at that event. He said there are a lot of events that only need some open land.

Lynn Merrill, Planning Board Chair, said there had been a number of issues with events in the past at the Fairgrounds and a reason the concerts were stopped. She said maybe this is too piecemeal and suggested that all Town property usage should be looked at. She said a 10-year plan to assess Town needs for infrastructure and recreation could be put out and the money raised over time. Chairman Bashaw said that Envision Kingston already encompasses some of this, but the bigger challenge is that a lot of Town property is held in trusts that restrict usage.

Chief Pellerin and Director Coombs were asked to bring a proposal for how to structure this committee to the next Board meeting.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT 1:**

Pam Brown, 23 Sunshine Drive, gave the following remarks that were then submitted in writing:

“(I am) speaking today as Vice Chair of the Hampstead Kingston Republican Committee, I’ve helped with Kingston Days tents for years. I would urge that we move Kingston Days back to its traditional August weekend.

Attendance this September was down from past years, especially among young people. Kingston Days provides our main outreach and annual fundraising opportunity. Our fundraising was off about 50% from last year. Other groups such as the Sanborn Music Boosters potentially suffered the same losses.

Many “out of town” people visit Kingston Days in August because they’re vacationing in NH - BEFORE Labor Day. We heard from many who weren’t able to attend this year for that reason. Others said they’d returned to school and work post- Labor Day and were too busy.

The September change also forced us to compete with two major events that same weekend. The Hampton Seafood Festival, now in its 34<sup>th</sup> year, took place Sept. 8 - 10. The festival has over 50 food vendors, over 70 arts & craft vendors, 2 Air Shows with acrobatic pilots, several bands performing, Fireworks, and their lobster-roll eating contest. As many as 80,000 people attend Hampton’s Festival, and it’s supported by several big-name sponsors.

The second large event that same weekend is the U.S. Airforce Thunderbirds show at Pease Airport (in Portsmouth) over Saturday & Sunday.

Before locking in a September weekend for 2024 -- I suggest you put out an online Survey asking vendors and other participants for their input. Did attendance improve? Were sales off? Would they prefer we return to an August weekend?”

#### **9:00 AM: BOARDS AND COMMITTEES Information and Discussion**

##### **Kingston Days Committee - Chair Stacy Dion**

Ms. Dion said the committee had met last week. She said they did have a very successful event this year, with good attendance and feedback. She said they are proposing to keep the event at the first week in September, as they had better attendance than in August and most food trucks and vendors want to keep it in September. She said that the Seafood Festival does not allow food trucks.

Chairman Bashaw said he would leave it to the committee to recommend the dates, as the volunteers do all the work. He said that this was the first time his family has been

able to attend as they are usually away in August. He said it's probably an even swap of people who can and can't attend in August vs. September. He suggested that more regular events at the far field would generate better foot traffic for the booths.

Selectwoman Szwed said that they need an answer from the carnival, as they book out ahead of time and could have a conflict, in which case Kingston Days might be shifted to the following weekend.

Ms. Dion said that the committee wants to get the dates set earlier this year and be able to go after additional sponsors. She said that numbers are preliminary, but they cleared approximately \$10,000 this year.

Selectwoman Alessio said that this is impressive, given the date change especially, and shared other positive comments. She said that Ms. Brown's concerns are valid, but that it is not a matter of "either/or" for attendees, as they can go to Kingston Days and still attend the Seafood Festival on a different day. She agreed that the final decision on dates should rest with the committee.

Selectman Coppelman also agreed on the dates decision, and said that it would be different if they had been faced with poor attendance, but this certainly did not seem to be the case. He said that they could work on the logistics to increase traffic to booths and vendors, but that the overall results speak for themselves.

Selectwoman Szwed said that all the concerns, including layout, were gone through on the committee agenda.

Ms. Dion said they are looking for approval of the dates so that they can get out ahead of things; last year they did not get started until January/February. She said they are asking for September 6, 7 & 8 if the carnival can make it, or the following weekend if not. Chairman Bashaw said that the Board will need a firm time frame to approve, which Ms. Dion said she will have by the next meeting.

Ms. Dion then said that Kingston Days committee appointments should end in October in the future, rather than the end of the year, so that the new committee can be appointed and get started.

#### **Budget Committee- Stacy Dion**

Ms. Dion said that the Budget Committee's schedule of meetings has been sent out with a letter to the Departments and Committees. Each will be hearing from their liaison.

Chairman Bashaw said he wants to be clear on the Budget Committee's intentions, as he considers a "flat" budget to be a 0% increase, which given inflation would mean there would have to be cuts. He said a more realistic goal would be to match inflation.

#### **Solid Waste and Recycling Committee - Stacy Dion**

Ms. Dion spoke about the flyer the SWRC has proposed to be sent out with the tax bills, explaining what is and is not recyclable and including what can be brought to the DPW's new collection point for glass and cardboard. She had obtained pricing from Minuteman printing at \$776.30. There was a discussion of the cost of printing the flyers at the Town Hall. It was estimated that the cost would be about \$200 cheaper if done in-house.

Selectwoman Alessio said that the printing could be done in batches, and that this would be the way to go if the price difference is verified. There was a discussion of where the money would come from. Ms. Dion said that going forward there would be a separate budget for the SWRC.

## **DEPARTMENTS: Information and Discussion**

### **Fire Department - Chief Graham Pellerin**

Chief Pellerin said that the Seabrook Station drill is from 9 am to noon tomorrow, which is a localized drill for Kingston. He said that the Web EOC is worthwhile to participate in, for example they set up a shelter during the ice storm. This will take place at the Central station and is the first of four drills; he will re-send the emails with dates for following drills.

### **Town Clerk/Tax Collector - Tammy Bakie**

Ms. Bakie thanked Director Coombs and the DPW crew for transporting donated voting booths from Exeter. She also thanked Police Chief Johnson and Officer Whitford who resolved an attempt to commit fraud and got a confession from the resident. Two voting machines were approved by the ballot law commission, and she said she doesn't have a cost yet but at some point the town will need to purchase new voting machines.

Ms. Bakie said that Deputy Caitlin Milhomme has created a new web page for the Supervisors of the Checklist. She said Ms. Milhomme is doing a great job on the website, and that she had asked Selectwoman Szwed about creating a policy to cover who can direct Ms. Milhomme on what goes on the website.

There is one dog left unlicensed and Officer Harvey will be starting the process to take that owner to court. There is \$423,000 left in taxes uncollected.

Ms. Bakie then she and the Board's Admin are looking into requirements for campers at campgrounds to be taxed. Ms. Ayer said that it doesn't appear that this has been done in years if ever, and it would apply only to unregistered campers; that if they are registered they would not be taxed. The campground owner would need to provide a list each year.

Selectman Hart asked if the State is mandating that the Town buy one of the two approved voting machines without paying for it. Ms. Bakie said that she hasn't ordered them yet, that she would rather see how they work out for other towns, as the old machines still work. She said the new ones do not have to be ordered yet. In discussion it was noted that the old machines were about \$3,000 each, and the new ones will be \$5,000 to \$6,000. Selectman Coppelman suggested putting this expense in the Capital Improvement Plan.

### **Finance - Director Paula Mahoney**

Director Mahoney said that she had sent out the budgets to departments and committees so that everyone can look it over prior to the first budget meeting. She said she will be working with Selectwoman Szwed on a policy for the invoicing and billing process.

Ms. Mahoney said she has created a wage study spreadsheet and sent it to other towns with a request for information. She has also sent job descriptions out to the various departments so that they can update them for the wage study.

The Director said that next week she will present changes to health insurance choices. She said the most expensive choice is going away, but that the new plans offer more for less money.

The personnel manual with changes is being approved by the committee to send to the Board and then to the attorney for review.

Ms. Mahoney also said she has sent the video of the NHMA Budget conference she had attended around to everyone she thought would be interested.

#### **Recreation - Director Paul Butler**

Mr. Butler handed out a flyer of upcoming Recreation activity and commented on the various events.

Mr. Butler asked and received permission to erect a sign at Comeau Field to list the donors to the newly completed Stepping Stones playground.

The Director then said he would like to raise all camp fees by \$10, which will cover the \$1 raise for camp counselors, many of whom will be returning. He said daily rates would remain the same.

**MOTION:** by Selectwoman Alessio, to approve a \$10 weekly increase in camp fees for both resident and non-resident campers.

**SECOND:** by Selectman Coppelman

**All in favor**

There was a discussion of collecting camp fees, as there are still some still unpaid.

Mr. Butler said he would like to be on the Fairgrounds committee when it is formed.

#### **Department of Public Works, Director Phil Coombs**

Director Coombs reported that his department had started a collection point for glass and cardboard recycling, and the first Saturday had 15 participants, which he thought was good for the first day. He said they will be doing it again this Saturday. He said that training is coming up in solid waste operation for SWRC members who are interested.

Mr. Coombs said that all paving has been completed aside from Concannon Road, where they are waiting for a septic system that is going in. He said the playground is complete pending a walk through and some small items that will be added next year. He said that the remaining fuel is being evacuated from the boiler at the museum, and he expects to replace it next week or the week after.

Mr. Coombs said that he has the invoice from Audio Video Experience for the work in the meeting room, and after a walk through with Adam Faulconer realized that the town is still owed two more desk microphones and two presenter mics. He said the best choice is to have one lapel mic for the Chair and one handheld mic for the floor. AV Experience will also be adjusting the location of the projector so that it is not in the middle of the screen on the video view.

#### **Police Department: Chief Joel Johnson**

Chief Johnson reported that all is going well in his department. He said he has one certified candidate for his open full-time position and will be bringing that forward. He commended Officer Whitford for her work and said that he sees her as a future detective, citing her work in recovering a stolen radio at the school.

#### **Select Board Administrative Assistant: Susan Ayer**

Ms. Ayer thanked Ms. Bakie for lending her clerk, Holly DeRusha, to help with the records scanning project in her spare time. She said that there is a huge backlog of scanning to be done, but it is finally getting done, with the goal of catching up by the end of the year. She said the four scanners initially ordered are all set up and ready to go,

and that anyone that produces permanent records will need to scan them into the records management system as the town will not be saving paper in most cases. Ms. Ayer also reported that the Town's assessment information will now appear on the Avitar.com kiosk, but with only general information. This is free to the Town, and anyone that wants to access full tax card information from the website would have to subscribe. The full information is available on the Town's website via AxisGIS. She said that she is working on updating the Assessing web page to get rid of old information and make the new information more visible. Finally, Ms. Ayer reported that the Town will no longer be using Zoom for remote meetings, instead utilizing Teams, which is included in Microsoft 365.

### **Human Services**

In the absence of Director Marissa Federico, Chairman Bashaw said he would like more information about what services need to be provided by local municipalities. Ms. Mahoney said that Ms. Federico would like to present what she has learned, perhaps next Monday.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Memorial Tree: update**

There was a discussion of the type of tree (Japanese maple) and location (on the fire station property) for planting, for a memorial tree for Joe Thompson. Selectman Coppelman shared an example and pricing for a stone marker as well; local options will be explored. Selectman Coppelman will see what trees are available and the DPW will get it planted.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Road name change**

There was no substantive discussion of this; the public hearing will take place on October 2 at 7:00 pm.

#### **Recognition of Holly Ouellette**

Chairman Bashaw announced that on October 2 at 6:30 the Board will be recognizing the accomplishments and service to the Town of long-time employee Holly Ouellette.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT 2:**

Pam Brown, 23 Sunshine Drive, said she had attended Concord commission's hearing on the new voting machines, and asked if they were mandatory; she said she was told that they are not required, they are just options for Towns.

### **CONSENT AGENDA:**

There was a brief discussion of what can and cannot be included in a consent agenda. These will include meeting minutes, routine bills, and other items that do not require discussion. This will be prepared for the next meeting; Meeting minutes were approved separately:

**MOTION:** By Selectwoman Alessio, to approve the meeting minutes of October 18, 2023, public and non-public.

**SECOND:** by Selectman Hart  
**All in favor**

**CORRESPONDENCE, APPLICATIONS, PURCHASE ORDERS:**

- An application for a raffle permit was submitted by the library, for dates of December 15 and May 18. This was approved (C. Hart, E. Alessio, All) and signed.
- Purchase orders were reviewed
- One request for emergency assistance (Human Services) was approved.

**NON-PUBLIC SESSION**

**MOTION:** by Selectman Coppelman, to adjourn public session and enter non-public session at 10:32 AM under RSA 91-A:3, II (a), Personnel

**SECOND:** by Selectwoman Alessio

**All in favor via roll call vote**

**MOTION:** by Selectwoman Szwed, to adjourn non-public session and return to public session at 10:46 AM

**SECOND:** by Selectwoman Alessio

**All in favor**

**Motion made to seal minutes of non-public sessions.**

Motion made by Selectwoman Alessio, seconded by Selectman Coppelman, because it is determined that divulgence of this information likely would...

\_X\_ 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:**

Chris Bashaw	Y	Charles Hart	Y
Laurie Szwed	Y	Glenn Coppelman	Y
Electra Alessio	Y		

**Motion: PASSED**

**Meeting Adjourned at 10:46 AM**

Respectfully submitted:

Susan H. Ayer, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board