

**Kingston, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting of October 2, 2023
FINAL MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by the Chairman.

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

NON-PUBLIC SESSION:

MOTION: by Selectman Coppelman, to adjourn public session and enter non-public session at 6:00 PM, 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 6:26 PM

SECOND: by Selectwoman Alessio

All in favor

APPRECIATION FOR HOLLY OUELLETTE

The Chairman opened the public meeting at 6:30 PM and introduced Holly Ouellette as the guest of honor, as she has recently retired from many years (46) as an employee in the Town Clerk-Tax Collector's office and has been involved in many Town and local organizations as a volunteer.

Ms. Ouellette was presented with a proclamation from the Select Board, and also a framed proclamation from the Governor, as well as flowers and many cards and gifts from well-wishers.

The meeting was recessed until 7:00 pm in order to allow attendees to visit with Ms. Ouellette and enjoy refreshments.

PUBLIC HEARING

The Chairman opened the public hearing at 7:00 PM by stating that the hearing is on a proposal to formally name a currently unnamed road at the north end of the Plains "Elaine VanDyke Way". He said the Select Board has the authority to name Town roads, and that this proposal was brought forward from a resident at the last meeting; he called forward Jef Flanders-McDougall to explain her proposal.

Ms. Flanders-McDougall read the statement she had previously brought to the Board, which outlined Elaine Van Dyke's many volunteer activities and accomplishments. She said Ms. Van Dyke had moved to Kingston in 1983 and contributed to the Town as a volunteer in many capacities, including as "Director before there was a Director" of the Recreation Commission, as a member of the Heritage Commission, and as a Library Trustee. She said she cooked and served for the senior lunch program, was involved in various nutrition councils, associations, and forums, and was a founding member of NH Hunger Solutions. Ms. Flanders-McDougall concluded by saying she feels Ms.

VanDyke's actions and dedication to the town should be memorialized. She requested that the small unnamed roadway on the north end of the Plains be formally named, "Elaine Van Dyke Way". She said that Elaine's service was exemplary and that she impacted many lives in and outside of Kingston.

Public Comments:

Jim Voss, 19 Wadleigh Point Road, along with three other members of the Kingston Veterans Club, spoke on the subject. Mr. Voss said that it is a tradition to reserve the roads on the Plains to be named for fallen service members. He said the Veterans Club members maintain the flags on either end of the roadways and attend memorial activities there in all kinds of weather, saying it is important to them.

Mr. Voss recognized Ms. Van Dyke's many accomplishments. However, he suggested that there could be other ways to honor her and implored the Board to reserve the naming of the Plains roadways for fallen heroes.

Ken Weyler, 23 Scotland Road, said that dedications in the Town Report used to be a big deal, but he has not seen any lately. He said this might be an appropriate way to honor Ms. Van Dyke.

Karyn Maxwell, 4 Phoenix Drive, said she may be partial because they were friends for 37 years, and that Ms. Van Dyke would probably be mortified to have someone suggest she have a street named after her, but she was a woman who had dedicated her life to people, especially feeding people, and had worked for the community, the state of Massachusetts and beyond what even her friends were aware of. She said she had integrity and humility and was driven to do things for people. She said she has respect for recognizing veterans but does not see the harm in naming an unnamed street for someone who has contributed so much to the Town, and dedicated her life, right up until she died, to helping people.

Muriel Ingalls, 100 Main Street, said she thinks Ms. Van Dyke would be upset that this has become an issue. She said it is unfortunate that it comes up against a rule or law regarding veterans. She said the Select Board should think about some other way to honor Ms. Van Dyke, as she would be most unhappy to cause controversy.

Comments of the Board:

Selectwoman Alessio said that when Ms. Flanders-McDougall brought up the naming of the road, it made a lot of sense, but she had not been aware it was a tradition to name the streets for veterans. She said she would like to uphold that tradition. She said that as a Board, earlier this evening they had talked about the many talented and dedicated volunteers the Town has had. She said Selectman Coppelman had suggested a monument for volunteers, to which the names of those who donate so much of their time could be added, and that Ms. Van Dyke would certainly fall into that category.

Chairman Bashaw said that as a veteran he approves of the naming of roads for fallen service members. But he said he doesn't want that to take away from the fact that Ms. Van Dyke is also deserving of recognition. He said he wants to maintain the veterans tradition while also being an advocate to find an appropriate way to honor her.

Selectman Coppelman said that he doesn't disagree with the Select Board members Alessio and Bashaw, and that he had not paid attention enough to know that it was a tradition to name the streets only for veterans. He said he also agrees with Ms. Ingalls, that Ms. Van Dyke would not be happy with the division that has started to form. He said

that there is no doubt she deserves recognition, so if naming the road for her is breaking a tradition they need to follow up in other ways.

Selectwoman Szwed said that she has not been in Kingston for long, but as a proud Navy veteran she is all for maintaining the tradition the veterans have set. She said the Town needs to honor Ms. Van Dyke, but in a different way.

Ms. Flanders-McDougall said that she also had been unaware that the road names were exclusively for veterans. She said that she thought something like a plaque that will eventually be lost was not adequate, but that a permanent monument is a wonderful idea.

Final comments were that all ideas are welcome.

MOTION: by Chairman Bashaw, to reject the current proposal to name the unnamed street at the north end of the Plains for Elaine Van Dyke, but that a way to honor her will be found.

SECOND: By Selectman Hart

All in favor

The Chairman closed the public hearing at 7:24 PM.

APPOINTMENTS:

Police Chief re: New Hire

Chief Joel Johnson gave some information on the full-time patrolman he proposes to hire, saying that this new officer is certified; he had not wanted to have to put another new hire through the academy. He said the pay is less than for the officer who vacated the position, so this is well within budget.

MOTION: by Chairman Bashaw, to authorize the hiring of a full-time patrolman at \$29.25 per hour, as recommended by the Police Chief.

SECOND: by Selectman Hart

All in favor

Public Works Director re: Waste Oil Grant

Director Coombs said that the waste oil furnace at the DPW is kaput, that a repair done 10 years ago held for a long time but now they need a new furnace. He said they would like to participate in the Waste Oil grant program, which will pay up to \$2500 to defray the cost of the tank, estimated at \$16,000.

Mr. Coombs said that the rest of the cost would come from the Buildings capital reserve fund. Chairman Bashaw asked what the balance of the reserve fund is currently, but this was not exactly known. He said that before taking a vote to have him sign the grant paperwork, he would like to know the balance. In further discussion the Chair said he is comfortable supporting the expenditure, as the DPW collects waste oil and if they can't burn it for heating the building, would have to dispose of it at a cost. However, he said quotes are needed for the work, as well as the fund balance, and assurance that this will not take away from another necessary expenditure.

PUBLIC COMMENT 1:

Pam Brown, 23 Sunshine Drive, speaking about Kingston Days dates for 2024 (prepared remarks submitted):

"Again I'd urge we move 'Kingston Days' back to its August weekend. At your last meeting I explained that attendance during September 8 to 10th appeared quite a bit lower than in previous years and our fundraising was down significantly. I also noted we were competing with Hampton's massive Seafood Festival - and the Pease Thunderbirds Air show taking place the same weekend. Kingston Days Committee members Stacy Dion and Laurie Szwed said the September event was a success but - as I recall - concerns had also been expressed about the difficulty finding major sponsors at a Kingston Days Committee meeting I attended over the summer. Lack of a Car Show this year meant we also lost many traditional visitors. Again - Hampton's Seafood Festival is a major draw and we lost both sponsors, vendors, and attendees - due to their event taking place the same weekend. With 80,000 attendees, which would you choose if you were a food truck owner, craft vendor or a corporate sponsor? Hampton's 3-day event would clearly be the more profitable. Selectmen Alessio suggested at your last meeting that "September's fine, and people can go to both." Realistically, people can't devote 3 days to *both* events. They're going to pick one. Why compete -- when our traditional August weekend is available? Please return us to the August weekend that Heritage Day takes place."

Representative Lilly Walsh, Hampstead, said she is the chair of the Hampstead-Kingston Republican Committee and can attest that gun raffle sales were down 30% this year, which she attributed to the move of Kingston Days from August to September. She said many of the people that came by said that they had been to the Seafood Festival and just remembered to come to Kingston Days too, but attendance was dramatically down. She said they also noticed the lack of kids that would usually come by. She said she understood the festival was primarily moved because of weather, but there was some pretty wild weather anyway, and still hot, so she said all can agree that New England weather is unpredictable. She said the move caused confusion. She asked the Board and committee to reconsider the move and return Kingston Days to August.

Representative Ken Weyler, 23 Scotland Road, said he has been involved in Kingston Days since 1990, and always had the same place under the trees near the big tent to set up. He said they were very disappointed to be moved to the other area, that used to be for a car show or flea market, and he did not think they got as much traffic. He said they moved twice and it didn't seem to be well organized. He said there did not seem to be good reasons for the move, and when he tried to talk with someone who said she was the Chair, he was brushed off. He said he thought as someone who has been somewhat involved, he had something more to contribute than someone who is new at the job. He said he hopes the board will have some influence on next year, and he feels that this decision should be made by elected officials rather than appointed ones.

Chairman Bashaw said that he agreed that as elected officials the Board has a lot of influence, however the Board had agreed that the decisions should be made by the people who are doing all the work. He agreed there had been some hiccups and a big transition of those involved. He said that as he often says, there are only two things people hate, and those are the way things are and change, and they are never happy

with either one. However, what the committee decides to do will weigh heavily for him, because he is not the one planning all year long. He said he did make some suggestions of things that he thinks could help drive traffic toward the vendors. However, he said he heard in equal numbers from people who could never attend in August and so enjoyed September, and those who wish it stayed in August. Mr. Weyler and Ms. Walsh expressed interest in attending Kingston Days meetings; Ms. Walsh said she didn't think that the committee had known about the competition of other events when planning for this year. Selectwoman Alessio said that there will always be conflicts on any summer weekend, and that the committee had had a very successful event. She said that if people go to the meetings, that will help to see that concerns are addressed.

Ms. Brown suggested a survey should be conducted.

COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS

Selectwoman Szwed said that the second Recycling collection point day was successful, with 14-15 cars participating. She said the word is still getting out and a lot of people had questions.

Selectman Hart said that the budget meeting dates have been posted and worksheets sent out to the Departments and Committees. Finance Director Paula Mahoney said that today is the due date for those, and so far she has received them back from one Department and three committees.

Chairman Bashaw said that the hiring of a replacement patrolman puts the Police Department back at full staff. He said that for one of the big cases before the Planning Board, the Summit gas station application, no requests for continuations or appeals to the ZBA had been received, so the case was denied without prejudice. If the applicant wants to pursue it they will need to start again with a new application which would be subject to all current ordinances and regulations.

Selectman Coppelman reported on Recreation, saying that the Director is very active on social media and also that the refurbishments to Stepping Stones playground at Comeau Field have been completed, and a sign is being added to inform the public that the upgrade was done due to the help of taxpayers as well as a significant donation from Partners Bank. Selectman Coppelman also reported that the HDC and Planning Board will hold a joint meeting tomorrow to go over proposed zoning ordinance changes for the warrant in March. The HDC section of the ordinance is to be updated.

The Heritage Commission is working on ongoing plans for the 300th anniversary of the Plains Cemetery, for which a steering committee is being formed.

The Museum committee is working on their October event, set for Saturday October 14, which will include a car show and other activities, and will include a beer and wine tent.

Selectman Coppelman said that the heating system is being installed at the Nichols building (Mr. Coombs commented that the propane tanks were dropped off today).

Selectwoman Alessio said that the Wage Matrix Committee will meet this week.

OLD BUSINESS

Fairgrounds Committee formation

Director Coombs said he had met with Fire Chief Graham Pellerin today to lay out parameters for the Fairgrounds use study group. He said they are looking at having the

Fire Chief, Recreation Director, himself, two residents, one being from the Folly Brook area, and a Select Board member to make up this group. He said they plan on this being a 6-month study group to conduct a feasibility study of uses of the property, taking into account comparables in the area, cash projections of potential revenue and costs, potential phases of construction, staffing and detail requirements, insurance requirements, and the basic finances of how this would be set up, such as a revolving fund. He said they plan to bring back the information they gather in 6 months. In discussion it was determined that this is not a formal committee but an ad hoc study group.

MOTION: by Selectwoman Alessio, to authorize the formation of a Fairgrounds usage study group, with the members suggested, for information purposes only

SECOND: by Selectman Hart

All in favor

Tree Warden

Director Coombs said that he wants to discuss this as budget season is here; he said that the Board had been in favor of appointing a Tree Warden until the subject of pay came up. He said he feels this is an area where the town is lacking; it is a role that Rich St. Hilaire had filled previously, but he has no bandwidth or experience to do it himself. He said he feels a lot of potential revenue is being lost out on, such as yield taxes for timber harvests, as there is no qualified individual going out and checking to make sure people are being honest when submitting the reports of cut, or even submitting them. He said this is not spelled out in the RSA but the Select Board has the prerogative to expand or minimize the role as they see fit.

Chairman Bashaw said that he thinks this is worth pursuing, but if there is no funding to pay someone to engage in the role that is problematic. He said this should be advocated for during the budget process as there should be someone in that role.

Selectman Coppelman asked if seeking a volunteer from the community with that background is an option. Mr. Coombs said that managing trees in the right-of-way is part of the role, which Shawn Clough of his department handles now in an unofficial capacity. He said if someone qualified would like to do it for free, that was what was done in the past. But he said what happened was that it went okay until the person realized how much work it is, and that is why Mr. St. Hilaire took it on. He said he was under the impression that Mr. St. Hilaire has been paid for this as part of his compensation but could not find it explicitly spelled out anywhere.

Director Coombs said with the Board's permission he would come up with an appropriate stipend amount to go with the role. Chairman Bashaw agreed this is an important role and this should be done; it will just need appropriate funding.

Memorial Tree

Mr. Coombs confirmed that the Japanese Maple in memory of Joe Thompson has been planted in front of the Fire Station.

Kingston Days: 2024 Dates

Stacy Dion, Chair of the Kingston Days Committee, said that they had heard back from Rockwell Amusements, who run the carnival, and they are interested in coming back on the dates proposed of September 6, 7 and 8, 2023.

Ms. Dion said they will start by forming the new committee at their November 16 meeting and will be working on lessons learned. There was a brief discussion of feedback from vendors and the success of the September dates this year. Selectman Hart suggested that the voters could be asked what dates they would like to have the event on; Ms. Dion said that if everyone who voted would also volunteer, they could have the event on any date they wanted, but as it is, it was put it on with 10 volunteers this year. She said they are open to all who wish to volunteer. Selectwoman Alessio commented that the Board had been willing to scrap the event due to poor profitability and lack of volunteers in prior years, and she felt bad for the prior Chair who had so little help. However, she said that this committee made it a success and turned a profit, and they are to be commended. She said she is compelled to support them and the dates they recommend. Selectwoman Szwed, as liaison for the Board, said that Ms. Dion had done a heck of a job, and acknowledged the concerns about the September dates, but said that moving the dates back to August would lose others. She said that they will be looking at the layout and placement of booths. She also said she would like to address the perception that young people did not participate, and said that from her perspective, it was nothing but young people. She also said that they may not have been buying things from vendors or visiting political booths, but they were there and enjoying themselves. She said that there was something for everyone and she did not think that Kingston Days took away from the other large events in the area. She said she appreciated the Chairman allowing the committee to decide on the dates. She commented to Ms. Brown that she did not think an online poll would come up with the information Ms. Brown is hoping for, because the feedback from vendors was very positive and they want to come back. She once again encouraged participation in the meetings.

Selectwoman Szwed also mentioned that a trailer of old supplies had been cleaned out, and those will need to be replenished. Ms. Dion said that the Committee would like to use some of their profits to replenish such things as signs, tents and barriers, some of which would be shared with other groups that have similar events.

MOTION: by Selectman Coppelman, to accept the recommendation of the Kingston Days Committee to hold the 2024 event on September 6, 7 and 8.

SECOND: by Selectwoman Alessio

All in favor

Use of Consent Agenda

Pros and cons of using a consent agenda were discussed; Selectwoman Szwed said that as many of the items in this week's consent agenda had to be signed individually anyway, it did not seem to be saving any time. The auditors will be asked if it is acceptable if only the consent agenda cover sheet is signed. The format will be researched further and tried again for the next meeting.

Changes to Health Insurance options

Finance Director Paula Mahoney shared paperwork outlining the two insurance plans available to employees, pointing out that the more expensive plan will no longer be available. It will be replaced by two options and the town needs to decide which to offer by the end of the month. Ms. Mahoney will come back with a more detailed comparison, and 2024 cost estimates if possible.

NEW BUSINESS

Building and Code Officer position

Chairman Bashaw said that due to budget constraints the decision had been made to try getting by with a part-time building and code officer, up until the end of the year if possible, and not hire a full-time employee right away. However, he said it has become clear that more support is needed in the building department. He said that the Board could pursue filling the full-time position at this time, with the reduced salary agreed upon, but additional ideas are being considered. One suggestion is to create a full-time permitting clerk position while maintaining the part-time Building Inspector, so that there would be separate full-time clerks for building and assessing. The thought process was that the new Building Clerk could be the point of contact to coordinate all the building inspectors and permitting aspects, so there would always be someone available at the window to answer questions without pulling away from the Assessing duties. He said there seems to be too much workload for one person, and there has been discussion of adding another part-time person to the department, but this is another option. He said it would allow one of the clerks to also help out with needs in the Select Board office.

Selectman Hart said his opinion is that a part-time Building Inspector is needed now. He said it's going to take time to get applications in and a full-time person in place, and a certified person that can put in more hours is needed. He said he felt the Code Officer aspect is secondary. He said he had talked with the Town Manager in Raymond, who has recently hired a part-time building inspector, and asked if the person might help in Kingston. That person makes \$31-\$35 per hour.

Chairman Bashaw said that his concern is that the position was approved as full-time, and would need to be changed to part-time.

Selectman Coppelman said that he agrees more administrative support is needed, he would prefer to reopen the search for a full-time inspector. He said that contrary to what was discussed earlier, he feels there is plenty to do in town and support is needed.

Selectwoman Alessio said that comments received earlier from the Interim Building Inspector were valid and that more support in the office is needed more than a full time building and code inspector. She said what she has found in her work for the wage matrix committee is that other towns in the vicinity have a lot more support staff in Assessing, the Select Board office, and in the Land Use office than Kingston does. She said she is concerned that there is not enough volume to justify the full time building and code officer, but that more staffing at the office level would be supportive of the person in the inspector's position. She said she would like to have numbers to look at, such as how many building permits were processed this year.

Director Coombs came forward to speak on the topic, saying he has been affected by the lack of a code enforcement officer. As an example, he said he got a call about a person paving without a permit, and he followed up, but it was 2 hours out of his day spent tracking down a contractor that is banking on not getting caught, and there is no recourse. He said that the reason the full-time code enforcement officer position was instituted was that these things come in waves, and at the time there were two developments in town not following the rules at all. He said there are still numerous developments that have not done what they promised in their site plans. He said in a lot of those instances the Town had to go to court, and prevailed because we had very good notes and records and a lot of legwork put in by the Board members at the time.

He said that a lot of people in various positions are having to fill the void of having no Code officer. He said that for him, the main thing is that when someone comes in and has a site plan approved, they have made a deal with the Town to fulfill their obligations, but the Town has been horrible about holding them to this. He said the Planning process and long meetings are for nothing with no enforcement going forward. He said that maybe there are not enough building permits coming in to justify a full-time inspector, but that is why it was to be a hybrid position.

Mr. Coombs also noted that the Stormwater requirements are more and more stringent. He said that eventually it will get to the point where the town will have to take enforcement action. Selectman Coppelman said he remembered that Stormwater was one of the key items considered in the decision. Mr. Coombs said that the Town is now in Year 6 of the MS-4 permit, and responsibilities of the Town are increasing.

Chair Bashaw said that much of the conversation has revolved around the Building Inspection piece of the position, and it has been forgotten that Code Enforcement was a huge part of it.

Selectwoman Szwed said that if the Town is going forward with the full-time Code and Building Inspector, as the voters approved, she is torn because an additional permitting clerk is vital to coordinate with all the inspectors and to free up the current Permitting and Assessing clerk. Selectwoman Alessio said that if the position that the voters approved is to be filled, the process needs to start now as it could take months, and she agrees with Selectman Hart that it needs to be filled. As for the full-time Permitting Clerk, Selectwoman Szwed said she thinks most of the Board agrees this is needed and a warrant article should be placed for that.

Selectman Hart questioned whether the Planning Board will also be putting in an article again for a full-time administrative assistant. Selectwoman Alessio said she thinks the attitude is that this is needed, and they will keep asking until the voters feel they can afford it.

MOTION: by Selectman Coppelman, to reopen the search for a full-time Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer with the description and salary range placed most recently.

SECOND: by Selectwoman Szwed

Chairman Bashaw said he would like it to be understood that the start date would not be until January. All agreed this is reasonable.

All in favor

Selectman Coppelman said that additional support is also needed in the office, even if part-time. A Warrant Article will be placed for a full-time permitting clerk.

The Chair asked that the Board be given the opportunity to review the BI/CEO advertisement before it is posted.

BOARD BUSINESS

Selectwoman Szwed said she was approached by a member of the Solid Waste and Recycling Committee, who had suggestions on how to increase citizen participation. She said he was suggesting an electronic suggestion box to be placed on the website. There was a discussion of this, the consensus being it could become a complaint box, not a suggestion box, and that people can and do email the Town.

PUBLIC COMMENT 2: None

CORRESPONDENCE, APPLICATIONS, PURCHASE ORDERS:

- A request for use the Plains for a practice by Conquer Self Defense was granted, and the fee set at \$50 to be consistent with other recent low-impact usages.
- A purchase order from Bell and Flynn for road work in addition to the original PO was held pending receipt of the invoices by the Finance Director.
- The annual letter from the Rockingham Planning Commission regarding dues was received; for 2024 the amount, based on population (\$1.03 per capita) will be \$6,568. On a motion by Selectwoman Alessio, seconded by Selectman Coppelman, all were in favor of including the RPC dues in the 2024 budget.
- The Administrative Assistant explained that the amended agreement with Sanborn Head, to work within the ARPA/NHDES grant to install point of entry filtration systems, has not yet been received for signature. She also noted that the Request for Proposals for the work is still in process and waiting for Sanborn Head to review it, as it was more complicated than usual, including all contract paperwork. Selectman Coppelman said that this is past the initial timeframe that was planned, but that it is still hoped that the contractor will be hired and the POET systems installed by the end of the year.
- Correspondence had been received from the neighbor across from the Fire Station, to complain again about the lighting and about his water. These issues had been addressed in the past, but a letter may be written to explain the upcoming installation of water filtration systems.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

MOTION: By Selectwoman Alessio, to approve the public and non-public meeting minutes of September 25, 2023 as written

SECOND: by Selectman Coppelman

In favor: All

Motion made to seal minutes of non-public session.

Motion made by Selectwoman Coppelman, seconded by Selectwoman Alessio, 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 9:37 PM

Respectfully submitted:

Susan H. Ayer, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board