

**Kingston, New Hampshire
Select Board
Meeting of October 30, 2023
FINAL MINUTES**

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

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

NON-PUBLIC SESSION:

MOTION: by Selectwoman Alessio, to adjourn public session and enter non-public session at 8:30 am, under RSA 91-A:3, II (c), matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of a person other than a member of this board.

SECOND: by Selectwoman Szwed

All in favor via roll call vote

Chairman Bashaw re- opened the public session at 9:05 am.

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
Ellie Alessio	Y		

Motion: PASSED

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES Information and Discussion

DEPARTMENTS: Information and Discussion

Human Services- Director Marissa Federico

The Director said that holiday programs are starting, and deadlines are all set for Thanksgiving, the Giving Tree, and holiday meal assistance, which will be posted outside her office and also on Facebook. She said she will be talking to the budget committee about her three sections of the budget and also asking that her hours be increased from 15 to 17 hours per week due to increased volume. She said she has been trying to increase case management hours to better meet the needs of her clients and also to minimize impact on the budget.

Police Department: Chief Joel Johnson

Chief Johnson said all is going smoothly. He said the project to turn the garage into a training room should be completed next week, and it was done at no cost to the Town due to two contractors who donated their services. He said those contractors would like to remain anonymous.

Library - Director Melissa Mannon

Director Mannon reported that Kingston librarian Michelle Cole won Librarian of the Year from the State of New Hampshire, so they are very proud of her. She also said the outdoor education grant is nearly completed. She said they will learn in February if they will receive the grant. She said it would be around \$430,000, with a matching amount of 15% or around \$85,000, which they have already through donations. Ms. Mannon said the plan has 5 stages, and they have enough funding for the first two, which are to build a senior outbuilding for gathering, and also to expand the trails with handicapped access, hopefully to also connect them to SELT trails someday.

Ms. Mannon said they are also working on a strategic plan for the library, the prime portion of which is the outdoor education center, but which also focuses on things like collections and programming. She said they are updating their patron manual to be sure all the policies are up to date, and said she will share that as the Town is doing similar work.

Lastly, the Director said that they are trying to start a foundation to put aside a nest egg for large building projects down the road. She said they have formed a committee to work on a mission statement and bylaws, hoping to apply for a 501(c) status.

Department of Public Works, Director Phil Coombs

Director Coombs reported that the boiler at the Nichols building (museum) has been replaced.

Mr. Coombs explained some purchase orders that are before the Board, for completing road work and shoulders. He also said there is a purchase order for new guardrails on the Little River Bridge which will be paid for from the balance of the Bridge block grant. He said there will be pre-construction meeting about the Grace Daly barn project this Wednesday, and also reported that there were 22 visitors to the glass and cardboard collection point last Saturday.

Finance and Human Resources - Director Paula Mahoney

Director Mahoney said that she has most of the budget worksheets from Departments and Committees. She asked all to get copies to her of any contracts with financial impact. She said she is trying to avoid a situation such as happened last year, when the increase for revaluation on the fifth year of the Assessing contract was overlooked in the budget planning, causing a \$60,000 shortfall.

The Chair said the Board needs an updated spreadsheet of the budget; this is ready to be printed and will be sent electronically. It was noted that committees coming before the Budget Committee need their portion of the budget in order to discuss it with their liaison.

Fire Chief Graham Pellerin asked for clarification of whether there is a spending freeze of just cautious spending. Chairman Bashaw said that there is no formal spending freeze but everyone needs to be cognizant that we are trying to get an exact number for

the amount of the shortfall to be made up, and while it may have nothing to do with a particular department, all are asked to be cautious about spending.

Budget Committee - Stacy Dion

Ms. Dion shared information on what is on the budget committee's agenda for Wednesday. She said they can't discuss departments they don't have a budget for; Land Use Secretary Robin Carter said that Planning and Zoning budgets are prepared and she will get them to Ms. Mahoney.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector - Tammy Bakie

Ms. Bakie thanked the Recreation Department for putting on Trunk or Treat. She said that all dogs are compliant with the dog ordinance, with 100% licensed.

The Clerk said that the tax rate is not yet set, but she needs inserts for the tax bills as soon as possible, as the bills will go out as soon as the warrant is printed.

Ms. Bakie also explained that there is a new company this year to handle liens and deeding, and the agreement is in front of the Board to sign.

Ms. Bakie then said that she had become aware of a meeting of the Hampstead/Kingston Republican Committee, which had been planned with advisement to members to not contact their Town Clerk. This meeting was to discuss putting an article on the warrant to require hand counts of election ballots. She said she, Ms. Mahoney and Selectwoman Alessio had attended the meeting and she hopes she persuaded people to think otherwise. She also said she will be holding a mock election to help train new workers; she said even the experienced participants have not seen the entire process. Selectwoman Alessio said this could be a good chance to do a demonstration on hand counting, which is a huge task.

She and Deputy Clerk Caitlin Milhomme are going to demonstrations on the two options for new ballot machines, but they don't have to be purchased right away. There will be four elections next year.

Ms. Bakie asked if Ms. Milhomme could have access to help work on the content of the cable channel. Selectwoman Alessio said that the Board is responsible for the content so they should be notified of changes. Selectman Coppelman said that small administrative corrections or changes don't need approval, but anything substantive does. Mr. Coombs said he recalled that a few years ago the Board had passed a policy providing guidelines for the Cable Channel. This will be shared by the Administrative Assistant.

Ms. Bakie said that the town has worked with Seacoast Business Machines for years, but since they sold out to another company, they have not been as responsive.

Fire Department - Chief Graham Pellerin

Chief Pellerin said that the new AED (Automated External Defibrillator) machines are now in service, and are very easy to use, but training will be offered again.

Chief Pellerin said he had spoken to the Finance Director about changing the pay schedule for fire fighters who currently are paid for what they work, which is 36 hours one week and 48 the next, to an average each week of 42 hours. He said that Director Mahoney had found information through NH Municipal Association that says they can be paid the average of 42 hours each week. Chairman Bashaw requested that documentation be shared with the Board before a vote is taken on the matter.

Recreation

Director Paul Butler could not attend, but Selectman Coppelman reported that Trunk or Treat was very successful, with an estimated 1,000 people in attendance. Mr. Butler has suggested that for safety reasons a shuttle bus may be used next year, to bring people from the high school parking lot. Chief Johnson said that instead of having a bus, the event could be held on the Plains, where there is plenty of room and parking can be on the side of the roads. Selectwoman Alessio said it makes sense if there are going to be that many people. Chief Pellerin said he had suggested this to Mr. Butler the night of the event, and he had answered that he wants to highlight the Recreation Center, which he understands, but safety was definitely an issue. It was agreed that this discussion should be held with Mr. Butler present.

Planning

Peter Coffin, Chair of the ZBA, said he would like to put in a plug for the Capital Improvements Plan, and encourage everyone to get their submissions in to Glenn Greenwood.

Cable Channel

Adam Faulconer, AV Technician, said that the recent procedure for submitting items for the Cable channel bulletin board has been to go through Administrative Assistant Susan Ayer, who will send the items on to him to put them on the cable channel.

Kingston Days Committee - Stacy Dion

Ms. Dion said that this is a follow up discussion to talk to departments and committees about potentially purchasing supplies that can be shared for various events. She said that Kingston Days paid for the license for music that covers the Town. She said that their event went pretty well this year, and they are looking to put some money into the infrastructure, and share items among groups; she gave as an example that Trunk or Treat would need lights if it is to take place on the Plains. She said they learned that there are not enough lights on hand to illuminate the entire area. She mentioned other items such as fencing and parking signs that could be on hand as a shared resource. Chairman Bashaw said to clarify, the intent is to have something like a Pod container with an events package in it, including tables, chairs, road signs and cones, etc. Ms. Dion said that is exactly right. Selectwoman Szwed asked if Ms. Dion is recommending that excess money from Kingston Days be used for this purpose; Ms. Dion said some of it, not all, for instance they can put a few thousand dollars into posts, so the DPW does not have to lend theirs, or signs that just say "event today" that could be used by all. She said this could reduce the cost of each event. All agreed this is a good idea and Ms. Dion will start communicating with others to start a list. She added that if anyone has had an event with public music, they should let her know because she needs to file a report with the music licensing company.

Police and Fire Details

The Chairman said that as it is budget season some people wanted clarification on the details, such as when they are required and the rates for Town sponsored events vs. private events. Chief Johnson said that he waives the cruiser fee, which is \$20 per hour,

for Town sponsored events, but not the administrative fee, which covers taxes.

Chairman Bashaw said that it had been noted that anyone planning events during the year should account for detail fees in their budget, as otherwise the Police Chief has to increase his budget to cover them. He added that the RSA clearly defines that when it comes to public safety at events it's under the purview of the Chief to determine the need for a police detail.

There was a discussion of what warrants a police detail; the Chief said that not all events require a detail, if they don't present any hazard, but if traffic will be obstructed in any way, he will require one. It was pointed out that the facilities use forms require a sign off by Police, Fire and DPW, and at that time they will determine the need for details. The Chair said that if for budgeting purposes a department would like to be able to estimate costs, they could discuss their planned events with the Chiefs ahead of time. Chief Pellerin said that a lot of factors come into play when deciding if an ambulance needs to be provided, so for planning purposes people should just plan on having one officer and one ambulance at any large event.

The Chairman said that the Chiefs should send out information to all about the rates and other information such as the four-hour minimum.

The Chair then addressed the point about Town sponsored vs. private events, saying Town events are those put on by a Town Department or official committee, but not for private entities or non-profits not associated with the Town. He said he knows this has come up with a non-profit that does attempt to directly benefit a committee and a place in Town, but as the Town has no control over how they expend their funding it is not considered Town sponsored. Ruth Albert, Chair of the Museum Committee, came forward for a discussion of the difference between the Friends of the Museum hosting an event and the Museum Committee hosting an event. Chairman Bashaw reiterated that while the Friends may be raising money directly for the museum, the Town has no control over that.

Director Coombs asked if the details required for roadwork next year will come under the same category as events and need to be budgeted for. It was recommended that he plan for this.

Ernie Landry, Heritage Commission Chair, commented that in the past, for events that were not too big, there was volunteer group called the Community Emergency Response Team that would do the traffic detail as far as guiding people across the street. He recalled an event at the Plains cemetery when this group assisted in moving people (about 80) from the Plains over to the cemetery, instead of paying a police officer. Chairman Bashaw said that any traffic control needs to be coordinated with the Chief of Police, and that now all flaggers need to be DOT certified. He said that all events need to be discussed with the Chief because all situations are different.

Peter Coffin, ZBA Chair, said CERT was a group of about a dozen people who regularly would do traffic details for (ex.) parades. They had taken state training to be certified and he said there are a few in town that are still certified, but the group is no longer in existence.

Director Coombs said that if anyone is interested in flagger training, the DPW hosts classes periodically, put on by NH Municipal Association.

Wage Salary Matrix Working Group

Director Mahoney said that a date has been chosen to have this group present its findings to the Budget Committee and Select Board; if the Board agrees, the date will be November 15 at 7:00 PM here at the Town Hall. It was determined this is acceptable to all and it will be posted.

PUBLIC COMMENT 1: None heard.

OLD BUSINESS

Assessing Contract 2024-2028

The Administrative Assistant said that the contract is not ready to be signed yet, because the contractor is having it reviewed by DRA prior to finalizing the language.

Solar Meeting recap

Selectman Coppelman reported that last Thursday a quorum of the Solar Committee, along with 2 Select Board members, heard a presentation by ReVision Energy on legislative changes that have opened up new opportunities for solar power in New Hampshire. He said that up until now, there were limits on net metering and to do a large-scale solar project was not feasible. The Committee had proposed a small-scale project that did not move forward. He said that municipalities can now build up to a 5-megawatt array, and the electricity produced would be fed into the grid. The Town and also neighboring towns would benefit because of the new net metering program. Selectman Coppelman said that the committee had gone through the RFP process last year to choose a vendor to work with, and had chosen ReVision, so they reached out to them to work with again.

Selectman Coppelman said that the bottom line is that there is a real opportunity to use a property in town that is currently costing money (the closed landfill) but could potentially produce electricity and be a significant revenue generator for the Town. He said the Solar Committee had voted to bring the information to the Select Board and to ask to schedule a meeting, suggesting at the Board meeting of November 13, to have ReVision back to present information in the form of a Public Hearing so that the public could have input as well.

Selectman Coppelman said there is a lot of interest from local communities in getting solar facilities on board, and the first step will be to get into the queue for connecting to the grid.

Selectwoman Szwed added that if the Town wants to do this, it's best to do it sooner rather than later, so that the costs would be added to the construction if changes need to be made to the substation. Chairman Bashaw asked about how this would be financed. Selectwoman Szwed said there would be no cost to the Town. She said the cost is taken by the investment by ReVision and they handle all of the construction costs. She said it could mean less revenue to the Town if for example it was the 10th municipality that wants to use that substation and they have to expand it. No money is being put up by the Town because the land would be leased. If the Town wanted to buy the array it would be around 20 million dollars. As a lease agreement it is an investment firm along with ReVision that would finance it.

Selectwoman Alessio said that she feels every time the Town deals with solar there is pressure to make a quick decision.

Selectman Hart asked how far underground the brackets go when placing the solar panels. Selectwoman Szwed said that because it's a landfill, they do not drill as the cap can't be compromised. She said the company has built multiple landfill solar farms. Selectman Hart questioned if the contractors are taking the liability should something happen during construction. Selectwoman Szwed said that the first step in all of this is to look at the interconnectivity into the substation, and then to assess the integrity of the cap and determine what changes or upgrades may be needed to ensure or mitigate any problems. Selectman Coppelman said that ReVision will start with a full investigation to determine if it is even a suitable site.

Director Coombs said that there has been nothing heavier than a pickup truck on the landfill in the 20 years it has been closed, and that the weights to hold down a giant sail are extremely heavy.

Rick Russman, Chair of the Solar Committee, said that obviously the integrity of the landfill is paramount, and from an environmental standpoint he appreciates that. However, he said this is a 20-million-dollar project. He said the capacity of the plug-in across the street is currently a little under 10 megawatts, and this is a 5-megawatt project. He said ReVision will probably come in to ask the Board to enter into an option, where they would pay maybe \$1,000 per year for 4 or 5 years, and then spend around \$100,000 investigating the cap (etc.). He said that nothing is going to happen immediately, but by having the option agreement they get into the queue, so the Town gets 5 of the 10 megawatts in the plugin. He said that after a few years they will come back and say this is a viable site and at that point the Town could potentially enter into a lease agreement for say 35 years at X number of dollars per year. At the same time, he said that if at that point the Town decided against going forward, there would be no obligation to do so.

Mr. Russman addressed the integrity of the landfill, saying that James Hasselbeck of ReVision is on a national committee on landfill solar, and told him that he would have to be sure it was done right. He said that no investor is going to spend \$20 million on something that is going to fail. Mr. Russman said that the amount of revenue over 30 years would be between 1 million and 2.5 million, in addition to the tax revenue, so it is an opportunity to do something with the one piece of land that the Town really can't do anything with.

It was agreed to have the public hearing on this topic on November 13 at 7:00 PM.

NEW BUSINESS

Approved use of Lone Tree Campground

Chairman Bashaw said that the Town Planner had followed up on this topic and reviewed the Planning Board minutes regarding the use of the Lone Tree summer camp. He has indicated in a memo that the way the owner is currently using the camp is not within the confines of the approved site plan. They had said they were going to continue to use it as a summer camp and do youth programming, but that is clearly not what has been happening. He said there has been an Airbnb ad for rental of the fort, you can rent cabins, and also people who are homeless have been coming in for assistance who had been staying there and paying cash off the books. He said he feels a cease-and-desist letter is needed. He added that he and the police chief had gone out and observed that people are still out there living in tents and past the seasonal deadline of October 15.

MOTION: by Selectwoman Alessio, to issue a Cease and Desist which will be drafted by Town Counsel

SECOND: by Selectman Hart

There was a brief discussion in which all supported this action.

All in favor

The Chair will continue working with Town Counsel and sign the letter once it is prepared.

Open bids: Point of Entry Treatment System project

The Town received two bids for this work, which is to be done using grant funds through the ARPA and NH DES. These were opened and compared:

1. Water Techs: Total \$254,316 plus costs contingent upon the need for iron, manganese and/or radon filters
2. Allied Clearwater: Total \$156,700 with costs for the same contingencies

MOTION: by Selectman Coppelman, to have the Town's consultants, Sanborn Head, review the bids, provide analysis of "apples to apples" comparison, and return with a recommendation.

SECOND: by Selectman Hart

All in favor

PUBLIC COMMENT 2: NONE

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

MOTION: By Selectwoman Alessio, to approve the public and non-public meeting minutes of November 23, 2023 as amended (correct the date).

SECOND: by Selectman Hart

In favor: All

CORRESPONDENCE, APPLICATIONS, PURCHASE ORDERS:

- The contract with Newfound Title Services for 2024 liening and deeding work, discussed earlier, was signed.
- Purchase orders were reviewed for signatures
- A donation to the Conservation Commission from Pollinator Pathways in the amount of \$500 was accepted with thanks, with a motion by Selectman Coppelman, seconded by Selectwoman Alessio

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION: by Selectman Coppelman, to adjourn public session and enter non-public session at 10:45 AM under RSA 91-A:3, II (I), Legal advice

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 11:00 AM

SECOND: by Selectwoman Alessio

All in favor

Motion made to seal minutes of non-public sessions.

Motion made by Selectman Coppelman, seconded by Selectman Hart, 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 11:00 AM

Respectfully submitted:

Susan H. Ayer, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board