

**Kingston, New Hampshire  
Board of Selectmen  
Meeting of November 29, 2021: Meeting with Department Heads  
FINAL MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 am by the Vice Chairman.

**PRESENT:** Richard Wilson, Vice Chair; Electra Alessio, Donald W. Briggs, Kevin St. James, Select Board Members.

Chairman Phillip Coombs arrived at 9:25 AM

Department heads present: Highway Agent Richard St. Hilaire; Fire Chief Graham Pellerin; (Police Chief Donald Briggs); Town Clerk-Tax Collector Tammy Bakie; Stephanie Hasselbeck, Interim Library Director; Finance Director Cindy Kenerson; Treasurer Jayne Ramey

**PUBLIC HEARING:** To consider a revised schedule of permitting fees.

The Vice Chairman called this Public Hearing to order at 9:05 am. He pointed out one error on the revised schedule; the first line, shed fees, should read \$3.50 per \$1,000. He then explained that the reason the fees are being upgraded is so that the building and permitting department does not lose money. There are also more details in the new schedule to make it more clear what items need permits. There was a brief discussion by those present; no members of the public were present to be heard on the topic.

**MOTION:** by Selectman St. James, to close the Public Hearing

**SECOND:** by Selectwoman Alessio

**All in favor; Public Hearing closed at 9:10 am.**

**MOTION:** by Selectman St. James, to adopt the new permit fee schedule as printed, with one amendment (shed fees \$3.50 per \$1,000).

**SECOND:** by Selectman Briggs

**All in favor**

Selectman St. James said he appreciated all the work that went into the revised schedule by the inspectors and Selectman Wilson.

The regular Department Head meeting was opened at 9:12 am

**TOPICS BY DEPARTMENT (taken out of order):**

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

Ms. Bakie said that she has been going through the meeting minutes of all the boards and committees to make sure she has them all, and also to see which are already in digital form, on the Town's website. These can be directly uploaded into the new software when the digitization project takes place, rather than being scanned first.

Ms. Bakie asked the Board if there is any objection to her posting a sign by her office, stating that no photos or videotaping are allowed. The Board agreed that this is okay to post, as private information is included in many Clerk-Collector transactions.

The Clerk then said she is working on a Town policy on returned checks, which she will print for the Board to review at the next meeting.

In addition, Ms. Bakie said that she attended a Planning Board meeting to talk about how the Zoning articles are printed on the ballot. She had suggested that the full text does not need to be included on the ballot, but a summary only, with the full text posted ahead of time and available at the polling place. She said that the Planning Board did like the idea of making this change and preferred full text; they tabled the topic to a later meeting. Ms. Bakie said that if the Select Board agrees with her that printing a summary on the ballot is sufficient (which will reduce the cost of the election ballots), they should talk to the Planning Board.

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

Chief Pellerin said that he had been looking into prices for a town-wide phone system. He said that the Town Hall offices will keep the phones currently in use and the changes would be made to the system itself. He said other departments can expect visits from Block 5 and Kent Communications to see how many lines are needed.

The Chief gave an update on building project progress at the new Fire Station.

Chief Pellerin said that he and Kelly have been working on a Medicare audit, for which the Town was randomly selected. He said they need help from Comstar and also from the Building Maintenance Department for various components of the audit, and that it is under control but a lot of extra work.

**(Chairman Coombs joined the meeting at this time.)**

#### **Finance/Human Resources - Cindy Kenerson, Finance Director and Jayne Ramey, Treasurer**

Christopher MacDonnell, Kelly Hutchinson and Karyn Scharf Morin of Partners Bank were present at the invitation of the Board, to discuss bank accounts and credit cards. Selectman St. James said that there was some concern about how the funds will be insured if the Town moves its large accounts to Partners from TD Bank. He said that as FDIC only guarantees up to \$250,000, it was understood that the funds need to be spread out over a number of banks.

Mr. MacDonnell said that Partners does do this to an extent, but that the funds are totally liquefiable at any time, and that this is a popular way to fully guarantee deposits. Partners works with a network of other banks using the IntraFi Networks Deposits system; Mr. MacDonnell said that the Town would be able to log on at any time to see which banks are selected for its accounts, and can choose to have a bank removed if necessary. All are fully FDIC insured. He said there is no cost to the town, and the accounts earn interest.

Asked if the Town of Kingston would be Partners' largest customer, Mr. MacDonnell said no, that Partners has handled all the accounts for the County of York, Maine for a significant number of years.

Ms. Kenerson asked what happens if one or more of the banks in the network were to fail. Mr. MacDonnell said that in this case, the bank(s) would be removed and another added. He said he will get back to Ms. Kenerson with the logistics of this. Ms. Scharf-Morin said that there is a lot of liquidity, and that all the banks must be covered by FDIC; she said it is very rare that the insurance is called upon.

Ms. Ramey asked what the benefit of switching banks would be. Ms. Scharf-Morin said that Partners is a local bank and they give back 10% to the community; they have already donated funds to various causes in town. She said that Partners came to Kingston in the first place as it was a good fit for a small community bank. Ms. Bakie added that she uses the bank every day; to make deposits late in the day, and to get change on a regular basis, is more convenient with a local bank (TD Bank currently sends a courier for deposits).

Ms. Kenerson asked how long Partner's Bank has used the IntraFi system. Mr. MacDonnell said they have used it for a minimum of 10 years. Ms. Kenerson noted that the state of New Hampshire has just adopted the ability to use this method, that in the past only banks chartered in New Hampshire or federally guaranteed could be used. Ms. Kenerson asked if during that 10 years any bank in the network had failed; Mr. MacDonnell said no. He added that CDs can be used instead if preferred. Ms. Kenerson said this has been done in the past with TD in order to earn interest.

Ms. Ramey asked if there were any other reasons for the switch; Chairman Coombs said that he was irritated with TD Bank for the way they left the bank building empty. Selectwoman Alessio said that as a business owner since 1971 she has always used community banks, and feels that it is vital to have a local bank to work with local people and small businesses. She said she understands the need to protect funds, and TD Bank has been good, but she doesn't feel they care about the town itself.

**Credit cards:** Mr. MacDonnell said that these are the riskiest of loans; Partners Bank partners with TCM Bank through the Independent Commercial Bankers Association. He said they have some control but there are limitations. He said the credit offered is based on the business or organization's line of credit. He said that they need to identify users and collect some information on them in order to satisfy the Patriot Act. He said that there is no impact on the individual's credit rating.

Ms. Scharf-Morin said that the town can decide what the limit of each card's line of credit will be; it is managed internally by the Town, and the limit can be temporarily increased if needed for an unusual purchase. Points earned go to the town, not the individual user.

Chairman Coombs pointed out that cards would only be issued to department heads, not individual employees. A Credit Card policy was recently adopted. He said this is

meant to be a convenience, so that when a credit card purchase is necessary it doesn't have to be placed on the employee's personal card. However, each department head will have the choice of whether or not to take one. There was further discussion on details; Ms. Kenerson will work with Ms. Hutchinson at the bank.

### **Highway/Building Maintenance**

Mr. St. Hilaire asked Ernie Landry, Heritage Commission Chair, to come forward to discuss work to be done on the Grace Daley barn next door to the Town Hall. Mr. Landry said that the roof needs to be fixed, but that beams are shifting and the foundation needs work as well. Mr. St. Hilaire said that Requests for Proposals need to be sent out, but he estimates this could cost up to \$40,000. He said that \$25,000 was put into the Capital Improvement Plan as a placeholder. He said the Highway Building Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund could be used.

There was a brief discussion about the building itself; Mr. Landry said that it houses carriages, the hearse and sleighs; it has agricultural and historical value and it is popular with visitors.

Mr. St. Hilaire said that moving the Daley barn has also been considered during discussions of Town Hall space needs. He said it could be moved toward Main Street to make room for an addition. However, reconfiguring the space at the Town Hall was also discussed, and he said he will go forward with the RFP for the barn work.

Mr. St. Hilaire said there is an MS-1 Stormwater meeting today at 1:00 PM. He said that his employee with the best computer skills, to work with testing and documentation, is Dylan Chenevert, and he will be asking him to work with the Highway Administrative Secretary on this.

Mr. St. Hilaire then mentioned that there has been illegal dumping at the state shed, and cameras may be installed.

The Fall Household Hazardous Waste collection day will be in Kingston in 2022, which Mr. St. Hilaire said he has in his budget. Bids will be solicited for the collection company to be used. This event, which is circulated among five towns, with Plaistow holding the Spring collection every year, will cost up to \$90,000 according to Mr. St. Hilaire, with revenue up to \$70,000.

Mr. St. Hilaire then brought up the subject of the School's plowing crew and schedule. He said that he has told them they have to wait for him to be present to access the equipment that belongs to the town. The Chairman said that the school needs to plan for outside contractors and only call on the Town in an emergency.

### **Budget/American Rescue Plan Act**

Chief Pellerin asked Ms. Kenerson if he would be able to access the budget sheets to track expenses and balances on his own, in a read-only capacity. Chief Briggs agreed this would be helpful. Ms. Kenerson agreed to send the budget updates to all, including the Select Board, weekly.

Chairman Coombs directed attention to the list started at a recent meeting of priorities for uses of the American Rescue Plan Act funds. There was a discussion of items on the list. Chief Pellerin commented that the use of UV lights building systems to kill viruses has been discontinued by the state, as the Department of Health found them to be ineffective. He said that air exchange makes more sense to him.

Ms. Hasselbeck asked about including cybersecurity upgrades, which had been suggested in the past. This will be added to the list. Ms. Hasselbeck then said that the library's budget for IT costs will be going up quite a bit, as their contracts for IT services are reconfigured. She said that the library should have good technical resources.

### **Library**

Ms. Hasselbeck said that the Trustees are reaching the end of the interview process for the Library Director position, and there are several good candidates. She said they hope to make an offer soon, and then there are two more full time positions to be filled at the library.

Ms. Hasselbeck reported that the numbers are going up for program participants and library traffic. She said she has been reaching out to committee members to partner in events, to avoid overlapping.

On the subject of a proposed outdoor structure at the library, Ms. Hasselbeck said the initial estimate was too high, and she is interested in the contacts for other contractors that Selectman Wilson had reached out to. Selectman St. James questioned if lumber from taken down trees could be used; Mr. St. Hilaire said that he has some wood at the Highway Department, as well as a mill.

Ms. Hasselbeck said that there are questions about the library budget and what category building maintenance costs should be put in. It was agreed that a clear understanding of Town vs. Library responsibilities is needed. Selectwoman Alessio said that the Library Trustees need to decide; Ms. Hasselbeck said that she wants the new library director to make this decision.

### **Finance**

Ms. Kenerson directed the Board's attention to the employee evaluation forms, which were newly revised in committee. All agreed they looked okay for now; the committee will reconvene after this year's evaluations are done.

Ms. Kenerson also noted that the street light expenses have not decreased significantly thus far after the LED lights were installed. After some discussion, it was decided that she will contact Tim Noonan of Unitil to get an understanding of what is to be expected, for budgeting purposes.

### **Highway**

Mr. St. Hilaire shared with the Board that he has learned that due to lack of employees, the State's level of winter road maintenance will be reduced. He said that breakdown

lanes will not be plowed until after the end of a storm. He said it should be made clear what roads are state road and which are Town roads, as there will be complaints.

### **BOARD BUSINESS**

There was a discussion of the banking decisions to be made. All were in favor of switching over to Partners Bank. It was decided to give Ms. Kenerson a week to do further research; the decision whether or not to transfer funds will be put on the December 6 agenda.

Selectman Wilson said that after the discussion of changes to the Sanborn Seminary project, he had called Eric Chinburg, and then sent a copy of the Town Planner's memo outlining steps that need to be taken on the 79-e tax relief application.

A letter has been received from Caitlin Milhomme (Clerk's Office) asking the Board to accept funds received as donations for the building of the Stepping Stones playground.

**MOTION:** by Selectwoman Alessio, to accept unanticipated funds in the amount of \$1,350, to be deposited in the Recreation Revolving Fund.

**SECOND:** By Selectman Wilson

**All in favor**

Selectman Wilson said that there have been several issues regarding seasonal houses, and residents using them in the winter. He asked what should be done, and if there is a legal process to follow. More research will be done on this for an upcoming meeting.

### **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

**MOTION:** By Selectman St. James, to approve the meeting minutes of November 22, 2021, as written.

**SECOND:** By Selectwoman Alessio

**In favor: Alessio, Briggs, St. James, Wilson; Abstain: Coombs; passed**

### **Adjournment:**

**Meeting Adjourned at 11:30 AM.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Ayer, Administrative Assistant