

Kingston, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting of April 9, 2018
MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM in the Meeting Room at the Kingston Town Hall.

PRESENT: Mark Heitz, Chairman; George Korn, Kevin St. James and Donald Briggs, Jr., Selectmen.

ABSENT: Philip A. Coombs, Selectman

The Selectmen adjourned to Non-Public session by unanimous vote under the provisions of NH RSA 91-A:3, II(b), in order to conduct interviews of applicants for the position of Electrical Inspector. The Board adjourned at 5:35 PM. (Selectman Coombs arrived at 6:30 PM.)

MOTION: by Selectman Briggs, **SECOND:** Selectman Korn, to return to public session at 7:00 PM. Vote was unanimous.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Library Trustees and Revision Energy - Solar Array Proposal

Library Director Rebekka Mateyk and James Hasselbeck of Revision Energy led a discussion of the solar panel array proposed for the library grounds, which has been under discussion for about 14 months. Information given at prior Selectmen's meetings was reviewed: The proposal is for a Solar Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) for a 39.68 kilowatt grid-tied solar electric array. The financial structure offered includes no upfront cost to the Library, but instead an agreement to purchase all the electricity generated by the system. The system will be financed, built, owned and operated by an investor. After 5 years the Library will have the option to purchase and own the solar array; year 6 buyout amount is estimated at \$74,391.

This option will be available periodically over the 25- year life of the contract, but the Library may choose to continue purchasing power from the investor. At the end of the contract, the Library may opt to have the array removed for free, or buy it at a "nominal salvage cost".

Ms. Mateyk said that the new proposal provided for Selectmen review was received on March 23. She said that financing possibilities include a \$100,000 grant available for solar power, with a deadline of April 30, 2018. She said she would like to apply for this, and could work with Revision to partner on the grant. If received, the money could be used to pre-pay the solar array, which is valued at \$123,985.

In addition, there was a discussion of possible use of Library impact fees, which need to be used within a certain time frame and only for capital improvements. Whatever can be paid upfront will reduce the cost of the future buyout.

Selectman Coombs asked what happens when the solar panels are at the end of their lifespan and need to be discarded. He said he has read reports that they are made up of hazardous materials and are expensive to dispose of. Mr. Hasselbeck said that this is false, that the panels are made of all recyclable materials. He said that he has not heard of any issues with old solar panels. Selectman Coombs said that this could change, and he would want to be sure that there will not be a cost to throw out the panels in 25 years. Mr. Hasselbeck that metal and tempered glass are the main components, and that he will send literature that lists specific materials.

The Selectmen reviewed information provided about the current cost per kWh through Unitil that has increased 24% since 14 months ago, compared to the rates projected to be paid per kWh during the PPA agreement years. The rate for year one will be \$0.1365 per kWh, and an annual increase of 2% per year will be added starting in year three. There was a lengthy discussion of comparative costs using differing scenarios for pre-payment and length of time before buyout.

It was noted that the plan includes the removal of three trees from the Library grounds, but discussion is ongoing about placement of the array and landscaping to make it esthetically pleasing. The Trustees have also discussed the educational value of the solar array. Mr. Hasselbeck answered a question about the danger if the panels are touched or broken by saying that nothing would happen; they are not dangerous. He said that wires are covered with a metal mesh and the glass is tested to be durable and even if it did break, it would not shatter but crack like a car windshield.

The Trustees said they are ready to go forward with the permission of the Board. Chairman Heitz asked the Trustees to bring a formalized contract back to the Selectmen, and they would have Town Counsel review it. Mr. Hasselbeck said that the contract is fairly straightforward, and construction details would also be provided. Listening sessions will take place to involve the public.

Request to Increase Veterans Property Tax Credit

John Whittier of Rockrimmon Road addressed the Board to share research he had done on the amounts various municipalities pay for Veterans Property Tax Credits. He provided a list of 34 area towns that showed Kingston pays the lowest amount, \$300 per year, while all but two of the other 34 pay \$500 per year.

Chairman Heitz said that the credit started at \$100, but that several years ago the State passed an RSA bringing the limit up to \$500. At that time, Kingston raised its credit to \$300.

MOTION: by Selectman Briggs to recommend an increase of the Veterans Tax Credit to \$500, to be put in a Warrant Article for approval in 2019.

SECOND: by Selectman Korn.

In discussion, the Selectmen agreed the increase is overdue. All were in favor of a Warrant Article to raise the credit to \$500, in line with the State RSA.

NEW BUSINESS

Highway

Road Agent Richard St. Hilaire asked to speak with the Board on two issues. First, he said he had been notified that FEMA has made money available to New Hampshire towns for damages sustained during the March 13 blizzard. He said he has put together a cost estimate, and asked the Selectmen if they would like him to apply for funds.

MOTION: by Selectman Briggs to authorize Mr. St. Hilaire to apply for any additional FEMA funds available to mitigate storm damage due to the March 13 storm.

SECOND: by Selectman Korn. Four in favor, one abstention, passed.

Mr. St. Hilaire then said that there are some federal grant moneys available for work on drainage culverts. He said that Kingston has one such project left, which involves a dam on Powwow Pond that needs to be shored up, and a bridge on Main Street. Asked if this work needs to be done now, Mr. St. Hilaire said that the flooding in the area will only get worse and more expensive to clean up the longer this work is put off. He said that this is the last big money item the town has at this time, and to get grant money would be very helpful. He estimated the work to cost between 1.3 million and 1.4 million dollars. The grants usually cover 75%, which would leave roughly \$400,000 left to be paid by the Town. He added that if awarded, the grant does not have to be accepted. Chairman Heitz said that the interest on the landfill accounts could be used to cover the 25% match in funds, without directly impacting the taxpayers.

Mr. St. Hilaire said that he has used CMA Engineers in the past to prepare grant applications that have been successful; the cost would be \$1500-\$1800 for the paperwork, but he said he can't do this himself.

A poll of the board showed unanimous support to have Mr. St. Hilaire work with CMA Engineers to prepare a grant application.

Approval of Meeting Minutes - April 2, 2018

MOTION: By Selectman St. James to approve the meeting minutes of April 2, 2018, as written.

SECOND: Selectman Briggs; Vote: 4 in favor, 1 abstention, passed.

Special Town Meeting - Information

Following up on information shared at the April 2 meeting, Chairman Heitz said that the Public Hearing to precede the Special Town Meeting will be held on April 23 at 7:00 PM. The Special Town Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 9 at 7:00 PM. Both the public hearing and the meeting will be held at the Town Hall. Chairman Heitz explained that this procedure is being followed in order to ratify the election, because it was discovered that the required state form (MS-737) was not posted with the budget prior to the deliberative session, although the budget itself was posted for viewing along with the Warrant. This Special Town Meeting will be for the purpose of ratifying the vote that was already taken; all who attend will be asked to vote on one Warrant article: to see if the Town will vote to ratify the results of the March 13 election though the posting requirements were not met.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

- An off-site catering form has been received from the Old Salt restaurant for the 5K and Fair to be held on May 12.
- Two Veterans Exemption forms and one Elderly Exemption form were approved; one Disabled Exemption application was not approved pending more information being provided.
- A letter from Virginia Morse advocating Madelyn Ouellette as a new member of the Historic District Commission was received, along with a letter of interest from Ms. Ouellette. The appointment was approved.
- Two abutter notices from the Planning Board were reviewed, one for a case involving a subdivision on North Road, and the other for a change to septic design for the All American Assisted Living project. Both cases are to be heard on April 17.
- Fund balances provided by the Trustees of the Trust Fund were reviewed.

Selectman Coombs brought an article in the weekly bulletin of the NH Agricultural Commission to the attention of the Board. There has been some misuse of the Agricultural and Farm license plates that are meant to be issued only for certain types of vehicles to be used for limited, agriculture-related purposes. He said that the Town loses revenue by issuing these lower cost plates, and they should only be issued for the lawful purpose. Selectman Coombs asked for permission to have a conversation with the Town Clerk about the problem. He will present his findings at the April 23 meeting.

Administrative Assistant Salary

After reviewing salaries paid by comparable towns, the Selectmen decided to set the Administrative Assistant salary at \$45,000 per year.

Planning Board

Selectman Coombs reported on recent Planning Board activity. Selectman Briggs asked about the status of the golf course subdivision, but this has not been a matter recently dealt with at the Planning Board. Selectman Briggs said that it is his understanding that a cease and desist order is in place. Selectman Coombs was asked to get an update on the situation.

Complaints

There was a brief discussion of how property complaints are handled at the Town Hall. It was agreed that in the absence of a Code Enforcement Officer, the Selectmen are the code enforcement agent, and complaints should be received in writing and brought to the Board. Complaints must include the name of the person submitting it.

Public Comment

Carol Croteau, as a member of the Planning Board, asked the Selectmen for permission to have a second Agricultural Forum, set to take place on April 28, taped for the cable television channel. She said that she was concerned whether there is money budgeted for cable tapings beyond the meetings of the Planning, Zoning and Select Board

meetings. There was a brief discussion in which it was decided there is still plenty of money in the budget, and permission was given to tape this meeting.

Non-Public Session

MOTION: Upon motion of Selectman St. James, **SECOND** of Selectman Korn, it was voted unanimously to adjourn to Non-Public session under the provisions of NH RSA 91-A:3, II (b): "The hiring of any person as a public employee". The Board adjourned at 9:10 pm.

MOTION: Upon motion of Selectman St. James, **SECOND** of Selectman Coombs, it was voted unanimously to return to public session at 9:35 pm.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 9:36 PM.
(**MOTION:** Selectman St. James; **SECOND:** Selectman Coombs, unanimous)

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Ayer
Administrative Assistant