

**Kingston, New Hampshire  
Board of Selectmen  
Meeting of September 27, 2021: Special Meeting with Department Heads  
FINAL MINUTES**

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

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

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; Budget Committee Chair Chuck Hart

**9:00 AM PUBLIC HEARING #2 Pursuant to the provisions of RSA 41:14-a, on intent to sell Town-owned property**

The Chairman called this Public Hearing to order at 9:00 am and read the notice for this hearing:

**The Selectmen of the Town of Kingston will hold Public Hearings pursuant to the provisions of RSA 41:14-a, on their intent to sell the following Town-owned property:**

- Map U4, Lot 27 - 7 Seventh Street - .3 acre
- Map U4, Lot 30 - 12 Sixth Street - .1 acres,
- Map U4, Lot 87 - 31 Second Street - 1.3 acres
- Map U4, Lot 175 - 5 Sixth Street - .11 acres

**All lots are to be sold with restrictive covenants as unbuildable.**

The Chairman noted that this is the second public hearing on this topic, as required by law. No members of the public were present to participate.

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

**SECOND:** by Selectwoman Alessio

There was a discussion by the Board; Selectman St. James saying for the record that this has been a process, and the lots will be sold. He said that none of the lots can be built on, and it has been decided to offer them to abutters only for that reason.

Selectman Briggs added that each lot will be sold as-is and as-seen, with no warranties or guarantees; Selectman St. James added that there are no covenants and the lots have not been surveyed. Chairman Coombs said that since only abutters are to bid, a stipulation might be made that the lots will be automatically merged. He will check if this is the case.

Selectman Wilson said that at least in one case, two abutters may plan to share a lot. It was also reaffirmed that the lots are unbuildable, but once merged, may be used as any other part of a property for a shed, for example, within setback regulations.

At this point, Selectman St. James noted that since the motion was made to close the hearing, one resident had joined the meeting. The points discussed above were shared with the resident.

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

**MOTION:** by Chairman Coombs, to authorize Selectman St. James to contact the auctioneer to share the stipulations and to set a date for the auction within 30 days.

**SECOND:** by Selectman St. James

**All in favor**

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

## **TOPICS BY DEPARTMENT:**

### **Fire Department**

Fire Chief Graham Pellerin reported on Fire Department activity. He started by thanking the Board for the use of the Plains for the Brewfest fundraiser; he said that all feedback from neighbors was good and that there were no issues. He also reported that the new Fire Station project is on time and on budget. The Heritage Commission will be taking pictures of the old station.

Chief Pellerin then said that staffing the Fire and Emergency Management Department is still an issue; he said there are still 9 openings on the October schedule. There was a lengthy discussion of solutions to the crisis in staffing. The Chief has talked with the East Kingston and Brentwood departments about possible future regionalization. He said he also has looked into funding from a SAFER grant, which would pay the costs of a new employees training and pay for four years, after which the Town must accept the employee. He said that the only problem with that is that the NH Fire Protective Agency requires that there will be four people available on a fire engine in order to accept the funding.

Chief Pellerin said that he doesn't want people to think that this is about building a new fire station and needing to fill it. He said that is not the case; the department needs to staff the ambulance.

Selectman St. James said that the Town is at a crossroads, and that while it is an opportunity for the three towns to work together, a lot of Kingston's calls are to service other towns, and this is not how mutual aid is supposed to work. Selectman Briggs said this has been discussed recently, and that when Kingston responds to other Town's emergency calls, it leaves Kingston residents without prompt ambulance service. Chief Graham concurred, saying that it could take Trinity ambulance about a half hour to reach Kingston if called.

Chief Pellerin said he had done a lot of research on creating a fire district. He said that even if this is the decision, it will take time. Selectman Briggs suggested that Chief Pellerin could talk with the other Fire Chiefs and then reach out to the various Select Boards.

Chairman Coombs asked Chief Pellerin to bring his data to the Board, preferably for discussion at the next regular Board meeting.

Discussion continued on pay and incentives to retain personnel.

Chief Pellerin said that he has submitted his draft budget to the Finance Director, but he may need to adjust it for equipment needed, depending on how ARPA funds may be used. Chairman Coombs said that the Town has three years to spend the ARPA money, and at this point analysis is being done and needs prioritized. He said the Board is looking at expenditures for things that need to be done but that may not be approved by the voters due to cost.

Chuck Hart said he is here to listen, and to get some information on how the ARPA funding may affect the budget. He said that putting items in budgets that may ultimately be paid with ARPA funds would distort the budget. Chairman Coombs said that anything you would ordinarily be putting in the budget should be in the budget. Larger items such as revamping the phone systems, digitizing town records, and other town-wide expenditures, will be looked at for possible funding. He said that the guidance from the state is still very vague.

Chief Pellerin said that it will be hard to stay within the 2% increase limit, if that is imposed again, due to increased prices.

### **Highway/Building Maintenance**

Mr. St. Hilaire said that paving is to start soon; he is waiting for a call from the paving company. He said he is also waiting to hear from the engineer in place for repairing the front steps of the Town Hall. He said that roads to be paved this year include Washington, Madison, Lincoln, Lucien, Clement, Independent, Kelley, Cardinal, Gunstock, Windsong, Valley, and Kasher. Selectman Wilson asked if the parking on the Plains by the State Park is to be changed this year; Mr. St. Hilaire said that he would rather deal with it in the Spring. Selectman Wilson said that getting the area marked out would be a good idea so that people know the change is coming.

Mr. St. Hilaire reminded the Select Board that if a complaint is received about a sink hole or other deficiencies in the road ways, they have an obligation to report it to him immediately. He said they could be personally liable if someone is injured due to road problems that were not reported to the Highway Agent.

Interviews have been conducted with several of the applicants for Highway Administrative Assistant, and Mr. St. Hilaire said that there are some very good candidates.

### **Town Clerk/Tax Collector**

Town Clerk Tammy Bakie said she has no staffing issues, but hopes the Board will support pay increases in order to keep them.

Ms. Bakie said she is still waiting for the third window to be installed that will be used for overflow on the busiest days.

Ms. Bakie said that going to Partner's Bank, she can only get \$200 in change a time rather than \$300, because the Town has no accounts there yet. She encouraged the Board to open an account at Partner's Bank.

Ms. Bakie then said that she recently attended the annual Town Clerk's conference, and learned that if there should be an ice storm (for example) and the Town Hall had no power for an extended period, she would be allowed to bring her license plates, State computer, etc. to the Fire Station temporarily.

She reported that the form for elections candidates has been revised. She also said that she has ordered two new voting booths to replace some of the old ones that have writing on them, are in poor shape, and can no longer be completely cleaned. She said she will eventually replace them all; they have not been replaced in about 30 years. She said the new ones are taller but not as sturdy; the first two can be tried to see how they work out.

### **Police Department**

Chief Briggs said that his budget shows a large increase due to the half year of salary for a new chief. He mentioned other items in his budget, such as bullet proof vests, which had been mentioned as possibly being bought with ARPA funds but which should be in the budget as normal expenditures.

The Chief said that the bigger issue is retention of officers. He explained that a bump in pay in the third year would help to keep them from leaving after being trained and getting started. He said that the first year after hiring a new officer is not really useful as he/she can't ride alone. He said that three- and five- year pay bump incentives would help not to lose them just as they are ready to be fully on board.

There was another discussion of pay and retention, and Chief Pellerin suggested that the Department Heads might bring to the Board a wage matrix for their own department. He said a matrix would be useful, even to have a pay range for a position that does not currently exist.

### **Library**

Stephanie Hasselbeck represented the library as the temporary Interim Library Director. She said the Library is going through a management transition, and she is grateful for the staff who are working very hard, along with the Trustees. She said the position of Director has been posted and the first interview will take place next week.

Ms. Hasselbeck said she had hoped to have some proposals to share, for an IT consultant, to be paid through ARPA funds in the cybersecurity category. She said that they had reached out to Block 5 to do an audit, but they are very busy. She said the library is looking into their phone system. Chief Pellerin said that they are working with Dave Black to put voice over IP phones in at the fire station; he said he can ask Mr.

Black to reach out to the other departments. Ms. Hasselbeck said that the library is a Town building but a little different; they are governed by library RSAs. However, she said they would like to communicate and share services as long as their road map allows it.

Ms. Hasselbeck went on to share proposed projects at the library. She said the library needs a better archiving system, and it is on their list to digitize records, perhaps working with the Town on this. She mentioned that another project that may be eligible for ARPA funding is an outdoor structure, something permanent to be used for outdoor programs; a tent was used this year for the summer reading program. She said library Trustees will be meeting with a designer on October 7.

Other outdoor work proposed includes clearing the trail behind the library to make more open space. Friends of the Library plan to clean the existing trail to be used at Halloween. Mr. St. Hilaire said that if they pile debris, the Highway crew will pick it up. Ms. Hasselbeck also said that there is no walkway to the patio in the back of the library, so some patrons may not use the patio. This may be a capital improvement project, or paid through impact fees.

Ms. Hasselbeck asked if the water at the library is potable. Mr. St. Hilaire said that it is a public water source that is tested quarterly.

On the subject of the library budget, Ms. Hasselbeck said it has not been presented to the Budget Committee yet, because she wanted to clear up some items that may come out of the Highway Capital Improvement line. Mr. St. Hilaire said that the library is a Town building and boundaries need to be established. Chairman Coombs said that he would like to codify the rules, as there are always questions about who pays for what.

## **BOARD BUSINESS**

### **Bike ride on Plains**

Selectman Briggs said he had been approached by some individuals who are organizing a short bike ride around the Plains in memory of the Donna Briggs, who was killed by a hit and run driver while riding her bike. Selectman Briggs said no Town services are being requested, but the Police Department will be on standby in case a lot of riders show up. The Board had no objection to this.

### **Request for Proposals: Digitizing Records**

The Board reviewed a revised version of this Request for Proposals, which is for the scanning and digital storage of all records in all Town departments that are legally required to be retained. Training for Town staff to be able to retrieve and add to the digital files going forward is to be included. The Board agreed that this RFP can now be posted.

### **Request for Proposals: Perambulation of Bounds**

The Board discussed the need to catch up on the schedule of perambulations of bounds with neighboring towns. It was agreed that while this is not an emergency, it does need

to be done per RSA Chapter 51. The RFP will be posted in order to have a cost for the budget.

### **Facilities Use Request**

The Condominium Association for Lamplighter Estates has requested use of the meeting room for their annual meeting. The Board discussed the matter in light of last year's restriction on use of the Town Hall to municipal/government use. Learning that the association usually meets at the library but was turned down, Selectwoman Alessio said she would talk to Ms. Hasselbeck. It was agreed that the Town Hall should continue to be restricted to municipal/government use, and community groups should meet at the library.

Chairman Coombs read a notice that the New Hampshire DOT will hold a series of public meetings on the State of New Hampshire Transportation Ten Year Plan, which covers projects planned between 2023 and 2032. They will hold a meeting in the Kingston Town Hall meeting room on October 6, 2021 at 7:00 PM.

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

**MOTION:** By Selectwoman Alessio, to approve the meeting minutes of August 30, 2021 and September 20, 2021, Public and Non-public, as written.

**SECOND:** By Selectman Briggs

**All in favor**

### **NON-PUBLIC SESSION**

**MOTION:** by Selectman Wilson, to adjourn to non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II (a) and (l) to discuss two legal issues and a personnel issue.

**SECOND:** by Selectwoman Alessio

**All in favor; Meeting adjourned to non-public session at 11:15 AM**

**MOTION:** by Selectman St. James, to return to public session at 11:30 AM.

**SECOND:** by Chairman Coombs

**All in favor**

### **Discussed in Non Public session:**

Personnel issues; legal developments

**Motion made to seal these minutes?** If so, motion made by Selectman St. James, seconded by Selectwoman Alessio, because it is determined that divulgence of this information likely would...

XX 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:**

Phillip Coombs	Y	Richard Wilson	Y
Kevin St. James	Y	Electra Alessio	Y
Donald Briggs	Y		

**Motion: PASSED**

Adjournment:

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Ayer, Administrative Assistant