

**MINUTES OF THE DELIBERATIVE SESSION
KINGSTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
JANUARY 30, 2021**

The Deliberative Session of the Annual Town Meeting, Saturday, January 30, 2021 was called to order at 9:02 AM by the Moderator Ellen Faulconer, who introduced the Selectmen: Phil Coombs Chairman, Donald W. Briggs, Jr., Kevin St. James, Richard Wilson, Electra Alessio and Tammy L. Bakie Town Clerk-Tax Collector. The Budget Committee Members as present, Chuck Hart Chair, Rick Russman Vice Chair (Zoom), Gary Finerty (Zoom), Kim Donahue Secretary, Annemarie Roth, Heather Hanlon, Jim LaValley, John Pramberg and Stanley Shalett.

Copies of the proposed Budget, default budget and Warrant Articles were available at the door for people attending the meeting.

Moderator Faulconer welcomed everyone and asked them to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag. Moderator Faulconer explained the process, and how to access the hearing via the Zoom platform.

ARTICLE 1: To elect the following Town Officers: two Selectmen for a term of three years; one Town Clerk-Tax Collector for a term of three years; one Supervisor of the Checklist for a term of five years; two Trustees of Trust Funds for a term of three years; one Trustee of the Trust Funds for a term of one year; three Library Trustees for a term of three years; two Planning Board members for a term of three years; four Budget Committee members for a term of three years; and two Zoning Board of Adjustment members for a term of three years.

No Zoning Articles

ARTICLE 2: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant, or as amended by vote of the first session for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$ 6,661,370.00. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$6,474,403.00 which is the same as last year with certain adjustments required by previous action of the town or by law, or the governing body may hold one special meeting in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. This operating budget warrant article does not include appropriations contained in any other warrant article.

Estimated tax impact \$4.97/\$1,000

RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN 5-0
RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE 6-3

Motion made to accept the article by Kevin St. James seconded by Richard Wilson.

Chuck Hart thanked the Budget Committee for their hard work. Mr. Hart stated the budget was up 4% and an additional 4% for the bond and interest payment for the new fire station. Mr. Hart reviewed the budget by department. Moderator Faulconer declared with no more discussion on

article 2 it will appear as printed on the ballot. Christina Kelsey made a motion to not reconsider Ms. Alessio seconded all in favor.

ARTICLE 3: Shall the Town rescind the provisions of RSA 31:95-c to restrict 100% of the revenues from ambulance billing of non-residents to expenditures for the purpose of replacement of the Kingston Fire Department Ambulance, known as the Ambulance Replacement special revenue fund. Said funds, with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, are to be transferred to the municipality's general fund. This article will be contingent upon the passage of article #4. (Majority vote required)
No tax impact

RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN 5-0
RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE 9-0

Motion made to accept the article by Richard Wilson seconded by Phil Coombs. Chief Pellerin stated the fund was established for billing of non-residents for ambulance transports in 1999. Chief Pellerin stated he would offer more details after Article 4 was read. Moderator Faulconer asked for any further comments, asked for a vote, and declared the article will move forward.

ARTICLE 4: To see if the town will vote to establish an Ambulance Services Revolving fund pursuant to RSA 31:95-h. All revenues received from non-resident ambulance billing will be deposited into the fund, and the money in the fund shall be allowed to accumulate from year to year, and shall not be considered part of the town's general fund balance. And, further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$246,100 to be added to the EMS Services Revolving fund, with this amount to come from the Town's unassigned fund balance. The town treasurer shall have custody of all moneys in the fund, and shall pay out the same only upon order of the governing body and no further approval is required by the legislative body to expend. Such funds may be expended only for the purpose for which the fund was created. This article will be contingent upon the passage of article #3. (Majority vote required)
No tax rate impact

RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN 5-0
RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE 9-0

Motion made to accept the article by Electra Alessio seconded by Rich St. Hilaire. Chief Pellerin stated there is \$246,000 in the fund. Chief Pellerin stated as it reads now the funds can only be used to replace an ambulance. Chief Pellerin stated these articles will make it so that the funds can be used for supplies, training and medial contracts. Moderator Faulconer asked for any further comments, asked for a vote, and declared the article will move forward.

ARTICLE 5: *Moderator Faulconer brought Article 5 forward amended:*
To see if the Town of Kingston will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$75,833 for the purpose of installation of energy saving equipment namely, LED street lights which will result in a significant reduction for street lighting costs of more than \$9,000 per year, starting in 2022. Additionally, a rebate incentive from the Town's energy provider estimated to be \$16,946 will help to offset the cost if received. (Majority vote required)
Estimated tax impact is \$.09/\$1,000

RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN 5-0
RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE 9-0

Motion made to accept the article by Kevin St. James seconded by Electra Alessio. Glenn Coppleman stated he was in support of the article but was looking for an additional amendment. Mr. Coppleman stated LED lights are very bright and he was looking for more tempered lights of 3000k or less. Mike Matayabas seconded. Rick Russman suggested Mr. St. James discuss with the provider to come up with a slightly brighter solution and thought the amendment might not be necessary. Kevin St. James stated they already have the contract and the proposal is based on the exact lighting of Exeter and Plaistow. Mr. St. James stated he was reluctant to restrict because of public safety concerns. Janet Hart asked for comments from the Public Safety Officers. Chief Briggs stated he has always been a proponent of brighter is better. Chief Briggs state that the proposed lighting will be similar to what we currently have. Chief Briggs stated that lighting prevents crime. Chief Pellerin agreed. Mr. St. James stated the town would save 44K kilowatt hours per year. A vote was taken on the amendment, it did not pass. Moderator Faulconer asked for any comments, asked for a vote, and declared the article will move forward as printed.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Tax Collector to allow a 1½% deduction from Property Tax when payment is made prior to the due date. It is the responsibility of the taxpayer to take the deduction; deductions not taken by the taxpayer on or before the due date will not be refunded. (Majority vote required)

RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN 5-0
RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE 8-1

Motion made to accept the article by Richard Wilson seconded by Kevin St. James. Moderator Faulconer asked for any comments, asked for a vote, and declared the article will move forward.

ARTICLE 7: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$85,000.00 to be placed in the previously established Fire Apparatus Replacement Capital Reserve Fund. (Majority vote required)

Estimated Tax impact is \$.10/\$1,000

RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN 5-0
RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE 9-0

Motion made to accept the article by Richard Wilson seconded by Kevin St. James. Chief Pellerin stated this article prevents spikes in taxes, as money is put aside every year to build up a fund so that when new equipment is needed it levels off the tax impact. Moderator Faulconer asked for any comments, asked for a vote, and declared the article will move forward.

ARTICLE 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$80,000 to be placed in the previously established Town Buildings Maintenance and Repairs Capital Reserve Fund. (Majority vote required)

Estimated Tax impact is \$.09/\$1,000

RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN 5-0
RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE 9-0

Motion made to accept the article by Richard St. Hilaire seconded by Electra Alessio. Highway Agent Richard St. Hilaire stated this fund was created over 30 years ago and the town has supported every year but one. Mr. St. Hilaire stated this helps the tax base. Mr. St. Hilaire stated they have a specific project: the water line from the fire department. Mr. St. Hilaire stated he was not sure of the cost, currently the town hall is using the line from the old high school which has been sold. Mr. St. Hilaire stated this was a stand-alone project, not part of the fire station project. Moderator Faulconer asked for any comments, asked for a vote, and declared the article will move forward.

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000.00 to be placed in the previously established Highway Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. (Majority vote required)

Estimated Tax impact is \$.12/\$1,000

RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN 5-0
RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE 9-0

Motion made to accept the article by Richard St. Hilaire seconded by Richard Wilson. Mr. St. Hilaire stated this fund is established to replace highway equipment. Mr. St. Hilaire stated the big trucks with sanders and wings can cost 190 thousand, they currently have 6 along with backhoes and loaders. Mr. St. Hilaire stated this fund is used for replacement of equipment and any new equipment purchases is brought before the town. Moderator Faulconer asked for any comments, asked for a vote, and declared the article will move forward.

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will vote to create a full- time Highway Administrative Secretary position and eliminate the current part-time position. Further, to raise and appropriate the sum of \$31,354 for salary and benefits, to be added to the \$25,000 currently in the proposed Highway budget. This appropriation will be for salary and benefits for nine months; if approved, this position will become part of the operating budget in ensuing years. (Majority vote required)

Estimated Tax impact is \$.04/\$1,000

RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN 5-0
RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE 9-0

Motion made to accept the article by Richard St. Hilaire seconded by Kevin St. James. Mr. St. Hilaire stated this is an increase in staffing for an administrative assistant. Currently there is a part-time person who works 45 minutes per day, and with all that has been added to his plate over the years this is inadequate. Mr. St. Hilaire stated there are records that are not being kept or documented. Mr. St. James concurred stating there are two positions being brought forward and the select board unanimously agree on both. Richard Wilson stated that the need is driven by the State and Federal Government requiring documentation and the fines could be devastating. Moderator Faulconer asked for any comments, asked for a vote, and declared the article will move forward.

ARTICLE 11: To see if the Town will vote to create a full- time Code Enforcement Officer Position. Further, to raise and appropriate the sum of \$65,690 for salary and benefits. This appropriation will be for salary and benefits for nine months; if approved, this position will become part of the operating budget in ensuing years. (Majority vote required)
Estimated Tax impact is \$.08/\$1,000

RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN 5-0
RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE 8-1

Motion made to accept the article by Electra Alessio seconded Richard Wilson. Phil Coombs stated both positions are changing part time to full time. Mr. Coombs stated the building inspector Robert Steward is considering retirement, the new code enforcement officer would be able to shadow Mr. Steward until his retirement and then take over his responsibilities. Mr. Coombs stated that the federal government has created unfunded mandates regarding storm water management, and the town is not fulfilling the requirements. Mr. Coombs stated the new highway administrative position would do the paperwork while the code enforcement officer would do the actual inspections. Mr. Coombs stated the select board spends 60% of their time dealing with code violations, this position would avoid bringing on a Town Manager. Mr. Coombs stated the town is at risk of having fines levied and is losing revenue from fees. Mr. Coombs stated that the code enforcement officer would not be going after homeowners but businesses that have made agreements with the town and no one is checking to see if they are complying. Paul Butler asked for clarification if this was additional staff. Mr. Coombs explained that the current building inspector is part time and he is looking at retirement, there will no longer be a part-time position after his retirement. Mr. Coombs stated that the existing rules and ordinances need to be enforced. Electra Alessio stated the board spends a huge amount of time supervising small projects. Ms. Alessio stated they are not experts in the construction trade and this could save the town from legal fees and preclude problems down the road. Stanley Shalett suggestion this was just another layer of bureaucracy. Mr. Coombs stated the figure included benefits and they were targeting \$25.00 per hour. Richard St. Hilaire stated he had been involved with the town inspectors for 30 years and the town is vulnerable to litigation and law suits, the MS4 is an EPA requirement and the town will get no warning when found to be in violation, fines start at 236 thousand a day. Mr. St. Hilaire explained that the town is responsible for every drop of rain until it gets to the ocean. Mr. St. Hilaire stated subdivision's storm water systems have to be inspected yearly and the highway administrative assistant will schedule inspections for code enforcement officer to complete. Moderator Faulconer asked for any comments, asked for a vote, and declared the article will move forward.

ARTICLE 12: On a petition of 25 or more registered voters, shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,333 (\$1.00 per person) based on town population to support the substance misuse prevention, suicide prevention and community wellness services of the SoRock Coalition for Healthy Youth. SoRock's work promotes wellness and nurtures resiliency for the children, youth and families of Kingston as well as surrounding communities. SoRock works through coordinating community education, programming & resources and collaborating with federal and state agencies to help direct additional resources to the towns they serve.
Estimated Tax impact is \$.01/\$1,000

NOT RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN 4-1

RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE 8-1

Motion made to accept the article by Heather Hanlon seconded by Mary Cyr. Charlotte Scott, SoRock Coordinator stated they were asking for funding based on population from all of the towns that they serve with no change from last year. Ms. Scott stated that substance abuse was up, and mental health issues are dramatically up. Ms. Scott gave examples of the programs and services they provide. Kevin St. James made a motion to reduce the amount requested to \$3,000 and Electra Alessio seconded. Mr. St. James stated he supports SoRock but it is the 2nd highest funding of social services over Meals on Wheels. Ms. Alessio stated she supports the reduction because she does not believe the funding is equitable, SoRock is also being funded directly by the school and the school is providing free office space. Ms. Scott stated that other towns put the funding in the budget, the money from the school is new this year and they need all the money they can get or will have to rely more on volunteers. Ms. Alessio stated as it reads the town would provide 6K the school 3K plus the office space. Heather Hanlon proposed an additional amendment if the 3K was provided by the school then the town could change the amount to 3K. Mary Cyr stated she was a member of the school board and the 3K for SoRock would be voted on at the school deliberative session. Ms. Cyr asked that the selectman that voted for the article speak. Chief Briggs stated that on occasion they use their services. Ms. Alessio stated a warrant article can only be spent for that particular entity the budget offers other options. Tammy Mahoney stated it should remain at \$6,333 as services are extremely needed. Ms. Mahoney stated SoRock is underfunded and suicide and depression are real issues especially during the pandemic. Ms. Mahoney stated it was only a difference of \$3,000 and the voters should decide. Stanley Shalett agreed with Ms. Mahoney stating CHINS is a flop and that a charitable organization was needed to keep kids healthy. Moderator Faulconer called for a vote on the amendment to reduce the amount which failed, then called for a vote on the original amendment and declared the article will move forward. Ms. Mahoney made a motion to restrict the article for reconsideration, Ms. Alessio seconded, which passed.

ARTICLE 13: On petition of 38 registered voters of the Town of Kingston, to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$29,000 for upgrading of the 20+ year old playground on Folly Brook Terrace, at Comeau Field. This will include the purchase of some new commercial grade playground equipment, and reusing of some current equipment, as well as ground material, to be installed at the playground on Folly Brook Terrace, at Comeau Field.
Estimated Tax impact is \$.03/\$1,000

RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN 3-2
RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE 8-1

Motion made to accept the article by Richard Wilson seconded by Electra Alessio. Paul Butler Recreation Director, stated he had spoken to a playground expert and they worked to reduce the cost by re-using some of the current equipment. Mr. Butler also stated that he was pursuing a grant to offset the cost. Kevin St. James stated he voted no for this article, although he supports the playground, the original playground was privately funded, built by a group of resident that sold bricks, and recruited Timberland and towns people for labor. Mr. St. James stated Envision Kingston planned for a playground at a more central location. Mr. St. James stated Mr. Butler works tirelessly for kids and asked that he sharpen his pencil. Mr. St. Hilaire stated he had passed on this responsibility to Mr. Butler and if it was up to him he would ask for \$65,000. Mr. St. Hilaire stated volunteerism doesn't happen anymore, the structures have been propped up and repaired to keep in

service and the liability now belongs to the town. Mr. Wilson stated he was the liaison to the Recreation Department and the Director will seek private funds and grants. Phil Coombs stated he was opposed to the article, as the number of kids is diminishing, school enrollments are down, and asked how many playground are needed for kids that are not here. Moderator Faulconer asked for any comments, asked for a vote, and declared the article will move forward.

Moderator Faulconer reminded voters that the town election is March 9th and adjourned the meeting at 10:30.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tammy L. Bakie
Town Clerk