**TOWN OF EAST KINGSTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

MEETING MINUTES

October 17, 2023

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| Town Offices  24 Depot Road  East Kingston, New Hampshire  6:30PM | Robert Caron, Chair  Joseph Cacciatore, Vice Chair  Robert Nigrello |

Board Members present: Robert Caron – Chair, Joseph Cacciatore – Vice Chair, and Robert Nigrello.

Others Present: Town Administrator Grace Ruelle, Police Chief Michael LePage, Police Lieutenant Clayton Jervis, Fire Chief Ed Warren, Emergency Management Deputy Director Laurie McCarter, Solid Waste and Recycling Committee Chair Ron Morales, Road Agent Mark Brinkerhoff, and Library Director Zoe Sucu.

Chairman Caron called the meeting to order at 6:30pm with the roll call.

**APPROVAL AND SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS**

***Meeting Minutes***

The Board reviewed the October 2, 2023 meeting minutes which included a public session, and nonpublic sessions I and II.

**MOTION: Mr. Nigrello motioned to approve the October 2, 2023 public and two nonpublic session meeting minutes; seconded by Vice Chair Cacciatore. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

The Board reviewed the October 2, 2023 conservation easement public hearing minutes.

**MOTION: Chairman Caron motioned to approve the October 2, 2023 conservation easement public hearing minutes; seconded by Mr. Nigrello. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***Accounts Payable Check Registers***

Chairman Caron presented, for board review and questions, accounts payable check registers dated October 5, 2023 in the amount of $25,699.14.

**MOTION: Mr. Nigrello motioned to approve and sign the accounts payable check registers dated October 5, 2023 in the amount of $25,699.14; seconded by Vice Chair Cacciatore. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***Payroll Registers***

Chairman Caron presented, for board review and questions, the payroll check register dated October 13, 2023 in the amount of $40,194.20.

**MOTION: Vice Chair Cacciatore motioned to approve and sign the payroll register dated October 13, 2023 in the amount of $40,194.20; seconded by Mr. Nigrello. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***Police Special Detail***

Chairman Caron presented, for board review and questions, police special detail payroll register for the period of September 26 through October 4, 2023 in the amount of $8,420.00.

**MOTION: Vice Chairman Cacciatore motioned to approve and sign the police special detail payroll check register for the period of September 26 through October 4, 2023 in the amount of $8,420.00; seconded by Mr. Nigrello. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

**CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS**

***#1. Department Head Budget Guidelines***

Chairman Caron provided an overview of the Warrant Article timeline that included:

* Bond Warrant Articles should be forwarded to the Town Administrator right away.
* Capital Warrant Articles should be submitted by November 10th.
* Warrant Article in draft format should be submitted by November 10th.
* Zoning Amendment Warrant Article petitions filing period is from November 13-December 13 with the first public hearing no later than January 16th.

Chairman Caron provided an overview of the budget development timeline that included:

* Budget worksheet to be disseminated by October 19th and must be used for import into the budgeting software program.
* Budget Excel spreadsheets are due to the Town Administrator by November 10th.
* Department heads to present their proposed 2024 budgets to the Selectboard on November 27th. Special accommodations for another date can be made through the Town Administrator.
* All other budgets will be presented at the December 11th meeting.

Chairman Caron then provided an overview of wage guidelines that included:

* Retroactive raises will require a personnel action form by March 18. 2024.
* Wage lines shall include a 3% increase.
* Health insurance increase is set at 15.6% and dental insurance increase is set at 4.7%.
* Workers’ compensation will reflect a 12% increase and property liability will reflect a 17.8% increase.
* NHRS will remain at the same level.

Responding to questions, Town Administrator Ruelle stated the workers’ comp increase is due to the under 50 employee group the town is enrolled in with Primex and not because of any claims.

Chairman Caron stated the Town Administrator projected calculations for a 3% wage increase which would align with the anticipated social security increase of 3.2% as the board wanted to see the impact the 3% would have on the overall budget. Three percent equates to approximately $30k. He noted some of the biggest budget drivers so far are the technology projects with Block 5.

Mr. Nigrello stated that overall budget-wise, the full increase for insurance, wages, and workers’ comp is $74k ($33k for health and dental, $30k for wages, and $11k for workers' comp). It was noted the insurance increase was not the guaranteed maximum rate; it was the actual rate of increase.

Fire Chief Warren sought confirmation of the 3% wage increase stating he was happy with this rate. Chairman Caron stated there were still some unknowns, but that they felt comfortable beginning the wage increase process at 3%. He noted the board is mindful of the economic challenges of the residents.

***#2. Block 5 – Proposed Projects***

Chairman Caron spoke about technology upgrades to be performed by Block 5 which include a firewall upgrade and access point upgrades (combined cost of $xxxxxx) which must be done along with several other small projects.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

***#1. Culvert at Old Town Hall - Bids***

Road Agent Brinkerhoff informed the board he had spoken with Dennis Quintal about the quote for replacing the culvert at the town hall. He stated Mr. Quintal thought the quote was a good, fair price that would include the replacement of the culvert with a 160 foot long, 24-inch plastic pipe. He stated the other bids were in the same range; however, the issue was with getting the work scheduled as most everyone he contacted for an invitation to bid stated they were too busy. He listed several individuals who he contacted with very few available to do the work. He recommends offering the bid to Todd Bradshaw.

It was noted the job was not complicated; but that it needed someone with an excavator and some skill.

Fielding board questions, Road Agent Brinkerhoff stated the total cost of the job would run between $12k and $15k, and that he would like to get this done before they have to start salting the roads as the salt shed is located close to the culvert.

**MOTION: Chairman Caron motioned to offer the bid to Todd Bradshaw to replace the culvert at the old town hall at a cost not to exceed $15k; seconded by Vice Chair Cacciatore.**

Discussion: Mr. Nigrello inquired about factors associated with the $12k to $15k range. Road Agent Brinkerhoff stated they know the cost of the pipe and the labor. What they do not know is how much stone they will require as they won’t know until they dig up the old pipe to see the damage. The baseline cost is $12k and they are hoping it will stay at $12k. The funds for this project will come from the highway budget.

**VOTE: The motion passed 3-0-0.**

**FOLLOW UP ITEMS**

***Use of Additional Highway Grant Funds (Block Grant: $44,792.53, Bridge Grant: $39,226.44)***

Chairman Caron noted the bridge grant monies have already been dedicated to a bridge project and the highway block grant can be held over to next year. Some ideas for utilizing these funds included private road signs and new salt shed.

Road Agent Brinkerhoff spoke about replacing the private road signs throughout the town, starting with those on Brandywine Drive and doing the rest in stages. The rationale for replacing the signs is two-fold: to inform that the road is a private road (not built to town standards or to be maintained by the town) and to assist with mutual aid in locating residences on those private roads (safety). The current signs are non-reflective, bent and compromised.

Discussion ensued on utilizing the road maintenance budget versus the block grant and on the confusing road system throughout Brandywine Drive.

**MOTION: Chairman Caron motioned to move forward and purchase and install private road signs for the Brandywine development with funds coming from the road maintenance budget; seconded by Vice Chair Cacciatore.**

Discussion: Clarification was provided on the cost of each sign - $250 which includes a new pole, the new sign, and installation.

**VOTE: The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***Budget Guidelines***

Circling back to the topic of budget guidelines, Chairman Caron inquired if there were any questions from the department heads. Town Administrator Ruelle noted the September budget reports would be coming out later this week and the Willow Road special detail will be included. She also noted the proposed budget public hearing date is scheduled for January 15th, Martin Luther King, Jr./Civil Rights Day at the Pound School. The last day to hold the hearing is January 16th which they wish to reserve in case of a snow day. The Deliberative Session will be held at the East Kingston Elementary School. She then reminded department heads to email her their warrant articles as soon as possible.

***Emergency Management Structure***

Chairman Caron directed this item be tabled to the next meeting as he has new ideas to add to the plan before it is ready for presentation.

***Work Period Determination – 7k Exemption***

Chairman Caron noted the Town Administrator is still working on the policy updates associated with this; that the item has not been forgotten.

***Noise Ordinance***

Discussion ensued about the process in reviewing the noise ordinance as was promised to a resident at a prior meeting, on a report about noise on Bowley Road just that morning, on the complexities with citing decibel levels within the noise ordinance, on the difficulty in prosecuting violations, and that all complaints about noise outside the stated allowable timeframe (10pm-7am) should be investigated. It was noted the noise ordinance was last updated in 2006 thus warranting a review. Chairman Caron agreed they should work with the Police Chief to review the ordinance.

***Sealed Minutes Review***

Consistent with the new law which requires governing bodies to review their sealed minutes to determine if they should remain sealed, the board will begin their review of past sealed minutes at the end of the month.

With no other business before the board,

**MOTION: Vice Chair Cacciatore motioned to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Nigrello. The motion passed 3-0-0 and the meeting ended at 7:13pm.**

Minutes prepared by Catherine Belcher.

Approved on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

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| Joseph Cacciatore |  | Robert A. Caron |  | Robert L. Nigrello |