**TOWN OF EAST KINGSTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

MEETING MINUTES

November 27, 2023

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

Board Members present: Joseph Cacciatore – Vice Chair, Robert Caron – Chair and Robert Nigrello (6:39pm).

Others Present: Town Administrator Grace Ruelle, Police Chief Michael LePage, Police Lieutenant Clayton Jervis, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Barbara Clark, Fire Chief Ed Warren, Library Director Zoe Sucu, Building Inspector Kip Kaiser, Emergency Management Department Co-Director Michelle Cotton-Miller, Solid Waste & Recycle Committee Chair Ron Morales and committee members Dan Guilmette and Willian Staples, Cemetery Trustee Stephen McMillan, Recreation Committee Chair Andy Herum, and Library Trustees Robert Minicucci and Sarah Courchesne.

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

**APPROVAL AND SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS**

***#1. Meeting Minutes***

The Board reviewed the November 13, 2023 public and nonpublic sessions I and II meeting minutes.

**MOTION: Chairman Caron motioned to approve the November 13, 2023 public and nonpublic sessions I and II meeting minutes; seconded by Vice Chair Cacciatore. The motion passed 2-0-0.**

***#2. Accounts Payable Check Registers***

Chairman Caron presented, for board review and questions, accounts payable check register dated November 22, 2023 in the amount of $72,046.01.

**MOTION: Vice Chair Cacciatore motioned to approve and sign the accounts payable check register dated November 22, 2023 in the amount of $72,046.01; seconded by Chairman Caron. The motion passed 2-0-0.**

***#3. Payroll Registers***

Chairman Caron presented, for board review and questions, the payroll check register dated November 24, 2023 in the amount of $56,470.71.

**MOTION: Vice Chair Cacciatore motioned to approve and sign the payroll register dated November 24, 2023 in the amount of $56,470.71; seconded by Chairman Caron. The motion passed 2-0-0.**

***#4. Police Special Detail***

Chairman Caron presented, for board review and questions, police special detail payroll register for the period of November 8 through November 17, 2023 in the amount of $3,190.00.

**MOTION: Vice Chair Cacciatore motioned to approve and sign the police special detail payroll check register for the period of November 8 through November 17, 2023 in the amount of $3,190.00; seconded by Chairman Caron. The motion passed 2-0-0.**

**CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS**

***#1. PA 30 – Elderly Tax Deferral MBL# 10-02-10 ($7,907.00)***

Pursuant to the provisions set forth in RSA 72:38-a, board members reviewed the application for tax deferral in the amount of $7,907.00 for property identified as MBL 10-02-10.

**MOTION: Vice Chair Cacciatore motioned to grant the application for tax deferral in the amount of $7,907.00 for the MBL# 10-02-10 as presented; seconded by Chairman Caron. The motion passed 2-0-0.**

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Noting Mr. Nigrello would be arriving to the meeting late, Chairman Caron modified the agenda as follows:

***Budget Presentations***

TOWN CLERK/TAX COLLECTOR – Town Clerk/Tax Collector Barbara Clark presented proposed 2024 Town Clerk and Tax Collector budgets totaling $64,305.00 and $46,610.00 respectively reflecting an increase of 2% (Town Clerk) and 4% (Tax Collector) over the 2023 budgets. Discussion ensued on budget line items Rentals and Leases (credit card machine and scanner), part-time payroll (current deputy town clerk/tax collector reducing hours from 20 to 10 per week, hiring another person for the remaining 10 hours who may also be interested in running for Town Clerk/Tax Collector in the future, and on incentives for the longevity of the deputy town clerk), and the Town Clerk’s salary (2023 warrant article).

Mr. Nigrello entered the meeting at 6:39pm.

LIBRARY – Library Trustees Robert Minicucci and Sarah Courchesne and Library Director Zoe Sucu presented the proposed 2024 Library budget totaling $177,527.00 reflecting an increase of 1% over the 2023 budget. Discussion ensued on the electricity budget line, a 67% decrease, due to the solar array beginning in January which should all but eliminate the cost of electricity, on budgeting $1,000 to cover whatever expenses might occur as there is still some uncertainty until all things are on line, and on the adjustment to the heat line item (a decrease of 43%) due to new electric heat pumps.

POLICE DEPARTMENT – Police Chief Michael LePage and Police Lieutenant Clayton Jervis presented the proposed 2024 Police Department budget totaling $676,508.83 reflecting an increase of 5% over the 2023 budget. Discussion ensued on costs associated with employing a prosecutor (currently filled by the Chief) and on new legislation pushing felony level cases back onto the town instead of the county, on the overtime budget line which accounts for another hourly position versus salaried, increases in the information technology line due to technology upgrades, the increase in required training and associated costs, and fuel costs which fluctuates monthly.

SOLID WASTE & RECYCLING COMMITTEE – Committee Chair Ron Morales and committee members William (Bud) Staples and Dan Guilmette presented the proposed 2024 Solid Waste & Recycling Committee budget totaling $322,700.00 reflecting an increase of 3% over the 2023 budget. Discussion ensued on decreases to the white goods and bulk waste budget lines based on trends, on 2024 being the last year of a 5-year contract with Waste Management, on the work ahead to secure a new contract beginning 2025, and on recycling trends.

CEMETERY DEPARTMENT – Cemetery Trustee Stephen McMillian presented the proposed 2024 Cemetery Department budget totaling $47,550.00 reflecting a 0% increase over the 2023 budget. There were no questions or comments.

FIRE DEPARTMENT – Fire Chief Ed Warren presented the proposed 2024 Fire Department budget totaling $392,425.00 reflecting a 33% increase over the 2023 budget. Discussion ensued on current call volumes (455 calls to date), on the stipend payroll and the need to present the run rate at Deliberative Session, on pre-employment screening and the cost of NFPA physicals, and on upgrades to technology and costs associated with the Fire Department website (developed, hosted, and owned by JGPR).

AMBULANCE SERVICE – Fire Chief Ed Warren presented the proposed 2024 Ambulance budget totaling $34,501.00 reflecting a 14% increase over the 2023 budget. Discussion ensued on costs associated with medical supplies and training, on taking advantage of free items and supplies from the state due to Covid, and on the increase in ambulance calls due to older populations in town.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT – Co-Director Michelle Cotton-Miller presented the 2024 proposed Emergency Management Department budget in the amount of $40,951.00 reflecting a 7% increase over the 2023 budget. Discussion ensued on the flat rate from Seabrook Station not being shown in the budget thus giving the appearance the part-time payroll budget line is overspent, on the cost of heating shared with the fire department, on providing budget detail for rental and leases and other rental and leases budget lines, and on the number of drills performed each year (2 exercises scheduled for 2024).

Board members side-barred the budget discussion for a moment to discuss with Chief Warren, the removal of tanks and pads behind the old town hall, the relocation of a utility pole, and the removal of oil tanks and a safe at the old town hall. Chief Warren agreed to remove the items; Unitil will need to be contacted to move the utility pole.

BUILDING INSPECTOR AND CODE ENFORCEMENT – Building Inspector and Code Enforcement Officer Kip Kaiser presented the Building Inspector and Code Enforcement 2024 proposed budgets in the amounts of $21,200.00 and $5,928.00 respectively with the Building Inspector budget reflecting an increase of 19% and Code Enforcement reflecting an increase of 2%. Discussion ensued on the addition of the electrical inspector budget line, anticipated revenues, the increase in the salary line (stipend) and possibly increasing the stipend further to a minimum of $20,000.

RECREATION COMMITTEE – Recreation Committee Chair Andy Herum presented the proposed 2024 Recreation Committee budget in the amount of $14,900 reflecting a 0% increase over the 2023 budget. (Discussion ensued on the addition of a Balance with Dues column to the budget spreadsheet to show anticipated revenue to be charged against the expense, on one-time purchases (cages at EKES, netting at Foss Wasson), on the justification of each line item (soccer, basketball, skiing, baseball/softball, pickleball, and fishing derby), on the department’s revolving account (not the general fund), on online payment capabilities, and on addressing the overgrowth around the pond at Foss Wasson.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION – Board members reviewed the Conservation Commission proposed 2024 budget of $9,001.00 reflecting a 0% increase over the 2023 budget. Discussion ensued on the Powwow Pond milfoil budget line, and on the practice that all unspent funds go towards the Conservation Commission’s revolving fund which currently has a balance of $30,000. The Conservation Commission Chair will be invited to the next meeting for further discussion.

ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT – Board members reviewed the Zoning Board of Adjustment proposed 2024 budget of $5,001.00 reflecting a decrease of 12% over the 2023 budget. Discussion ensued on the increase in part-time payroll due to the anticipated time need for archiving files and other general housekeeping tasks.

PLANNING BOARD – Board members reviewed the Planning Board proposed 2024 budget of $27,403.00 reflecting a decrease of 24% over the 2023 budget. Discussion ensued on the rational for the decrease in the part-time payroll, on the housing grant, and on underfunding the postage line and possibly the master plan line. The Planning Board Chair will be invited to the next meeting for further discussion.

Budget Summary Discussion: EOD Co-Director Cotton-Miller to be invited back before the board to discuss department restructuring, and concerns were noted about an outside vendor owning the rights and content of a government domain (Fire Department website).

***Abatement – 8 Terrance Lane***

Town Administrator Ruelle indicated she spoke with the assessors about 8 Terrace Lane in which a mobile home was removed from the property a year ago, but the property’s assessment had not been updated. This means the board will need to abate the taxable value of the mobile home in the amount of $446.

**MOTION: Mr. Nigrello motioned to approve the abatement for 8 Terrace Lane in the amount of $446; seconded by Vice Chair Cacciatore. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***Town Office Minisplits***

Chairman Caron updated the board on this project noting of the four quotes received, two are the closest with great reviews (Granite State and Donovan). He provided an overview of those quotes, of the products used, and on the locations of those units throughout the building. Discussion ensued on using the furnace as a back-up to the minisplits, on the models and their warranties, on the lead time in getting the work done, and on obtaining updated quotes that would remove the third floor from the project. Board members wanted to be sure they were comparing the quotes and their details accurately before moving forward.

***Floor Refinishing***

Chairman Caron updated the board on the floor refinishing project noting four companies were contacted for quotes with only one responding. Discussion ensued on the scope of the project (refinishing all floor surfaces on the second floor), clearing out the offices for the work to be done (Ace Cleanout to provide quote), the timeframe for completing the project (one week in April after March elections), working remotely and/or setting up at Pound School, and the cost of the refinishing project ($6,017.50) – total project cost to be determined. It was noted the funding source would be the ARPA funds.

**MOTION: Chairman Caron motioned to move forward with the floor refinishing project contingent on receiving a reasonable quote from Ace Cleanout; seconded by Mr. Nigrello. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***Painting Project***

Chairman Caron updated the board on plans to paint the walls on the second floor and hallways at the town offices, on ascertaining quotes, and on the challenges associated with the project (high ceilings). He noted the plastering work has been completed. Discussion ensued on the timeframe and order of projects to ensure best results.

***Warrant Articles***

Discussion ensued on the status of department generated warrant articles that were to be submitted along with budget spreadsheets. Articles have been received by the police department only at this time (building and maintenance capital reserve funds).

***Selectmen Budget***

Board members discussed fixed costs associated with the Selectmen’s proposed 2024 budget (assessing, Primex, election).

With no other business before the board,

**MOTION: Chairman Caron motioned to adjourn; seconded by Vice Chair Cacciatore. The motion passed 3-0-0 and the meeting ended at 9:32pm.**

Minutes prepared by Catherine Belcher.

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

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