

TOWN OF KENSINGTON  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
Kensington Town Hall  
95 Amesbury Road  
Kensington, NH 03833  
MONDAY  
October 30, 2023  
Minutes - APPROVED  
**6:30 PM**

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 6:30pm and led all in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

In attendance: Joe Pace (chairperson), Bob Solomon, Bob Gustafson, Kathleen Felch (Town Administrator), Owen Corcoran (Land Use Administrative Assistant).

**Public Comment-**

**Jim Thompson, 53 Osgood Rd**

Mr. Thompson had a complaint about a 6-inch drop from his driveway leading to the street. He wanted to know when it is going to be fixed. Matt Armstrong stated he'd been in contact with Bell and Flynn and was informed that they would fix the problem at the end of the week. He stated he will contact Bell and Flynn to see if he can expedite the repairs.

**Cooper Hartwell, 46 cottage Rd**

Mr. Hartwell had a question about the firing range that is accessed through the Seabrook Water Treatment Plant. He had questions about how the town felt about the opening of the firing range. J. Pace stated that on different occasions there have been safety concerns in the town, as casings have at times not remained in the area of the firing range. B. Gustafson suggested waiting for Chief Cain to arrive at the meeting to provide better information for Mr. Hartwell. J. Pace opined that any use of the firing range would need to meet safety standards so as not to put residents at risk. J. Pace asked Mr. Hartwell what his relationship is to the range and if there was a group looking to push this forward. Mr. Hartwell stated that he was interested in a safe place to target shoot. B. Gustafson said he remembered that in the past there were some problems with safety issues such as ricochets that endangered the public. He stated that he personally wouldn't be against the new range, but he'd want to see oversight, like a range captain, to oversee safety. Mr. Hartwell stated that he supports having a credentialed range captain, as well as secure access to the range. J. Pace suggested that Mr. Hartwell draft a comprehensive proposal for the board to review. K. Felch presented minutes from the Seabrook selectboard that stated that a 501(C)3 was in place for the range.

**Wendy Osgood, 62 Osgood Rd**

Ms. Osgood asked about the cell towers, and if any carriers have been approved yet. B. Solomon stated that the Rosencrantz tower was already built and in place, but that he was not sure where the Moulton

Ridge tower was in the building process. He stated that major carriers have signed up to use both towers.

**June Thompson, 53 Osgood Rd.**

Ms. Thompson asked if Bell and Flynn have been paid yet, as the work is unfinished. M. Armstrong stated that they've received partial payment, and that the contract stipulated that they will be paid as work is completed. Ms. Thompson expressed concerns about damage to vehicles. J. Pace recommended that residents keep repair documents and receipts for all vehicle repairs as a result of the unfinished work.

**AGENDA:**

**DEPARTMENT HEADS:**

- Police Department –Chief Scott Cain –
  - Chief Cain presented a tuition reimbursement form for the board to sign off on.
  - Police Department Tuition Reimbursement application:

**MOTION: B. Gustafson motioned for a warrant article to appropriate funds for Brad Van Haden for tuition reimbursement, to execute contract, and to authorize the chair to sign. B. Solomon seconded. All in favor None opposed, no abstentions.**

- Road Manager – Matthew Armstrong-
  - M. Armstrong presented the board with a contract for winter maintenance.

**MOTION: B. Solomon motioned to approve the contracts for BNS and Matrix. B. Gustafson seconded. All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions.**

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**NEW BUSINESS:**

- **Review of the mission and charge for the Kensington Community Power Committee**

Zeke Schmois presented the plan for the Community Power Committee (Addendums 1&2). Z. Schmois recommended to the board that the town move forward with Community Power of New Hampshire. Z. Schmois explained that the contract is at this point non-binding, contingent on approval at 2024 town meeting. Z. Schmois provided extensive detail on the Community Power Committee's proposed structure and procedures, and explained that there will be no cost to taxpayers as the committee works with the carriers they presented before the 2024 town meeting.

The board reviewed the Joint Powers Agreement of Community Power of New Hampshire with the board.

J. Pace stated that the plan should be sent for legal review before the next regularly scheduled meeting.

**MOTION: B. Gustafson motioned to tentatively authorize the Kensington Community Power Committee to work with Community Power of New Hampshire with preliminary steps for Kensington to join, pending the results of the 2024 town meeting.**

- **Appoint member to the Kensington Community Power Committee- Bart Wu**

**MOTION: B. Gustafson motioned to appoint Bart Wu to the Kensington Community Power Committee. B. Solomon seconded. All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions.**

- **Review document for the Kensington Community Power Committee**
  - Joint Powers Agreement of Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire

**MOTION: B. Solomon motioned to approve the Kensington Community Power Committee's charge as presented to the board. B. Gustafson seconded. All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions.**

- **Set Municipal Tax Rate 1943**

J. Pace detailed the process of setting the tax rate for the town (Addendum 3). He highlighted the 68% average increase of residents' property determined from the recent revaluations. J. Pace discussed with the board using \$100k of funds balance to pay toward the town's tax rate. He stated that he isn't always in support of such a measure since there are upcoming infrastructure updates for the town.

Mr. Hartwell of 46 Cottage Rd. stated that as a resident, he would rather see the funds going towards the upkeep of town infrastructure. J. Pace discussed the downfalls of using funds balance to pay down the tax rate, as it is not sustainable.

J. Pace clarified that the tax rate that the board was discussing is based off the budgets that were approved at the 2022 and 2023 town meetings.

B. Solomon highlighted the critical need to invest in capital projects to fund infrastructure updates. J. Pace highlighted the benefits of using funds balance to reduce the burden on taxpayers. As an example, he detailed a hypothetical \$2 million dollar bond being reduced to \$1.5 million bond with money from the funds balance contributing reducing the bond. J. Pace stated that he doesn't have a problem with using the funds balance to reduce the tax rate as long as it's done in a sustainable way. J. Pace also detailed how accumulated revenue can be used for higher cost expenditures and purchases that don't require appropriated more funds.

Ms. Osgood of 62 Osgood Rd. expressed concerns to the board about residents on fixed incomes and high taxes.

K. Felch stated that the tax rate set at this meeting is tentative, as the state still needs to approve the rate. J. Pace stated that they will need to discuss how to move forward with capital improvement projects, and how to moderate the impact on taxpayers. He stated that the town is engaged in ongoing conversations about capital improvement projects.

**MOTION: B. Solomon motioned to set the tax rate at \$13.15. B. Gustafson seconded. All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions.**

- **Review of agreement for the land donation for a Grange Parking Lot**

The board reviewed the legal documents for the acceptance of a land donation to the Grange, contingent on approval at the 2024 town meeting. The resident will be going before the planning board on November 15, 2023 for a lot line adjustment approval, and approval by the planning board will be conditioned on approval at the town meeting.

**MOTION: B. Gustafson motioned to allow the chair to sign the documents for the board. B. Solomon seconded. All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions.**

- Approval of Board Minutes    **October 02, 2023 - TABLED**

- **Next Meeting Date –**

**November 6 and November 20**

**December 11 and December 18- Public hearing for encumbered funds**

- Adjournment

**MOTION: B. Gustafson made a motion to adjourn. B. Solomon seconded. All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions. Meeting adjourned at 8:57pm.**

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APPOINTMENTS: If you do have something that you would like to discuss with the Board, it is best to request being on the agenda of a meeting and provide details of the subject, so the Board can prepare in advance.

Respectfully Submitted,

Owen Corcoran

Land Use Administrative Assistant