



TOWN OF KINGSTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
OPEN SESSION
MINUTES
TOWN HOUSE-26 EVERGREEN ST. ROOM 200 & VIA ZOOM
January 30, 2024

6:00 p.m. – CALL TO ORDER – ROOM 200

Chairman Kimberley Emberg called to order the meeting of the Board of Selectmen at 6:00 p.m.—selectmen in attendance: Donald Alcombright, Sheila Vaughn, and Tyler Bouchard.

Staff Present: Keith Hickey, Town Administrator; and Patricia Tucker, Assistant to Town Administrator.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- This meeting is recorded by PACTV. Anyone intending to make an audio or video recording of this meeting should notify the Chair at this time.
- Financial Assistance Applications are available on the town's website or by calling the Selectmen's Office.
- The Highway department is still seeking plow drivers for the upcoming winter season. We have increased our rates this year and are also offering a \$750 insurance stipend for qualified contractors. For more information, please call 781-585-0513.
- If you wish to file an abatement, please go to the Assessors' Office and pick up an abatement application. As a reminder, abatement applications are due by 2/1 which is the day after tomorrow.
- Dog licenses are available in the Clerk's office. Please keep in mind that there is a \$20 late fee if your dog is not registered by March 15th.
- As a reminder, our Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, 5/4 and the Annual Town Election is scheduled for Saturday 5/18.
- For anyone interested in volunteering, we have a number of vacancies on various committees and boards. One of those openings is on the Capital Planning Committee which advises the Board of Selectmen, the Finance Committee, and Town Meeting on all major projects and improvements that fall under their bylaw such as the acquisition of equipment, land, buildings, or infrastructure for a public purpose. If you or someone you know would like to fill this vacancy, contact a member of the Finance Committee. To see a complete list of the openings, please visit our website at kingstonma.gov.

OPEN FORUM:

There is nobody in **attendance for open forum**.

APPOINTMENTS:

ARPA Check Presentation by the Plymouth County Commissioners and County Treasurer

Ms. Emberg introduced County Commissioner Jared Valanzola as well as Commissioner Gregory Hanley who are attending to present the Town with ARPA funds.

Commissioner Hanley stated that he likes to see use this money towards projects that won't need to be borrowed. They thanked Senator Moran and State Representative LaNatra for their support with these funds.

Public Hearing for Review of Sugar Kelp License

Ms. Emberg explained that in June of 2023 a resident came forth requesting a sugar kelp bed in Kingston Bay, and they are bringing back the discussion tonight.

Ms. Emberg read the public hearing notice:

Public Hearing Notice

The Kingston Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, January 30, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at the Town House, Room 200, 26 Evergreen Street, Kingston, MA to consider the application of a Proposed Sugar Kelp Farm.

The applicant is Jared Waitkus, 15 Village Path, Kingston is proposing a Sugar Kelp Farm. This farm is a 2.9 Acre located coordinates are:

NW Corner 42.001579, -70.684021

NE Corner 42.002499, -70.680809

SE Corner 42.002174, -70.680611

SW Corner 42.001202, -70.683807

The farm will consist of an area of an area 135 ft by 935 ft with rows of kelp, which will be grown from Mid-October through Mid-April. A copy of the presentation is available in the Selectmen's office.

Motion by Mr. Alcombright, seconded by Mr. Bouchard and a 4-0-0 vote,

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen open the public hearing.

Mr. Hickey began by stating that the Town has had a few conversations with the Department of Marine Fisheries (DMF) and the Town is only to vote on the location. After the location has been approved the applicant will move onto the State for permitting and licensing as well as the Army Corp of Engineers.

Mr. Jared Waitkus of 15 Village Path, the applicant, spoke briefly about the changes since the last time he came before the Board. The coordinates have changed slightly, and the farming of shellfish was removed.

Matthew Wheble of 23 Jones River Drive wanted to make sure that this was just sugar kelp, and no shellfish. He is in favor of sugar kelp. Mr. Wheble also wanted to make sure that Shellfish/Aquaculture regulations are updated to include the farming of sugar kelp.

John Wheble of 21 Jones River Drive wanted to make sure that the channel was open to boating even though it is off season. He also stated that he believes that Mr. Waitkus should remove himself from the aquaculture waiting list if he is moving forward with sugar kelp.

Joe Zlogar the Shellfish Constable addressed Mr. John Wheble's comment about the waiting list and said that in the eyes of the State the kelp farm does not involve shellfish, so they are separate.

Mr. Zlogar also added that the fees for the kelp will be set by the Town, and he created a draft of the regulations.

There was a discussion of who licenses the applicant. Mr. Hickey stated the State is the one who issues the license/permit.

Ms. Emberg asked if Sugar Kelp isn't shellfish whose jurisdiction does it fall under? Mr. Zlogar stated this is Aquaculture. Tom Taylor the Harbormaster was also in attendance and added that it is up to the Harbormaster to make sure that the equipment is correct. Mr. Taylor added that this is not a lease of land like our aquaculture licenses.

Mr. Bouchard added that if there are 4 plots for aquaculture and Mr. Waitkus moves up on the list for shellfish should he be allowed to occupy 2 out of 4 plots if sugar kelp moved forward, he would like that added to the regulations. Mr. Bouchard also would like an official statement from the State that this license/permit is only for Sugar Kelp. He also added that if the

Harbormaster has oversight, and sugar kelp is farmed during the off season, when the Harbormaster does not work, that will also need to be added to the rules and regulations prior to a vote.

Ms. Emberg wanted to clarify if the location is approved Mr. Waitkus can begin to move to State permitting.

Mr. Bouchard is concerned that sugar kelp is off season, and the Harbormaster doesn't work during the off season.

Mr. Bouchard stressed that he would like the regulations to be more specific prior to the Board voting. Mr. Bouchard stated he will work the Harbormaster as well as the Shellfish Constable to get this completed prior to next meeting.

Motion by Mr. Bouchard, seconded by Mr. Alcombright and a 4-0-0 vote,

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen to continue this public hearing until February 13, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

Request from Paul Curley to hold Best Buddies event on June 1, 2024

Ms. Emberg explained that a request was received by Paul Curley to hold the Best Buddies Challenge through Kingston the morning of Saturday, June 1, 2024. Ms. Emberg explained that Best Buddies is a nonprofit 501 © (3) organization dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, and leadership development, for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The request was sent to the Police and Fire Chief's along with the Superintendent of Streets, Trees and Parks for review, their recommendations are in the meeting packet.

Motion by Mr. Alcombright, seconded by Mr. Bouchard and a 4-0-0 vote,

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen approve the request from Paul Curley to hold their 24th Annual Best Buddies Challenge Cycling Event on June 1, 2024, according to the traffic control plan presented with the following conditions:

- Best Buddies successfully acquires the proper permits from MassDOT.
- Best Buddies contacts the Kingston Police Department for the scheduling of detail officers as outlined in the event's traffic plan.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

Acceptance of Donation

Ms. Emberg explained that the Veteran's Department have received the following donations and are requesting the Board of Selectmen to accept.

Motion by Mr. Bouchard, seconded by Mr. Alcombright and a 4-0-0 vote,

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen accept the following donations:

- \$300 in gift cards from Daniel Tucker
- \$100 in gift cards from Janet Holmes
- \$100 in gift cards from Len and Linda Warner
- \$2,000 donation from an anonymous donor

Appointment to COA Advisory Board

Ms. Emberg explained that the COA Advisory Board has a vacant associate member. Included in the packet is the letter of interest from Lucy Coletta. The COA Advisory Board held a vote on January 10, 2024, the COA Advisory Board voted unanimously to support the appointment of Lucy Coletta to the open position of Associate Member.

Motion by Mr. Alcombright, seconded by Mr. Bouchard and a 4-0-0 vote,

VOTE: I move to appoint Lucy Coletta to the COA Advisory Board as an Associate Member to a term expiring June 30, 2024.

Acceptance of Resignation from Zoning Board of Appeals and Conservation Commission

Ms. Emberg explained that we received a resignation from Brian Woods from ZBA as an Associate Member as well as Natalie

Wiegman and Glen Duffy both from the Conservation Commission all effective immediately.

Motion by Ms. Vaughn, seconded by Mr. Bouchard and a 4-0-0 vote,

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen approve the resignations of Brian Woods from Zoning Board of Appeals, Associate Member as well as Natalie Wiegman and Glen Duffy from the Conservation Commission effective immediately.

Request to Declare Equipment Surplus

Ms. Emberg stated that Streets, Trees, and Parks is requesting the Board to deem the old office trailer at the Transfer Station that was once used as the "Swap Shop" as surplus. Within the memo in the packet Mr. Basler states the trailer is unsafe and is not worth repairing.

Motion by Mr. Alcombright, seconded by Mr. Bouchard and a 4-0-0 vote,

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen declare the former Swap Shop trailer surplus and approve of its disposal.

Police Chief Search Update

Mr. Bouchard provided an update on this by saying that last week the candidates went through the assessment center which is a time where candidates go through real-life scenarios and are tested upon their answers. After the assessment center the search committee is bringing forth one candidate to be considered for a formal interview. The interview with the Board will take place on February 8th at 6pm in room 200.

Discussion and Possible Vote on Selectmen Recommended FY25 Operating Budget

Ms. Emberg explained that at the budget meeting held January 11th, the Town Administrator's proposed budget was provided to the Board.

Ms. Emberg stated she wanted to know from the Police and Fire Chief if there would be any impact to their department regarding the edits the Town Administrator is proposing in the budget.

Mr. Hickey stated he sent Ms. Emberg's questions to the both the Fire and Police Chief and asked that they provide a written response. Mr. Hickey stated that the Fire Chief had a conversation with Ms. Emberg stating that he is comfortable with the changes and the Police Chief just responded this afternoon, that the Board will need to discuss.

Mr. Hickey stated the Board did not need to vote this evening but should be finalized by February 13th meeting and will need to vote by then. Ms. Emberg said she is comfortable voting for the budget this evening but removing the police budget until the Board has time to review. The Board discussed briefly when they want to vote.

Ms. Emberg read the email from Chief Splaine's which was a response of being asked what the impact to your budget with the proposed reduction is:

The proposed reduction in the overtime line item may impact the chief's ability to cover extra personnel during storm emergencies, hamper community outreach at the senior center, impact the ability to provide an SRO officer at the elementary/intermediate schools, offer the RAD & Rad Kids programs thru the Recreation Department, conduct detective's investigations, and/or provide shift coverage for PTO obligations. It will be up to the incoming chief to prioritize funding objectives and institute the reductions.

The Harbormaster's truck is 2016, a \$250 dollar line for vehicle repairs is simply not adequate. That figure barely covers oil changes and an inspection sticker. In FY24 the amount spent year to date is \$3,313.04. The vehicle needed shocks, front & rear brakes, parking brake repair, and replacement of the VHF antenna.

The Town Administrator has also proposed a \$5,000 reduction in the police department's vehicle repair line item. This is also ill advised. Since COVID, repair costs have increased significantly. The remaining balance in this year's budget is only \$8,000 with nearly six months to go.

It was discussed they will vote on February 13th.

Meeting Minutes

Ms. Emberg stated that there are meeting minutes.

Motion by Ms. Vaughn, seconded by Mr. Bouchard and a 4-0-0 vote,

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen to accept the open session meeting minutes of January 11, 2024.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Hickey read from his report:

Financial Updates

Requests for Proposals for legal services are due by January 31st at 2:00 pm. Several firms have indicated their intention to submit a response.

The Wastewater Department opened a bid for their leaching field project on January 24th. They received bids. Bids are being tabulated by the engineering firm overseeing the project. Several of the bids received were well below the \$13 million approved at the Town Meeting.

The State has provided their estimated state revenues and charges for FY25. The preliminary revenue figure for FY25 is \$7.171 million, up from \$7.008 million. Charges have increased from \$511,971 to \$532,394.

Project Updates

The Conservation Commission has approved the revised boat ramp design. The contractor can begin the project.

Personnel Update

After advertising twice for the Finance Director position and not finding a candidate, Carol McCoy has agreed to remain as Finance Director until June 30th. Carol will work remotely full time and attend meetings virtually as needed.

Miscellaneous Updates

The Facilities Department applied for and were awarded Green Community Grant funds in the amount of \$66,488 towards energy improvement projects in five town buildings.

SELECTMEN COMMENTS:

Ms. Emberg mentioned a few topics to be discussed at a future meeting:

- Fire Department will be updating the Board.
- Discussion of Tax Work Off Program.

Motion by Mr. Alcombright, seconded by Mr. Bouchard, and a 4-0-0 vote,

VOTE: I move to adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

February 13, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Tucker

Assistant to the Town Administrator/Board of Selectmen

Documents used at the meeting:

Agenda

Agenda Addendum

Sugar Kelp Presentation

Bike Race Information

Donation

Appointment

Surplus

Report of the Town Administrator

Minutes