



TOWN OF KINGSTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
OPEN SESSION
MINUTES
TOWN HOUSE-26 EVERGREEN ST. ROOM 200 & VIA ZOOM
SEPTEMBER 10, 2024

6:00 p.m. – CALL TO ORDER – ROOM 200

Chairman Eric Crone called to order the meeting of the Board of Selectmen at 6:01 p.m.—selectmen in attendance: Tyler Bouchard, Kimberley Emberg, Donald Alcombright, and Melissa Bateman.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- The Board of Assessors has a vacancy and will be looking to fill the vacancy. The Town's website will be updated with more information regarding a joint meeting.
- September 11th Remembrance Ceremony will take place tomorrow at 8:45am at The Fire Department.
- This meeting is being recorded by The Local Seen. 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.
- For anyone interested in volunteering, there are several vacancies on various boards and committees. Please check the website for a listing.
- Please check our website for any additional events or notices www.kingstonma.gov

OPEN FORUM:

Jean Landis Naumann was in attendance to speak to two of the topics on the agenda this evening, regarding the resignations of Community Development Director and Superintendent of Streets, Trees and Parks. Ms. Naumann feels like this a good time to reassess the positions. These positions had been previously discussed with the Town Government Study Committee and the Implementation Committee the final recommendation was to create a Department of Public Works. Ms. Naumann is asking the Board to create a task force to review the positions prior to hiring.

APPOINTMENTS:

Request to Set Winter Plow Rates for Contracted Plow Drivers

Mr. Crone discussed that Kingston has historically relied on contracted plow drivers to support Streets, Trees, and Parks employees with sanding and salting Town roads. In the Board materials is a memo from Superintendent of Streets, Trees and Parks, Paul Basler recommending that the current plow rates and insurance bonus remain the same as the 2023/24 winter. Also included in the Board materials is a list of the current rates paid for the type of equipment used.

Mr. Basler was in attendance to discuss that there was a significant increase last year so the rates will remain the same for this year.

Motion by Mr. Alcombright, seconded by Mr. Bouchard and a 5-0-0 vote,

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen approve the winter plow rates included in the Board packet and continue to offer an insurance bonus of \$750 as proposed by the Streets, Trees, and Parks Superintendent this evening.

Open Special Town Meeting Warrant

Mr. Crone explained that the Board is required to open the Special Town Meeting Warrant. Opening the warrant indicates

the start of the time that the town and citizen sponsored warrant articles can be added to the Special Town Meeting Warrant. The warrant is scheduled to be closed October 8th. Mr. Hickey discussed this is a housekeeping item that is required to open the warrant. Mr. Hickey distributed to the Board a current list of articles that he is currently aware of for Town Meeting.

Motion by Mr. Alcombright, seconded by Mr. Bouchard and a 5-0-0 vote,

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen open the 2024 Special Town Meeting Warrant at 8:00 a.m. on September 11, 2024.

Open Session Meeting Minutes – August 27, 2024

There was no discussion.

Motion by Mr. Bouchard, seconded by Mr. Alcombright and a 4-0-1 vote, Ms. Bateman abstained

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen approve the open session meeting minutes of August 27, 2024

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Hickey read from his report:

Financial Updates

- There are no financial updates.

Project Updates

- The Opachinski well drilling project is expected to begin during the week of September 9th.
- Main Street water main project work is progressing. The contractor will be tying the new water main into existing water main at the northbound side of route 3A at the Route 3 overpass. Once connection is made, installation of the last new fire hydrant will be completed. Testing of new main South of Jones River will be conducted before being placed into active service.

Once testing results are satisfactory, the contractor will complete house service connections and tie new water main. That work will be completed on the north side of the Jones River bridge into existing mains at Landing Rd. and Main St. Once all excavation is complete, the contractor and Water Department will finalize a paving schedule

Personnel Update

- Community Development Director Jason Silva has resigned effective October 11, 2024.

Miscellaneous Updates

- Kingston's contract engineering firm is still reviewing the Silver Lake school zone information. I expect an item on the Board's September 24th agenda.
- Town Planner Valarie Massard and I have taped the first of two or three informational television shows providing some background and information on the proposed MBTA zoning question that will be on the November Special Town Meeting warrant.

6:15PM Public Hearing: Petition from Verizon New England Inc. and NSTAR Electric Company dba Eversource Energy, proposing to place new facilities on Atwood Street and Spruce Street

Mr. Crone discussed that Verizon New England Inc. and NSTAR Electric Company dba Eversource Energy, is seeking to install a handhole on Atwood Street and Spruce Street on the back side of the pole area to prevent any plow damage. This was continued from the last meeting. Streets, Trees and Parks Superintendent, Mr. Basler had requested that Eversource place install the handhole on the back side of the pole area to prevent any plow damage and the plans were updated with that request.

Mr. Basler was in attendance and had nothing further to add.

Motion by Ms. Emberg, seconded by Mr. Alcombright, and a 5-0-0 vote,

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

Ms. Emberg asked about the impact to the neighbors, as in previous handhole requests some abutters lawns were torn up during the placement. Mr. Basler stated that the incident Ms. Emberg is referencing is that Eversource installed a conduit and there was damage to trees. Ms. Emberg wanted to make sure that everyone is cognizant when working and any potential impact on the neighbors. Mr. Basler stated that this is straight down the paper road to the address and there should not be any impact.

Motion by Mr. Alcombright, seconded by Mr. Bouchard and a 5-0-0 vote,

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

Motion by Mr. Alcombright, seconded by Mr. Bouchard and a 5-0-0 vote,

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen approve the request from NSTAR Electric Company dba Eversource Energy, to locate underground cables, conduits, manholes, including the necessary sustaining and protecting fixtures, in under, along and across the following public way or ways:

Install one (1) new handhole 16/H5 and 58' +/- of PVC conduit to customer installed handhole on Atwood Street and Spruce Street on the back side of the pole area to prevent any plow damage

ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

Discussion and Possible Vote on Installing Town of Kingston Signs on Town Property

Mr. Hickey discussed that Kingston Facilities Manager Rob Cuoco has been working the Town Planner Valarie Massard on designing "Welcome to Kingston" signs that are proposed to be placed along roadways near the town line. The concept for the installing the signs is to promote and inform people travelling on the road they are in Kingston. The renderings of the proposed signs along with picture of the locations proposed for installation are in the packet and were shared via zoom.

Ms. Emberg asked if this is contingent on funding and Mr. Hickey stated that the three signs presented tonight the Town has funding for, additional signs will be constructed if funding is available in the future.

Ms. Jean Landis Naumann suggested that a sign at the end of Evergreen Street regarding the location of Town House, Highway, Animal Control and Council on Aging. Mr. Hickey stated that the thought is as we work and move forward, the look and feel of the signs would be consistent, such as possible directional signs or new building signs are installed, they will all be consistent of the look and feel of the signs being proposed tonight.

Motion by Ms. Emberg, seconded by Mr. Bouchard and a 5-0-0 vote,

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen approve the design and recommended locations of the Welcome to Kingston signs.

Discussion of Replacement of the Community Development Director

Mr. Crone handed the discussion to Mr. Hickey; he began by saying that there is a memo in the packet regarding the position.

There has been discussion with staff including Mr. Silva on the position. The Community Development Director position was created in FY22, to upgrade the existing Building Commissioner position to oversee the Planning and Conservation Departments in addition to the Building Department activities. The expectations were to create one supervisor over the land use departments that would streamline a customer's experience. The recommendation Mr. Hickey is presenting tonight is to consider reestablishing the Building Commissioner position. The reason is that the current and anticipated workload over the next couple of years will be significantly less due to the water moratorium. As well as the oversight of the land use departments was not as successful as originally hoped when the position was established.

Mr. Hickey stated that every community within Massachusetts must have a Building Commissioner, a building inspector has less authority.

The Board had no discussion.

Motion by Mr. Alcombright, seconded by Mr. Bouchard and a 5-0-0 vote,

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen support the recommendation of the Town Administrator to present a Building Commissioner job description with recommended wage range to the Wage and Personnel Committee for consideration and presentation at the November Special Town Meeting.

Discussion of Qualification of Superintendent of Streets, Trees and Parks Position

Mr. Hickey discussed that with the pending retirement of Paull Basler, the position of Superintendent of Streets, Trees and Parks, there will be a vacancy.

Mr. Hickey briefly spoke to the options provided within the memo to the Board, he stated that he feels the Town has time to review the current job responsibilities and propose recommended changes, if any, or retain the Superintendent of Streets, Trees and Parks position. The current Foreman is willing to take on the responsibility of becoming an interim superintendent allowing the Board the time to review the position. Mr. Hickey also mentioned that if the Board has no interest in reviewing the job description the position of the Superintendent of Streets, Trees and Parks they will be able to post the position at the end of the week. Mr. Hickey stated that the possible changes that he is referring to is within the packet the information is in regard to keeping the job responsibilities the same or possibly create a Public Work Director position.

Mr. Alcombright and Mr. Bouchard agreed to take the time to review the position.

Elaine Fiore, Sewer Commissioner asked what the goal of the discussion would be on possibly changing the job title.

Mr. Hickey responded that the goal would be to research and present an organizational chart that best suits the needs of the community and that may be the way is being handled now or it could be something different.

Mr. Crone stated he feels the goal is to talk to all the players involved, he can't state the goal until he speaks to everyone involved.

Mr. Bouchard stated that this is night one so this is the first time it has even been discussed and the goal would be to do research and streamline the process with the research that was compiled.

Ms. Emberg stated the goal of task force to study and recommend the best overall structure of the Town.

Ms. Emberg asked how they will back fill the position of Foreman when he is interim. Mr. Hickey discussed that there were conversations with the foreman and, there will be a lot of moving parts.

Motion by Mr. Bouchard, seconded by Mr. Alcombright and a 5-0-0 vote,

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen appoint Shawn Turner Interim Streets, Trees, and Parks Superintendent beginning November 2, 2024, while the Selectmen explore available options in the responsibilities and job title of the current Streets, Trees, and Parks Superintendent position.

Appoint Kenneth Moalli Interim Tax Collector

This item will not be heard this evening.

SELECTMEN COMMENTS:

There were no comments.

Motion by Mr. Alcombright, seconded by Mr. Bouchard and a 5-0-0 vote,

VOTE: I move to adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50PM

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Tucker

Assistant to the Town Administrator/Board of Selectmen