



TOWN OF KINGSTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
OPEN SESSION MINUTES
TOWN HOUSE-26 EVERGREEN ST. ROOM 200 & VIA ZOOM
February 11, 2025

6:00 p.m. – CALL TO ORDER – ROOM 200

Chairman Eric Crone called to order the meeting of the Board of Selectmen at 6:00 p.m.—selectmen in attendance: Tyler Bouchard, Kimberley Emberg (began the meeting virtually), Donald Alcombright, and Melissa Bateman.

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

The meeting began with a roll call vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. This meeting is being recorded by The Local Seen. Anyone who intends to make an audio or video recording of this meeting should notify the Chair at this time.
2. Financial Assistance Applications are available on the town's website or by calling the Selectmen's Office.
3. For anyone interested in volunteering, there are several vacancies on various boards and committees. Please check the website for a listing.
4. Please check our website for any additional events or notices www.kingstonma.gov
 - Town Meeting April 26, 2025
 - Town Election May 17, 2025

OPEN FORUM:

Stacia Levit and Kristen Pishkin from the Kingston Teachers Association spoke on behalf of the teachers in regard to the budget crisis they are facing, and they asked the Board to support their budget.

Carl Pike of Shore Drive wanted to respond to a couple of comments regarding cuts 4 years ago, there was an increase in the education budget of 7.5 million dollars. The funding of Police and Fire has increased 1.1 million dollars. Mr. Pike feels that Kingston education has received appropriate funding.

Jackie Giovannangelo of Franz Lane, a parent of an incoming kindergartener spoke to her concern of possible budgets cuts.

Cassie Lemcke of Crescent St is a parent of a son in Kingston Elementary School, who is currently receiving services, Ms. Lemcke spoke in favor of the schools.

Sheila Vaughn, of 7 Frank Street, feels it is important for all work together. Ms. Vaughn feels we need to talk to our legislators about giving the schools more money.

Lauren Ilteris of Off Second Brook Street stated she is a teacher of 12 years and a neighboring town and spoke in favor of the schools by saying that these kids are not numbers and they deserve the education.

APPOINTMENTS:

Appointment of Director of Elder Affairs

Mr. Crone discussed that due to a resignation, the Director of Elder Affairs position is vacant. The Assistant Director, Holly Nighelli, has been serving as the Interim. After the recruitment process, the Town Administrator is recommending the hiring of Holly Nighelli to the position of Director of Elder Affairs. Mr. Hickey discussed the hiring process and said Ms. Nighelli has done a wonderful job since becoming the interim.

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

VOTE: I move to appoint Holly Nighelli to the position of Director of Elder Affairs as a full-time, Wage and Personnel, Schedule D12, Step 2 exempt position with the Council on Aging with an anticipated start date of February 13, 2025, contingent with the terms in the offer letter.

Ms. Nighelli was in attendance and spoke to the Board. She thanked a lot of individuals including Mr. Hickey, the COA Board, the Board of Selectmen, for their support.

Meeting with Representatives from the Kingston School Committee

The School Committee opened their meeting.

Mr. Crone discussed that the school committee approved of a budget that would require an override.

The Silver Lake School Committee has not voted on their budget yet so Mr. Crone stated that the Board may not vote tonight. Mr. Crone discussed that budget from last year and as an example if a million dollars is needed for an override, more than a million dollars would be required to help sustain for next year.

The school committee briefly spoke regarding their process and how they have been working together on the budget and have been thoughtful regarding all residents, and they are trying to work on a solution that all residents could support.

Mr. Bouchard stated the reality of it is, that everyone involved is working hard on a solution. Mr. Bouchard feels the State is failing the town with funding. Mr. Bouchard is not in favor for an override as it is not sustainable.

Ms. Bateman concern is from different places, she asked the school committee what they are bringing to the table. They discussed at their meeting they don't want revenue as it relates to charging buses etc..

Ms. Cannon discussed that incoming revenue can be discussed in the future. There is a new Director of Student services and she is working hard on the budget.

6:50pm Ms. Emberg joined in person.

Ms. Emberg stated the misconception of a level budget, and she spoke regarding the budget advisory committee meeting in October and there was a unanimous vote from the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee to try to avoid an override. The School Committee did not attend that meeting.

Ms. Emberg asked if we have a specific amount of money, if they can relocate from other departments to help the schools. Ms. Emberg asked, does the school have other areas to cut out other than teachers? Ms. Emberg stated she would like the school committee to provide the supporting documentation of their budget as she cannot make sense of it to justify asking other departments to cut budgets to support.

Dr. Kerri Whipple spoke, and she stated she would be neglectful if she couldn't discuss what these proposed staff cuts would do to these students. Her biggest concern is safety as there will be less staff in the building.

Ms. Emberg said that Dr. Whipple's passion for the kids has never been a question, the problem is the budget. Ms. Emberg asked, does charging for bussing save a position? Ms. Emberg noted that the school committee decides what is cut based on the budget.

Andrew Materna Kingston Intermediate Principal discussed the process of how they work together to see what can be cut from the budget.

Mr. Crone stated that override cannot be discussed until they see what Silver Lake is doing and see the whole picture before an override vote is made.

Mr. Crone asked the Board about their thoughts on putting an override on the warrant.

Mr. Bouchard stated he will not support an override.

Mr. Alcombright doesn't necessarily support an override but does not oppose putting on the warrant but would like to see numbers. Ms. Bateman stated that she agrees with Mr. Alcombright.

Mr. Alcombright asked what the plan is for next year and he would like to see that.

Ms. Emberg stated she does not support this going to warrant.

The Board discussed at length if they will support putting this on the town meeting warrant versus allowing someone to amend the budget on the town meeting floor.

Mr. Crone asked the Board to wait until Silver Lake comes back with a number prior to voting a prop 2 ½.

The Board took a 5-minute recess.

Additional FY26 Budget Discussions

Chief Holmes presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Board. Which was intended as an addendum to the previous presentation for the FY26 KPD Budget and SMART Growth Plan which was presented at an earlier meeting. The previous slideshow was 10 slides.

This addendum includes an adjusted monetary request as well as additional information to be considered for statistical analysis.

Leadership sometimes is an unpopular decision, need to get the resources your team needs. The Chief thanked the Board and administrators for their support.

Topics of Discussion:

- Department overdue for growth
 - Logged Events Increase: 2024 +23% , 2023 +13%
 - Calls for Service: 2023 +10% , 2024 +6%
 - In comparable Towns
 - Kingston tied for 2nd lowest number of officers per 1K residents
 - Kingston led in most calls per officer per year in both 2023 and 2024
- Separate from the funding to maintain level services, the following request is to secure additional positions and appropriate department wide training:
- Additional Positions:
 - 4 additional patrolmen, 1 additional sergeant, 1 additional dispatcher, additional training
- Notably different from prior request: No request for Deputy Chief.
- **The cost to add these additional positions:**
- **\$1,366,472.78**

Chief Holmes talked about the changes and removed the request for a Deputy Chief at this time.

Mr. Alcombright asked about removing the deputy and adding a patrolman as it removes the option later with the addition of an officer.

Chief Holmes asked the Board how to get to this without an override. It was discussed that growth in this town would elevate this issue. Mr. Bouchard discussed having the Water Commissioners lifting the water moratorium.

The Chief asked the Board for a number for his budget and he will work within it.

Recommendation of 2025 Transfer Station Sticker Fees from Interim Streets, Trees, and Parks Superintendent

Mr. Crone discussed that included in your Board materials is information from Interim Streets, Trees and Parks Superintendent Shawn Turner who is recommending changes to some of the fees currently charged at the Transfer Station. These numbers are in the revenues.

Transfer Station Fees		
Current Fees vs. Proposed Fees for FY26		
	<u>Current Fees</u>	<u>Proposed Fees</u>
<u>Decal Fees</u>		
Regular Decal	\$ 240.00	\$ 260.00
Second Decal	\$ 20.00	\$ 40.00
Replacement Decal	\$ 20.00	\$ 25.00
Recycling Only Decal	\$ 40.00	\$ 60.00
One Day Permit	\$ 20.00	\$ 30.00
Senior Decal 62-65	\$ 120.00	\$ 140.00
Senior Decal 66+	\$ 100.00	\$ 110.00
Veteran	\$ 120.00	\$ 120.00
<u>Other Fees</u>		
Airconditioning Units	\$ 5.00	\$ 10.00
Bathtubs	\$ 20.00	\$ 20.00
Boats 12' and Under	\$ 20.00	\$ 30.00
Construction Debris (per pound)	\$ 0.24	\$ 0.30
Dehumidifiers	\$ 5.00	\$ 10.00
Large Furniture	\$ 20.00	\$ 30.00
Mattresses and Box Springs	\$ 35.00	\$ 40.00
Microwaves	\$ 20.00	\$ 20.00
Monitors and Laptops	\$ 20.00	\$ 20.00
Oxygen Tanks	\$ 35.00	\$ 35.00
Refrigerators and Freezers	\$ 10.00	\$ 10.00
Sinks and Toilets	\$ 5.00	\$ 5.00
Televisions	\$ 20.00	\$ 20.00
Tires Under 16'	\$ 6.00	\$ 6.00
Tires 17" or Over	\$ 9.00	\$ 9.00
Proposed Changes in Red Font.		

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

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen accept the recommendation from the Superintendent of Street, Trees and Parks as presented and listed above.

Discussion of Ambulance Fee Increase

Mr. Crone discussed that at the January 28th Board Meeting; Fire Chief Douglass is proposing the following ambulance fee increases. Included in the Board materials is a memo from Chief Douglass outlining the changes.

	Current Rate Schedule	Proposed Rate Schedule
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ASL1	\$2,450	\$2,550
ASL2	\$2,990	\$3,250
BLS	\$1,850	\$1,850
Mileage	\$50 per mile	\$50 per mile

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

VOTE: I move to approve the proposed Ambulance Fee Increase as amended effective, February 12, 2025.

Approval of (2) One Day Liquor License – Kingston Collection

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

VOTE: I move to approve the request from The Bartending Service of New England LLC for (2) One Day Beer and Wine Liquor License for the Sip and Stroll event taking place on March 15, 2025, and December 6, 2025, at Kingston Collection. from 12pm-4pm.

Request from Candice Williams to hold the Best Buddies event on May 31, 2025

Mr. Crone stated that a request was received by Candice Williams to hold the Best Buddies Challenge through Kingston the morning of Saturday, May 31, 2025. The request was sent to the Police and Fire Chief's along with the Interim Superintendent of Streets, Trees and Parks for review, their recommendations are in the meeting packet.

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

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen approve the request from Candice Williams to hold their 26th Annual Best Buddies Challenge Cycling Event on May 31, 2025, 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."

ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

Selection of Board Member to Represent the Board on the School Regionalization Study

Mr. Crone discussed that as the Board is aware, a Community Compact Grant was awarded to Kingston to study the regionalization of the entire school system. Representatives from the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee and School Committee from the three sending Towns, along with a representee from the Silver Lake School Committee will act as the subcommittee during the study.

The Board discussed and Ms. Bateman volunteered.

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

VOTE: I move to appoint Melissa Bateman to Represent the Board of Selectmen on the School Regionalization Study.

Establish Filing Fee for Road Acceptance Policy

Mr. Crone discussed that when the Road Acceptance Policy was approved it stated a filing fee is required, but that amount was never set. Staff recommend a fee of \$500 for staff support to the applicant during the consideration of road acceptance.

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

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen set the Road Acceptance Policy Filing Fee as presented at \$500.

Appointment to Memorial Day Parade Committee

Mr. Crone discussed that there is one vacant seat on the Memorial Day Parade Committee. Denbeigh Forbes completed a volunteer application form to join the committee. The Memorial Day Parade Committee met on February 6th and voted in

favor of the recommendation.

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

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen appoint Denbeigh Forbes to the Memorial Day Parade Committee effective immediately through June 30, 2027.

MEETING MINUTES:

Approval of December 23, 2024, January 14, 2025, and January 16, 2025, Open Session Meeting Minutes

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

VOTE: I move the Board of Selectmen (approve/not approve) the opens session meeting minutes of December 23, 2024, January 14, 2025, and January 16, 2025, as amended

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Hickey read a letter from the Interim Superintendent of Streets regarding last week's snowstorm:

I am writing to you because I have a conflict and cannot make tonight's meeting.

Just update on the storm we had multiple breakdowns and short staffed because of vacations, but we had all the roads clear and sidewalks done by 9am Sunday morning.

I just want to thank the Fire Department for assisting you with getting notifications about the parking ban and the closure of the transfer station. We want to thank the Police Dept. and Dispatcher for working with us and getting all the vehicles off the roads before we started plowing. Finally, we want to thank some of the Departments that assisted in the plowing operation. Facilities for sending both employees to plow the streets, then clear all the walkways to the public buildings after plowing. The Water Department for sending employees, especially Chris Veracka who came in, helped because he knew we were so short staffed. And finally, the Sewer Department sent an employee to help plow also. We appreciate everyone working as a team. We cannot thank everyone enough. We also want to thank the Town Administrator for getting the info out and calling Sunday morning to see if we needed anything.

Mr. Hickey continued with his report:

Financial Updates

- There are no financial updates this week.

Project Updates

- Town Planner Valerie Massard has applied for grant funding to update Kingston's Local Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. The current plan was approved on September 2, 2022, and is set to expire on September 1, 2027. The total budget for this project is \$24,766.
- The Ring Road flood mitigation project has been bid and awarded. Work is going to begin in the spring.
- Staff has been working with the residents of Captain Jones Way and Barrows Brook Circle to present the necessary information to the Selectmen to include a warrant article on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant to have voters consider accepting the roads.

Personnel Update

- There are no personnel updates this week.

Miscellaneous Updates

- The Kingston Fire Department was awarded a Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant in the amount of \$19,000.
- The Kingston Police Department was awarded \$50,000 for the purchase of mobile speed trailers.

SELECTMEN COMMENTS:

Motion by Ms. Bateman, seconded by Mr. Bouchard and a 5-0-0 vote, by roll call vote

VOTE: I move to recess executive session, not to return to open session.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Tucker

Assistant to the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen

DOCUMENTS USED AT THE MEETING:

Nighelli Offer Letter

Presentation from the Kingston Police Department

Letter from School Committee

Budget Backup

Recommendation of Transfer Station Sticker

Ambulance Fee Increase

One Day Liquor License

Best Buddies Request

Appointment to Memorial Day Parade

Minutes

Report of the Town Administrator

Agenda Addendum