

Kingfield Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Monday, June 3rd, 2024; 6:00 PM Webster Hall 38 School Street

Attendance

Municipal Officers: Wade Browne, Morgan Dunham, Kim Jordan and Hunter Lander

Municipal Staff: Leanna Targett (Town Manager), Travis Targett (Wastewater Superintendent)

Public: Terry Coffin, Taylor Jordan, Fred Nichols, Annie Twitchell, Chris Rushton, Jeffrey Maget, Diane Christen, Josh Nunes, Dee Menear, Mary Nodine, Jim Boyce, Angela Boyce, Alan Stewart, Lillian Cheimis, Gry Cheimis, Valarie Cheimis, Susan Davis, Rob MacMichael, Polly MacMichael,

Via Zoom: David Davol, Rebecca Richards, Julie Swain

Absent:

Chairman Browne calls the meeting to order.

Board reviews meeting minutes from May 20, 2024. Selectman Dunham makes a motion to accept all minutes as written. Seconded by Selectman Lander. All in Favor.

Public Comment:

Mary Nodine addresses Chairman Browne. Mary says, I have some thoughts related to property valuations driving up our portion of school taxes. I first want to say that as a school board member I am aware of the challenges with the rising budget overall and know that there is a lot of work to be done to create a sustainable system. We have a long road ahead! I want to talk about what I think we can do as a town.

Mary says, Wade at the last board meeting when the school was being discussed you noted that we need to be unbiased and informed. I support that statement. I got curious and wanted to understand the potential impact this could be having on the town and decided to look at the public records to determine properties owned by people who do not live in Kingfield and had determined that our valuations are largely driven by non-residents. The figure I came up with was 45%. 45% of our properties are owned by people that do not live in Kingfield.

As I understand Kim Jordan pointed out the valuations are a reflection of how desirable it is to own property here. This is a good thing! The challenge is how to capture the value of that demand for the benefit of our residents.

I think it might help us to shift our perspective to seeing high value, non-resident owned property as a potential resource, not a problem, using that resource to create a system more favorable to properties that house full-time residents.

Short term rental tax is one option. But it might be easier and more impactful to allow a tax discount for owners or resident-occupied properties. This way we are not trying to track and enforce compliance with a higher rate. Of course, research into legal aspects would be needed.

Adjusting incentives could have an immediate impact on the property value challenges and inequities, but over time should incentivize behavior that also improves housing situation and make our neighborhood more vibrant with resident families.

We have three important assets: School is in town – lets keep it that way and figure out how best to use it. Enough residents for the town to function and Property demand. Lets figure out how to leverage that to fuel the first two, keeping our town thriving.

Mary says, I don't believe the burden of our schools should fall to Strong or Phillips – that is not the answer.

Chairman Browne says he would like to see that the superintendent agreements are paying the same cost per child as Kingfield is paying per kid. He states that maybe if we had something similar to how the ambulance service does its billing in each town which is a combination of valuation, population and distance.

Mary says the other towns that are part of the district probably like the budget less than we do.

Old Business: Annual town meeting follow-up, comments, suggestions. TM Targett thanks Jeff Maget for his assistance in getting into the school for the town meeting. The board feels that the town meeting went well and noted that the voting process for officers worked well bringing out 221 voters although the town meeting only had 64 voters deciding the finances for the upcoming year.

New Business:

The first item of new business is the discussion on planters. TM Targett states that there has been some concerns and questions as to where the planters will be located and why they had been painted. Selectmen Jordan states that many residents had noticed that the planters had been painted covering the kid's artwork and to her understanding this was done without permission. Polly MacMichael says that she was very clear with the VEC board that she intended to paint, plant and take care of them and she thought they had the authority to approve this. As far as location she planned to scatter in the downtown area. The corner by the bank, near the Maine High Peaks sign, Anni's, Longfellow's, the Herbert and maybe near the bridge area where the Billy Gilmore sign is.

Polly questions the board, would you rather have them left in the shed? Selectman Jordan says no we are glad they are getting put out. When the VEC board brought this to us we said to go for it but nothing was said about painting. Rob MacMichael asks who made the decision for the kids to paint them. TM Targett explains that she brought this to the board as many people did not like how they looked like trash cans. Painting was determined by the selectboard and the selectboard provided some parameters for the kids so that they would fit within our arts district. Polly says there is six more that she has not been painted, if anyone wants to plant on them not all is lost. Polly says I am sorry I thought I made my plans clear to the VEC. I meant no offense to this.

Chris Rushton asks Sue Davis the Chair of the VEC if the board previously agreed to this. Sue Davis says the painting was not discussed. Polly says the children could repaint them she meant no offense to the children. Polly says she understood this discussion to be for the placement of planters not about painting them. She did not know painting was going to be the bigger issue. She says, I received an email stating to wait on placement until it could be discussed with the board.

Following further discussion Selectman Jordan states that when you plan to change town property you must get permission from the selectboard otherwise it can be seen as defacing town property.

Chairman Browne says this is no different then someone going to the electric box that is painted blue and adding additional paint to it.

Next item is to open bids for the Community Swimming Access (river property). TM Targett asks that the board hold on opening the bids as there have been some changes since the bid was sent out. Part of which is FEMA looking at the area and suggesting what needs to be completed which is different from what she believes has been bid on. She would like to create new bid documents and have the two bidders resubmit a cost. It would be written as "invitation only" for those two contractors to be fair. Selectman Jordan asks how long the process would take. TM Targett says she would like to think where there are only two parties she could write up new bid documents and submit before the week is out with a plan to open at the next board meeting or at the very least July 1st. Board agrees to hold the opening of bids.

Board reviews a supplemental tax bill for tree growth penalty. Selectman Lander makes a motion to sign as presented. Seconded by Selectman Dunham. All in Favor.

Chairman Browne recognizes Chief Fred Nichols to discuss the purchase of a new fire truck. Fred indicates that the fire truck they are looking to purchase is a tanker truck that will be all wheel drive. He explains that this is needed for places such as Ira Mountain, Tufts Pond and Eagle Ridge. Fred says people like us to show up for some reason when there is a fire and some of these locations we have had a huge struggle trying to get to. Fred says this is a really good truck for the price. TM Targett says to summarize we would like to move forward with signing the contract on this to get moving as it may take 2+ years to build. Chairman Browne says if Fred feels they need it then I agree we should jump on it now. TM, Targett explains the plans for funding. To include taking \$200,000.00 from fire equipment reserves and financing the remaining cost. Selectman Jordan makes a motion to immediately move forward with the purchase. Seconded by Selectmen Lander. All in favor.

Town Manager Updates/Discussion: TM, Targett

TM Targett provides an update on bid documents for Riverside Street and West Kingfield Road. Out to bid: **June 10th**. Pre bid meeting/site drive: **June 17th** Bids due back: **June 24th** by close of business (4:30). Open bids: **June 24th or 25th** - Selectboard to choose who/when. Selectboard to award bid: **July 1st** Project Duration: 12-15 weeks Substantial Completion: **November 01, 2024 Final Completion: November 27, 2024** (Day before Thanksgiving) TM Targett explains that she and the engineer can open the bid documents if the board chooses. Chairman Browne asks who will monitor the work. TM Targett says she believes it will be the engineer she feels as if it was part of the contract the town signed. The board agrees to the town manager and engineer opening the bids.

TM Targett states that she has submitted the TIF updates to the town attorney however it will be a few weeks before she is able to jump on this.

TM Targett states that she has been in continued contact with AVCOG about the comp plan and has explained that we wish to have one of their consultants lead this. Chairman Browne reminds TM Targett that he would like to see a survey similar to what Rangeley or Carrabassett did which was open to anyone.

Selectmen Discussion:

Selectman Jordan asks about a future meeting with Susan Mason. In the previous meeting the board briefly discussed an email from Susan Mason and Selectman Jordan asked if there was any forward movement. TM Targett states that it was the boards wishes for Susan to attend a meeting or send someone that would be able to answer the numerous questions the board has about her endowment fund to clean up properties on West Kingfield Road. Selectman Jordan asks if she could attend via ZOOM. TM Targett says yes if the board allows. TM Targett will reach out to Susan with this offer.

Selectman Jodan says the other item she was going to discuss was MSAD 58 however she says Mary Nodine covered it well. However, she would like to find out what the board wants to do moving forward. She is willing to contact Steve Bailey with Department of Education (DOE) to find out where we might be able to get some assistance. Following discussion, the board agrees to have Selectman Jordan make this contact.

Chairman Browne asks if public works should keep an eye out to purchase equipment for crack sealing in the future. TM Targett says she agrees with this and knows that the road commissioner has been keeping an eye out for a commercial model.

Selectman Dunham makes a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Selectman Lander. All in Favor.

*The minutes provided above are a summary. The Town meets record management requirements and retention schedules by maintaining permanent records of electronic recordings of meetings to satisfy the requirements of §403-A. Minutes by Leanna Targett.