

Kingfield Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 17th, 2025; 6:00 PM Webster Hall 38 School Street

Attendance

Municipal Officers: Wade Browne, Hunter Lander, Chris Rushton, Kim Jordan

Municipal Staff:

Public: Brent West, Claudia Diller, Susan Davis, Richard Hawkes, Fred Nichols, Seth Paige, Wolfe Tone, Bob Carlton, Steve Yates, Rob Woodhouse, Kathy Houston, Alan Stewart, Lynn Batt, Jeff Maget

Via Zoom: Leanna Targett (Town Manager), David Davol, Diane Christen, Danielle Mathieu

Absent: Morgan Dunham

Chairman Browne calls the meeting to order.

The board reviews meeting minutes from March 3, 2025. Selectman Jordan makes a motion to accept the minutes as written. Seconded by Selectman Lander. All in Favor.

New Business:

Chairman Browne recognizes Lynn Batt, Trust for Public Land. Lynn explains that she is before the board to discuss a proposed Kingfield community forest expansion they are calling a Reed Brook project. The proposed partners in this project would be the Town of Kingfield and High Peaks Alliance. The Town would take ownership of the land. As far as funding is concerned all funds will be raised by the Trust for Public Land and there will be no cost to the town.

Lynn says we will need to purchase the land at fair market value, the parcel will be purchased with grant funds and then donated to the town. We also have some private donors to fund a stewardship account for long term needs such as land, road, and management costs. The parcel is 1,065 acres and is located adjacent to the Shiloh Pond parcel owned by the town. Lynn says that future uses of the property would be up to the town and/or a committee. The Trust for Public Land with the help from Brent at High Peaks Alliance will facilitate a series of public meetings which will be open to the community to get input on the forest and the potential uses like trails, forest management, school programs, hunting fishing, etc.

Lynn says the funding that they are looking at has minimal restrictions. Lynn says the primary access to the parcel will be from Tufts Pond Road. There is potential to connect Shiloh Pond and Reed Brook Falls. The tax impact of taking this off the ta rolls is \$6,628.00/year as the parcel is enrolled in tree growth. This represents 0.19% of the total annual taxes.

Lynn says in a separate effort the same landowner plans to sell two additional parcels to the State which will add Mount Abraham and Crocker Mountain to state lands. The timeline for all of this begins with a purchase and sale agreement and funding application this spring/summer. Our plan is throughout 2026 we hold public meetings to begin the planning process while surveys, appraisals, and boundary markings are being completed. Then in the fall of 2026 we would be looking for town approval/acceptance. In the Spring of 2027, we would close on the purchase and transfer the parcel to the town.

Brent West from the High Peaks Alliance explains that this is along the same idea as Shiloh Pond. The land would be purchased from Wagner with grant funds, and it would be donated to the town. Wagner wants to preserve it for conservation. The Trust for Public Land will leave \$100,000.00 for stewardship.

Lynn says she would be looking for a letter of interest, which is not a commitment within a month.

Selectman Jordan asks if the Trust for Public Lands purpose is to purchase land like this for conservative purposes. Lynn says yes, but they purchase land with the intent to donate, they do not purchase to keep.

Chairman Browne asks do you see being able to build an ATV trail from Tufts Pond down to the falls. Lynn says the funding source they are applying to has few restrictions.

Lynn says looking at the maps provided to the board parcels A & B are proposed to go to the state. Parcel D is proposed to have an easement which Wagner will retain ownership. Lynn says if the town is not interested then the state will be. Chairman Browne says if that is the case, that it will be taking of the tax rolls anyways then he would rather see the town own it for local control over the parcel.

Chairman Browne asks what is in it for the town of Kingfield? Lynn says to preserve and enhance it for trail recreation and to stop it from being developed.

Chairman Browne says that he is not opposed to it, but he also is not in favor of it yet.

Chairman Browne asked that Lynn forward everything to the Town Manager so that the information about the project could be added to the town's website to allow residents to provide input.

Following further discussion, the board indicates that they do not act on something the first time it is discussed so they will think it over prior to agreeing to a letter of interest.

Old Business:

Chairman Browne moves into discussing the budget. TM Targett says she would like some discussion as there will only be one more opportunity prior to it going to the budget committee. TM Targett says the increase could be \$518,961 or a 26% increase to as low as \$230,581 or 11.65% increase. The larger amount has all the amounts which have been discussed throughout the year to include refunding the road maintenance line item now that the bond is pretty much depleted.

Chairman Browne summarizes each budget. Administration budget increase of \$34,490.00. \$15,000.00 of which is wages, withholdings, and insurance, an increase in legal fees of \$5,000.00 and a some additional increased costs. Fire Department budget increase \$42,200.00 This budget includes a new per diem staff member. It also includes a healthy amount in the equipment line item to purchase lifesaving items and items needed for the new tanker truck that is being built. The fire chief and possibly deputy will need to fly out during this budget cycle to review and accept the building of the truck. Also, in the budget cycle there is a slight increase of \$5,000.00 from taxpayers and TIF for the truck reserve account. The Public Works budget increase of \$168,500.00 This budget includes an amount for crosswalk painting of \$9,000.00, crack sealing \$25,000.00, increase in wages, \$48,500.00 to include a year round third person, increase in tar \$50,000.00, building maintenance \$5,000.00 to cover a new garage door on loader bay, new lighting, and a few other increased costs. This budget will also propose to purchase a new loader and new sidewalk equipment with a lease/purchase option. Chairman Browne says we should keep in mind that the entire roof of Public Works needs to be replaced in the near future. Waste Water budget possible increase of \$18,100.00 of which taxpayers are not responsible for. This would present no increase to taxpayers. The TIF request will be less than last year, and the Gray Water request will be the same. Transfer Station budget increase of \$42,850.00 of which \$30,387.00 Kingfield is responsible for. Increases are Assistant which is 24 hrs. week - \$18,840.00, other wages and insurance

\$10,000.00, tipping and hauling fees \$14,500.00. and a few other increased costs. The Municipal Services budget increase of \$290,684.00 is the largest. First is an increase ambulance cost of \$16,034.00, increase in Town Insurance \$5,050.00, new items such as sidewalk light maintenance \$3,500.00, tree removal \$5,000.00, Bunker water line installment \$80,000.00, Tax Reval 1/2 of cost \$75,000.00, Painting the town office \$16,000.00 and road improvements for \$100,000.00.

Chairman Browne says we need to make some decisions. We have no choice about the water line cost however we could change tax reval costs, painting the office or road improvements. Programs have an increased amount from Webster Library from \$12,000.00 to \$15,000.00 The Caretaker budget increases \$2,900.00 Increase wage, taxes and pfml \$2,185.00 and a few other increased costs. Animal Control budget increase of \$950.00. Increase wage \$400.00 and an increase to shelter cost of \$579.00. The TIF is guesstimated at this time as we do not know the mil. We do have funding for Public Works, the Fire Department and Wastewater as the revisions to TIF should be approved.

Town Manager Updates/Discussion: TM, Targett requests that the board consider two upcoming public hearing dates. She says she feels that they could be held during a selectmen meeting. She proposes wastewater rates on April 7th and TIF amendments on April 22nd. The board agrees to this.

Discussion: None

Public Comment: None

Selectman Lander a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Selectman Rushton. 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.