

Kent Board of Finance
Minutes, Monthly Meeting Jan. 20, 2021

Present: Jim Blackketter, Rufus de Rham, Ed Epstein, Tegan Gawel, Nancy O’Dea-Wyrick.

Public and Invited Guests: Suzanne Charity, Debbie Devaux, Bonnie Donzella, Donna Hayes, Barbara Herbst, Martin Lindenmayer, Jean Speck.

Board chairman Nancy O’Dea-Wyrick called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. via Zoom.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda: Ms. O’Dea-Wyrick asked to have email from Suzanne Charity added to correspondence. Mr. Blackketter made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Mr. de Rham seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes 12/15/20: Mr. de Rham made a motion to approve the minutes of the Dec. 15, 2020 monthly meeting (attached). Mr. Blackketter seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Correspondence: Ms. O’Dea-Wyrick read email letter from the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding the Plan of Conservation and Development (attached). Ms. O’Dea-Wyrick acknowledged email from Suzanne Charity (attached).

Reports: Tax Collector: Debbie Devaux provided a written report (attached). Ms. Devaux said she can’t make any predictions on the tax collection rate until next month.

Board of Education: Martin Lindenmayer reported that yesterday was the deadline for bids for the proposed Kent Center School Entryway Project. He said a couple of the bids came in under the budgeted amount for the project.

Treasurer: Barbara Herbst provided a written report (attached). Mrs. Herbst noted the Town has received \$61,000 to offset COVID-19-related expenses. All departments are within their budgets except litigation. Mrs. Herbst noted that the building department has issued 66 more permits than last year. These projects would boost the grand list when completed. The board requested the treasurer send them her report prior to the meeting. The treasurer noted she usually prepares the report the afternoon of the meeting.

Board of Selectmen: Jean Speck reported:

- ◆ The board voted not to pursue an appeal of the cell tower ruling.
- ◆ COVID-19 case rate has been higher than with the first wave and is going to last longer because of the variants, which are much more contagious. The vaccination site at The Barns was set-up by Highwatch, which worked with the state. The free testing site Mondays at the Town Transfer Station will continue through February. An average of 300-plus tests reportedly are done weekly.
- ◆ The Town is heading into budget season.

- ◆ The Annual Town Meeting is tomorrow night.

Business: FY2020 Annual Town Report: The board clerk emailed the report to the board (attached). Mr. Blackketter made a motion to approve the 2019-2020 Annual Town Report. Ms. Gawel seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

FY2021 KVFD EMS Contract Staffing Financing & Vote: Ms. O’Dea-Wyrick read the following motion: Upon the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen to appropriate up to \$55,000 (Fifty-Five Thousand dollars) from the Unassigned General Fund balance to GL # 060-812, Fire Protection and recommend the appropriation to the taxpayers for approval. Said appropriation is to be used exclusively to reimburse the fire department on a monthly basis for costs incurred from contracting with an EMS staffing agency that will cover shifts that cannot be filled with current Volunteer Corps. Mr. Blackketter made a motion to approve the motion as read. Mr. Epstein seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

FY2021 KCS Entryway Project Financing & Vote: Ms. O’Dea-Wyrick read the following motion: Upon the request of the Board of Education to appropriate \$140,000 (One Hundred and Forty Thousand dollars) from the Unassigned General Fund balance to be deposited in the Capital Fund titled KCS Entryway Security and recommend said appropriation to the taxpayers for approval. Any unused portion of this appropriation will revert to the General Fund upon completion of the KCS Entryway Security project. Mr. Blackketter made a motion to approve the KCS Entryway Project motion as read. Mr. Epstein seconded the motion. Mrs. Herbst clarified this is an additional appropriation from the unassigned fund and, therefore, any unspent funds would return to the general fund. The motion was approved unanimously.

FY2022 BOF Budget: Ms. O’Dea-Wyrick said the board’s current budget line for compensation is based on 20 meetings a year, but there are normally 14-16 meetings/year (attached). Ms. O’Dea-Wyrick recommended reducing of the number of meetings and keeping the compensation budget line flat. The board clerk said she is comfortable with reducing the number of meetings but was not requesting an increase in compensation. Mr. Epstein and Ms. O’Dea-Wyrick agree the board clerk should not get paid less in the coming year. Mr. Blackketter made a motion that the board clerk compensation would be \$150.00/meeting. Mr. Epstein seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously. The board clerk thanked the board. Ms. O’Dea-Wyrick will forward the budget proposal to the treasurer.

FY2022 Budget Calendar Update: Ms. O’Dea-Wyrick noted the board’s March meeting is on the 17th and not the 16th as listed on the budget calendar. Mr. de Rham asked if the board could hear presentations from the selectmen and the school boards on separate nights. Mr. Blackketter said it would be great to have as much information as possible before those meetings. The board discussed tentative budget workshop meeting dates of March 17 and 24 and April 7 at 6 p.m.

FY2022 Capital Plan: Ms. Speck said the selectmen haven’t voted on the proposed Five-Year Capital Plan. Land Use administrator Donna Hayes reminded the Board of Finance that the Planning and Zoning Commission has to approve the proposed capital plan. Mr. de Rham

suggested the Town could defray some costs by working regionally. Suzanne Charity spoke in favor of the proposed capital funds for the Swift House. Mr. de Rham said he would like to see the Town make a decision on the Swift House. Mr. Epstein, Mr. Blackketter and Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick each noted the historical significance of the Swift House.

Public and Invited Guests: There were no comments.

Mr. Blackketter made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

Lesly Ferris
Board Clerk

Minutes are not considered final until approved. Please check ensuing meeting minutes for any changes/corrections.