

*Draft – Minutes*

Kingston Fire District  
Board of Wardens' Meeting  
23 March 2023

**Present:** Wardens Bill Flatley, Sandra Koerner, Elizabeth McNab, and Doug Carr. Also present were Treasurer Tom Vignali, URI Director of Public Safety & Chief of Police Michael Jagoda, Chief Tom Reed and District Manager Jenifer Madison.

**Absent:** Warden Mark Barabe, Tax Collector Susan Axelrod and Deputy Chief Erik Brierley.

**Call to Order:** President Bill Flatley called the Board of Wardens Meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

**Information/Comments/Questions from the Public:** There were no comments from the public.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion:** McNab made and Carr seconded a motion to accept the Minutes from the Wardens Meeting on 02/23/23. The minutes were reviewed. There were no questions.

Flatley, Koerner, McNab and Carr voted to pass the motion. Barabe was absent.

**Tax Collector's Report:**

**Motion:** Koerner made and Carr seconded a motion to accept the Tax Collector's Report.

Madison presented the Tax Collector's Report in Axelrod's absence. The Board reviewed the report. Madison let the Board know that the 2022 tax roll collection rate is 96.2%. She also let the Board know that 49 delinquency notices were sent out on 3/3/23 and that to date, we have received 13 payments. There was no further discussion or questions.

Flatley, Koerner, McNab and Carr voted to pass the motion. Barabe was absent.

**URI Report:**

**Motion:** McNab made and Koerner seconded a motion to accept the URI report.

Jagoda presented the URI report. The Board reviewed the report. Jagoda let the Board know that they are starting to prepare for Commencement and that it will be three days this year, with the main ceremony on Saturday, 5/20/23. There was no further discussion or questions.

Flatley, Koerner, McNab and Carr voted to pass the motion. Barabe was absent.

**Chief's Report:**

**Motion:** Carr made and Koerner seconded a motion to accept the Chief's Report.

Reed presented an oral Chief's Report. He let the Board know that to date, KFD has responded to a total of 165 emergency responses this year and 45 calls this month so far. McNab asked how many calls are for locations on campus versus in the District and/or town; Reed responded that it fluctuates. Reed let the Board know that KFD is

working with the URI Office of Small Projects to obtain a scope of work for station bathroom renovations and that we are looking for a contractor to hire to do a number of small projects this spring. He noted that the resident bathrooms will be renovated and updated. He also let the Board know that we have met with a couple of dealers/manufacturers to begin the process of replacing our rescue truck. Reed noted that the radio system repair invoice to replace the microwave link that failed came out to be about \$28,000 but that it will be covered in whole by insurance minus a small deductible. He also let the Board know that KFD was awarded a SAFER FY21 grant through FEMA in the amount of \$156,000 to provide tuition/education reimbursement assistance to our volunteer firefighters over four years. He noted this is the same grant we were awarded five years ago that closed out last year, which proved to be a beneficial recruitment and retention tool. There was no further discussion or questions.

Flatley, Koerner, McNab and Carr voted to pass the motion. Barabe was absent.

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

**Motion:** McNab made and Carr seconded a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report.

Vignali presented the Treasurer's Report. The Board reviewed the report. Vignali went over the balance sheets and profit and loss statements for the operating and capital projects funds and noted that the budget overall is trending as expected. The Board discussed a maintenance invoice for Engine 8. Carr asked about the vendor and whether the repair was under warranty. Reed responded that the vendor is our new "go to" vendor for apparatus repairs and that the repair to Engine 8 is not under warranty. Vignali reminded the Board that they approved a transfer from the capital projects fund to the operating fund at the end of the year if the maintenance budget for Engine 8 significantly runs over this year. There was no further discussion or questions.

Flatley, Koerner, McNab and Carr voted to pass the motion. Barabe was absent.

**Finance Committee Update:** Madison presented the information that was discussed at the 03/16/23 Finance Committee Meeting. Madison let the Board know that the Committee discussed KFD's FY2023-24 operating fund budget projections. She also noted that the Committee reviewed and discussed possible upcoming capital fund projects including: SCBA, station improvements to resident bathrooms and windows and doors, a new fixed high pressure breathing air system (cascade system) and a new gear dryer. Reed noted that KFD will look into USDA grant funding for upgrading the bathrooms.

#### **Next Meetings:**

- May 18, 2023 at 9:30 a.m.
- August 17, 2023 at 9:30 a.m.
- October 19, 2023 at 9:30 a.m.

#### **New Business:**

- **FY2023-24 Budget Projections:** Reed and Vignali presented.
  - **Operating Budget:** Vignali let the Board know that the proposed FY2023-24 operating budget follows an overall five-year budget plan. He noted that the proposed tax revenues increased by about two percent which is in-line with the two percent increase in the KFD-URI Cooperative Agreement. He also noted that the increase is also in-line with the FY2023-24 budget that was passed by the South Kingstown Town Council last night. Reed noted that the increases to the expense side are basically in-line with the FY2022-23 budget and Vignali confirmed that they are historically in-line with KFD's budgets.

Vignali also let the Board know that he, Reed and Madison are considering creating a separate “government” type account for firefighter incentives so that the account can retain its funds over time.

- Capital Projects Budget: The Board agreed to table this to the Budget Hearing on 4/13/23.
- **Review of KFD’s Open Meetings and Schedule of Agenda Items:** Madison presented the Board with a calendar with annual agenda items to review. Discussion ensued about eliminating some of KFD’s monthly Wardens Meetings and meeting fewer times throughout the year based on these events. The Board asked for this item to be put on the agenda for approval at the next meeting on 4/13/23. There was no further discussion or questions.

#### **Old Business:**

- **Review of KFD’s Legal Needs:** Flatley let the Board know that he still needs to follow-up with possible names that were suggested for KFD’s legal representation.
- **Update of KFD’s Articles of Incorporation:** Carr let the Board know that the bill to revise KFD’s Articles of Legislation was presented to the Rhode Island House Committee by State Representative Kathy Fogarty. He noted that it was discussed in Committee and “put on hold for more talk” and that the Committee is meeting again tomorrow but that KFD’s bill is not on the agenda. Carr also let the Board know that State Senator Susan Sosnowski has presented the bill to her Committee but that they have not met yet. There were no questions or further discussion.
- **Use of Training Grounds Agreement and Fees:** Reed let the Board know that there has not been any progress since the last update.
- **Radio System Project Update:** Reed let the Board know that as of 3/22/23, the project is waiting for final approval from the engineer about using the Kingston Water Tower. There were no questions or further discussion.
- **American Rescue Plan Act – Covid-19 Response and Recovery (ARPA) Funding Update:** Reed let the Board know that that the South Kingstown Town Council has indicated that KFD and the Union Fire District will get some of the town’s ARPA funds. He noted that KFD’s is expected to receive about \$12,000 and we will put it towards the purchase of a new gear washer; however, KFD will have to fund a new gear dryer. He let the Board know that there is a Town Council member who is pushing for the fire districts to get some of the funds. There were no questions or further discussion.

**Communications:** Flatley let the Board know that Mark Barabe officially resigned his KFD Warden position effective as of today.

#### **Information:**

- KFD Chicken BBQ – Sat., 6/3/23
- South Kingstown 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Parade – Sat. 6/17/23 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (KFD will take part.)

**Future Planning:** The Board reviewed which positions were up for election this term and discussed filling the empty Warden's position. The Committee also reviewed other potential elected official resignations. The Nominating Committee is going to do some outreach with KFD's current elected officials.

**Next Meetings:**

- April 13, 2023 at 6:30 PM at the KFD Station – Budget Hearing
- April 13, 2023 at 6:30 PM (following Budget Hearing) at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting
- May 1, 2023 at 7:00 PM at the KFD Station – Annual Meeting
- May 25, 2023 at 6:30 PM at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting
- June 22, 2023 at 6:30 PM at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting
- July 27, 2023 at 6:30 PM at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting
- August 24, 2023 at 6:30 PM at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting
- September 28, 2023 at 6:30 PM at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting
- October 26, 2023 at 6:30 PM at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting
- December 07, 2023 at 6:30 PM at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting

**Adjournment:**

**Motion:** Carr made and McNab seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Flatley, Koerner, McNab and Carr voted to pass the motion. Barabe was absent.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenifer Madison  
District Manager