

Minutes

Kingston Fire District
Board of Wardens' Meeting
26 October 2023

Present: Wardens: Bill Flatley, Elizabeth McNab, Sandra Koerner, Doug Carr and Steve Davis. Also present were Jeff Wadovick, CPA, Wadovick & Company, Robert Civetti, CPA, Tax Collector Susan Axelrod (departed at 6:45 p.m.), Treasurer Tom Vignali, URI Director of Public Safety & Chief of Police Michael Jagoda, Chief Tom Reed, and District Manager Jenifer Madison.

Absent: Deputy Chief Erik Brierley.

Call to Order: President Bill Flatley called the Board of Wardens Meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

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

Approval to Amend the Agenda:

Motion: McNab made and Flatley seconded a motion to amend the Agenda to hear the *Tax Collector's Report* and *Approval of the 2023 Tax Rate – Updated* under *New Business* before the FY2022-23 Draft Audit Presentation under *New Business* tonight to accommodate Axelrod's schedule. There were no questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

Tax Collector's Report:

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

Axelrod presented the Tax Collector's Report. The Board reviewed the report. Axelrod let the Board know that the 2022 collection rate is at 98.5%. And that there was nothing else new to report at this time. There was no further discussion or questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

- **Approval of 2023 Tax Rate Updated:** Axelrod let the Board know that the net tax levy presented during the September meeting when the Wardens voted on the 2023 tax rate was incorrect. She presented the corrected revised net tax levy and information regarding revised proposed tax rates and the amount they would yield. Axelrod let the Board know that Vision is set to process the tax bills as soon as KFD sets the revised rate and that the bills will go out about a week later due to this. The Board reviewed the proposed rates and discussion ensued.

Motion: McNab made and Carr seconded a motion to set the revised 2023 Tax Rate at 0.75 per thousand.

The motion passed unanimously.

- **FY2022-23 Draft Audit Presentation:** Wadovick from Wadovick & Co. and Civetti presented the final draft of the FY2022-23 Audit. Wadovick let the Board know that Wadovick also presented to the KFD Finance Committee last week prior to presenting it to the full board tonight. He noted that KFD received a “clean” opinion which is typical and good. Wadovick let the Board know that they had no trouble getting any of the fiscal documents they needed from the staff and that it was clean and easy and that the accounting is done very well. Carr let the Board know that Wadovick & Company walked the Finance Committee very thoroughly through the report last week and that he was very satisfied with the presentation. Civetti noted that the audit is on target to go to the R.I. Office of the Auditor General on time. There were no questions.

Motion: Koerner made and Davis seconded a motion to accept the FY2021-22 Audit Report. There was no further discussion or questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion: Koerner made and Davis seconded a motion to accept the Minutes from the Wardens Meeting on 09/28/23. The minutes were reviewed. There were no questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

URI Report:

Motion: Carr 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 the repaving project on Old North Road is set to begin in early November. There was no further discussion or questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

Chief's Report:

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

Reed presented the Chief's Report. He let the Board know that to date, KFD has responded to a total of 637 emergency responses this year and 66 calls for service so far during the month of October. Reed noted that there have been no major responses since the last meeting. He noted that there is no major breakdown or issue to report. He let the Board know that KFD is undergoing our annual testing and certification cycle with annual pump tests conducted on both engines today and that the ground and aerial ladders were tested and passed earlier in the month. Reed also let the board know that there is new fire alarm equipment being installed at the station by a URI vendor as part of a campus-wide upgrade to newer and more modern technology. He noted that KFD will be participating in a birthday parade in honor of a long-time Kingston resident to celebrate his life of public service and accomplishments.

Reed let the Board know that KFD has been very successful recruiting this semester. He noted that we had 14 new applicants and eight are still training. Davis asked if this rate is better than usual; Reed responded in the affirmative and stated that there's a big crew at the station these days. There was no further discussion or questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

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 let the Board know that the budget is trending as expected for this time of year. Reed let the Board know that we cut a purchase order out of the capital projects budget for new RIT packs. Vignali proposed and the Board discussed opening up a certificate of deposit for the Capital Projects Fund and moving our operating fund to a higher interest bearing account in order to increase the interest that KFD earns. Civetti noted that operations and everything else looks great accounting-wise and that KFD has ample controls in place for a district. There was no further discussion or questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

Finance Committee Update: Carr presented the information that was discussed at the 10/19/23 Finance Committee Meeting. He let the Board know that Wadovick and Civetti, along with Rob Salmani, CPA, Wadovick & Company presented the draft FY2022-23 Audit report and that the Committee reviewed it. He noted that the Committee recommended that the draft audit be presented at the 10/26/23 Wardens Meeting for approval. There was no further discussion or questions.

Next Meetings: TBD

Other New Business:

- **KVFC Christmas Party Contribution 2023:** Reed let the Board know that KFD will be hosting a separate awards ceremony at a later date and that he recommends that the Board split the \$1,000 the District usually contributes to the Kingston Volunteer Fire Company's Christmas Party in half; \$500 for the Christmas Party and \$500 for the Awards Ceremony. He noted that the expense would come out of the recruitment and retention budget.

Motion: McNab made and Koerner seconded a motion to approve a \$500 contribution towards KVFC's 2023 Christmas Party and \$500 contribution towards the next Awards Ceremony.

The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

- **Use of Training Grounds Agreement and Fees:** The Board agreed to table this topic until the 12/07/223 Wardens Meeting.
- **Radio System Project Update:** Reed let the Board know that the new radio system was tested and that grounding issues were found that have now been rectified. He noted that the project is almost complete and may decrease KFD's insurance premium since all the equipment will now be insured as part of the whole system. There were no questions.

Communications: There was no update. No motions were made.

Information: McNab shared some old historical records regarding KFD.

Future Planning:

- Flatley asked about moving KFD's insurance needs over to the interlocal trust to save money. Reed responded that he did not think that the interlocal trust could beat the prices that KFD pays for our present insurance carrier, VFIS.
- Jagoda asked about the status of the budget numbers for the next KFD-URI Cooperative Agreement renewal. Reed explained to the board that officials from both KFD and URI are reviewing different types of multi-year contracts. Reed let Jagoda know that we need to firm up the timeline on how this process is going to work for the next contract renewal and that KFD can get URI the numbers by the first of the year. There were no additional questions. No motions were made.

Next Meetings:

- December 07, 2023 at 6:30 PM at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting

Adjournment:

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

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenifer Madison
District Manager