

*Draft – Minutes (Updated)*

Kingston Fire District  
Board of Wardens' Meeting  
28 September 2023

**Present:** Wardens: Bill Flatley, Elizabeth McNab, Sandra Koerner and Doug Carr. Also present were Tax Collector Susan Axelrod, Tax Assessor Dorald Beasley (arrived at 5:40 p.m. and departed at 6:30 p.m.), URI Director of Emergency Management Samuel Adams (departed at 6:37 p.m.), Chief Tom Reed, Deputy Chief Erik Brierley (arrived at 6:14 p.m.) and District Manager Jenifer Madison.

**Absent:** Treasurer Tom Vignali and URI Director of Public Safety & Chief of Police Michael Jagoda

**Call to Order:** President Bill Flatley called the Board of Wardens Meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

**Information/Comments/Questions from the Public:** Steve Davis and Kelley Morris Salvatore, Esq., Darrow Everett, LLP., (departed at 6:00 p.m.)

**Meet and Greet with KFD's New Legal Representative:** The Board met and vetted KFD's new legal representative, Kelley Morris Salvatore, Esq., Darrow Everett, LLP. Salvatore introduced herself, explained her background and reviewed the terms of her proposed letter of engagement.

- **Approval of Letter of Engagement:**

**Motion:** McNab made and Koerner seconded a motion to approve the Letter of Engagement with Darrow Everett.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion:** Koerner made and Carr seconded a motion to accept the Minutes from the Wardens Meeting on 08/24/23. The minutes were reviewed. There were no questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Tax Collector's Report:**

**Motion:** McNab made and Carr 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%. She noted that she has received the 2023 tax roll from Vision and that the valuation went up. Axelrod let the Board know that we are on track to get the 2023 tax bills out at the end of October. There was no further discussion or questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

**URI Report:**

**Motion:** Carr made and McNab seconded a motion to accept the URI Report.

Adams presented the URI report in Jagoda's absence. Adams let the Board know the new upgraded traffic gates system will be installed by the end of December/beginning of January and that URI has a new Interim Vice President, Administration and Finance, Abby Benson. There was no further discussion or questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

### **Chief's Report:**

**Motion:** McNab made and Carr 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 562 emergency responses this year and 71 calls for service so far during the month of September. He noted that this is a normal uptick in the number of calls and coincides with URI's return to campus for the fall semester. Reed let the Board know that there have been no major responses since the last meeting and he is working with URI to review multiple alarms to the building. He also let the Board know that he is working with different vendors on a replacement for Rescue 6 and is looking to lower costs. Reed noted that he and six other KFD firefighters (and other responders throughout the state) had a very enjoyable day on Block Island last weekend where they were treated to a day of food and camaraderie arranged by the Block Island Fire Department and the Block Island Town Council in recognition of the response to the Harborside Hotel fire. He also noted that the South Kingstown Town Council recognized KFD and the Union Fire District (UFD) on 9/25/2023 for our response during the Block Island fire. Reed let the board know that he is meeting with representatives of the Kingston Water District next week to discuss the new Fieldstone Farms development going in off of Old North Road.

Reed let the board know that KFD has eight new active applicants and that KFD will be working to retain them through our newly renewed Tuition/Education Reimbursement grant and our other firefighter incentives. He noted that low staffing is a problem across state fire and police departments whether paid or volunteer. There was no further discussion or questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

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

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

Madison presented the Treasurer's Report in Vignali's absence. The Board reviewed the report. Madison let the Board know that the budget is trending as expected. She also let the Board know that KFD made a purchase of RIT packs that are going to be expensed to capital outlays in the Capital Projects budget. There was no further discussion or questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Finance Committee Update:** There was no meeting this past month. Adams let the Board know that he submitted the proposed budget numbers that were agreed on at the 8/17/23 Finance Committee Meeting regarding the next cooperative agreement renewal with the University of Rhode Island (URI) to the URI budgeting office and that he has not heard anything back yet. There was no further discussion or questions.

### **Next Meetings:**

October 19, 2023 at 9:30 a.m.

### **New Business:**

- **Status of Open Warden Position:**

- Appointment of Interim Warden: The Board discussed appointing Steve Davis as Interim Warden to fill KFD's vacant position until 2025. There were no questions.

**Motion:** McNab made and Carr seconded a motion to appoint Steve Davis as Interim Warden.

The motion passed unanimously.

- **Approval of 2023 Tax Rate:** Axelrod and Beasley presented information regarding proposed tax rates including the net levy and the amount they would provide. The Board reviewed the proposed rates.

**Motion:** Koerner made and McNab seconded a motion to set the 2023 Tax Rate at 0.73 per thousand.

The motion passed unanimously.

- **Review and Recommendations for Pay Rates and Billing Rates for:**

- Firefighter Details Pay Rates and Billing Rates:

- Decon Training Pay Rates:

Madison presented the rates that the Finance Committee recommended for the Firefighter Detail pay and billing rates and Decon Training pay rates at their 08/17/23 meeting noting that the Committee is recommending leaving all the rates as is.

**Motion:** Koerner made and McNab seconded a motion to approve the proposed rates with both the billing and pay rates to become effective July 1, 2024.

The motion passed unanimously.

- **Policies for Review and Approval:** Reed let the Board know that as a condition of receiving our SAFER FY22 grant for tuition and education reimbursement, KFD has to develop non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies. The Board reviewed the policies that have been developed. Reed also reminded the Board that we will be reviewing and approving a couple of policies related to District business every month going forward in order to update all of KFD's policies. There were no questions.

- Policy and Notice of Non-discrimination – Madison noted that this policy would be posted for the public.
- Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy – Reed noted that KFD developed this policy using a template from a paid municipality and that changes were made accordingly.

**Motion:** McNab made and Carr seconded a motion to approve the Policy and Notice of Non-discrimination and Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

The motion passed unanimously.

- **Review of KFD's By-Laws:** The Board agreed to table this item until the 12/07/23 meeting.

- **Wardens Badges:** The Board discussed the options for badges and what they may want. They agree to table the rest of the discussion until the 12/07/23 meeting.

**Old Business:**

- **Use of Training Grounds Agreement and Fees:** Reed noted that there is nothing to report.
- **Radio System Project Update:** Reed let the Board know that the installation of the new system is 95% complete and should be fully complete by the middle of October. He noted that testing and the consoles are complete. There were no questions.
- **American Rescue Plan Act – Covid-19 Response and Recovery (ARPA) Funding Update:** Reed let the Board know that KFD and UFD will not be getting any of the ARPA funds that the Town of South Kingstown received. The Board agreed to take this item off of future agendas.

**Communications:** Reed let the Board know that KFD received a letter from the Town of Block Island thanking us for our aid during the Harborside Hotel fire and shared the plaques they sent us in commemoration.

**Information:** McNab shared some newspaper articles about the Harborside Hotel fire and an old article about KFD.

**Future Planning:** There was none.

**Promotion to Firefighter:** Brierley introduced Malcolm Rodgers to be promoted to Firefighter. Brierley and Reed congratulated him on the completion of his probationary training and had him say the KFD oath before presenting him with his badge and certificate as a full active member of KFD. The Board congratulated and welcomed him.

**Next Meetings:**

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

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenifer Madison  
District Manager