

Draft – Minutes

Kingston Fire District
Board of Wardens Meeting
15 April 2021

Present: Wardens Ina Sciabarrasi, Sandra Koerner, Elizabeth McNab and Bill Flatley. Also present were Tax Collector Linda Mendillo, Treasurer Tom Vignali, URI Director of Public Safety & Chief of Police Stephen Baker, Chief Nate Barrington, Deputy Chief Tom Reed and Office Manager Jenifer Madison.

Absent: Warden Mark Barabe and Interim Deputy Chief Erik Brierley.

Call to Order: President Sciabarrasi called the Board of Wardens Meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. The meeting was conducted by Zoom Videoconference due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

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

Approval of Minutes:

Motion: McNab made and Flatley seconded a motion to accept the Minutes from the Wardens Meeting on 03/25/21. The minutes were reviewed. There were no questions.

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

Tax Collector's Report:

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

Mendillo presented the Tax Collector's Report. The Board reviewed the report. Mendillo let the Board know that the 2020 Tax Roll collection rate was at about 98%. Sciabarrasi noted that the collection rate is "doing good." Mendillo let the Board know that of the 65 delinquency notices sent to taxpayers whose 2020 tax was not paid, we have now received 43 of those payments. Mendillo noted that there is still one homeowner whose fire district tax is delinquent for two years. She let the Board know that there is very little tax still owed for 2017 and 2018 and that what is owed is a tangible tax for one business that is no longer in the district and is now located in Wakefield. Mendillo also noted that Vision is looking into setting up a new vendor for credit card payments since the current vendor has had lots of technical issues with their system. She noted that KFD does receive a portion of our tax payments via credit card and its beneficial to offer our taxpayers the convenience and does not cost the district anything. There was no further discussion or questions.

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

URI Report:

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

Baker presented the URI Report. The Board reviewed the report. Baker let the Board know that URI has been the only university approved to hold commencement in Rhode Island but that only students and staff will be allowed to attend, no parents, family members or spectators. He noted that all events will take place outdoors with maximum capacities imposed and that all attendees will be required to have a negative Covid test within 48 hours of attending. Sciabarrasi asked Baker when his last monthly meeting with KFD will be before he retires; Baker noted that it will be the May Wardens meeting. There was no further discussion or questions.

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

Chief's Report:

Motion: Flatley made and McNab seconded a motion to accept the Chief's Report.

Barrington presented a written Chief's report. The Board reviewed the report. He let the Board know that there was a fire on Berth Avenue earlier today and that the crews did a great job and that it looked to be an illegal rooming house. He noted that the proposed FY2021-22 draft budget has his blessing and that he sees challenges going forward that KFD cannot completely foresee regarding recruitment versus retention. Barrington let the Board know that the chief's transition is going well and that Erik Brierley, Interim Deputy Chief, is doing a good job.

Reed presented an oral Chief's Report. He let the Board know the fire on Berth Avenue broke out at 4:05 AM this morning and that our crews were on scene within three minutes and the fire was out within 15 minutes, noting that the great timing was a credit to KFD's training program. Reed also let the Board know that he and Brierley were on-scene with 12 KFD firefighters and seven firefighters from the Union Fire District (UFD) who provided mutual aid. He noted that the fire was contained to the basement bedroom and that KFD cut a hole in the roof which minimized property damage and that there were no firefighter injuries. He let the Board know that the State Fire Marshal's office is investigating, although it was accidental, because there was a bunch of unpermitted work done which classifies the property as a rooming house which is illegal. Reed noted that this property was not on anyone's radar until now and that we will be watching a few other houses for similar issues. Sciabarrasi asked Reed to let KFD's crews know that they did a great job.

Reed also let the Board know that KFD is in good shape financially, He noted that he had a very good meeting with UFD Chief Steve Pinch about moving forward and building relationships between the two districts. He also let the Board know that he has had positive conversations with Narragansett Chief Scott Partington and one of the Charlestown Chiefs over the past month. There was no further discussion or questions.

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

Treasurer's Report:

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

Vignali presented the Treasurer's Report. The Board reviewed the report. Vignali went over the budget and noted that it is trending as expected. He let the Board know that he will have an estimate of the expected FY2020-21 general fund surplus to present at the Annual Meeting on 5/3/21. Vignali noted that miscellaneous income is higher than expected because of plan review fees KFD has received from the Town of South Kingstown. Reed explained that these fees are higher than in years past because the Town switched to an e-permitting program and the permitting fees are now captured through this process

and KFD now receives a percentage of the fees for the projects in the system. Reed did note, however, that these fees are hard to forecast. Madison reviewed the accounts receivable with the Board and let them know about recent payments. There was no further discussion or questions.

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

Finance Committee up-date/report: There were no updates.

Next Meetings:

- May 20, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.
- August 19, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.
- October 21, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.

New Business:

- **Status and Updates to Open Positions:** Sciabarrasi let the Board know that using bulk mail rates for the district recruitment letter is a little more complicated than we expected and that it has slowed the process of getting the letter out somewhat. She noted that she is working to get the correct bulk mail postal routes to iCopy (which is preparing the mailing) tomorrow. She told the Board that she thinks we may get some interest in KFD's open positions through the mailing.

Old Business:

- **Review of KFD of By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation:** Sciabarrasi let the Board know that she reached out to KFD Attorney Noelle Clapham with questions about who can vote and who can hold office within KFD. She noted that based on our current By-Laws, the qualifications for both are that the individual must be a registered voter on the Town's rolls and must reside within KFD. Sciabarrasi also let the Board know that she acquired and researched all the revisions to KFD's Articles of Incorporation since 1955 and that some errors were made along the way that caused older versions to be mixed up with the newer amended versions. She noted that she asked Clapham to work on this and to make all the revisions reflect properly in a clean version that will make the Articles current. Vignali asked what some of the errors were; Sciabarrasi responded that the version of the Articles we have does not accurately reflect the current boundaries of KFD. Koerner thanked Sciabarrasi for all her hard work.
- **Covid-19 Effort and Effects:** Barrington let the Board know that the Town of South Kingstown is receiving \$9 million for Covid-19 relief efforts and is looking for requests on how to spend it and that the Town Manager asked the fire districts to let him know if we have any requests. Barrington noted that Reed requested a place holder for a trailer with an ATV for enclosed spaces and that this is to address the Great Swamp area where KFD is first due.
- **Radio System Project Update:** There were no updates.

Communications: Sciabarrasi updated the Board on the retirement party for the Chief and let them know it will take place on 6/12/2021 at Yawgoo Bakes and that she will provide updates as we get closer. Barrington noted that he is humbled and very gracious to be honored.

Information:

- KFD Annual Meeting is coming up on Monday, 5/3/2021.
- Barrington reminded the Board that the Fire Academy's dedication of the state's Firefighter's Memorial is on 5/1/2021.

Next Meetings:

- May 3, 2021 at 7:00 PM – TBD via *Zoom* – Annual Meeting
- May 27, 2021 at 6:30 PM TBD via *Zoom* or at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting
- June 24, 2021 at 6:30 PM TBD via *Zoom* or at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting
- July 22, 2021 at 6:30 PM TBD via *Zoom* or at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting
- August 26, 2021 at 6:30 PM TBD via *Zoom* or at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting
- September 23, 2021 at 6:30 PM TBD via *Zoom* or at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting
- October 28, 2021 at 6:30 PM TBD via *Zoom* or at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting
- December 02, 2021 at 6:30 PM TBD via *Zoom* or at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting

Adjournment:

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenifer Madison
Office Manager

Page 4 of 4
Draft Minutes
April 15, 2021

The Kingston Fire District is an equal opportunity provider and employer.