

*Draft – Minutes*

Kingston Fire District  
Board of Wardens Meeting  
28 January 2021

**Present:** Wardens Ina Sciabarrasi, Sandra Koerner, Elizabeth McNab, Bill Flatley (arrived at 6:38 p.m.) and Mark Barabe. Also present were Tax Collector Linda Mendillo, URI Director of Public Safety & Chief of Police Stephen Baker, Chief Nate Barrington, Training and Recruitment/Retention Coordinator Erik Brierley and Office Manager Jenifer Madison.

**Absent:** Treasurer Tom Vignali and Deputy Chief Tom Reed.

**Call to Order:** President Sciabarrasi called the Board of Wardens Meeting to order at 6:34 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.

**Promotion to Firefighter:** Brierley introduced Anthony White to be promoted to Firefighter. Brierley noted that White finished his probationary training and became a full member back in September and gave an overview of his significant training efforts. The Board congratulated him and thanked him for his service and dedication.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion:** Koerner made and Flatley seconded a motion to accept the Minutes from the Wardens Meeting on 12/03/20. The minutes were reviewed. There were no questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Tax Collector's Report:**

**Motion:** Barabe made and Flatley 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 92%. She let the Board know that currently there are three delinquent accounts that have not paid their taxes for two years, but one homeowner is sending in a check. Mendillo noted that this is a smaller amount than usual and that usually it is about 20 accounts this time of year. She also let the Board know that the property that had been up owned by the Town of South Kingstown through tax sale has been bought and that the new owners are responsible for back fire taxes and that she will be sending them a bill. Mendillo noted that tax collection has gone smoothly aside from the mortgage lenders and tax services paying their escrow accounts in a timely fashion.

The motion passed unanimously.

**URI Report:**

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

Baker presented the URI Report. The Board reviewed the report. Baker let the Board know that students began moving in for the spring semester during the week of January 18<sup>th</sup> and that they are being tested for Covid-19 at the Memorial Union. There was no further discussion or questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Chief's Report:**

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

Barrington presented an oral Chief's Report. He let the Board know that it has been mainly quiet and run numbers are down. He noted that he reviewed the security tapes of the footage from the call at URI when the doors were broken and that KFD's firefighters did the right thing. Barrington let the Board know that there was a failure in the main radio system last week that was an easy fix but costly because it required a tower crew. He let the Board know that we are looking at a USDA grant for station improvements and an Assistance to Firefighters grant (AFG) for a gear extractor. He also let the Board know that he was going to reapply to the AFG for the regional radios grant we previously submitted because we had a good application but not enough call volume for a regional grant. Barrington noted that we will spend most of our SAFER grant funds on tuition/education reimbursement by the end of the grant in the fall and will reapply for another. He also told the Board that KFD received a grant of \$4,900 from the RI Department of Health for pediatric EMS training and that KFD Firefighter Paul Decerbo was responsible for securing that for us. Barrington let the Board know that all the trucks were in service. He noted that while Covid-19 has hurt our recruitment numbers, that our retention numbers are still good.

Brierley presented an oral report on training. He let the Board know that KFD will host a 2-day elevator operations training on URI's campus for our firefighters in July and that he is looking at a ground ladder training with an outside consultant. He noted that KFD was unable to hold these kinds of trainings last fall due to the pandemic.

Barrington also let the Board know that he met with Union Fire District (UFD) Chief Steve Pinch and South Kingstown Town Council Vice-President Bryant Da Cruz to discuss the funding that Town has historically given each fire district. Barrington noted that in the past, the Town has given each station a portion of the money each year and that they met to discuss releasing the funding as scholarship money instead. Brierley let the Board know that he attended a joint KFD-UFD Recruitment Meeting and that a scholarship committee is going to be formed to allocate the scholarships.

Sciabarrasi asked about the town radio system upgrade project and specifically about the meeting to address the request for proposals from 16 vendors listed in the recent UFD minutes. Barrington noted that KFD was not invited and he was unaware that it took place. Koerner asked if Flatley and/or Barabe should look into this as members of the Radio System Committee; Flatley said he will follow-up. There was no further discussion or questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:**

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

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Madison presented the Treasurer's Report in Vignali's absence. The Board reviewed the report. Barrington reviewed the billing and status for the HazMat calls in North Kingstown noting that he is working on restructuring KFD's Decon response to these types of calls. He also let the Board know that Westerly Hospital is processing KFD's bill for the HazMat call we responded to there. There was no further discussion or questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Finance Committee up-date/report:** Madison presented the information that was discussed at the 01/21/21 Finance Committee Meeting since Sciabarrasi was unable to attend the meeting. Madison noted that the Committee reviewed the same Treasurer's Report as discussed above. She let the Board know that the Committee continued discussing the proposed one-year extension to the KFD-URI Cooperative Agreement for FY2021-22. No motions were made at this meeting. There were no other updates.

**Next Meetings:**

- March 18, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.
- 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:**

- **Extension of KFD-URI Cooperative Agreement 7/1/2021 – 6/30/2022:** Baker presented the proposed amendment for a one-year extension of the current cooperative agreement at a flat funding rate through 6/30/2022. Koerner asked if this was being presented this way due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting financial impact to URI; Baker responded yes. The Board agreed to the amendment and Sciabarrasi will sign it.
- **Covid-19 Effort and Effects:** Barrington noted there was nothing new to report.

**Old Business:**

- **Recruitment of New Tax Collector:** Sciabarrasi asked if Mendillo or anyone else if they had a recommendation for a new Tax Collector; no one had any recommendations at this time. Sciabarrasi let the Board know that she updated KFD's recruitment poster with the District's open positions and hung it around town. She noted that she will send it to Barabe to post on South Kingstown's social media sites. Sciabarrasi said that she will follow-up with the Kingston Improvement Society regarding our recruitment efforts. Sciabarrasi also let the Board know that she sent her notes regarding the last time the Board went over KFD's By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation for review since the Board is considering changes to the qualifications for KFD's elected officials. Barrington reminded the Board that they would need to reach out to the local legislators to change the By-Laws because a bill would need to be proposed to the RI State Legislature. He noted that the deadline for this is coming up soon and suggested a workshop to work on the language. Barrington stated that he would reach out to the legislators via e-mail and copy Sciabarrasi so she could follow-up. There was no further discussion or questions.

**Communications:** There were no updates. No motions were made.

**Information:** Madison reminded the Board to sign the check batches that are in the box in the office and that she would leave the next batch for them to sign once this one was complete.

**Next Meetings:**

- February 25, 2021 at 6:30 PM – TBD via *Zoom* or at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting
- March 25, 2021 at 6:30 PM – TBD via *Zoom* or at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting
- April 15, 2021 at 6:30 PM – TBD via *Zoom* or at the KFD Station – Budget Hearing
- April 15, 2021 at 6:30 PM (following Budget Hearing) – TBD via *Zoom* or at the KFD Station – Monthly Wardens Meeting
- May 3, 2021 at 7:00 PM – TBD via *Zoom* or at the KFD Station – 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:** Flatley made and McNab seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenifer Madison  
Office Manager

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