

At the Regular Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of North Kingstown, County of Washington, and State of Rhode Island, held in and for said Town, County, and State this 6th day of February, 2023 at the Town Hall Council Chambers, 80 Boston Neck Road, at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT WERE: Gregory A. Mancini, President  
Katherine K. Anderson  
Lawrence C. Mandel  
Matthew B. McCoy  
Dr. Kimberly Ann Page

ALSO PRESENT: A. Ralph Mollis, Town Manager  
Jeannette Alyward, Town Clerk  
Susan A. Murray, Deputy Town Clerk  
Matthew F. Callaghan, Jr., Town Solicitor

An audio recording and video recording of this meeting was made to supplement the written record.

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of North Kingstown held on February 6, 2023 was called to order by President Mancini.

2. Notice of Meeting being posted

Pursuant to R.I.G.L. 42-46-6(c), notice of this meeting has been posted on the Secretary of State's Website.

3. Salute to Flag

President Mancini led those in attendance in a salute to the flag.

**I. PUBLIC HEARING**

4. Class B-Full Alcoholic Beverage, Victualling, Dance, Jukebox, and Entertainment Licenses (new)

Motion by Councilor Mandel, seconded by Councilor McCoy and unanimously

VOTED: To open the Public Hearing.

There was no public comment.

Motion by Councilor Page, seconded by Councilor Anderson and unanimously

VOTED: To close the Public Hearing.

Motion by Councilor Page, seconded by Councilor Mandel and unanimously

VOTED: To approve the application for a Class B-Full Alcoholic Beverage License, Victualling License, Dance License, Jukebox License, and Entertainment License, expiring on December 1, 2023, by Quonset Tavern by the Green Inc., 615 Callahan Road, subject to taxes and water paid to date; receipt of a Certificate of Good Standing; receipt of a Certificate of Liability Insurance; receipt of a copy of their RI Department of Health Certificate; and compliance with the recommendations of the Police Department, the Fire Marshall, the Planning Department, and the Building Official.

5. Public Comment

James McGwin, 412 Chimney Rock Drive, provided the Council with two items for possible resolutions. He stated that last year he came to the Council with a bill that would help protect children from abuse from the people that were supervising them or had temporary custody of them and with the help of Representative Casimiro it passed. This year he is asking the Council to support a bill that would make non reporting of these issues a felony, again this is being supported by Representative Casimiro. He believes that this bill is important not only with the issue happening in North Kingstown but in other cities and towns around the state as well. He is asking for the support of the Council on this matter. He further stated that over the past couple of years in this Town it has been very divided and there has been a lot of diversity. Since we are in black history month, he would like to talk about someone in this Town who was a uniter. Mel Benson was an amazing person, she was a teacher in our school system, she was the first black representative in the State House, and she even has a post office named after her. He gave some information to the Council on Mel Benson and hopes in black history month that it may help unite us and remind us of what this Town has been.

**II. SPECIAL BUSINESS**

6. Presentation by Marcum, LLP and Receive and File Annual Audit

Kyle Connors of Marcum, LLP gave the following presentation:

**Town of North Kingstown  
2022 Financial Statements**

February 6, 2023 | Presented by: Kyle Connors, CPA

**MARCUM**  
ACCOUNTANTS & ADVISORS

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**Introduction**

- 01 Presentation will review the Town's 2022 financial statement audit results
- 02 Feel free to ask questions at any time

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## Town General Fund

- Total Fund Balance increased by \$1.5 million
- Unassigned Fund Balance = \$12.1 million
- Unassigned Fund Balance represents 13.4% of Operating Budget
- Current level is within healthy target of 8-16% of budgeted expenditures

## Fund Balance: Last Six Years



## Results of Operations

- Revenues were above budget by \$1.5 million
- Property taxes \$378 thousand above what was anticipated
  - Strong collection of prior year balances
  - Collection of current year assessment above budget assumption
- Tax collection percentages:
  - *98.6% collection of current year assessment*

## Results of Operations (Continued)

- Intergovernmental revenue favorable by \$420 thousand
  - Higher motor vehicle excise tax phase out revenue from State than anticipated
  
- Departmental revenue favorable by \$813 thousand
  - Due to higher than anticipated building permits and clerk fees as well as higher police detail revenue than anticipated

## Results of Operations (Continued)

- Expenditures were \$1.1 million below appropriated amounts
- Favorable results in these areas:
  - *Planning*
  - *Public Works*
  - *Fire*
- Unfavorable results in these areas:
  - Police, harbor and animal control
  - Information Systems

## School Department

- Unrestricted fund ended year with assigned fund balance of \$6.9 million which is 9.6% of operating budget
  - \$1.2 million earmarked at year end for stipends
- Fund balance increased in current year by \$1.7 million
- Revenue was favorable compared to the budget by \$577 thousand
  - Tuitions were \$423 thousand higher than anticipated

### School Department (Continued)

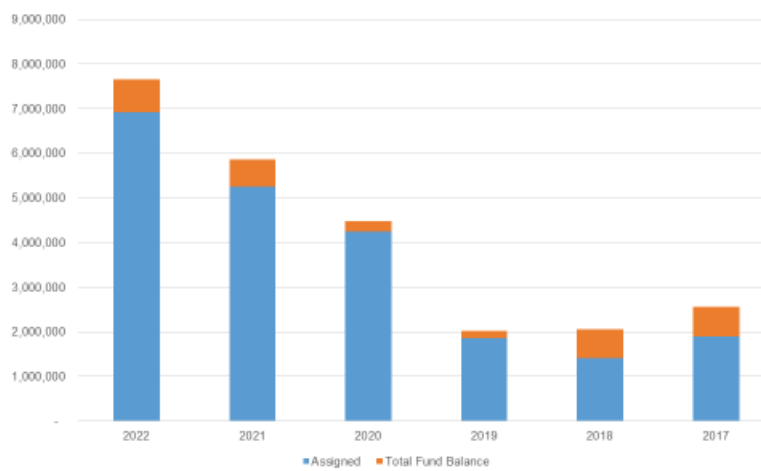
- Expenditures were \$1.3 million below appropriations
  - Favorable variances split amongst salaries, fringe, professional services, and supplies / materials
- School expended \$1.2 million in Federal ESSER funds that were new in 2022
- School Lunch Fund recognized net increase in net position of \$991 thousand for a total of \$2.1 million
  - Will need a plan to reduce net position, best practice not to carry more than 3-4 months average expenditures

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### School Department Fund Balance: Last Six Years



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### Water Department

- Operating revenues amounted to \$4.2 million, down slightly from prior year revenue of \$4.3 million
- Operating expenses were \$3.0 million, down from prior year amount of \$3.7 million
- Operating income of \$1.3 million in 2022 compared to \$536 thousand operating income in 2021
- Fund has net position of \$15.2 million – with a net position of \$8.3 million unrestricted for operational use

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## Sewer Department

- Operating revenues amounted to \$1.6 million, down slightly from prior year revenue of \$1.7 million
- Operating expenses were \$1.5 million, up from prior year amount of \$939 thousand
- Operating income of \$100 thousand in 2022 compared to \$718 thousand operating income in 2021
- Fund has net position deficit of \$126 thousand

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## Town Pension Plans

- Plans are administered through the State of Rhode Island
  - MERS General Employee Plan funded at 87.54%
  - MERS Fire Plan funded at 85.56%
  - MERS Police Plan funded at 85.95%
  - Teachers Retirement Plan funded at 66.50%
- The Town has made all required contributions to these plans as prescribed by the State dating back to 2014 (introduction of GASB 68).
- Total State Plan Net Pension Liability reported in the 2022 financial statements totals \$63.4 million

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## Other Post-Employment Benefits

- Town plan funded at 11.0% with a total net OPEB liability of \$18.1 million
  - Context – plan was funded at June 30, 2021 at 12.0%, down 1% from prior fiscal year due to net investment activity offset by actuarially required contribution being met
  - Plan was funded at 4.3% in 2018

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## Recommendations / Other

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- Continue to develop month end and year end checklists to ensure all balance sheet items are reconciled to source documentation – specifically as it relates to Sewer Assessment receivables
- Continue cybersecurity training on an annual basis – recommending performing vulnerability testing proactively.
- The Town implemented GASB 87 for Leases. The impact of this standard increased assets for lease receivables and increased deferred inflows for lease revenue by \$1,992,194 and also increased right of use assets and lease liability by \$318,950 at July 1, 2021.

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## Uniform Guidance

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- In accordance with Uniform Guidance we selected one Federal program for compliance testing
  - Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER)
- No noncompliance was noted during our testing thus far

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## Questions?

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Mr. Mollis thanked Kyle Connors, Marcum, the Audit Committee, and the Finance Department for completing the audit in a timely manner. Having the Audit completed is beneficial during the budget preparation process.

President Mancini thanked Mr. Connors for a very precise and easily understood presentation.

Councilor Page stated that there is nothing in our financials thus far that would be a concern. Mr. Connors stated that the financial statements are fairly stated and he doesn't expect anything to change at this point.

Councilor Mandel thanked Mr. Connors, the Audit Committee, and Mr. Lathrop. Councilor Mandel asked why the Public Works Budget was underspent and why the Sewer Department's revenues were down. Mr. Mollis stated that he doesn't have the information in front of him, but he can say that the favorable result in the Public Work's Budget is most likely due to the result of some positions not being filled. We didn't expend all of our capital fund and he assumes that snow removal had no effect as we moved that to a restricted fund. As far as the Sewer Fund is concerned, the operating income was down by \$100,000 which was as a result of an expenditure increase. He further stated that this is an enterprise fund which does not affect taxpayers, but the Sewer Department is something that we will want to talk about in detail during budget discussions because we are going to present a budget that has a functional structural deficit. We hope to address that with additional tie-ins and Wickford Elementary. We did have a number of appeals that were granted to a certain extent which reduces the budgeted revenue.

Councilor McCoy stated that he wants to be sure he understands the pension piece where the state administers the four pensions listed in the audit, and the Town has paid all the required contributions at 100% so the reflection of percentage funded is correct. Mr. Connors stated that throughout the state every town and city participates in the MERS plan, North Kingstown has made 100% of their contributions to MERS. If the Town wants to over contribute to the plan, the state wouldn't accept it. President Mancini stated that most pension funds are not 100% funded.

Councilor McCoy stated that 1.5% of taxes were not collected which he felt was significant. Mr. Mollis stated that the collection rate was 98.4% of our anticipated levy. That is an incredible amount which is most likely above the statewide average and is 2% more than we collected two years ago. Finance Director Lathrop stated that when we talk about collection, we talk about the current year. The 1.4% we will collect in subsequent years is reflected in prior years taxes. In the past, the collection rate was approximately 96% in the levy year.

President Mancini stated that Mr. Connors indicated that the school Lunch Fund has approximately a \$2.1 million surplus. He assumes that is because kids studied from home during COVID. He asked the Manager to work with the Chair of the School Committee to ensure that we don't have a problem with the federal government in the future. Mr. Connors stated that typically those funds are earmarked for the school lunch program. In answer to President Mancini's question how do we avoid challenges from the federal government, Mr. Connors stated that there are a few ways that can be done. North Kingstown is not the only community dealing with this issue as during COVID school lunch was free and funds from the government were higher than what we were realizing in expenses. Going forward, prices could be adjusted to reduce the burden to the families and investments could be made in upgrading equipment. Again, this has to be used for lunch programs.

Councilor Page stated that Trish Cawley, the head of food services has done a fantastic job during the Pandemic by making sure the kids had lunches as well servicing the Food Pantry. If anyone could make a good suggestion on how to spend these funds, it would be Trish Cawley.

President Mancini thanked Mr. Connors for his presentation.

Mr. Connors stated that it was a pleasure working with the Finance team as well as the School Department.

Motion by Councilor Anderson, seconded by Councilor McCoy and unanimously

VOTED: To receive and file the Annual Audit Report for Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2022.



7. Presentation by the Asset Management Commission/Receive and File the Capital Improvement Program for FY2024-FY2028

Edward Cooney, Chair of the Asset Management Commission gave the following presentation:



Town of North Kingstown  
Asset Management Commission  
FY 2024– FY 2028 CIP

February 6, 2023  
North Kingstown Town Council

## Process

- AMC met four times to discuss Department requests
  - November 10<sup>th</sup> December 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, January 5<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>
  - Public Safety, Public Works, Recreation, Library School, & Water Departments made presentations
  - Town Manager & Finance Director made a presentation as well

## 2018 Bond Referendum

- Voters approved \$27.0 million of authorized bonds on November 6, 2018
  - \$13.5 million for School Department projects
  - \$13.5 million for Town projects
- Period of deferred maintenance coincided with “debt cliff”
  - Able to complete projects without additional strain on operating budget or increase tax rates

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## 2018 Bond Referendum

- Town
  - Only project remaining is the closure of the Landfill on Hamilton Allenton Rd.
    - Will not be completed until a later date
- School
  - \$1.8 million remaining to be spent in FY 2024 (summer 2023)
    - Slab & Flooring Work in HS
    - Several Outstanding projects in elementary schools

## Three Major Projects

- Three Major Projects were presented for discussion this year
  - 1) New Middle School & 3:1 Elementary School
  - 2) Public Safety Headquarters
  - 3) Recreation Center

## New School Buildings

- January 18<sup>th</sup> School Committee's Facilities Subcommittee meeting with Mario Carreno from RIDE's School Building Authority
  - North Kingstown eligible for a maximum enhanced reimbursement rate of 52.5% if certain steps are met by December 31, 2023.
  - If not, the Town will be reimbursed at a lower 35.0% rate for any new building projects

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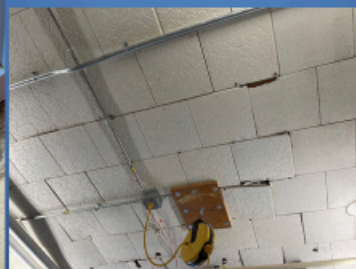
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## New School Buildings (Cont.)

- The School Building Authority's mantra is "Newer with Fewer"
  - Current projects in front of SBA are approximately \$80.0 million for a new middle school and \$80.0 million for combining 3 elementary schools into 1
  - To receive enhanced rate these projects need to be under contract by 12/31/2023 & completed by 12/31/2028
- Not ranked by AMC because not initially included in NKSD proposal

## New School Buildings (Cont.)

Project	Cost	Enhanced Rate 52.5%	Current Rate 35.0%	Difference
Middle School	\$80.0	\$38.0	\$52.0	\$14.0
Elementary	80.0	38.0	52.0	14.0
Total	\$160.0	\$ 76.0	\$104.0	\$28.0



# Public Safety Headquarters

- Detailed Process last two years to meet needs of department the community for next 50 years
- Council authorized an RFP for consultants to explore sites and cost estimates
  - Hired DBVW
  - Original budget \$40.0 - \$45.0 million
  - Included in its request a scaled down version of \$21.5 - \$31.5 million
  - Project would meet the needs of the community at the current site of Station1 and the Police Department
  - This proposal would have the project completed in stages

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## Public Safety Headquarters (Cont.)

This project was ranked the #1 priority of the Asset Management Commission



## Recreation Center

- Leisure Services had a group study this project and have identified 3 properties to place a Recreation Center.
  - 2 Town Owned and 1 Privately Owned
  - Build in 2 phases



## Recreation Center (Cont.)

- Phase 1
  - 50,000 sq ft for \$25.0 Million
  - Basketball, Volleyball Pickleball, indoor track meeting spaces, etc.
- Phase 2
  - Indoor Turf Fields, Outside playing surfaces \$15.0 Million

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## Recreation Center (Cont.)

- Total project costs \$40.0 million
  - \$5.0 million from grant and other identified funds
  - \$35.0 million from voter approved bonds
  - Includes \$2.0 million for land acquisition
- Not identified as a top priority by Asset Management in its ranking scale

## Path Forward to November

- 1) Engage Citizens (series of “Town Hall” explanatory meetings)
- 2) Meet with residents in affected neighborhoods
- 3) Devise strategic messaging and present w/ to local community groups
- 4) Raise visibility of the project(s)
- 5) Reach voters through inserts in regular bulletins (i.e. The Puddle)
- 6) Mobilize supporters

## Considerations

- AMC members have concerns about this level of borrowing with the current interest rates
- We ask you to consider:
  1. Shovel-Readiness of the projects
  2. Project funding resources
    - Permanent loss of enhanced rate for schools
  3. Capacity of Town and School Departments to get these projects shovel ready while managing tight deadlines to maintain funding and control costs

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## Debt Study

- Recommend the Town Manager and Finance Director present a cost benefit analysis of options/timing of requests to the Council
  - Increasing Public Safety request to \$31.5 million, timing of Phase 2 of Rec Center
  - Out year costs of borrowing and year over year changes to the debt ratio
  - Most importantly will the Town have the bandwidth to borrow in an emergency

## CIP Rankings

- Four Funding Sources:
  - Authorized Bonds
  - Enterprise Funds
  - Non-Enterprise Funds
  - School Department
- Seven members submitted priority rankings
  - 1 being lowest priority 5 being highest priority
  - 35 would be highest possible score

## Enterprise Funds

1. Water Main Condition Assessment (32/35)
2. Replacement of Watermain in Saunderstown Village (26/35)
3. Water Supply Redundancy/Source Augmentation (24/35)

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## Non-Enterprise Funds

1. Public Safety Complex (32/35)
2. (tie) Replacement of 2 fire doors & frames on lower level at Library (31/35)
2. (tie) Road Maintenance Projects (31/35)
2. (tie) Senior Center HVAC Improvements (31/35)

## School Department

1. Fire Alarm System – Hamilton EI (34/35)
2. Generators – All Schools Add or Replace (33/35)
3. Physical Plant Improvements (28/35)

## Departmental Requests

	Pre-24	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total
Public Safety	\$ 0.1	\$ 31.6	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 31.7
Public Works	1.3	1.0	2.0	4.0	1.0	1.0	10.3
Recreation	6.2	10.5	5.5	6.1	0.4	-	28.7
School	1.6	2.3	1.5	1.5	-	-	6.9
Library	0.4	0.1	15,000	1.0	-	-	1.5
Water	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	-	-	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 9.8</b>	<b>\$ 45.6</b>	<b>\$ 9.1</b>	<b>\$ 12.7</b>	<b>\$ 1.4</b>	<b>\$ 1.0</b>	<b>\$ 79.6</b>

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## Requests by Fund Source

	General Fund	Enterprise	Authorized Bonds	Unauthorized Bonds	Grants & Other
Public Safety	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 31.5	\$ 0.2
Public Works	8.5	-	1.7	-	0.1
Recreation	7.1	0.7	-	20.0	1.0
School	6.8	-	-	-	0.05
Library	0.035	-	-	1.0	0.5
Water	-	0.45	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 22.44</b>	<b>\$ 1.15</b>	<b>\$ 1.7</b>	<b>\$ 52.5</b>	<b>\$ 1.85</b>



## AMC Recommended Projects

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total
Water Main	\$0.05	\$0.05	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 0.1 M
Saunderstown WM	TBD	-	-	-	-	TBD
Water Supply	0.05	0.05	0.05	-	-	0.15 M
Public Safety HQ	31.6	-	-	-	-	31.6 M
Library Doors	15,000	-	-	-	-	15,000
Roads	0.8	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	4.8 M
Senior Center HVAC	0.1	-	-	-	-	0.1 M
Fire Alarm	0.3	-	-	-	-	0.3 M
Generators	0.5	-	-	-	-	0.5 M
Physical Plant	0.5	0.5	0.5	-	-	1.5 M
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 33.9 M</b>	<b>\$ 1.6 M</b>	<b>\$ 1.55 M</b>	<b>\$1.0 M</b>	<b>\$1.0 M</b>	<b>\$ 39.05 M</b>

## Recommended Projects by Source

	General Fund	Enterprise	Unauth Bonds	Grants & Other
Water Main	\$-	\$100,000	\$-	\$-
Saunderstown WM	-	TBD	-	-
Water Supply	-	150,000	-	-
Public Safety HQ	-	-	31.5 M	100,000
Library Doors	15,000	-	-	-
Roads	4.8 M	-	-	-
Senior Center HVAC	162,200	-	-	-
Fire Alarm	330,000	-	-	-
Generators	480,000	-	-	-
Physical Plant	1.5 M	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7.2 M</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>	<b>\$31.5 M</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>

## Other Recommendations

- 1) Present Clear Funding Plans in the Budget
  - Create an Asset Protection Fund by Town Council Ordinance
  - Continue to Clearly Identify Projects funded in FY 2024
  - Publish a five-year plan for projects and show the funding
- 2) Create and fill and FTE for a Grant Writer
- 3) Encourage Greater Collaboration between Town Management and the School Department

## Next Steps

- Asset Management will meet twice in April
  - One meeting to discuss Town's Facilities Assessment
  - One meeting to discuss School's Facilities Assessment
- Once a decision has been made about the fall
  - AMC will meet again

## Thank You

- Adam White, Kim Jones, Kris Kinder
  - Kim has been very supportive in our efforts over the years– Congratulations on your retirement
- Ralph Mollis, Jim Lathrop, Mike Waterman
- Most importantly the members of AMC
  - Great group of dedicated volunteers willing to give up their free time to help to put together this document for you.

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President Mancini thanked Mr. Cooney for his presentation and the great group of volunteers who serve on the Asset Management Commission. He further stated that we have a lot of capital needs and there is only one way to tackle this and that is head on. It is clear to him that our facilities have not been properly maintained and we need to do something about it.

Councilor Mandel stated that in the report the Old Town House is projected to cost \$135,000 in necessary maintenance and he asked what the context is on where we are going with the Town House. Mr. Cooney stated that request was made by Public Works. President Mancini stated that the last Council approved that request for a roof. He further stated that we should hold off on the discussion of the Old Town House as there is a group of citizens interested in forming a non-profit to raise money for this building. He further stated that right now the Old Town House is the least of our concerns and needs to be discussed separately.

Councilor McCoy stated that he would like to thank the Town Manager, the Police Department, and Fire Department for the tour of Station 1 today as it was very enlightening. He was also able to tour Wickford Middle School. One observation he made about the public safety building is that while it is easy to look at the value of a recreation center, people need to be aware that there is a value of having proper facilities for our public safety personnel. As we have the deliberations about funding for these projects, he would like everyone to keep in mind that while

it may not seem something you see as much as the pickleball court, it is something that is needed by our Town and worthy of the investment.

Councilor Anderson stated that she and Councilor Page took a tour of the public safety complex and what struck her was that this isn't a wish list but a need list. The Chief pointed out that the equipment and fire trucks as they are improved over time will not fit in the existing station. She agrees with Councilor McCoy that the public safety complex is a need for our community as well as all of these projects are important.

Mr. Cooney stated that we have many needs, and all these projects are important.

President Mancini stated that he thinks the School Department has been through quite a bit over the last couple of years and he is confident that there will be superb collaboration between the Town and School Department. He appreciates that the Chair of the School Department is in attendance tonight. President Mancini asked why a new school was not included as a project. Mr. Cooney stated that it wasn't presented to the Asset Management Commission. Mr. Cooney stated that there is a lot of stuff going on at the meeting with the School Superintendent and Mr. Waterman. They presented their CIP, and they chose to exclude a new school; however, it was part of the discussion. In answer to President Mancini's question if the Asset Management Commission believes it is a high priority to build a new middle school, Mr. Cooney stated that he can't speak for the Commission; however, he feels it is an important project to be investigated further especially when we could potentially get back an additional 17.5% in funding.

President Mancini asked if Mr. Cooney is aware of another community who has a specific position for a grant writer to secure funding for capital projects. Mr. Cooney stated that he is not aware, but he also thinks that we could look to private foundations for projects like the recreation center. He doesn't think the current staff has the time to secure these grants. Mr. Cooney stated that he believes the Town has received DEM Grants for playgrounds.

President Mancini stated that clearly the Town has significant capital needs. The Asset Management Commission has pointed out that not only are borrowing costs going to increase but so are construction costs. This is a real challenge for our community as we have several facilities that are significantly deficient which we must address over time.

Councilor Page stated that she appreciates the Asset Management Commission's work on the CIP. When the school presented their issues, she agrees it is hard not to pursue the newer and fewer schools' incentive of an additional 17.5%. Many years ago, when she was on the School Committee she sat on the Asset Management Commission as the School Committee Representative. She appreciates this document and all the work that goes into preparing it. She does like the main priorities of water issues as it is critical, and we must put a priority to the public safety complex. We need to take care of our infrastructure.

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President Mancini asked if the Asset Management Commission has any opinion on one or multiple bond questions. Mr. Cooney stated that was not discussed; however, he thinks it all depends on how you pair the projects/questions. The Asset Management Commission does believe that the bond should be for a full build out and not a phased project. President Mancini stated that he agrees as we learned that lesson with the Town Hall.

President Mancini thanked Mr. Cooney and said he appreciates Mr. Cooney's professionalism.

Motion by Councilor Mandel, seconded by Councilor Page and unanimously.

VOTED: To receive and file the Capital Improvement Program for FY2024-FY2028.

### **III. CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion by Councilor Page, seconded by Councilor Mandel and unanimously

VOTED: To approve Consent Agenda Item Numbers 8 through 17 as presented with the exception of Agenda Items Numbers 8 and 12.

8. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Councilor Mandel, seconded by Councilor Anderson and unanimously

VOTED: To continue the approval of minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 9, 2023 to the Town Council Meeting of February 27, 2023 to allow the Town Clerk to make amendments as provided by Councilor Mandel.

9. Tax Abatement List #867

VOTED: To approve Tax Abatement List #867 submitted by Deb Garneau, Tax Assessor, in the amount of \$5,967.34; and it was

FURTHER VOTED: That overpayments, if any, resulting from these abatements are hereby approved for refund by the Tax Collector.

10. Receipt of Donation

VOTED: To accept with gratitude the following donation in the amount of \$4,000.00:

For: Beechwood Senior Center	
To be used for Instructors	
From: North Kingstown Senior Association	\$4,000.00

11. Receipt of Donation

VOTED: To accept with gratitude the donation of the following three (3) Original Paintings and Prints to be displayed at the Town Hall:

- Donated by Jean Chapman - an original painting by Professor Herbert Cross, resident of Pleasant Street, depicting Goodman's Wharf prior to the 1938 Hurricane
- Donated by Sarah Bell - a framed John Mecray print from the collection of the late Hon. Robin Porter and Reverend Marsue Harris
- Donated by Sarah Bell - an original Loring painting from the collection of the late Reverend Marsue Harris

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12. Award of Contract

Motion by Councilor Mandel, seconded by Councilor Anderson and unanimously

VOTED: To award a five (5) year contract for the Fire Department for Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) Systems and Accessories to Avive Solutions, Inc., 223 Mississippi Street, Unit 2, San Francisco, CA 94107, in the amount of \$89,509.53 as follows:

Year 1	Sixty (60) Avive Connect AED Systems & accessories	\$22,549.53
Year 2	Maintenance/Communications Plan	\$16,740.00
Year 3	Maintenance/Communications Plan	\$16,740.00
Year 4	Maintenance/Communications Plan	\$16,740.00
Year 5	Maintenance/Communications Plan	\$16,740.00

Funding is from Rescue Account 16707020-530605.

13. Approval of Purchase

VOTED: To approve the purchase of a Tire/Wheel Balancer for the Department of Public Works from Mohawk Lifts LLC, PO Box 110, Amsterdam, NY 12010 (State of RI MPA #548), in the amount of \$13,021.22.

Funding for this purchase is from the FY2023 Budget – Highway Capital Outlay Account 00110020-550501.

14. Award of Bid

VOTED: To award the bid for the Water Department for a Portable Vacuum Unit for Valve Box Clean Out to E.H. Wachs, 600 Knightsbridge Pkwy, Lincolnshire, IL 60069, in the amount of \$28,120.00.

Funding is from Water Department Other Capital Purchases Account – 44040050-550701.

15. Class B-Full Alcoholic Beverage and Victualling Licenses (amend hours of operation)

VOTED: To amend the hours of operation on their Class B-Full Alcoholic Beverage and Victualling Licenses for West Passage Brewing Company LLC, 7835 Post Road, as follows:

From: Friday 3:00 p.m. - 11:30 p.m.  
 Saturday 11:30 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.  
 Sunday 11:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

To: Friday 7:30 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.  
 Saturday 7:30 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.  
 Sunday 7:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

16. Victualling and Dance License Renewals

VOTED: To approve to December 1, 2023 the following list of Victualling and Dance License Renewals, subject to taxes and water paid to date and compliance with the recommendations of the Building Official, the Fire Marshall, and the Water Department.

VABDJ Renewal  
 TC 2/6/2023

NK #	NAME	DBA	BUSINESS LOCATION	PHONE	SEATS	HOURS	LIC. HELD
135	HITM ENTERPRISES INC	THE PLACE	95 BROWN ST	294-0800	16	11:00 AM- 11:00 PM	V
262	THE TALENT FACTORY LLC		6171 POST RD	523-7966	N/A	4:00 PM -9:00 PM	D

All taxes/water assessments have been paid to date 01/22/2023 Collection Dept.

Date 01/22/2023

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17. Victualling License (transfer)

VOTED: To approve to December 1, 2023 the application for transfer of a Victualling License from Buddy's Ice Cream Corp., dba The Inside Scoop, 30 Ten Rod Road, to Jules Inside Scoop, LLC, 30 Ten Rod Road, subject to taxes and water paid to date; receipt of a certificate from the Rhode Island Department of Health; receipt of a Rhode Island Retail Sales Tax Permit; and compliance with the recommendations of the Fire Marshall, the Planning Department, the Water Department, and the Building Official.

**IV. REPORTS**

18. Report by the Town Manager

Town Manager Mollis gave the following report:

- A reminder that Wickford Village is once again being considered as USA Today Reader's Choice "Best Historic Small Town of 2023". We were honored to receive this designation in 2022. The public can help us receive this distinction by voting once per

day from now until February 18th. The link on how to vote can be found on all our Social Media Platforms. Thank you.

- We continue our work on the FY2024 Budget. A reminder to the general public on some dates. I will be presenting the FY2024 Budget to the Town Council at your March 13th Council Meeting. The Town Council will meet with Department Heads and me all day on Thursday, March 16th and the evening of March 20th before adopting a Preliminary Budget that night. The Public Hearing on the Budget will be Wednesday, April 19th.
- A few updates for the Town Council:

The Planning Department is working on next steps relative to the Presentation they made to the Town Council on Recreational Marijuana. They will be presenting information to our Planning Commission over their next two meetings for their review which will be followed by a planned introduction and First Reading of an appropriate Ordinance during one of your March Town Council Meetings.

We are still working on follow up on the Short-Term Rental presentation made to the Town Council recently.

We are preparing the RFP for the Community Energy Aggregation Program which the Town Council directed per your Resolution of November 28th.

And we hope to introduce the long-awaited presentation on a hopeful Recreation Center here in North Kingstown. Some of the School Department Building Plans have affected this introduction of this project, and I feel it is best to continue working with the School Department on these plans before introducing a solid Recreation Center Presentation to the Town Council. I hope to have this on one of your Agendas in March.

- I want to let the Town Council, and the general public, know that we are aggressively pursuing funding for the installation of EV Charging Stations for our Municipal Office Building, our Municipal Parking Lot in Wickford, and potentially 80 Boston Neck Road. This would be in addition to the Charging Stations we had installed at our municipal golf course. The State is working with us and they are hoping to embark on Phase 2 of their grant and funding program which would be available to municipalities sometime this summer. I will keep you up to date.
- As you know, Quonset Development Corporation has introduced their plans for a Workforce Housing Project within the Quonset Business Park. The plan is for primarily studio and one-bedroom rental units. The Quonset Development Corporation approved the variance necessary for this project and QDC is now seeking the concurrence of the North Kingstown Planning Commission. Our Planning Director is in discussions with our Town Solicitor as to the role of the Town and the Planning Commission and we will be communicating with Steve King of QDC as well.

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- I want to congratulate the partnership of the R.I. Youth Theatre and our own Recreation Department in their work on the ROCK SHOW receiving the “Best New Play or Musical” for the 2022 Broadway World Rhode Island Awards. This partnership began with an introduction from then Council Person Kerry McKay. The show was inspired by the North Kingstown Rune Stone and received the assistance of our Town Historian, Tim Cranston. This show appeared at our Beach Bandstand this summer and was well received.
- The Town --- and I --- want to welcome Interim School Superintendent Frank Pallotta. Dr. Pallotta brings nearly 50 years of experience and an impeccable reputation to the North Kingstown School Department. We had nearly a 3 hour meeting, along with the School Committee Chair & Council President, on his first day on the job where we covered and addressed numerous topics, including the upcoming budget and infrastructure plans. We are excited to work with Dr. Pallotta as he will serve the North Kingstown School System and our students well.

## V. NEW BUSINESS

19. Amendments to the Town Council Meeting Schedule

VOTED: To amend the Town Council Meeting Schedule for 2023 as follows:

- Change the Regular Meeting of April 3, 2023 to March 27, 2023
- Change the Budget Public Hearing of April 17, 2023 to April 19, 2023

20. Veterans Memorial Scholarship Fund Committee - Amendment to Membership and Appointment

Motion by Councilor McCoy, seconded by Councilor Page and unanimously

VOTED: That the Town Council vote of September 12, 1994 modifying the composition of the Veterans Memorial Scholarship Fund Committee is hereby amended to increase the membership from three (3) members to five (5) members to include a Town Council Representative and a Citizen's Representative; and it was

FURTHER VOTED: To appoint Councilor McCoy, Town Council Representative to the Veterans Memorial Scholarship Fund Committee to July 1, 2024; and it was

FURTHER VOTED: To appoint Brett Mallery, 731 Annaquatucket Road, Citizen's Representative to the Veterans Memorial Scholarship Fund Committee to July 1, 2024.

21. Sexual Assault Awareness Month Proclamation

Motion by Councilor Anderson, seconded by Councilor McCoy and unanimously

VOTED: To pass the following Proclamation:

APRIL 2023 – SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, nationally one in three women and one in four men will experience some form of sexual assault in their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, Sexual Assault Awareness Month draws attention to the fact that sexual violence is widespread and has implications for every community member; and

WHEREAS, there is compelling evidence that we can be successful in reducing sexual violence through prevention education, increased awareness, and holding perpetrators who commit acts of violence responsible for their actions; and

WHEREAS, we must work together to educate our community about what can be done to prevent sexual assault and how to support survivors; and

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WHEREAS, everyone should be a leader in preventing and ending sexual violence. As employers, educators, parents, and friends, we all have an obligation to uphold the basic principle that every individual should be free from violence and fear; and

WHEREAS, we encourage every person to start conversations about what sexual violence is, how to prevent it, and how to help survivors connect with services, and to speak out against harmful attitudes and actions.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Town of North Kingstown does hereby proclaim April 2023 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in our community and we urge all citizens to recognize this month by dedicating ourselves to the task of improving the quality of life for all our citizens by starting a conversation about what is sexual violence, how to prevent it, and how to help survivors connect with services.

22. South Gould Island Public Recreation Plan Resolution

A resolution by Councilor Anderson, seconded by Councilor McCoy and unanimously passed as follows:

WHEREAS, the State of Rhode Island owns the southern 39 acres of Gould which are administered by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Government transferred that property to the State of Rhode Island in two tranches: In 1975, the southernmost 16.9 acres were transferred for the purpose of public recreation, which restriction was subsequently removed and replaced with a wildlife sanctuary restriction, and then, in 1989, 22.5 acres immediately north were transferred for use as a wildlife sanctuary; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Environmental Management, declared in 2018 that the future South Gould should be open for public recreation outside bird nesting season as part of the planned Bay Islands Park System; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Environmental Management has requested the US Army Corps of Engineers to perform an extensive physical hazard remediation; and

WHEREAS, the US Army Corps of Engineers has stated that their legal authority under the Formerly Used Defense Sites program is limited and does not allow them to perform an extensive physical remediation without additional US Congressional authorization and funding; and

WHEREAS, the office of US Senator Reed has called for “local and state partners... to coalesce around a plan and shared commitment” for the future recreational use of South Gould before additional Federal funds can be secured for a more extensive remediation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Town Council of the Town of North Kingstown requests that the Department of Environmental Management prepare a plan for public recreation on the southernmost 16.9 acres of Gould Island; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Town Council of the Town of North Kingstown further requests that the Department of Environmental Management collaborate with the Town of Jamestown to ensure that such a plan provides for:

- Removal of wildlife sanctuary deed restriction
- Remediation of physical hazards to enable public access
- Provision of potable water and sanitary facilities
- Creation of transportation infrastructure to enable public access
- Construction of fencing or other separation from the wildlife sanctuary to the north
- Provision of transportation of emergency services

and be it

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FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Town Council of the Town of North Kingstown authorizes the Town Manager to transmit this Resolution to the Department of Environmental Management, to the Federal Delegation, and to other interested municipalities for the purpose of encouraging their support.

This resolution take effect upon passage.

President Mancini stated that the Town Manager would be the point of contact for any communication or information regarding this issue.

### 23. Report of Town Council Office Hours Initiative

Councilor Mandel stated that he would like to report on the Office Hours held on the 5 Tuesdays in the month of January. Three people attended the first week, one person the second week, no one in the third week, seven people which included one repeat person in week 4, and in week 5



we had two people which included one repeat person. This suggests that there is interest in the community in having availability of Councilors on a periodic basis, but it also suggests that it does not justify having weekly office hours. He further stated that he would like to propose to continue having office hours to make the Council Members available. However, we can do it on a monthly basis with daytime hours once a month and nighttime hours once a month where one of us can make ourselves available in coordination with the Manager to find a time that works for everyone. He is happy to coordinate with Council Members on what time is convenient for them.

President Mancini stated that he appreciates Councilor Mandel's efforts on this matter; however, he works two jobs and can't make a commitment at this time. However, he is always available to meet with or speak with constituents at any time. At this time, he is not in a position to be able to commit to this. Councilor Mandel stated that he understands, and this would be done for which ever Council Member would be available and would like to participate. The fact that we had 13 parties participate over the 5 weeks is significant.

Councilor Anderson stated that she would like Councilor Mandel to consider once a month and alternate daytime hours and nighttime hours. She also suggested that the Council consider a virtual option for those who may still be uncomfortable in meeting in a public space. Councilor Mandel stated that is a great point and is worth exploring.

President Mancini suggested that Councilor Mandel coordinate a schedule for office hours. Councilor Mandel stated he would be happy to facilitate this as long as all the Council Members are supportive of the concept.

Councilor Page stated that she is supportive of the concept; however, she also works 2 ½ jobs and her issue is finding the time. She probably could schedule some time for a virtual option.

Councilor McCoy stated that he is in favor of doing this on a monthly basis and would have to see when we are proposing for dates in order to make a commitment for a specific time. In regard to a conversation we had earlier this evening about the AMC's recommendation about obtaining feedback from residents on some of these major projects, this would be a good venue for input of our residents. Obviously, it would be done in a full Council Meeting; however, for residents that would like to voice their opinion on these projects there is value there. Councilor Anderson stated she would agree with that however we would still need to do outreach to inform the public of these projects.

President Mancini thanked Councilor Mandel for facilitating this concept.

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24. Discussion on "How we communicate with residents"

Councilor Mandel stated that this item is somewhat related to our previous discussion and how we communicate with residents of the Town. He stated that by definition it is impossible to communicate enough, no matter what we do, by meeting every two weeks, our agendas are public and encourage public comment, we can never communicate enough. He further stated that he thinks constituents do appreciate outreach and communication. He has been thinking on how to accomplish this outreach and office hours are certainly one way of doing so. He thinks that regular updates after Council Meetings is appropriate individually as Council Members, and he and President Mancini have discussed an initiative to reach out to URI journalism students as another option to reach out to our constituents. We need to amplify our signal to tell residents what is going on. He also suggested potentially hosting a town forum as the Economic Development Advisory Board had done a few years ago. We have talked in various ways about affordable housing and getting this out to the community and a forum may be an option. He

thinks this is something the Council can take on or perhaps have the EDAB do something. Anything we do as outreach is useful to the extent we can.

President Mancini stated he agrees it is a challenging situation particularly since what he would call the “death of local news outlets”. He also struggles with this and there is no magic bullet. He thinks some of social media stuff becomes echo chambers and is not sure how effective it is. One thing we talked about with the last Council was what extent should we have Council liaisons to our various town committees and we took a survey and half of the committee members didn’t want council liaisons and half did. His thought is the first step would be to figure out how to extract the expertise, time and effort of our town committees. One option could be for the 50% of those committees that want a Council liaison we could appoint one. Those committees that don’t want a liaison we could ask them to provide a report to the Council. He doesn’t think we are communicating with our committees efficiently and we should look at how we do that as well as have them communicate with us. He suggested that council members think about how to communicate with our town committees and have that on a future agenda for discussion and go from there on the best way to communicate to the community.

Councilor Anderson stated that she thinks we need to think about what communication with residents means and thinks it is happening through informal channels which is just as valuable and informative. For example, the high school democracy night was a great opportunity to speak with high school students on issues that matter to them which was very valuable. She stated that if people are not communicating with us, we need to figure out what those barriers are. She is not sure there is an easy answer right now on how we would increase engagement with groups who are not representative in these conversations.

Councilor Mandel asked if we could put this on the next agenda for a discussion of committee liaisons.

Councilor Page asked if we should ask committees first. Mr. Mollis stated that the survey that was conducted was anonymous. Councilor Mandel suggested that we ask committees if they are interested in liaisons. Mr. Mollis suggested that we utilize staff to reach out to committees to gauge their interest. President Mancini stated that he would think about this a little more.

## 25. Correspondence

Ed Cooney (Chair, Asset Management Commission)  
2/5/23: Capital Improvement Plan (Dated 31-JAN-2023).

Brian Jenkins (Unknown)  
2/2/23: E-mail promoting white nationalist ideology and hate.

Robert Jones (Constituent)  
1/23/23: Comments and concerns pertaining to the NKTC’s legislative priorities.

Sarilee Norton (Audit Committee Member)  
1/24/23: Clarification of comments at 1/23/23 NKTC meeting.

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Joseph Piccinni (For Jamestown Town Councilor Erik Brine)  
1/23/23: Request to collaborate with North Kingstown on education systems. [Note: Email forwarded to Erin Earle].

Megan Reilly (Constituent)  
1/21/23: Inquiry about North Kingstown’s insurance coverage through the Trust.  
1/24/23: Feedback to members of the NKTC.  
1/31/23: Request for Proclamation for Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

Christa Thompson (District Director for Rep. Seth Magaziner)  
1/24/23: Invitation to the opening of Rep. Seth Magaziner’s District Office in Warwick, RI.

North Kingstown School Committee (Erin Earle)  
1/27/23: Announcement of Dr. Frank Pallotta as the new Interim Superintendent.

1/31/23: Announcement of the release of the Equity Audit Report.

2/3/23: Announcement about the United Against Hate event at URI on 3/2/23.

#### RI Public Expenditure Council

1/31/23: Press Release – RI Economic Growth Stalls in Q4.

2/3/23: RIPEC February 2023 Newsletter.

#### South County Tourism Council

1/23/23: Weekly Tidings.

1/30/23: Weekly Tidings.

2/6/23: Weekly Tidings.

#### Wickford Art Association

Recurring information on upcoming events.

Councilor Mandel made the following report on office hours held on Tuesday, January 31, 2023:

On January 31 I held Office Hours. I had two sets of visitors:

--Sandy and Tom Shaeffer, 79 Pine Tree Circle, raised several issues. Concerning the town beach, they urged that the Town provide beach access in the form of ramps leading down into the sand for individuals who are handicapped. They also asked the Town to clarify that individuals have access rights to the part of the coastline that is just south of the bandstand; according to them, the residents of the house just south of the bandstand yell at beachgoers who seek to walk on the water frontage in front of their property. They also alleged that there is a right of way from Cold Spring Road down to the beach. Additionally, they raised concerns about maintenance of the cemetery on Tower Hill Road, near the Carriage Inn, asserting that some trees on the cemetery property create a dangerous condition.

--Richard Santos, 137 Dana Road, came in to express his concerns that the Purchase and Sale Agreement on the Town annex at 55 Brown Street should not be allowed to be extended. He believes the proposed buyer is delinquent in paying utility bills for the property, and that she will not be able to meet her obligations. He urged that the Town terminate the P&S agreement and again put the property up for sale. Additionally, he urged that fixing the drainage and flooding issues on the parking lot behind the former drugstore on Brown Street should be the responsibility of the owners, allegedly Ocean State Job Lot, rather than the Town.

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Jeannette Alyward  
Town Clerk