

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 30th day of October, 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
James M. Callaghan, 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 October 30, 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.

President Mancini led those in attendance in a moment of silence for Sarah Roche.

4. Public Comment

Sarah Carter, 195 Crowfield, stated that she has two concerns regarding the CRMC Applications for oyster farms. She said she had no idea what was going on until a flyer ended up in her mailbox. She would like to have more notice so she could respond properly to the additions to the Oyster Farms. She also stated that some members of the community would like to not have a commercial endeavor directly in front of their homes.

Gerry Grabowski, 169 Georgia Avenue, stated that she was a former board member and President of the Wickford Art Association. She stated the reason the Wickford Art Festival is being held in Wilson Park is because of COVID and now the artists love it. She also was told that Phillips Street and Boston Neck Road will be under construction next year for the roundabout. Town Manager Ralph Mollis said they have asked that this construction not take place during the busy season. Ms. Grabowski further stated that Wickford Village is not handicap accessible. She said she would like to help bring people to the village and would be happy to drive them herself.

Brett Mallery, 731 Annaquatucket Road, stated that this is the last chance before voting and he doesn't think Bond Question One should be a combined question between the Safety building and the school. He is in support of both buildings and when he asked for the breakdown of the school, he received nothing about it. If the cost is overrun, who is held accountable. He also stated that on Bond Question Two, there is no operation cost. He believes there should be some concrete numbers available.

I. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Councilor Mandel, seconded by Councilor Anderson and unanimously

VOTED: To approve Consent Agenda Item Numbers 5 through 12 with the exception of Agenda Item Numbers 8 and 12.

5. Receipt of Donations

VOTED: To accept with gratitude the following donations in the amount of \$3,189.88:

For: Beechwood Senior Center To be used for Faith Fund Senior Assistance	
From: North Kingstown Senior Association	\$1,864.88
For: Holiday Giving Program	
From: Robert and Debra Semple	\$1,000.00
John and Kathy McGeehan	125.00
Beverly Wood	125.00
Virginia Gorman	75.00

6. Letter of Resignation

VOTED: To accept the letter of resignation from David Johnston, School Committee Representative, resigning from the Audit Committee, and that the Town Council send a letter of appreciation to him for the dedicated service he gave to the Town of North Kingstown.

7. Authorization to accept FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Funding

VOTED: To authorize the Town of North Kingstown to accept the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding to be used to update the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan in the amount of \$36,000.00, with a required Town match of \$4,000.00.

8. Sole Source Purchase

Motion by Councilor McCoy, seconded by Councilor Anderson and unanimously

VOTED: To approve the sole source purchase and a one (1) year Contract for the Police Department for six (6) Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR) Systems from Flock Group, Inc., 1170 Howell Mill Road, Suite 210, Atlanta, GA 30318, in the amount of \$20,400.00.

Funding is from Municipal Court - Misc. Expense Public Safety - Fund Balance Account #13003020-540519.

9. Approval of Contract Renewal

VOTED: To approve a one (1) year Contract renewal for the Department of Water Supply for a WaterSmart Software Platform for monitoring/analysis of the Town's water usage to WaterSmart, 1321 Upland Drive, Suite 8389, Houston, TX 77043, in the amount of \$27,060.00.

Funding is from the FY2024 Budget - Water Department - Contractual Services Not Otherwise Classified - Account #44040050-531206.

10. Ratification of approval of an Exhibition License (no vendors) (new)

VOTED: To ratify the Town Clerk's approval of the application for an Exhibition License with no vendors by The Pet Refuge, 500 Stony Lane, Mailing Address: PO Box 83, for a bazaar which was held on Saturday, October 28, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Cold Spring Community Center, 34 Beach Street, subject to taxes and water paid to date and compliance with the recommendations of the Fire Department, the Police Department, the Planning Department, and the Building Official.

11. Ratification of approval of an Exhibition License (51-61 vendors)

VOTED: To ratify the Town Clerk's approval of the application for an Exhibition License with 51-61 vendors by Show Me Reptiles LLC, 189 Surrey Drive, Troy, MO 63379, to hold a reptile and exotic pet expo on the grounds of Wide World of Indoor Sports, 1610 Davisville Road, which was held on Saturday, October 14 and Sunday, October 15, 2023, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., subject to taxes and water paid to date; receipt of a list of vendors at the Town Clerk's Office; and compliance with the recommendations of the Fire Department, the Police Department, the Building Official, and the Planning Department.

12. Exhibition License (61 or more vendors) (not to exceed 250 vendors)

Motion by Councilor McCoy, seconded by Councilor Mandel and was

VOTED: To continue to the Town Council Meeting of November 20, 2023 the approval of an application for an Exhibition License with 61 or more vendors by the Wickford Art Association, to hold the Wickford Art Festival – by the following Roll Call Vote:

Councilor Anderson	-	Yes
Councilor Mandel	-	Yes
Councilor Page	-	No
Councilor McCoy	-	Yes
President Mancini	-	Yes

Clerk’s note: This item was continued to allow the Wickford Art Association and the Wickford Merchants Association to discuss potential collaborative efforts agreeable by both parties.

II. REPORTS

13. Report by the Town Manager

Town Manager Mollis gave the following report:

- We had our bi-weekly meeting with Revolution Wind regarding their Off-Shore Wind Farm Project. The Contractor continues work on the excavation and offshore vessel activities such as dredging, surveying, etc. They will begin work on the steel casing this coming week which could result in minor noise and vibrations. They continue their active outreach to neighbors and businesses, which has been very successful and appreciated to date.

Residents can contact Revolution Wind at 251-2207 or at info@revolution-wind.com if they have any questions.

- North Kingstown’s LEARN365RI landing page within our town’s website is now live. This page provides comprehensive information relative to this exciting project. Once on our website, a visitor can hover over the residents’ link at the top of the page, scroll down to the left column and see a Learn365RI Link. The link includes details on the programs we’ll be rolling out under this initiative. We have rolled out the Youth Commission which is seeking applications and the first session of programming, which will include group counseling and after-school academic and wellness enrichment is seeking registrants. There is no cost to the participants and their families. We have a virtual meeting with the Governor’s Staff this Wednesday for an update and check-in. We’ve kept the Superintendent up to date and have invited him to attend this meeting as well. My thanks to our staff for their incredible efforts in this program.
- We’ve reached out to RIDOT to ask for a timeline on the activation of the traffic signal at Hamilton Elementary School. Their original response was that the electrical contractor was waiting for supplies to finish work on the controller and wiring for the new electrical service. Fortunately, they contacted us last week with an update that they expect the contractor to be back on the project this week to finish up their work. Once completed, they will then need to let the signal flash for 10 consecutive days prior to it being fully operational.

- I'm happy to welcome --- after a comprehensive application and interview process --- our new Deputy Finance Director Fung Chang. Fung comes to our town with over 9 years of experience in Municipal Government. Prior to joining us, Fung served as Finance Director in Warren, RI and was Deputy Finance Director of Portsmouth, RI prior to that. Fung will be a tremendous addition to our outstanding Finance Department.
- A brief update on an issue that I know is very important to this Town Council and an issue we've been addressing for years now, and that is Elm Grove Cemetery. I have been in regular contact with Attorney Dianne Izzo who has been engaged to serve as Legal Counsel to Elm Grove Cemetery. She has filed all missing annual reports, obtained a certificate of good standing, has reestablished this new non-profit, and has reestablished the Board of Directors. It was recommended that the Town have a seat on the Board so I have agreed to serve on their Board of Directors as Town Manager, and I will be attending the first meeting next Monday night. There's already been significant improvements at the Cemetery, and we hope this is just the first step in reestablishing this historic resting place. I want to thank Attorney Izzo for her efforts and success in this endeavor.
- As we prepare for the upcoming Budget Season, I want to give the Council, and the public, a summary of this past summer's 2023 Summer Camp Program. My thanks to Chelsey, and her staff, for their hard work this summer and to Chelsey for putting this information together for me.

Including the Teen Camp, we had 302 participants this year. Regretfully, we had 104 children ranging from 6 years old to 12 years old on a waiting list we were not able to accommodate due to staffing and space limitations. Our Summer Camp Program, including registration fees and various outside funding we've been able to successfully obtain, brought in total revenue of \$152,386. Our total expenses for Camp Payroll, supplies, expenses and field trips totaled \$206,104. The result is a total cost, expenses less revenue, of \$53,718. This is worked into our FY2024 Budget and is one of the reasons the Recreation Budget is no longer an Enterprise Fund.

- We also had a very successful Beach Season despite the difficult weekend weather we experienced all Summer. The total cost for our lifeguards, gate guards, maintenance, Porta Johns, weekly water testing, beach stickers, and supplies totaled \$126,217. We brought in \$52,750 in beach stickers, or parking passes, for 2023, for a total net cost, expenses less revenue, of \$73,467. This is also built into the FY2024 Recreation Budget and is something we would like to address over the next couple of years.
- We, town staff and I have had two very successful meetings with Mr. Ahren Cohen regarding the Council's directive to provide a plan to the Town Council which could utilize the Conservation Commission to appropriately handle groundwater responsibilities, potentially provide an opportunity for Groundwater Commission members to serve on the Conservation Commission and create new groundwork for this partnership to be successful. I want to thank the Town Council for setting this direction as this has been a very productive experience for staff and me. And I want to thank Mr. Cohen for his time, and professional expertise as he has been an amazing asset during these deliberations. We are completing our work and look forward to presenting a positive recommendation to the Town Council at your November 20th meeting.
- Council President Mancini, our legislative delegation, and I met with RIDOT Director Peter Alvit and his staff regarding our continued concerns with the traffic signals along Route 4. While Director Alvit has stated that, at this time, the timing of the lights is in a position he is most comfortable with, he did provide various long-term options to address this concern to the benefit of our residents. We are reviewing various options and look forward to continuing these discussions and hopefully have something to report to the Town Council and the community sometime soon.
- There is a Building Subcommittee Meeting this Wednesday night at 5:30pm at the School Department Administrative Offices. This is the final Subcommittee Meeting prior to next Tuesday's Special Election.

- Also, some meetings of interest:
 - I will be attending that bi-monthly meeting of the Governor's Workforce Advisory Committee, which I was appointed to, this Thursday morning, November 2nd.
 - I will be attending the State Short Term Rental Commission Meeting at the State House on November 8th.
 - We have our regular Executive Board Meeting of the RI League of Cities and Towns on November 14th.
 - And I will be joining a group of Mayors and Managers at a Workforce Round Table Meeting at Electric Boat on November 16th which will be followed by a guided tour of their facility.
- A reminder that Veterans Day is a week from Saturday, November 11th. We will be recognizing this day with a 10am parade along West Main Street, Brown Street, through Wickford and onto Boston Neck Road and Fairway Drive before concluding ceremonies at the North Kingstown High School. Also, our Municipal Offices will be closed Monday, November 13th in recognition of the Veterans Day Holiday.

14. Report by the Finance Director

Finance Director Deb Bridgham gave the following report:

The Council has been provided the September 2023 Budget report with their packet. This is the third month of the fiscal year.

Based on the current revenues and expenses that we are projecting, we are reporting a small surplus of \$272,650. The surplus is due to an increase in interest income, which has been invested in high interest-bearing accounts. We also have an increase in revenue from our net metering program.

We are concerned about several overtime lines, Consolidate Communications, and the Fire Department. After careful review of their current spending, and discussions with the Fire Chief, we have increased these line items by a total of \$300,000.

We will continue to monitor and refine projections as needed.

The Council thanked Ms. Bridgham for her report.

III. NEW BUSINESS

15. Coastal Resources Management Council Application Number 2023-09-052
(continued from October 16, 2023)

Motion by Councilor Page, seconded by Councilor McCoy and unanimously

VOTED: That no substantive objection be filed to Coastal Resources Management Council Application Number 2023-09-052 to allow Saltbox Sea Farm LLC, 218 Lindley Avenue, to construct and maintain a 3.8 acre expansion of the existing aquaculture farm and channel marked with navigational aids.

16. Coastal Resources Management Council Application Number 2023-10-006
(continued from October 16, 2023)

Motion by Councilor Page, seconded by Councilor McCoy and unanimously

VOTED: That no substantive objection be filed to Coastal Resources Management Council Application Number 2023-10-006 to allow Graham Watson, 101 Salisbury Avenue, to construct and maintain a 1.72 acre expansion of the existing aquaculture farm, Rome Point.

17. Adoption of Town Council Meeting Schedule for 2024

VOTED: To adopt the Town Council Meeting Schedule for 2024.

18. Correspondence

10/16/2023 – Rob Zimmer – Village Short-Term Rentals

10/16/2023 – James Hackett – Short-Term Rental Registration

10/17/2023 – Nancy Sherman – Short-Term Rentals

10/18/2023 – Stabilization of Real Estate Taxes

10/19/2023 – TANK Organization – [Columbus Day] Follow-Up

10/19/2023 & 10/23/2023 – Bob Egan – Invest in NK Bond Issues

10/26/2023 & 10/27/2023 – Matthew Griffin – Rome Point Aquaculture

10/28/2023 – Steve Alviti, Sr. – Saltbox Sea Farm Lease Expansion

10/30/2023 – TANK Organization – Flock Cameras

10/30/2023 – Jack Kliever – 2024 Wickford Art Festival Location

10/30/2023 – James Hackett – 2024 Wickford Art Festival Location

Councilor Mandel gave the following report of Office Hours held on October 24th:

- Dianne Izzo discussed the current status of Elm Grove Cemetery.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Jeannette Alyward
Town Clerk