

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 11th day of December, 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 December 11, 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.

4. Public Comment

President Mancini recognized that there are 37 students in the North Kingstown High School Music program that were accepted into the All State music ensembles.

George Lonquist, 58 Clover Court, stated that he would like to see an itemized budget of the School Department and would also like to endorse Megan Reilly for the upcoming vacancy on the School Committee.

Noeline Thomson, 5 Sea Grass Way, stated that there is a long list of qualifications for the person who is going to fill the vacancy on the School Committee. She is just asking for two. She asked that the person be someone who doesn't represent certain sides or political basis and asked that this person listen to all sides of an issue. She also asked that this person be genuinely concerned about the success of the School Committee itself. She asked that this person be able to build trust and a decent working relationship and not be a social media personality.

Ed Andrews, 50 North Road, asked the Council to put the recreation bond question back on the ballot.

Kathleen Guarino, 139 Summit View Lane, stated that she agrees with Noeline Thomson's comments. She stated that at the last Town Council Meeting, there was a comment made that said the Groundwater Committee was trying to be a watch dog or supervise the Water Department. She just wanted to state for the record that this is not accurate.

**I. SPECIAL BUSINESS**

5. Joint Meeting with the School Committee

School Committee Chair Erin Earle, Vice-Chair Robert Case, School Committee Member Jennifer Lima, and Superintendent Dr. Kenneth Duva were present for the joint meeting with the Town Council in accordance with RIGL 16-2-21.

Town Manager Ralph Mollis stated the following:

“As this is a State required joint meeting between the School Committee and the Town Council, I as the Town Manager have a very limited role of support and to provide any information that may be helpful.

First, in accordance with RIGL 16-2-2.1, the Town Manager shall submit to the School Committee an estimate of projected revenues for the next fiscal year which shall include only changes in the tax base and not the tax rate. While it is much too early to have an accurate projection of revenues for the upcoming fiscal year as the calendar year hasn’t ended yet, we have prepared the required projection which I have for each of you, and we are conservatively projecting an increase of 1.4% in total revenue from Fiscal Year 2024 – Fiscal Year 2025. This projection is based on our goal, and we hope to do all we can to have a limited or hopefully no increase in taxes for Fiscal Year 2025.

Town Manager Mollis distributed the following chart:

Town of North Kingstown			
	Adopted Budget FY24	Estimated Revenue FY25	% Increase
Taxes	85,295,302	86,359,189	1.25%
Prior Year Taxes	1,000,000	1,000,000	0.00%
Interest Late Pay	275,000	275,000	0.00%
QDC-Pilots	5,198,667	5,260,000	1.18%
Town Clerk	1,294,500	1,294,500	0.00%
Probate Court	53,000	53,000	0.00%
Police	1,185,300	1,185,300	0.00%
Harbor Master	136,000	136,000	0.00%
Animal Control	4,135	4,135	0.00%
Trans Ambulance	600,000	600,000	0.00%
Planning	67,500	67,500	0.00%
Code Enforcement	570,000	570,000	0.00%
Finance	511,661	800,000	56.35%
Recreation	383,000	390,698	2.01%
Assessment	150	-	-100.00%
Public Works	10,000	10,000	0.00%
MV Base	5,186,229	5,186,229	0.00%
MV Phase Out	192,589	192,589	0.00%
State-Pilot	1,006	1,006	0.00%
Pub Service	325,676	325,676	0.00%
Hotel, Meal & Bev	965,000	980,000	1.55%
Airport	60,000	60,000	0.00%
Housing Aid	949,516	950,000	0.05%
Other	725,000	725,000	0.00%
Allocated Cost	616,352	628,679	2.00%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>105,605,583</b>	<b>107,054,501</b>	<b>1.37%</b>

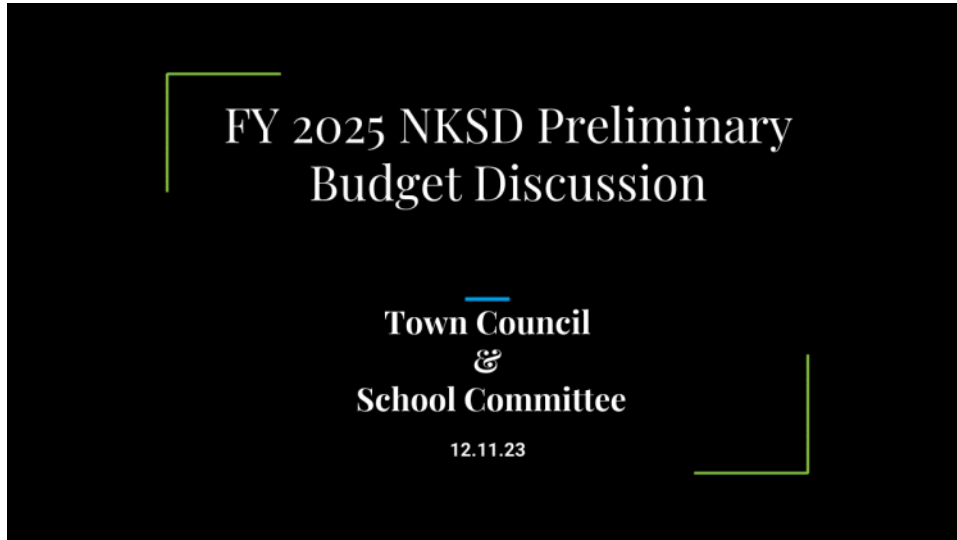
Historically, over these past 7 years, North Kingstown has provided an annual increase of over 3% to the School Department’s Budget. This appropriation is much higher than our neighboring communities.

Fortunately, we also want to recognize the School Department for their prudent operations of running surpluses each of those seven plus years as well. With our goal of having a limited or no increase in taxes in this upcoming fiscal year, we ask that you provide the most realistic and conservative budget for Fiscal Year 2025, looking at revenue and expenditure items that you historically run surpluses in, and consider reducing those line items in an effort to save taxpayer dollars.

I look forward to presenting a thorough and detailed budget presentation in less than 3 months, followed by numerous public opportunities as we review the Fiscal Year 2025 budget.

Thank you.”

Dr. Duva, Superintendent of Schools gave the following presentation:



### Budget Process:

- Our district strategic plan leads the discussion for our budget requests.
- Administrators meet with their building staff and department chairs to receive requests for the budget.
- Administrators make decisions based on what is educationally right for students and teachers.
- The Superintendent and Director of Finance review all requests for approval.
- Our budget is designed to fund expenses related to the known student population, the needs of the upcoming school year, and historical experiences related to programmatic expenses.
- We will consider the interests of the school community in developing our budget.
- The budget will provide a high quality education based on the academic and social-emotional needs of all students pre-K through 12th grade.

Priorities are to invest the community’s resources to promote **improvement, effectiveness, and efficiency** with a focus on:

- Vision and goals of our District Strategic Plan;
- Projected student enrollment for each grade;
- Prioritizing academic and social-emotional needs of students;
- Prioritizing instructional needs of teachers and staff;
- Curriculum and instruction needs based on school achievements and new educational reform;
- Enhancement and sustainability of our Facility and Technology infrastructures; and
- Human resources.

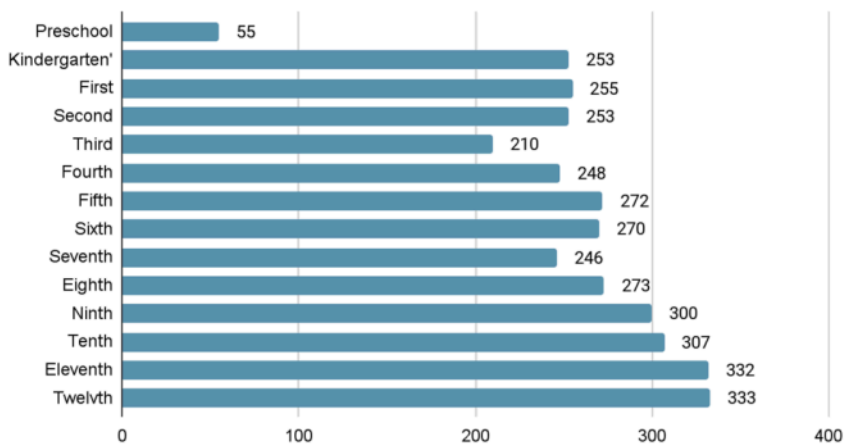
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### Overview of District

\$76,342,398	Total FY 24 School Budget
3781	Total Enrollment
1,643	Preschool through fifth grade
777	Middle School: sixth - eighth grade
1,319	Secondary: ninth through twelfth grade
20	Alternate Learning Placements
22	Out of District Placements
20%	Percentage of Free and Reduced
14.6%	Percentage of Differently Abled Learners
2.4%	Percentage of Multilingual Learners

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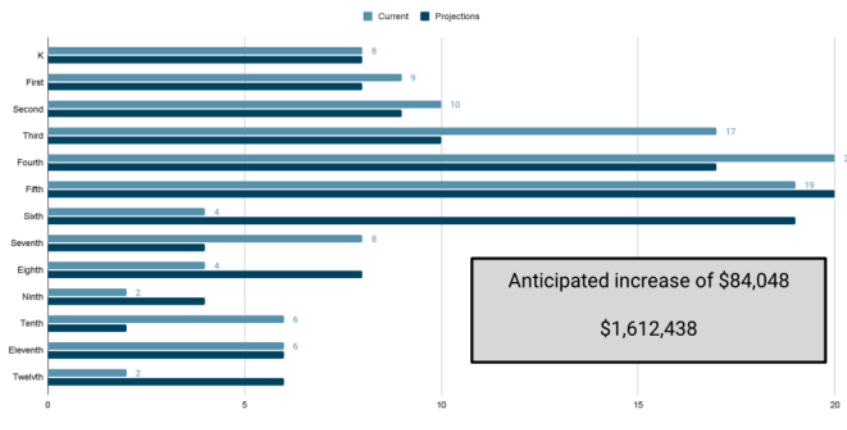
### Student Projections 2024/2025



### Enrollment and Staffing Impacts:

- Enrollment in grades prek through twelfth grade is expected to decline.
- 3,739 actual students in 23/24 and projection 3,658 for 24/25 (2.1% decrease)
- Anticipated overage in kindergarten at 3 Fishing Cove, Stony Lane, and Quidnessett
- Anticipated overage in first grade at Forest Park and Hamilton
- Further analysis of class projections, sections, and staffing will be completed for the elementary level.
- We are anticipating minor changes in special education programming at the elementary and middle school level that could impact staffing for next year.
- ESSER positions are being evaluated based on student needs in the areas of intervention and academic supports.

### Charter Student Projections



### Budget Impacts FY 25':

- Salary Increases (contractual):**
- ESP: 3% increase to steps and 2% increase on top of steps
  - NEANK/Admin: 2% increase
- Pension:**
- Employee Retirement System (certified personnel) 14.44% (.59 decrease)
  - Municipal Employee Retirement System 16.15% (.9 decrease)
- Health Insurance:**
- Budgeted increase of 5.5%
- Transportation:**
- Reviewing transportation options to limit the service from the Statewide program due to cost.
  - If we increase our ability to transport our students with vans it will decrease the cost of transportation with Statewide.
- Out of District Tuitions:**
- Plan for 1.5% increase

## FY 25' Anticipations

- ❖ Projected Expenditures: \$78,223,455
- ❖ Projected Revenues (\$16,546,806)
  - Tuitions: \$4,259,430
  - Preschool Tuition: \$150,000
  - State Aid: \$11,557,376
  - Medicaid: \$325,000
  - Other Earnings: \$155,000
  - Investment Earnings: \$100,000
- ❖ Anticipated Town Appropriation: \$61,676,649 (3.6% increase)

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## Facility Maintenance Expenditure

Under Rhode Island General Law 16-7-36(11), "Maintenance expenditures" means amounts spent for repairs or replacements for the purpose of keeping a school facility open and safe for use, including repairs, maintenance, and replacements to school facilities' heating, lighting, ventilation, security, and other fixtures to keep the facility in effective working condition.

- Maintenance shall not include contracted or direct custodial or janitorial services;
- expenditures for the cleaning of a school facility or its fixtures;
- the care and upkeep of grounds, recreational facilities, or parking lots;
- or the cleaning of or repairs and replacements to movable furnishings or equipment.

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## Budget Impacts FY 25':

### Capital Improvement Costs:

Potential increase in Operating Budget to meet requirements of the Maintenance of Expenditure.

- Rhode Island General Law 16-7-36(11), "Maintenance Expenditures"
- Square Footage of all school buildings times \$3.00 per sq ft;
  - 3% of total replacement value of buildings
  - 3% of operating budget

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The Council thanked Dr. Duva for his presentation.

### 6. Discussion – Invitation to the Legislative Delegation

President Mancini stated that the Council recently voted to request that the Legislative Delegation submit legislation to extend the deadline for the incentive bonuses from June 2024 to December 2024. He further stated that he would like to decide on an agreeable date for both the Town Council Members and the School Committee to invite the Legislative Delegation to a joint meeting to discuss priorities for the 2024 Legislative Session.

After a brief discussion, it was the consensus of both the Town Council and the School Committee to invite the North Kingstown Legislative Delegation to a joint meeting on Monday, January 8, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Town Clerk Alyward requested that the Council Members, the School Committee Members, the Town Manager, and the Superintendent forward the priorities by January 3<sup>rd</sup> so she can forward them to the delegation for them to be prepared for the meeting.

President Mancini thanked the School Committee and Dr. Duva for attending, and the Council looks forward to working with them in the upcoming budget discussions.

The Council recessed the meeting at 7:44 p.m.

The Council reconvened the meeting at 7:49 p.m.

**II. CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion by Councilor Page, seconded by Councilor Mandel and unanimously

VOTED: To approve Consent Agenda Item Numbers 7 through 19 as presented.

7. Approval of Minutes

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 30, 2023 as submitted by the Office of the Town Clerk.

8. Receipt of Donations

VOTED: To accept with gratitude the following donations in the amount of \$3,260.00:

For: Beechwood Senior Center	
From: North Kingstown Stamp Club	\$100.00
Anonymous	15.00
For: Beechwood Senior Center	
To be used for the Mealsite	
From: Anonymous	\$ 25.00
For: Holiday Giving Program	
From: Newcomers and Neighbors Club of North Kingstown	\$500.00
North Kingstown Woman's Club	500.00
Robert and Cheryl Suglia	500.00
Michael and Carol Oniskey	500.00
Narragansett Bow Hunters Association	430.00
Suzanne Mancini	200.00
Eleanor Osborne	100.00
Deborah Murphy	100.00
Kate Church	100.00
Lisa Burditt	100.00
Anne Huling	50.00
Mary Blue Hewitt	20.00
Inez Crowley	20.00

9. Acceptance of 2023 Homeland Security Grant Program – Annual DECON Grant

VOTED: To accept the grant from the 2023 Homeland Security Grant Program, through the RI Emergency Management Agency, in the amount of \$20,000.00, to be used by the Fire Department for training decontamination teams and maintaining the equipment.

10. Award of Bid

VOTED: To award the bid for the Recreation Department for McGinn Park Improvements to RAD Corp., dba Rad Sports, 171 VFW Drive, Rockland, MA 02370, in the amount of \$774,530.00.

Funding is from ARPA funds.

11. Award of Bid

VOTED: To award the bid for the Recreation Department for Wilson Park Improvements to Classic Turf Company, LLC, 437 Sherman Hill Road, Woodbury, CT 06798, in the amount of \$851,042.52.

Funding is from ARPA Funds.

12. Detective License Renewals

VOTED: To approve the following list of Detective License Renewals, expiring on December 1, 2024, subject to taxes and water paid to date, receipt of a bond, and receipt of a recommendation from the North Kingstown Police Department:

12/4/2023

Detective Renewal License  
Town Council  
12/11/2023

NK#	Name	Address	City	State	Zip	Business Add	Phone	email
40	Ryan J Gwaltney	154 Holly Hills Ln	Saunderstown	RI	02874	154 Holly Hills Ln	206-9884	rjginvestigations@gmail.com
31	Russell A Bertrand	591 Stony Ln	North Kingstown	RI	02852	6595 Post Rd	486-3999	bert.cgcri@verizon.net
9	Percy A Tucker	146 Brookside Dr	North Kingstown	RI	02852	146 Brookside Dr	885-4043	jaytuck@cox.net
5	Russell Tellier	149 Dawn Marie Ct	North Kingstown	RI	02852	149 Dawn Marie Ct	300-4876	russtellier@gmail.com
14	Richard Nagele	66 Walnut Rd	North Kingstown	RI	02852	66 Walnut Rd	474-2882	nagele@advantage411.com
54	Michael Clemente	6101 Post Rd #38	North Kingstown	RI	02852	6101 Post Rd #38	265-3438	mrandmrsdetectivereports@gmail.com
38	Lawrence O'Leary Jr	79 Greenmeadow Cir	North Kingstown	RI	02852	79 Green Meadow Cir	867-0009	detectiveoleary@gmail.com

All taxes/water assessments have been paid to date 12/11/23 collection dept

13. Holiday Sales License (renewal)

VOTED: To approve to July 1, 2024 the application for renewal of a Holiday Sales License by North Koffee Inc., 7726 Post Road, subject to taxes and water paid to date and receipt of a copy of their Rhode Island Retail Sales Tax Permit.

14. Refuse Collector – Commercial For Hire License Renewals

VOTED: To approve to January 1, 2025 the following list of Refuse Collector – Commercial For Hire License Renewals, subject to taxes, water, and any other assessments paid to date; receipt of a bond; inspection approval from the Transfer Station; and receipt of a Certificate of Insurance if needed:

Lic #	NAME	DBA	ADDRESS	TOWN	STATE	ZIP	PHONE	Reg #
25	D&N Equipment Services Inc.		169 Brown Street	Johnston	RI	02919	943-6315	RI 35600
22	PAUL R MUMFORD & SON CESSPOOL SERVICE INC		160 RAILROAD AVE	SAUNDERSTOWN	RI	02874	295-8505	RI 40469
65	WASTE MANAGEMENT OF RI INC		1610 PONTIAC AVE	CRANSTON	RI	02920	639-0878	RI 106575 93171
67	WASTE MANAGEMENT OF RI INC		1610 PONTIAC AVE	CRANSTON	RI	02920	639-0878	RI 413722 27638
68	WASTE MANAGEMENT OF RI INC		1610 PONTIAC AVE	CRANSTON	RI	02920	639-0878	RI 216983 1X165
69	WASTE MANAGEMENT OF RI INC		1610 PONTIAC AVE	CRANSTON	RI	02920	639-0878	RI 216984 1FW275
70	WASTE MANAGEMENT OF RI INC		1610 PONTIAC AVE	CRANSTON	RI	02920	639-0878	RI 413720 27636
71	WASTE MANAGEMENT OF RI INC		1610 PONTIAC AVE	CRANSTON	RI	02920	639-0878	RI 413726 27651
72	WASTE MANAGEMENT OF RI INC		1610 PONTIAC AVE	CRANSTON	RI	02920	639-0878	RI 415448 32594
73	WASTE MANAGEMENT OF RI INC		1610 PONTIAC AVE	CRANSTON	RI	02920	639-0878	RI 415449 32595
74	WASTE MANAGEMENT OF RI INC		1610 PONTIAC AVE	CRANSTON	RI	02920	639-0878	RI 418633 1CF348
75	WASTE MANAGEMENT OF RI INC		1610 PONTIAC AVE	CRANSTON	RI	02920	639-0878	RI 419996 52045
76	WASTE MANAGEMENT OF RI INC		1610 PONTIAC AVE	CRANSTON	RI	02920	639-0878	RI 490003 34055
77	WASTE MANAGEMENT OF RI INC		1610 PONTIAC AVE	CRANSTON	RI	02920	639-0878	RI 632886 28004
78	WASTE MANAGEMENT OF RI INC		1610 PONTIAC AVE	CRANSTON	RI	02920	639-0878	RI 632888 89802
79	WASTE MANAGEMENT OF RI INC		1610 PONTIAC AVE	CRANSTON	RI	02920	639-0878	RI 633525 79709
34	BM RUBBISH SERVICES INC	BLAKE MACERA RUBBISH	2380 MIDDLE RD	EAST GREENWICH	RI	01818	885-3243	RI 62960
8	ALLIED WASTE SERVICES MA LLC	REPUBLIC SERVICES	1080 AIRPORT RD	FALL RIVER	MA	02720	774-488-3523	89628
10	ALLIED WASTE SERVICES MA LLC	REPUBLIC SERVICES	1080 AIRPORT RD	FALL RIVER	MA	02720	774-488-3523	71968
12	ALLIED WASTE SERVICES MA LLC	REPUBLIC SERVICES	1080 AIRPORT RD	FALL RIVER	MA	02720	774-488-3523	89594
17	ALLIED WASTE SERVICES MA LLC	REPUBLIC SERVICES	1080 AIRPORT RD	FALL RIVER	MA	02720	774-488-3523	67698
52	EDWARD F BRIGGS DISPOSAL INC	BRIGGS DISPOSAL	600 CARRS POND RD	EAST GREENWICH	RI	02818	294-6391	91763
53	EDWARD F BRIGGS DISPOSAL INC	BRIGGS DISPOSAL	600 CARRS POND RD	EAST GREENWICH	RI	02818	294-6391	BX253
92	WASTE CONNECTIONS	MTG (MEGA) DISPOSAL	19 INDUSTRIAL WAY	SEEKONK	MA	02771	508-336-8466	1820 B
93	WASTE CONNECTIONS	MTG (MEGA) DISPOSAL	19 INDUSTRIAL WAY	SEEKONK	MA	02771	508-336-8466	4346 B

All taxes/water assessments have been paid to date 11/29/23 collection dept

15. Refuse Collector – Commercial Not For Hire License Renewals

VOTED: To approve to January 1, 2025 the following list of Refuse Collector – Commercial Not For Hire License Renewals, subject to taxes, water, and any other assessments paid to date; receipt of a Certificate of Insurance if needed; and receipt of a list of their North Kingstown clients:

11/29/2023

REFUSE COLLECTORS LICENSE - CNFH  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
12/11/2023

Lic. #	NAME	DBA	ADDRESS	TOWN	STATE	ZIP	Phone	REG #
150	LEO LAVALLEE	LAVALLEE LANDSCAPING	780 HATCHERY RD	NORTH KINGSTOWN	RI	02852	545-0061	115750
12	PETER QUINN	QUINN CONSTRUCTION	189 BEACH ST	NORTH KINGSTOWN	RI	02852	603-6110	54121
83	WICKFORD VILLAGE REALTY LP	WICKFORD VILLAGE	66 INTREPID RD	NORTH KINGSTOWN	Ri	02852	295-8813	184885
99	ARCH SERVICE LLC		45 MEADOWLAND DR	NORTH KINGSTOWN	RI	02852	743-2338	197971
135	TIM FLYNN		151 SACHEM RD	NORTH KINGSTOWN	RI	02852	204-3842	1MY308
87	KENNETH J LEES	RENOVATIONS AND MORE	25 ISLAND ST	NORTH KINGSTOWN	RI	02852	487-5900	13684
21	MEB LANDSCAPING		3560 QUAKER LN	NORTH KINGSTOWN	RI	02852	294-7546	4437
23	MEB LANDSCAPING		3560 QUAKER LN	NORTH KINGSTOWN	RI	02852	294-7546	44436
84	ESSEX VILLAGE RHF PARTNERS LP	ESSEX VILLAGE APARTMENTS	12 FISCHER DR	NORTH KINGSTOWN	RI	02852	884-6474	24390

All Taxes/Water Assessments have been paid to date for above applicants OCB Collection Dept  
Date 11/30/23

16. Victualling, Dance, and Amusement License Renewals

VOTED: To approve to December 1, 2024 the following list of Victualling, Dance, and Amusement License Renewals, subject to taxes and water paid to date and compliance with the recommendations of the Fire Marshall, the Building Official, and the Water Department:

VABDJ LICENSE RENEWALS  
December 11, 2023

NK #	NAME	DBA	BUSINESS LOCATION	PHONE	SEATS	HOURS	LIC. HELD
99	BAYVIEW OPERATOR LLC	BAYVIEW AT SCALABRINI	860 N QUIDNESSETT RD	884-1802	100	8:00 AM- 8:00 PM	V
270	CHIPOTLE MEXICAN GRILL OF COLORADO LLC	CHIPOTLE MEXICAN GRILL #3998	118 GATE RD	614-318-7478	61	10:45 AM- 10:00 PM	V
177	FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN NORTH KINGSTOWN	ALLENTON BAPTIST CHURCH	1135 TOWER HILL RD	294-4037	88	VARIOUS	V
229	GROOVES ON WEST LLC		7358 POST RD	523-1614	N/A	9:00 AM- 9:00 PM	D
112	JITTERS CAFÉ INC	JITTERS CAFÉ	530 TOWER HILL RD	295-9155	10	6:00 AM- 5:00 PM	V
78	JSC POST RD LLC	BURGER KING	7041 POST RD	600-0039	60	7:00 AM- 12:00 AM	V
103	KNIGHTSTAND LLC	DELS OF NORTH KINGSTOWN	6525 POST RD	885-2225	N/A	9:00 AM- 9:00 PM	V
43	KURMANJI LLC	RHODY SLICE	7415 POST RD	295-2121	50	PENDING	V
193	MARYLOU'S NEWS	MARYLOU'S COFFEE	7025 POST RD	398-7772	N/A	5:00 AM- 7:00 PM	V
132	MTDS INC	WICKFORD MINI MART	684 BOSTON NECK RD	295-2080	N/A	6:00 AM- 9:00 PM	V
189	SHAYNA'S PLACE LLC		45 BROWN ST	294-8740	20	8:00 AM- 8:00 PM	V
96	ST FRANCIS DESALES CHURCH		381 SCHOOL ST	884-2105	200	VARIOUS	V

ALL TAXES/WATER ASSESSMENTS HAVE BEEN PAID TO DATE OCB COLLECTION DEPT.  
DATE 12/19/23



17. First Reading – Amendment to Chapter 2, Article V, Division 4

VOTED: That this shall constitute the First Reading of an Ordinance in Amendment of Chapter 2, Article V, entitled, "Boards, Commissions and Committees", Division 4, entitled, "Conservation Commission" of the Code of Ordinances, Town of North Kingstown, and that this be advertised and referred to the Regular Town Council Meeting of January 8, 2024 for Second Reading and Consideration of Adoption.

18. First Reading – Amendment to Section 9-418

VOTED: That this shall constitute the First Reading of an Ordinance in Amendment of Section 9-418 of the Code of Ordinances, Town of North Kingstown, entitled, "Filing Date; term", and that this be advertised and referred to the Regular Town Council Meeting of January 8, 2024 for Second Reading and Consideration of Adoption.

19. First Reading – Amendment to Section 11-66

VOTED: That this shall constitute the First Reading of an Ordinance in Amendment of Section 11-66 of the Code of Ordinances, Town of North Kingstown, entitled, "Stop Signs", and that this be advertised and referred to the Regular Town Council Meeting of January 8, 2024 for Second Reading and Consideration of Adoption.

### **III. REPORTS**

20. Report by the Town Manager

Town Manager Mollis gave the following report:

RI Department of Transportation

- The Rhode Island Department of Transportation provided me with an update on the Devils Foot Road Bridge Replacement Project. They are moving forward with a temporary bridge closure from approximately Spring of 2024 through Fall 2024. They will have traffic detours in place and we will work with them to adequately inform the community once the information becomes available. RIDOT will update us further as details become permanent. I've reviewed this information with both the Police and Fire Departments, and they are comfortable with the information that has been provided by RIDOT to date.
- We continue to follow up on our successful meeting, earlier this Fall, with RIDOT regarding our concerns with the timing of the traffic signals along Route 4. Members of our Planning Department and I met with RIDOT this past Friday to review the plan proposed earlier this year. We reviewed some of the concerns relayed at the original meeting along with some additional concerns that our Planning Director and I put forth. For this plan to move forward, it will need to be included in an updated TIP Application. As a result, we are reviewing the proposal further and hope to make a presentation to the Town Council, and the public, in early 2024. Because it will require a TIP Application and because this has been a priority of the Council, we will be asking for Council consensus and approval to move forward with the hope that this project can be tackled within the next few years. We look forward to making this presentation as soon as possible.

Parks & Recreation

In addition to the continued renovations to Wilson Park and McGinn Park which we discussed this evening, we have some exciting plans for some of our other parks as well:

- We submitted an impressive Grant Application to Rhode Island DEM for improvements and upgrades to Yorktown Park. This application is in conjunction with the previous Grant Application with the Community Development Block Grant Program. As the improvements to Yorktown Park are a priority of ours, and we know it is a priority of the Town Council, we will be submitting a plan for the redevelopment and renovation with

the hopeful assistance of one or both of these grants as well as the usage of ARPA Funds available as a result of the Bond for the Recreation Center not passing.

DECEMBER 11, 2023

BOOK 110 PAGE

- We are also working, internally, on another priority of ours and that is the continued improvement of Signal Rock. In addition to the improvements made to the fields this past year, we are now working on a plan which will hopefully result in the removal of the vacant building, assessment of the pavilion, a master plan of the sports complex to hopefully include the renovation of and addition of courts, and the renovation of the playground. In addition, we have moved forward with the ordering of new bleachers for this facility, which should be in place by next season.
- We have some exciting plans for our Town Beach to make the beach accessible for those with disabilities. We are looking forward to presenting these plans to the Town Council shortly, possibly prior to or in conjunction with the introduction of the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget.
- And a reminder that our Recreation Department has some exciting events planned for the next couple of months. Please visit their web page to find information on our New Years Day Polar Plunge and various youth programs planned and available for the School February Vacation.

#### Finances

- We had our first Audit Committee Meeting regarding the Fiscal Year 2023 Audit on November 28th. Our Auditing Firm reported that they have completed the Town Audit preparations and are preparing the Financial Statements and reconciling with the State's MTP. They are slightly behind on the School Department side of the Audit preparation, which is completely expected and understandable due to the School Department's recent turnover and vacancies within their Finance Department. It is estimated that the Audit should be complete by mid-January which may require an informal extension request with the Auditor General.

As you know, we --- both town and school --- have made great strides in the timeliness of our Audit. Our FY2016 Audit was completed in May of 2017, over 4 months late. Since then, completing our Audit on time has been a priority of this Administration and have been very successful in accomplishing this goal.

It should also be noted that the Town's June 30, 2023 Financial Statement will be done by December 31st which is helpful and critical as we begin finalizing our FY2025 Budget in January and February.

I want to recognize the efforts of the School Department's Finance Department. The fact that we are looking at a hopeful completed FY2023 Audit by January 15th is commendable considering the vacancies and turnover they have had to deal with. And I want to thank our Finance Director Deb Bridgham for her efforts in working with the School Department's Finance Department as well.

- Speaking of the cooperative relationship between the School Department and Town, Superintendent Kenny Duva and I have had numerous conversations regarding Read-Only Access to the School Department's Financial Ledger and we hope to begin coordinating this sometime after the first of the year. I will keep the Town Council up to date.
- I made a detailed presentation to the Town Council in January of 2022 relative to the expenditure of the \$7.8 million in ARPA Funds which led to the Town Council supporting an exciting plan in March of 2022. Since then, together, we've made various 'on the run' amendments and a further review will be required to reevaluate our plans due to the Recreation Center Bond Question not passing this November. As you know, ARPA funds have to be officially obligated by December 2024 and spent by December 2026. I will be presenting an update and Amended Plan to the Town Council after the first of the year which will require a discussion and your review in order to receive further consensus for us to properly appropriate these one-time valuable funds.

### Revolution Offshore Wind Project

- We continue with our bi-weekly meetings with Revolution Wind regarding their Offshore Wind Farm Project. The project is going well with no concerns. All vessel activity on the bay is complete at this point. Duct Bank excavation continues, and they are projecting it will continue through December 22nd, then close up this activity for the winter before resuming in spring. The Department of Health has approved their plan for surface asbestos removal at their onshore substation facility. This excavation and remediation work is to take place later this month and into January. There will be significant outreach and informational signage in regard to this remediation. They will also be working with us to coordinate a public update and meeting in mid-January at our Town Council Chambers. They will get back to us with potential dates and we'll begin publicizing this information. As always, if members of the general public have questions, they can reach out to the project's hotline at 401-251-2207 or email them at [info@revolution-wind.com](mailto:info@revolution-wind.com).

### Department Information

- I attended the Graduation Ceremony of the RI Fire Training Academy with Fire Chief Scott Kettelle on Friday. The North Kingstown Fire Department had 5 graduates as part of this class. Chief Kettelle is scheduling a local graduation ceremony for our 5 new recruits at the end of January.
- We also have new recruits graduating from the Rhode Island Police Academy and we will be swearing in our new recruits at an afternoon ceremony on December 20th.
- Our Police Department has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Elizabeth Buffum Chace Center as we will work collaboratively with them on a Law Enforcement Advocacy Program specifically to address domestic violence and sexual assault cases. This program is funded by a Victims of Crime Act grant administered through the RI Department of Public Safety.
- Our Fire Department has successfully launched the Secured Access Lockbox Program that was presented to the Town Council earlier this year. This program will ensure a safe, quick entry for emergency personnel for those at risk of medical emergencies, seniors or disabled persons. We are promoting this on our Social Media Platforms which provide contact information for anyone interested in details and to date 10 boxes have already been installed with another 18 scheduled to be installed.
- A significant number of members of both our Fire and Police Departments have signed up for their interest in the Trust's Tactical Athlete Program which I brought to the attention of the Town Council at a recent meeting. We expect this program to be beneficial to these participants and the Town.
- The Senior Center has been busy preparing for the holiday season with their Holiday Giving Program serving almost 100 families and almost 200 children in 2023, amounts exceeding the number of individuals from last year. Our thanks to everyone for their efforts and generosity.
- The North Kingstown Water Department, working with our Recreation Department, Public Works, and Senior Center, is rolling out an exciting new initiative to install Water Bottle Filling Stations at numerous locations in Town. These water bottle filling stations will be installed next year at the Senior Center, Town Beach, Wickford Public Restroom, Wilson Park, McGinn Park, Signal Rock, Yorktown Park, and other areas. These stations will include an ADA compliant water fountain and the project will be paid for through Water Department funds and ARPA funds. We are projecting installation this spring and will be placing educational signage and information regarding this project.

- And I want to take a moment to once again recognize the outstanding work of our Town Clerk's Department. During this recent Special Election, they oversaw a turnout of over 32% while functioning as an early voting polling place which saw over 2,000 early voters seamlessly exercise their right to vote. These figures were some of the highest, if not the highest, in all of Rhode Island and were handled while still handling the normal day-to-day operations of this busy office. We all should be very proud, and I have received numerous compliments on this staff from our residents who participated in this recent Special Election.

#### Miscellaneous

- I want to let the Town Council know that we continue, as they have directed, working with Mr. Mike Donohue and Mr. Rob Zimmer on their work in attempting to come up with a plan and funding for the rehab of our Old Town Meeting House. I recently met with Mr. Zimmer in an effort to get an updated cost estimate and members of our Planning Department are meeting with them to assist them in the preparation of the Federal Grant Application. I will continue to keep the Town Council up to date.
- I have been asked to be part of 5 Mayors and Managers to meet with Speaker of the House Joe Shekarchi next Monday to discuss the Speaker's aggressive Housing Legislation and how communities can work with him in assisting in his Agenda. I will keep the Council and our Planning & Building Departments up to date on this initiative.
- And finally, we have what I consider a very important Building Committee Meeting this Wednesday night at the School Department Administrative Office Building. It is my understanding, as co-chair of this Committee with Superintendent Kenny Duva, that the School Department has tasked the Building Subcommittee to come up with a recommendation as to how the district should tackle the needs of the district's elementary schools, high school, and the possibility of the construction of a new Middle School or Middle Schools. This work will be addressed in conjunction with the Stage II application and the Bond Referendum Question which would most likely be necessary to fund these recommendations. Wednesday night's meeting will begin with Public Comment, and it would be an appropriate time for anyone who would like to weigh in on this important topic.

The Council thanked Mr. Mollis for his thorough report.

#### 21. Town Manager's Report of PFAS Lawsuit/Pending Settlement

Mr. Mollis gave the following update:

"In March of this year, I requested and received authorization from the Town Council to sign a Legal Services Agreement for the purpose of entering into an attorney-client relationship between the Town and various firms to investigate and assess potential claims arising out of the presence of PFAS contaminants in the water supply and represent the Town, in conjunction with our Town Solicitor, in any civil action that may result. I made this request after being informed of a potential national class action suit that was taking place which would help cities and towns recoup some of the monies this issue has and will be costing us. I reviewed this with both our Town Solicitor and Tim Cranston, and we all agreed this was a prudent step, which I then presented to the Town Council at your public meeting in March.

As you are aware, PFAS can be a complicated issue, one which we've kept the Town Council and the public up to date on. Fortunately, Tim Cranston has been proactive regarding this issue, having shut down Well 6 years ago and years before a shut-down would have ever been required. The EPA is now projected to roll out new guidelines which could affect the drinking water providers across our nation by limiting PFAS to 4 parts per trillion. These new guidelines, if put into place, could affect our Wells 9 and 10 and cost up to \$4 million for the appropriate treatments systems as well as some of the costs already incurred due to the closing of Well 6.

The team you authorized me to enter a relationship with back in March comprises some of the most PFAS experienced trial lawyers in the country. They pursued legal claims against 3M and Dupont on behalf of more than one hundred municipal, state, and private clients across the country. We hired them on a contingency fee basis meaning it wouldn't cost the Town any money and their compensation would be based on any settlement they successfully obtained.

The lawsuit was filed in April of this year and was announced in a national press release which we forwarded to our local media outlets. We've met regularly with this legal team and have communicated with them via hundreds of emails and calls. They have arrived at what appears to be a proposed settlement using a complex allocation methodology that assigns a score to each impacted client and uses that score as the basis for a pro rata distribution of the settlement fund.

While it is impossible to know how much the Town will be eligible to receive under this proposed settlement until after all the claims have been processed, legal counsel has provided an estimate of our settlement based on various assumptions and they are estimating a potential settlement of \$4.2 million. This estimate does not include a 10% bump that we would receive due to joining the process early and this \$4.2 million figure will be reduced by the 30% fee for attorneys. After consulting with our Town Solicitor and Water Department Director, and while we are aware that the claims process will be a heavy workload, we have chosen to participate in the settlement as allowed by the Town Council's previous direction due to the various benefits. In addition, it should be noted that there are additional claims opportunities as well. This settlement only covers half of the entities being sued, the Town will be able to make an additional claim under the supplemental fund if we find a new source with PFAS and there are additional funds potentially available via the "Action Fund" for reimbursement of costs directly due to PFAS detection.

Once the settlement is confirmed, we would receive a substantial sum up front by 2025 with the remaining funds paid out over a series of 7 years. There are no restrictions as to how these funds should be spent as long as we are meeting all PFAS requirements, which we are. However, because our Water Department is an Enterprise Fund, we would need to look into this flexibility further.

Obviously, we are very pleased with how this has turned out and are happy we chose to pursue this opportunity earlier this year. I will continue to keep the Council and public up to date and as always, please feel free to let me know if you have any questions."

The Council thanked Mr. Mollis for the update.

## 22. Update on the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Town of North Kingstown

Councilor McCoy distributed and gave the following report:

"Efforts to establish a steering committee to oversee the commemoration of the Town of North Kingstown's 350th anniversary began in July 2023. The first meeting of the steering committee was held on September 7, 2023, at the Municipal Office Building. Since that date, the members of the steering committee have met on September 21, 2023; October 5, 2023; October 19, 2023; November 2, 2023; November 16, 2023; and November 30, 2023. An event planning subcommittee meeting was held on December 4, 2023.

The following individuals are members of the 350th Anniversary Steering Committee: Chairman, Matthew B. McCoy; Vice-Chairman, Palmer Beebe; Secretary, Michael Donohue; Town Historian, G. Timothy Cranston; Randy Weitman; Keith Finck; John Gibbons, Jr.; Gerry Grabowski; Haley Wicker; and Ex-Officio Members Town Manager, A. Ralph Mollis; Town Clerk, Jeannette Alyward; and Executive Administrative Assistant, Kate Glass. The 350th Steering Committee is also receiving support and assistance from Melissa Devine, Tuni Schartner, and Bill Pennoyer of the North Kingstown Veterans Day & Memorial Day Parades Committee.

The 350th Anniversary Steering Committee has begun recruiting volunteers from the community to support the planning and conduct of signature events, including:

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- 350th Anniversary Kick-Off to be held at 10:00 AM, Saturday, January 6, 2024, at the North Kingstown Town Hall.
- 350th Anniversary Speaker's Series to be held at least monthly from January to December 2024.
- 350th Anniversary Gala to be held 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM, Thursday, April 24, 2024, at the Quonset O'Club.
- 350th Anniversary Family Day to be held 1:30 PM to 4:00 PM, Saturday, September 14, 2024, at Wilson Park.
- 350th Anniversary Parade to be held from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM, Saturday, October 5, 2024.

Additional ideas for 350th anniversary events are being explored by the steering committee.

The 350th Anniversary Steering Committee began its efforts with a budget of \$50,000.00. These funds have been used to create an official logo for the 350th anniversary commemorations. The steering committee has also approved a donation of \$100.00 to the Plum Beach Garden Club for a 350th anniversary related bulb planting. The steering committee also allocated \$2,500.00 for the conduct of the 350th Anniversary speaker series.

The 350th Anniversary Steering Committee has begun preparations to solicit both monetary and in-kind donations and sponsorships to support 350th Anniversary events. Historic Wickford, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit has agreed to act as the conduit for receiving charitable contributions beginning on/after January 1, 2024. Instructions on how to donate or sponsor 350th Anniversary events will be posted on the 350th Anniversary webpage that will go live on/about January 6, 2024.

The 350th Anniversary website will go live on December 11, 2023. The shortened link is <https://bit.ly/350thanniversary>. The full link is <https://www.northkingstownri.gov/995/350th-Anniversary>. It will be prominently displayed on the Town's homepage between where the "North Kingstown, Rhode Island" and "Government" headings sit now.

In the end, it is the 350th Anniversary's hope that the year-long set of events will result in a greater sense of community within North Kingstown and an increased knowledge and appreciation for the Town's rich history and heritage from before its establishment on October 26, 1674, to present day.

The Council thanked Councilor McCoy for his report.

#### **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **23. Letter of Resignation**

Motion by Councilor Anderson, seconded by Councilor Page and unanimously

VOTED: To accept the letter of resignation from Jennifer Hoskins resigning from the School Committee.

President Mancini thanked Ms. Hoskins for her many years of dedicated service to the district and the entire community.

##### **24. Information Technology Advisory Committee - Appointment**

Motion by Councilor Mandel, seconded by Councilor Anderson and unanimously

VOTED: To appoint Max D. Reynolds, 179 Vista Circle, Alternate At-Large Member to the Information Technology Advisory Committee to March 1, 2026.

25. Wickford Advisory Committee - Appointment

Motion by Councilor Mandel, seconded by Councilor Anderson and unanimously

VOTED: To appoint Nancy W. Sherman, 64 Pleasant Street, Wickford Village Resident to the Wickford Advisory Committee to October 1, 2026.

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26. Correspondence

11/27/2023 – Nancy Whyte Sherman – Wickford Art Festival

11/29/2023 & 12/02/2023 – Kevin O’Connor – Request for U.S. Flag

12/01/2023 – Kahlia Schmerer – Regarding NKPD Response

12/03/2023 – Donna Hutchinson – Groundwater Committee

12/05/2023 – Holly Quinn – Joint Town School Meeting

12/06/2023 (2x) – Megan Reilly – School Committee Letter of Intent

12/07/2023 – Jennifer Rowlett – Megan Reilly

12/07/2023 – Katie Feroldi – Megan Reilly

12/07/2023 – Lee Domaszowec – School Committee Letter of Intent

12/07/2023 – Cindy Booth – Megan Reilly

12/08/2023 – Christina Frye – Support for Megan Reilly for School Committee

12/08/2023 – Vicki Bennett – School Committee Appointment

12/09/2023 – Steve Raymond – Recommendation of Megan Reilly for Appointment to the School Committee

12/10/2023 – John Machata – Noise Pollution

12/10/2023 – George Lonquist – Current School Committee Vacancy

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Jeannette Alyward  
Town Clerk