

**TOWN OF KINGSTON  
MASSACHUSETTS**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes  
8 December 2005**

A meeting of the Kingston Finance Committee was opened by Chairperson Jean Landis Naumann at 7:30 PM at the Kingston Town Hall on 8 December 2005. Also present were Frederick Baughman, Richard Gardner, Mathew Hamilton, Jason Lelio, Judythe Lewis, and Maurice Simard.

Town Administrator Kevin Donovan and Town Treasurer John LaBrache met with the Committee to offer the Finance Committee a revenue forecast and budget overview. Mr. Donovan reviewed the introduction to the FY07 budget books he distributed to the members, noting that --

- the revenue figures offered are based on the best information to date;
- lots of new plans have been submitted by developers, providing an expectation of continued new growth for yet a while;
- although some retirees are either reluctant to switch or are locked into Master Health Plus, he has requested an open enrollment in health insurance to offer members of Master Health Plus to change to a program with both lower premium and better benefits;
- mandated increases and increases requested by various departments are highlighted in his report;
- he is trying to replace computers on a rotating basis;
- he is investigating whether the Town would benefit by changing its accounting system from MUNIS to another system.

Mr. LaBrache distributed and reviewed with the Committee members a new document entitled "5-Year Revenue and Expenditure Forecast" co-authored by him and Kevin Donovan, for which he invited questions and criticism. Mr. LaBrache noted that he based his figures on an anticipated \$417,200 in new growth vs. Mr. Donovan's and the Assessor's more conservative, current estimate of \$250,000.

He further reported that after totaling the new requests for FY07, he estimated that \$350,000 of the budget requests will not be recommended, leaving the budget approximately \$700,000 out of balance.

Mr. LaBrache said he did not anticipate the Town's bond rating will be improved this year, citing the school and sewer debt as negative factors when rating changes are considered.

Richard Gardner distributed copies of a document he authored entitled "Free Cash and the Budget" which provides a historical review of Kingston's use of free cash for operating costs and an analysis of expenditures driving that use of free cash. He cited a goal of returning to a time when operating budgets were funded from other revenues leaving free cash available for capital purchases and other one-time expenditures. He indicated that in view of the rise in costs at the present time, he foresees only three possible options that could alter the current situation: staff layoffs, a possible agreement by the town to split the cost of health insurance 50-50 between the town and employee participants, and use of stabilization funds.

Judythe Lewis submitted a document from the Superintendent of Schools entitled "2006-2007 Shared Cost Budget Rationale." She noted that--

- Kingston's share of the Silver Lake budget is now 52 per cent;
- Kingston will likely experience a 16.81 per cent increase for its shared cost;
- she expects the elementary school numbers to be available on 12 December.

There was discussion of whether the district will receive a discount since the new high school building was completed six months ahead of schedule.

The Committee reviewed items on the agenda.

Upon motion made by Mathew Hamilton and seconded by Jason Lelio, following discussion and a 6 to 0 to 1 vote, it was--

**VOTED:** To transfer \$870 from the Reserve Fund to the Collector's expense budget for payment of the stipend to which the Collector is entitled for certification as a Massachusetts Municipal Collector.

Maurice Simard abstained from voting on the motion; all other members supported it.

Upon motion made by Frederick Baughman and seconded by Maurice Simard, following discussion, it was unanimously--

**VOTED:** To authorize payment of \$89.37 due to We Print Today, a sum representing one half of the cost of printing FY07 budget books.

Upon motion made by Judythe Lewis and seconded by Mathew Hamilton, following discussion, it was unanimously--

**VOTED:** To accept the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2005 as corrected.

Upon motion made by Judythe Lewis and seconded by Richard Gardner, following discussion, it was unanimously--

**VOTED:** To reappoint Mathew Hamilton as the Finance Committee's representative to the Capital Planning Committee.

The Committee revised its budget-hearing schedule as follows: to review the Silver Lake Regional School budget on March 16, 2006 and the Kingston Elementary School and the Treasurer's budgets on March 9, 2006.

There was discussion of possible ways to increase revenue. Richard Gardner suggested the Finance Committee could appoint a subcommittee that would report back to the Finance Committee, and that its purpose would be to study ambulance fees, recycling costs, a pay-as-you-throw policy at the transfer station, and to investigate what other towns do. He proposed that the report could be printed in the Finance Committee's booklet for the voters.

Upon motion made by Mathew Hamilton and seconded by Judythe Lewis, following discussion, it was unanimously--

**VOTED:** To recommend a FY07 appropriation of \$343,778 for the Selectmen's budget of which \$273,913 is to be expended for personal services and \$69,865, for expenses.

Upon motion made by Richard Gardner and seconded by Frederick Baughman, following discussion, it was unanimously--

**VOTED:** To recommend a FY07 appropriation of \$120,000 for Legal Services.

Upon motion made by Frederick Baughman and seconded by Mathew Hamilton, following discussion, it was unanimously--

**VOTED:** To recommend a FY07 appropriation of \$87,625 for Data Processing.

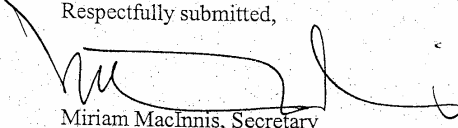
Upon motion made by Judythe Lewis and seconded by Frederick Baughman, following discussion, it was unanimously--

**VOTED:** To recommend a FY07 appropriation of \$312,270, for the Care of Municipal Property budget of which \$50,339 is to be expended for personal services and \$261,931, for expenses.

It was agreed to revisit the gasoline line item in the Care of Municipal Property budget later in the budget process and to request a breakdown of gasoline use by department.

There being no further discussion or vote, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Miriam MacInnis, Secretary