

**TOWN OF KINGSTON
MASSACHUSETTS**

FINANCE COMMITTEE

**Minutes
January 21, 2010**

Chairman Elaine Fiore opened a meeting of the Finance Committee at 7 PM on 21 January 2010 at the Kingston Town Hall. Also present were Mathew Hamilton, Lawrence Hunt, Jason Lelio, David Lofstrom, Paul Ricci, and Claire Soares. Also present were Town Treasurer John LaBrache; Town Administrator Jill Myers; Selectmen Richard Arruda, Mark Beaton, and Dennis Randall; School Superintendent John Tuffy, Silver Lake Regional School Committeeman John Creed; Elementary School Committeeman Christopher Mamakos; and Police Lieutenant Thomas Kelley.

John LaBrache reported—

- on his estimate of revenues and expenditures for FY2011;
- he would have two articles for the town-meeting warrant;
- that there is an unused appropriation that once voted can be used to reduce outstanding debt;
- Standard and Poors' has given an AA rating for Kingston's financial position;
- he was given a 3.67 per cent interest rate on new borrowing;
- he predicts an increase in the school's assessment;
- total valuations have decreased in Kingston over the last three years.

There was discussion of –

- whether real estate taxes should be increased each year to the allowable 2 ½ per cent. Mr. Beaton stated revenues are down and that the cost of doing business exceeds 2 ½ per cent;
- asking the unions to accept a wage freeze;
- the possibility of offering early retirement.

Mr. Tuffy advised that—

- early retirement laws are now more complicated;
- labor counsel is viewing the requirements for it;
- he expects layoffs in the school system.

Ms. Myers agreed that early retirement is more complicated now and is seniority driven. She reported the police contract has had arbitration hearings and both the police and fire contracts are due for renegotiation

Mr. Creed advised that—

- Kingston's share of the regional school budget will increase because the formula for apportionment is based on school population and Kingston's student population has increased while that of Halifax and Plympton has decreased.

- Kingston cannot avoid paying its full share of the regional school budget voted by the school committee if Plympton and Halifax find it within their means and accept it.
- the regional school committee and teachers' union voted to apply for "Race to the Top" funds as did the elementary school committee; however, the elementary teachers' opposed it.
- he expects the Commonwealth to reimburse only 20 per cent of the transportation costs billed to Silver Lake.

There was discussion of—

- efficiency measures such as work flow and job sharing proposed by Mr. Randall;
- eliminating salaries for elected officials proposed by Mr. Hunt;
- paying expenses vs. stipends to elected officials proposed by Mr. Tuffy.

Ms. Fiore reported she had spoke with Wage & Personnel Board Chairman Elizabeth White about changing committee secretaries' salaries to an hourly wage and that Board is following the bylaw process.

Upon motion made by Mathew Hamilton and seconded by David Lofstrom, following discussion, it was unanimously—

VOTED: To declare that, due to the depletion of the FY2010 appropriation for snow and ice removal, an emergency exists causing the Town to incur liability and, that in the interest of public safety and in accordance with MGL Chapter 44, Section 31D, the Town is required to make expenditures for snow and ice removal in excess of the available snow and ice appropriation for the Fiscal Year 2010.

There was discussion of whether to request voters to approve an override question on the town election ballot.

Upon motion made by Lawrence Hunt and seconded by Jason Lelio, following discussion, it was unanimously—

VOTED: To present to town meeting a balanced FY11 budget without an override question.

Upon motion made by Mathew Hamilton and seconded by Paul Ricci, following discussion, it was unanimously—

VOTED: To authorize payment of \$78.96 to We Print Today for the Committee's one-half share of the cost of printing the annual budget forms.

The Committee revised its meeting schedule to shift Budget discussions scheduled on 21 January to 11 February and those scheduled on 18 February to 25 February and to have no meeting on 18 February 2010.

It noted that the Council on Aging is asking for an additional \$15,000 for the new senior center.

Upon motion made by David Lofstrom and seconded by Claire Soares, following discussion, it was—

VOTED: To accept the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2009 as amended.

Mathew Hamilton, Jason Lelio, and Paul Ricci abstained from voting on the motion; all other members present and voting supported it.

The Committee reviewed all items on the agenda.

Ms. Fiore reported that the wind turbine should be moved from next to the sewage treatment plant to the capped landfill but that Weston & Sampson Engineers have not yet provided the costs figures.

There being no further discussion or vote, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam MacInnis, Secretary