

**TOWN OF KINGSTON**

**MASSACHUSETTS**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes**  
**10 September 2009**

Chairman Elaine Fiore opened a meeting of the Finance Committee at 7:30 PM on 10 September 2009 at the Kingston Town Hall. Other members present were: Mathew Hamilton, Lawrence Hunt, Jason Lelio, David Lofstrom, Paul Ricci, and Claire Soares. Also attending were Town Treasurer John LaBrache and Town Administrator Jill Myers.

Ms. Myers reported—

- on a free Financial Management Review offered to the Town by the Department of Revenue, a full description of which can be viewed on the DOR website. She said the Selectmen have accepted the offer and the review will begin in January and take approximately six weeks to complete. Mr. LaBrache reported having attended a presentation on the program and thought it would be beneficial for the Town;
- that the police contract has been heard by arbitrators and their decision is expected in the next two weeks. Once that is received, the Selectmen must present the contract to the voters at a town meeting for funding;
- that negotiations with the Fire Department have begun and that the KTEU contract has another year to go but the union has been warned to expect the layoff of at least one worker. There was discussion of selling job sharing to the union.

The Committee discussed the possibility of holding a special town meeting in the Fall for ratification of the police contract and/or adopting a state-authorized hotel and/or meals tax. Ms. Myers advised that the Selectmen have made no decision on the question as yet.

Upon motion made by Mathew Hamilton and seconded by Jason Lelio, following discussion, it was unanimously—

**VOTED:** To recommend that the Selectmen not call a fall special town meeting.

Green Energy Committee members Mark Beaton, Pine duBois, Michael O'Meara, James Moran, Brian Spires, and Eugene Wyatt, joined by Town Accountant Joan Paquette, met with the Finance Committee to discuss its wind-turbine project.

Elaine Fiore recused herself from the discussion and Jason Lelio presided over the meeting in her absence.

The Committee members reported--

- they have hired Weston & Sampson's engineering firm to provide a scope of work and cost for the project;
- they have been a grant for it;
- Weston and Sampson will help the Committee find more funding sources;
- the technology has changed since the Committee began its work four years ago providing more efficient turbines suitable for communities;
- there is more money available to communities for such projects than when the Committee began its work;
- the permitting process will take several months.

The members promised to advise the Finance Committee of Weston and Sampson's findings and to obtain a comparison of private and public proposals.

The Green Energy Committee members and Town Accountant left the meeting following the discussion. Elaine Fiore returned to the meeting and presided throughout the remainder of the meeting.

Mr. LaBrache provided the Finance Committee members with a copy of his financial summary for the FY11 operating budget which projects, as of this date, a \$482,730 deficit balance. He reported expecting a 10 per cent increase in health-insurance costs and suggested more revenue could be realized if the Assessors release more funds from their overlay surplus account and if the Town were to adopt a state-authorized hotel and/ meals tax. He said he was advised that the Town would have realized \$200,000 in FY10 revenue if it had voted the hotel and meals tax by 1 August 2009.

There was discussion of whether to request that the annual town meeting be split into two parts as was done in April 2009.

Upon motion made by Claire Soares and seconded by Mathew Hamilton, following discussion, it was unanimously—

**VOTED:** To recommend that voters at the April FY10 annual town meeting address only non financial articles on 3 April and adjourn to a later day in June to vote on the operating budget and other financial articles.

Mr. LaBrache reported that—

- Moody's has downgraded the Town's bond rating from A1 to A2;
- that the Silver Lake District was not downgraded so the change did not affect its recent bonding;
- that he will be borrowing for the Senior Center in January and will ask Standard & Poor's for a rating on that loan.

There was discussion of the Committee's recommendation to the next Budget Advisory Committee meeting on the amount of cuts departments will be asked to make to their FY11 operating budgets.

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

**VOTED:** To recommend that each department cut 3 per cent from its FY10 budget as the numbers to use when preparing their FY11 budget.

The Committee discussed scheduling a meeting with the Selectmen when the FY11 budgets are returned by town departments. The Chairman called the next Finance Committee meeting to be held on 12 November 2009.

Upon motion made by Mathew Hamilton and seconded by Claire Soares, following discussion, it was—

**VOTED:** To accept the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2009 as submitted.

Lawrence Hunt and David Lofstrom abstained from voting on the motion; all other members present and voting supported it.

The Chairman requested that copies of the Minutes of the Finance Committee meetings be sent to the Town Moderator. The Committee noted the Town Clerk's report that 2009 special election costs qualify as state mandates.

There being no further discussion or vote, the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam MacInnis, Secretary