

**TOWN OF KINGSTON
MASSACHUSETTS**

FINANCE COMMITTEE

**Minutes
12 February, 2009**

Chairman Mathew Hamilton opened a meeting of the Finance Committee at 7 PM on 12 February 2009 at the Kingston Town Hall. Also present were Elaine Fiore, Lawrence Hunt, John LaBrache, Jason Lelio¹, Paul Ricci, and Claire Soares.

Upon motion made by Elaine Fiore and seconded by Claire Soares, following discussion, it was –

VOTED: To transfer \$25,000 from the Reserve Fund to the Veterans' Agent's FY09 expense budget to pay for veterans' benefits.

John LaBrache opposed the motion; Paul Ricci abstained from voting on the motion; all other members present and voting supported it.

Upon motion made by Claire Soares and seconded by John LaBrache, following discussion, it was --

VOTED: To accept the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2009 as amended.

Jason Lelio abstained from voting on the motion; all other members present and voting supported it.

Highway Superintendent Paul Basler met with the Committee to discuss the FY10 Solid Waste and Recycling budget. Lawrence Hunt noted a decrease in recycling revenue. Mr. Basler –

- said his estimate of revenue to be generated from recyclable material has been reduced since he prepared the budget last November
- reported that recycling is now costing the town money.
- explained he is now paying for cardboard removal
- noted there is no cardboard compactor at the transfer station.
- expected a slight reduction in personal services after Mr. Shaw's retirement and a lower-paid worker replaces Mr. Shaw.

¹ Jason Lelio arrived at 7:15 pm and did not participate in the first vote.

There was discussion of the cost of the current method for dispensing transfer station stickers to residents and businesses.

Upon motion made by Mathew Hamilton and seconded by Elaine Fiore, following discussion, it was unanimously—

VOTED: To ask the Selectmen to extend the grace period for paying for transfer-station stickers beyond the 1 July 2009 date.

There was discussion of where reductions can be made to departmental budgets and of savings possible if a universal cut of 2.5 hours per week per employee is made. Mr. Hunt urged that every department be treated equally with cuts across the board. There was discussion of freezing salaries and steps at the FY09 level. Mr. LaBrache said he will prepare a level-funded budget based on FY09.

Mr. LaBrache reported that FY10 revenue is currently estimated at \$33,848,215 and that the number must be matched to expenditures to balance the budget. He noted that the snow and ice cost increases with each storm.

Water Commissioners Richard Loring and Robert Kostka met with the Committee to review the Water Enterprise Fund for FY10. Elaine Fiore said she would recuse herself from the discussion.

Mr. Kostka proposed reducing a \$40,000 request for engineering fees to \$30,000. Mr. Hunt asked for a reduction to \$15,000; Mr. Loring proposed \$20,000. Mr. Loring reported that most engineering costs are charged back to a developer.

Mr. Loring proposed reducing a \$10,000 request for legal fees to \$7,000; Mr. Hunt countered with \$6,000.

Mr. Hunt asked that the number for police details be reduced to \$6,500. Mr. Loring noted that the cost is dictated by the town's contract with the union. He said he would be willing to use flagmen if the union agreed. He suggested they budget \$7,200 for police details.

The following numbers were proposed as changes to the expense line items::

Telephone	\$ 2,900.
Hydrants	\$ 8,000.
Gasoline	\$ 15,800.
Dues	\$ 800.
Principal	\$ 229,600.
Short-term interest	\$ 24,792.

Mr. Hunt calculated the reductions to be 19.7% and proposed that rates be reduced. Mr. Kostka reported the state and auditors are insisting on a rate increase for maintenance of reserves..

The Committee deferred further deliberation on the budget and Messrs. Kostka and Loring left the meeting.

Veterans' Agent William Martin met with the Committee to review his FY10 budget. He reported having spent \$151,000 through this date in February on veterans' benefits. He estimated benefits are now costing \$25,000 per month. He agreed to a reduction from \$1,100 to \$600 for office supplies.

Upon motion made by Jason Lelio and seconded by Claire Soares, following discussion, it was unanimously—

VOTED: To recommend a personal services budget of \$21,944 for a part-time clerical employee and \$188,070 for expenses, for a total FY10 budget of \$210,014 for the Veterans' Agent.

Claire Soares asked the Committee to reconsider the figures voted for the Conservation Commission's budget on 5 February because she said they are incorrect. The Committee deferred action on the request and agreed to meet at 9 AM on 21 February to vote on remaining budget requests..

Upon motion made by Claire Soares and seconded by Elaine Fiore, following discussion, it was unanimously—

VOTED: To ask the Board of Selectmen to postpone action on the budget.

There being no further discussion or vote, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam MacInnis, Secretary