

**TOWN OF KINGSTON
MASSACHUSETTS**

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes
25 March 2010

Chairman Elaine Fiore opened a meeting of the Finance Committee at 7:00 PM on 25 March 2010 at the Kingston Town Hall. Also present were Lawrence Hunt, Jason Lelio, Paul Ricci, and Claire Soares. Town Administrator Jill Myers also attended. Mathew Hamilton and David Lofstrom were absent.

Town Administrator Jill Myers reported that a vote will be taken on 29 March on one of two options offered for the County health insurance FY11 premium. She explained that an increase of 18 % will be attached to one option without a change in the plan and a 10% increase in the second that will result in changes to the co-pays.

She reported also that must supplement the FY10 operating budget to pay–
\$2,293.10 for school insurance;
\$100,000 associated with an arbitration award to the police department, \$80,000 of which the Chief has encumbered;
\$22,000 from free cash will be needed for employee benefits and workers' compensation for police and fire; and
the deficit incurred for FY10 snow and ice removal.

Inspector of Buildings Paul Armstrong met with the Committee to explain his department's FY11 budget request. He reported that the budget he submitted reflected a 3 per cent reduction from the prior year. There was discussion of the revolving fund used to pay gas, electric, and plumbing inspectors and the part-time clerical worker that works on those permits. Elaine Fiore noted reductions made in the Inspection Services budget and there was discussion of the fact that costs for employee benefits were not paid from the revolving fund for those who are paid from it.

Upon motion made by Jason Lelio and seconded by Paul Ricci, following discussion, it was unanimously –

VOTED: To recommend a personal services budget of \$116,171 and an expense budget of \$2,425 for a total FY11 budget of \$118,596 for the Inspection Services budget.

Mr. Armstrong left the meeting following the review.

Town Planner Thomas Bott met with the Committee to explain the Planning Board's FY11 budget request. He reported that fees were increased in 2009.

A motion was made by Elaine Fiore to recommend a personal services budget of \$32,961 for the Planning which was not seconded. There was discussion of the fact that the number moved would eliminate stipends paid in prior years to the five elected Planning Board members. The Committee deferred voting on the Planning Board's budget pending receipt of more information.

Mr. Bott left the meeting following the review.

Recreation Director Susan Woodworth met with the Committee to explain the Recreation Commission's FY11 budget request. She reported that—

- the Commission receives annually revenue from the cell tower at the playing fields on Pottle Street;
- fees of \$26,000 paid in July was used for field maintenance;
- fees paid by the Kingston Youth Sports Organization were greater than \$36,000;
- there are 2 revolving funds: one supports programs via fees; the other, used for building fees and maintenance of ball fields.
- the Commission earns \$8 for administrative costs on each outside program offered at the Reed Community Building.

Mr. Hunt estimated all of the Commission's revenues at \$575,000 rounded up. At his request, the Committee deferred its vote on the Recreation Commission's budget.

Ms. Woodworth left the meeting following the review.

Conservation Agent Maureen Thomas met with the Committee to explain the Conservation Commission's FY11 budget request. She reported that—

- increases to the FY11 budget would be offset by money from the Wetlands Protection Fund;
- she would get the current balance in the fund for the Finance Committee;
- fees from permits are split between the Town and the State and a portion of the Town's share goes to the General Fund;
- the Conservation Commission paid for the storm-water review required for the Senior Center project from the Wetlands Protection Fund;
- fees were last raised in 2005 or 2006.
- There was discussion of increasing fees to cover an anticipated shortfall in the Wetlands Protection Fund. The Committee asked Ms. Thomas to ask the Conservation Commissioners to consider raising fees.

The Finance Committee deferred a vote on the Conservation Commission's budget until it receives clarification of the amount of revenue in the Wetlands Protection Fund and a breakdown of the fees charged for permits.

Ms. Thomas left the meeting following the review.

Mark Beaton, Chairman of the Green Energy Committee, met with the Committee. He delivered documents pertaining to estimated savings from other towns' renewable energy projects and on the status of that project. He addressed a wind-turbine and/or solar-panel project being considered on the Town's capped landfill and reported that –

- current discussions are of leasing the equipment from a developer for 20 years;
- Weston & Sampson has estimated the Town's revenue would be between \$100,000 and \$300,000 per year.
- the developer's covering insurance and management of the property could be included in the Request for Proposal;
- the Town has applied for "green community status" that if and when awarded would make it eligible for grants.

Jason Lelio inquired whether annual revenue to the Town would be guaranteed or variable and indicated his preference for a guaranteed amount for planning purposes. He asked that a guarantee of annual revenue be put into the RFP. Mr. Beaton indicated that rate reductions from the project would benefit town facilities, not residents.

Mr. Beaton left the meeting following the discussion.

The Finance Committee noted the articles in the Annual Town Meeting Warrant asking to amend the zoning bylaws by replacing an existing Wind Turbine Overlay District with new language and to amend the general bylaw by adding a new Stretch Energy Code pertaining to wind turbines and solar panels.

The Chairman called a special meeting to be held on 1 April 2010 at 7 PM to discuss the Warrant articles.

There being no further discussion or vote, the meeting was adjourned at 9:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam MacInnis, Secretary