

**TOWN OF KINGSTON
MASSACHUSETTS**

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes
25 February 2010

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

The Committee discussed the Sewer Department's FY11 budget request during which Elaine Fiore recused herself from the discussion and vote and Jason Lelio presided during both. Wastewater Treatment Superintendent Kenneth Vandal met with the Committee to answer their questions. Claire Soares and David Lofstrom, the Committee's liaisons to the Sewer Department, asked him to explain the variations in the betterment fees. He reported that –

- revenue is coming in from Phase 2;
- he doesn't receive reports on collections;
- septage fees are higher.

Mr. LaBrache reported that the Department's surplus has been certified by the DOR. It was reported—

- that variations depend upon the debt owed to the state each year;
- the surplus from septic haulage revenue and surplus revenue is used for plant expansion and equipment.

Mr. LaBrache said he will get an explanation from the state as to why paying off the loan earlier would not save on interest payments.

Addressing line items in the budget, Mr. Vandal reported--

- the department is requesting less for FY11 wages for labor-union employees than in FY10 because a funded K-8 operator position was never hired;
- overtime costs are for contractual weekends and holidays which, by contract, are paid for a 4-hour minimum.
- contracted services are mostly for sludge removal to Cranston, Rhode Island;
- funds requested for legal services are required because of pending law suits;
- funds requested for dues and memberships are contractual.

Mr. Vandal left the meeting following the discussion.

Upon motion made by Lawrence Hunt and seconded by David Lofstrom, following discussion, it was—

VOTED: To defer a vote on the Sewer Department's budget because allocated costs are subject to change.

Water Commissioner Robert Kostka and Water Superintendent Matthew Darsch met with the Committee to review the Department's FY11 budget request. During the discussion Elaine Fiore recused herself and Jason Lelio presided during it.

Mr. Kostka reported—

- a rate increase for water delivery will be reflected in the March billing;
- the Department is implementing an anticipated DEP requirement for irrigation systems for private wells;
- salary and wages requested are contractual with step increases where applicable.

Mr. Hunt expressed concern about the Department's debt ratio. Mr. Kostka reported a low surplus amount being the reason for the rate increase. Mr. LaBrache reported the maximum should be 35 per cent; it is now 42 per cent and is to be paid off in 2030 He said that more borrowing cannot be endorsed.

Mr. Kostka said that –

- 80 per cent of the service distribution is made of concrete asbestos which needs to be replaced;
- new developers are required to replace existing mains
- \$400,000 was borrowed for replacement of water mains on Pembroke Street while the state was repairing that road
- he will ask for an article to borrow for manganese amelioration while looking into a regional solution for that problem.

The Water Department representatives left the meeting following the discussion and there was no vote on that budget. Elaine Fiore again presided over the meeting.

Veterans' Agent William Martin met with the Committee to explain that the \$10,263 he has left from his FY10 appropriation is insufficient to cover future assistance to veterans, the cost of training, and flags.

Upon motion made by Claire Soares and seconded by Lawrence Hunt, following discussion, it was unanimously —

VOTED: To transfer \$35,200 from the Reserve Fund to the Veterans' Department's FY10 budget to provide ordinary and medical benefits for March and April.

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

VOTED: To recommend an appropriation of \$21,944 for personal services and an expense budget of \$214,770 for a total FY11 Veterans' Services budget of \$236,714.

Harbormaster/Shellfish Constable Dennis Carvalho and Waterfront Committee members Nathaniel Murray and Richard Veno met with the Committee to review their Department's FY11 budget request.

Ms. Fiore reported that the budget is funded from the Municipal Waterways Improvement Fund and a grant. She noted increases in mooring charges and shellfish permits have been approved by the Selectmen. She estimated the available revenue from the increases to be \$6,903 representing one half of the \$13,805 of the revenue expected to be garnered from the rate increases.

Mr. Carvalho reported he will need equipment to conform to state law relating to the oyster grants the Selectmen approved and is joining with other towns to apply for a grant from Homeland Security for motion cameras to enhance security.

Mr. LaBrache reported the Sampson Fund Trustees have approved two requests for a boat trailer and a defibrillator submitted by the Harbormaster and the Waterfront Committee.

Mr. Murray told the Committee that the department needed —

- required training for any new hires to avoid liability;
- a fee structure that would cover equipment and training;
- revenue projections for its waiting list.

Upon motion made by Elaine Fiore and seconded by Lawrence Hunt, following discussion, it was —

VOTED: To recommend an appropriation of \$24,363 for personal services and an expense budget of \$11,586 for a total FY11 Harbormaster/Waterfront budget of \$35,949.

Jason Lelio opposed the motion; all other members present supported it.

The Harbormaster and Waterfront Committee members left the meeting following the discussion.

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

VOTED: To recommend an appropriation of \$100,000 for the FY11 Reserve Fund.

Upon motion made by Larry Hunt and seconded by Jason Lelio, following discussion, it was –

VOTED: To deny a request to transfer \$4,000 from the Reserve Fund to pay for public officials' liability insurance for the School Committee members and to let the school pay the \$4,000 from the elementary school budget.

There was a discussion of Mary O'Donnell's proposal to erect wind turbines and solar panels on her land which was previously targeted for a 40R transit-oriented, mixed-use development.

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

VOTED: To accept the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2010 as submitted.

Mr. LaBrache reviewed his ten-year debt schedule with the Committee.

It was noted that the next Finance Committee meeting would be held on 25 March 2010.

There being no further discussion or vote, the meeting was adjourned at 9:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam MacInnis, Secretary