

**TOWN OF KINGSTON  
MASSACHUSETTS**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes  
6 May 2010**

Chairman Elaine Fiore opened a meeting of the Finance Committee at 7:00 PM on 6 May 2010 at the Kingston Town Hall. Also present were Mathew Hamilton, David Lofstrom, Lawrence Hunt, Paul Ricci, and Claire Soares. Jason Lelio was absent. Town Treasurer John LaBrache and Town Moderator Janet Wallace also attended.

Meeting with the Committee to discuss the FY11 budget for the schools were: Superintendent John Tuffy, Assistant Superintendent Joy Blackwood, Silver Lake School Regional School District Committee members John Creed and Robyn Kincaid, and Kingston Elementary School Committee member Scott Milbert.

There was discussion of changes made to the Regional School Committee budget. The school representatives left the meeting following the discussion.

Upon motion made by Paul Ricci and seconded by Elaine Fiore, following the discussion, it was unanimously—

**VOTED:** To recommend an operating budget of \$6,719,084 and other charges of \$889,789 for a total FY11 appropriation of \$7,608,873 for the Silver Lake Regional School budget.

Upon motion made by Paul Ricci and seconded by Claire Soares, following discussion, it was unanimously—

**VOTED:** To recommend that the Town appropriate \$47,000 for FY11 vocational school costs.

There was discussion of the elementary and intermediate schools' FY11 budgets. Paul Ricci reported that an additional sixth-grade teacher and classroom has been added to eliminate the need for 28-pupil classes in that grade.

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

**VOTED:** To recommend that the Town appropriate \$10,019,274 for the Kingston Elementary and Kingston Intermediate Schools' FY11 budget.

Treasurer LaBrache reported to the Committee on the cost of employee benefits. Upon motion made by Lawrence Hunt and seconded by Mathew Hamilton, it was unanimously—

**VOTED:** To recommend that the Town appropriate \$3,877,159 for FY11 employee benefits.

There was discussion of a 12.5 per cent increase in the Town's premium for professional liability insurance and a 15 per cent increase in the premium for property insurance for a total cost of \$246,700.

There was discussion of transferring any reduction to the Library's FY11 personal services budget to the expense line item for books to assure certification.

Upon motion made by Elaine Fiore and seconded by David Lofstrom, following discussion, it was—

**VOTED:** To accept the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2010 as submitted.

Mathew Hamilton abstained from voting on the motion; all other members present supported it.

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

**VOTED:** To accept the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2010 as submitted.

Discussion of elected officials' salaries was deferred to the Committee's meeting on 15 May.

Library Director Sia Stewart and Library Trustee Valerie Spence met with the Committee to review the Library's FY11 budget. Mathew Hamilton proposed eliminating funding for two library pages and using the amount of those wages (\$7,739) for books and periodicals to preserve the Library's accreditation. He noted that the bottom line would not change.

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

**VOTED:** To recommend a personal services budget of \$406,327 and an expense budget of \$101,263 for a total FY11 Library budget of \$507,590.

Ms. Stewart reported she had studied state statistics on costs and usage of libraries sent to her by Paul Ricci and she submitted statistics she obtained comparing the workload and circulation in six other towns' libraries with populations between 11,000 and 19,000. She also advised the Committee that most of her staff are entitled to maximum vacation time which affects coverage costs. Mr. Hamilton noted that the Library Foundation is growing and that soon there would be more reliable fund-raising estimates for future years. Ms. Stewart reported that the Foundation's goal is to raise \$750,000.

The Library representatives left the meeting following the discussion.

Claire Soares reported on the Sewer Department's FY11 Enterprise Fund. Elaine Fiore recused herself from the discussion and subsequent vote on the Sewer Department's budget. Mathew Hamilton chaired the meeting during her absence.

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

**VOTED:** To recommend a personal services budget of \$369,086, an expense budget of \$562,555, debt service in the amount of \$2,391,038, and allocated costs totaling \$168,785 for a total FY11 Wastewater Enterprise Fund of \$3,491,464.

Following the discussion and vote on the Sewer Department's budget, Elaine Fiore returned and again chaired the meeting.

There was discussion of increasing the Data Processing budget by adding \$5,000 for computer equipment and by adding \$3,000 for Vision, a software program that makes field cards available to the public from the internet.

Upon motion made by Elaine Fiore and seconded by David Lofstrom, following the discussion, it was unanimously—

**VOTED:** To recommend an expense budget of \$68,798 for a total FY11 budget of \$68,798 for Data Processing.

There was discussion of recommendations of the Community Preservation Committee being made at the town meeting. It was noted that the state matches 5 per cent of the funds raised by communities or an 8- per cent match for communities collecting a 3-per cent CPA assessment. The Finance Committee voted on each funding request separately, as follows:

A motion, made by Elaine Fiore and seconded by Claire Soares, to recommend favorable action for committing \$950,000 to acquire the Calista property, consisting of 10 acres of land on Elder Avenue, failed on a 2 to 3 to 1 vote after it was reported there was no appraisal as yet and that the asking price may change. Mathew Hamilton and Paul Ricci supported the motion; Elaine Fiore, Lawrence Hunt, and Claire Soares opposed it; and David Lofstrom abstained from voting on it.

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

**VOTED:** To recommend favorable action for committing \$39,000 to preserving and renovating the historic Major John Bradford House.

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

**VOTED:** To recommend favorable action for committing \$500,000 to preserving and renovating the historic Frederic C. Adams Heritage Center.

There was discussion of committing funds to acquire the Hall property, consisting of 43 acres adjacent to the Pottle Street playing fields. It was reported that—

- the land is now on the assessors' record as having a forestry management plan and that the town has the right of first refusal now that a town resident has made an offer on it;
- the MBTA has offered to give a right of way to the town which could provide another access to the playing fields which would reduce the time an ambulance could respond to an injury at the fields;

- possible uses of the property are additional playing fields and walking paths;
- there are wetlands concerns about the property.

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

**VOTED:** To recommend favorable action on acquiring the Hall property for \$152,500.

Elaine Fiore opposed the motion; all other members supported it.

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

**VOTED:** To recommend favorable action on committing \$75,000 to restore the terrace at the rear of the Reed Community Building and to provide accessibility for handicapped people to the building from the terrace.

There was discussion of committing \$35,000 to acquire an 18<sup>th</sup> century powder house formerly located in the Evergreen Cemetery and now on private property and using the funds to pay for the acquisition, restoration to its 18<sup>th</sup> century condition, and relocating it on the Library property.

A motion made by Mathew Hamilton, seconded by Elaine Fiore, to purchase and preserve the powder house failed on a 1 to 5 vote with Mathew Hamilton supporting the motion and all other members present opposing it.

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

**VOTED:** To commit \$1800 for preservation of Town of Kingston Annual Reports.

There was discussion of acquiring four lots consisting of 2.8 acres on Leigh and Larson Roads for \$132,000 to preserve as open space.

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

**VOTED:** To recommend favorable action on acquiring four properties on Leigh and Larson Roads for \$132,000 to be preserved for open space.

There was discussion of fees charged by the Recreation Commission for programs. Lawrence Hunt proposed reviewing the revolving funds used for programs and the relationship of those activities to the operating budget. The Chairman asked Mr. Hunt to pose those questions to the Recreation Director and further discussion was deferred to the Committee's next meeting.

There was discussion of the Capital Planning Committee needing a transfer for additional secretarial wages in FY10.

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

**VOTED:** To recommend an appropriation of \$400 for personal services in the Capital Planning Committee's personal service budget for a total FY11 Capital Planning Committee budget of \$400.

There was discussion of there being no FY11 budget request submitted by the Permanent Building Committee.

Upon motion made by Lawrence Hunt and seconded by Paul Ricci, following the discussion, it was unanimously—

**VOTED:** To recommend favorable action for a FY11 appropriation of zero (\$0.00) for the Permanent Building Committee.

There was discussion of whether funds available from the Assessors' Overlay Surplus account and any funds available for the Stabilization Fund would change.

There being no further discussion or vote, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam MacInnis, Secretary