

TOWN OF KINGSTON

Memorandum

Office of the
Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator

TO: Honorable Board of Selectmen

FROM: Jill R. Myers, Town Administrator

DATE: August 12, 2010

SUBJECT: Town Administrator's Report for the BOS Meeting of August 17, 2010

Kingston Community Wind and Solar Projects – Request for Proposals (RFP) for Lease of Public Property for the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance of Renewable Energy Facilities:

RFPs are due on 8/27/10; 2pm for the Wind Project and 3pm for the Solar Project. So far, we received 11 requests for the Wind RFP, and 9 requests for the Solar RFP.

There were no appeals to the Kingston Community Wind Project. The Solar project still needs to be permitted.

Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Secretary Recruitment:

In July, Priscilla Brackett advised the CPC that she no longer available to perform the duties of the CPC Secretary. She will leave a void as she performed very well in that capacity. Ms. Brackett will remain as the Administrative Assistant to the Veterans Agent, a W&P part-time employee. She performed the CPC duties during the work day with evenings, so as to not interfere with her other duties. The funding appropriated under the FY11 CPC budget is \$1,500, estimated for an average of 100 hours per year. The CPC Secretary position was posted in the Town House under a classification previously used (I did speak with the W&P Board about a formal classification for FY12). One full-time employee responded to the posting, and was interviewed, but availability was limited to primarily outside of the regular work hours. The CPC Chairman (Craig Dalton) and I further discussed the duties in addition to meeting preparation and minutes; especially with the amount of acquisition transactions our office assisted with following Town Meeting – coordinating appraisals, purchase and sales agreements, title searches, and arranging for the closing, and a minimal role in the LAND grant submittal. In addition to open space acquisition, there are other areas the CPC will work to address, such as affordable housing or seek grant available funding. As such, we feel that a person needs to be available during the regular work days (set office hours) – within the funding limitations to coordinate with staff, applicants, and other business professionals, by phone or in person. We would like to re-post the position to examine shared services with another town which may be available or if no other arrangement can be made, post externally. Both would require lifting the hiring freeze of 2009 for such purpose. The position is funded outside the General Fund. *I respectfully request to lift the hiring freeze for the CPC Secretary position remaining within the current budget appropriation and estimated average hours.*

Municipal Relief Package; Early Retirement:

The Legislature approved a Municipal Relief package last month (www.mma.org). One component is an Early Retirement Initiative (“ERI”) providing for an additional credit of three years, but with certain leave cash-outs to be paid to the Retirement Board instead of the employee. It also limits the Town’s

ability to hire replacements under this program. As of 8/12/10, we have 29 employees with over 20 years in the MA retirement system. The Treasurer's office is reviewing the age+service years to determine the ranking of creditability. I plan to provide a report to the BOS at its first meeting in September, but I wanted to highlight the process and estimated timelines below as set by the Legislature.

TIMELINE

1. Town Administrator submits plan by September 28, 2010 to PERAC (Retirement Board) Actuary
2. Once the plan is approved by PERAC Actuary, Town Meeting must accept the plan (April 2011)
3. Once approved at Town Meeting, within a month, the plan must be published and made available to all active employees (May 2011)
4. Employees must apply within 2 months of the publication date (July 2011)
5. Town Administrator determines which employees will be allowed to retire, within one month of the application deadline (August 2011)
6. Approved applicants must retire within two months of the notification date (October 2011)

ELIGABILITY

- Any limitations imposed by the Town Administrator
- Active member of an applicable retirement system
- 20 years of creditable service
- Salary must be paid from an operating budget (not from federal, trust or other capital fund)
- Employee must forgo the right to accrued sick and vacation time as that will be paid into the retirement system to reduce additional pension liability.

VACANT POSTIONS

For replacements, the Town is limited to paying compensation, contract and professional services in an amount that does not exceed the salaries of the ERI retirees by

- 30% - 2011
- 45% - 2012
- 60% - 2013

An Annual Report is also required.

Other Items:

- The Wage and Personnel Board met on 8/1/10 to affirm/approve compensation for the COA Director at a higher step (Step 6) than the minimum step. The Interview Panel is meeting on 8/18 to vote a formal recommendation of Linda Felix for appointment as the COA Director. The panel had agreed by consensus on 7/14/10.
- Committee meeting composition – The BOS had requested I seek advice from Town Counsel relating to the “even” numbered composition of the Town Government Study Committee. I spoke with Town Counsel. Attorney Talerma noted that “even” membership composition is allowed. However, the composition of certain committees is noted in the Kingston General Bylaws.
- Elm Street Bridge – MDOT offered to schedule a meeting in September to discuss comments with Town Officials. This is not a public hearing for the next design step; rather it is outside of the technical review process to maintain effective lines of communication. I do expect to receive a written response to the public comments. MDOT does not view this as a delay to the project as the Federal appropriation is for FY11 (September 1 – August 31, 2011). A meeting date has not been selected.
- Kingston Committee Handbook – the Handbook has been updated and includes information on the new Open Meeting Law and Ethic's Law. We plan to upload it to the website.