



TOWN OF KINGSTON

Finance Committee

26 Evergreen Street

Kingston, MA 02364

April 3, 2024

Minutes

Call to Order

At 6:00pm Carl Pike opened the Finance Committee Meeting in Room 203 at the Kingston Town House. Also present were members Michael Cowett, David Fuller, Debra Moran, Elaine Fiore, and Jason Viveiros. Derek Billnitzer and Finance Director Carol McCoy attended via zoom.

Public Comments

None

Other Items as Needed

Revote Agricultural Commission budget from \$250 to \$1000 per Jean Landis Naumann due to increased programming and additional police detail for the annual fair.

Agricultural Commission \$1000

Motion: Elaine Fiore

Second: Debra Moran

Vote: 7-0-0

FY25 School Budgets Status Update

Tim Lewis from the Kingston School Committee was present to answer questions. Carl stated that the original FY25 school budgets request was \$2 million more than FY23. At their joint meeting on 3/14/24 the schools proposed a \$4 million increase. At that meeting Carl stated that a 14% increase is unsustainable and suggested an increase of \$1.5 million instead of \$4 million for both school budgets. Tim stated that the Kingston School Committee voted 3 to 2 to reduce their budget by \$388,000. They voted to not reduce staff but to not hire 7 more teachers. David asked how SPED works. Tim replied that town pays 100% for when the student attends KES and KIS and a shared cost when the student attends SLRSH. Derek asked about class size without the new hires, noting that most educators agree that no more than 20 students per class is tolerable. Tim stated that eliminating the new hires would result in 2-3 more students per classroom and most classrooms already have 20 students or more.



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Elaine asked if these huge budget increases are a trend and Tim replied that it is due to an increase in student population. Eric Crone talked about the impact on the students and Elaine noted the impact on the residents, especially the elderly. Carl does not recommend approval of the school budgets. He suggested separate warrant articles for the town and the school budgets. Mary MacKinnon asked if the Finance Committee's directive was level services, did any of the budgets meet this directive? Tim stated that the goal of the Kingston School Committee is to keep kids in their district in order to learn with same age peers. Carl asked how the members feel at this time. Carl is opposed to the budgets. Michael is hesitant to respond because SPED is mandatory so Regular Day will take the hit with budget cuts. Elaine can't support either the town or the school because both have gone over the 3% directive and there is a reduction to both revenues and state aid. Debra, Jason, and David also can't support the school budgets. Derek stated he could support the school budgets because the committee approved the town budgets. Carl noted that the committee is leaning towards not recommending the Education Budget by a possible vote of 5 to 2. Carl reiterated his concern regarding the budget increases over the past years and the possible 10% increase in property tax bills. There is no development to produce revenue and the Stabilization Fund isn't being used as intended.

Reserve Fund Request

Discussion was held regarding a \$9170.00 reserve fund transfer request by the IT Dept. to pay for an unanticipated licensing fee for firewall security.

Motion: Carl Pike

Second: Michael Cowett

Vote: 7-0-0

Minutes

To approve the 2/21/24 meeting minutes with minor edits.

Motion: Carl Pike

Second: Elaine Fiore

Vote: 4-0-3

To approve the 3/6/24 meeting minutes with minor edits.

Motion: Carl Pike

Second: Elaine Fiore

Vote: 6-0-1



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To approve the 3/20/24 meeting minutes with minor edits.

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Elaine Fiore

Vote: 7-0-0

Review Town Meeting Warrant Articles

#1 to pay \$2903.60 for prior years' bills

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Debra Moran

Vote: 7-0-0

#2 to close Smart Growth Fund and return \$600,000

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Jason Viveiros

Vote: 7-0-0

#3 defer to next meeting for more information

#4 to supplement fy24 Wastewater Enterprise Fund \$601,327.27

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Carl Pike

Vote: 6-0-1

#5 to use \$92,000 of fy24 CPC funds to replace Opachinski irrigation wells

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Debra Moran

Vote: 7-0-0

#6 defer to next meeting for more information

#7 to fund Water Enterprise Fund \$2,520,855

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Carl Pike

Vote: 6-0-1



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#8 to authorize Water Dept. Request for eminent domain

Motion: Carl Pike

Second: Elaine Fiore

Vote: 6-0-1

#9 to fund Wastewater Enterprise Fund \$4,582,455

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Carl Pike

Vote: 6-0-1

#10 to fund Renewable Energy Enterprise Fund \$500,000

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Elaine Fiore

Vote: 7-0-0

#11 defer to next meeting for more information

#12 to establish BOH Revolving Fund

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Jason Viveiros

Vote: 4-2-1

#13 to transfer to Employment Liability Reserve Fund \$150,000 from Free Cash

Motion: Elaine Fiore

Second: Michael Cowett

Vote: 7-0-0

#14 to transfer to OPED Health Insurance Liability Fund \$100,000 from Free Cash

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Jason Viveiros

Vote: 7-0-0

#15 to transfer to Stabilization Fund \$100,000 from Free Cash

Motion: Elaine Fiore

Second: Michael Cowett

Vote: 7-0-0

#16 to transfer to Capital Stabilization Fund \$100,000 from Free Cash

Motion: Elaine Fiore

Second: Michael Cowett

Vote: 7-0-0



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#17 to transfer to Municipal Building Insurance Fund \$10,000 from Free Cash

Motion: Elaine Fiore

Second: Michael Cowett

Vote: 7-0-0

#18 to reorganize and fund Opioid Mitigation accounts

Motion: Elaine Fiore

Second: Michael Cowett

Vote: 6-1-0

#19 defer to next meeting for more information

#20 defer to next meeting for more information

#21 to fund Sampson Fund accounts \$51,806

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Elaine Fiore

Vote: 7-0-0

#22 defer to next meeting for more information

#23 to increase compensation for Elected Officials

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Jason Viveiros

Vote: 6-0-1

#24 defer to next meeting for more information

#25 defer to next meeting for more information

#26 to increase compensation for Property Tax Work Off Program

Motion: Elaine Fiore

Second: Jason Viveiroa

Vote: 6-0-1

#27 to rescind a previous article to borrow \$442,963 for a cold storage building

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Elaine Fiore

Vote: 7-0-0



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#28 to transfer \$25,054 from Waterways Improvement Funds for unforeseen expenses

Motion: Elaine Fiore

Second: Michael Cowett

Vote: 7-0-0

Member Comments, Questions, and Concerns

Elaine asked if the committee should reconsider the town budgets if the school budgets do not decrease. Carl stated final budgets and the remaining warrant articles will be discussed at the next regular meeting. He also asked Keith to provide lease information as it pertains to Free Cash.

Adjourn

At 8:18pm a motion to adjourn was made by Carl Pike, seconded by David Fuller, and passed unanimously.

Next Regular Meeting

April 17, 2024 at 6:00pm in room 200 and via zoom