



TOWN OF KINGSTON

Finance Committee

26 Evergreen Street

Kingston, MA 02364

April 17, 2024

Minutes

Call to Order

At 6:00pm Carl Pike opened the Finance Committee Meeting in Room 200 at the Kingston Town House. Also present were members Michael Cowett, Derek Billnitzer, Debra Moran, Elaine Fiore, and Jason Viveiros. David Fuller was absent. Town Administrator Keith Hickey was present and Finance Director Carol McCoy attended via zoom.

Public Comments

A resident spoke against having any cuts made to the school budgets.

Other Items as Needed

New Police Chief Brian Holmes was present to discuss an increase of \$550,000 to his fy25 budget. He stated his department hasn't had an increase in staff in 30 years and he needs additional staff due to increased service calls. In addition, his department has no court prosecutor, no traffic enforcement officer, and no outreach officer. Members understood the need but no motion was made to recommend approval of such a large increase at this time.

The Committee did vote on several budget adjustments approved by the Selectmen on 4/9/24:

Eliminate Selectmen Procurement Officer position \$75,000

Motion: Derek Billnitzer

Second: Michael Cowett

Vote: 6-0-0

Add Selectmen Clerical support \$10,000

Motion: Jason Viveiros

Second: Michael Cowett

Vote: 5-1-0



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Add \$13,000 for IT expenses

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Elaine Fiore

Vote: 6-0-0

Add IT Consultant \$111,000

Motion: Carl Pike

Second: Michael Cowett

Vote: 6-0-0

Eliminate IT Manager position (\$108,247 salary plus \$13,753 benefits)

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Elaine Fiore

Vote: 6-0-0

Review Town Meeting Warrant Articles (cont'd)

#3 to supplement fy24 budgets (Fire \$50,000 and Veterans Benefits \$35,000)

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Jason Viveiros

Vote: 5-1-0

#11 to authorize Revolving Fund expenditure limits

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Elaine Fiore

Recreation \$700,000 Vote: 5-1-0

Inspectional \$150,000 Vote: 6-0-0

Senior Center \$50,000 Vote: 6-0-0

Adams Center \$50,000 Vote: 6-0-0

Conservation \$15,000 Vote: 6-0-0

Wetlands \$15,000 Vote: 6-0-0



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#19 to fund Capital Planning Projects:

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Elaine Fiore

Phone system \$60,000	Vote:	6-0-0
Vehicle \$267,510	Vote:	6-0-0
Vehicle \$331,773	Vote:	6-0-0
Vehicle \$331,773	Vote:	4-2-0
Vehicle \$180,000	Vote:	5-1-0
Engineering \$50,000	Vote:	5-1-0
Vehicle \$158,056	Vote:	6-0-0
Steel Doors \$100,000	Vote:	6-0-0
6 leases \$747,515	Vote:	6-0-0

#20 to fund Equipment Purchase/Projects:

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Elaine Fiore

Fit Test Machine \$4667	Vote:	6-0-0
Poll Pads \$7975	Vote:	5-1-0
Voting Keypads \$9985	Vote:	4-2-0
Ceiling Tiles \$12,000	Vote:	6-0-0
Rugs \$14,000	Vote:	6-0-0
Compliance Permit \$62,500	Vote:	6-0-0
Steel Doors \$25,000	Vote:	6-0-0
Evaluate AC needs \$30,000	Vote:	0-6-0
Paint rooms \$40,000	Vote:	5-1-0
Tree removal \$32,600	Vote:	6-0-0

#22 to fund CPC budget

Motion: Carl Pike

Second: Michael Cowett

Vote: 6-0-0

#22 to fund CPC Projects

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Elaine Fiore

Vote: 6-0-0



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#24 to fund W&P Bylaw \$93,250

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Elaine Fiore

Vote: 6-0-0

#25 to fund a COA needs assessment survey \$35,000

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: Carl Pike

Vote: 0-5-1

#26 revisit Property Tax Work Off Program amount increase

Motion: Jason Viveiros

Second: Michael Cowett

Vote: 5-0-1

FY25 School Budgets

Discussion was continued from last week where many members are concerned with the nearly 10% increase to the school budgets when the directive to all departments was 3.5%. The Kingston School Committee voted to cut only \$388,000 from their original budget and Silver Lake Regional School Committee voted to cut zero. Kingston School Business Manager Sarah Hickey was present to discuss the challenges with the budgets this year due to the agreement voted at the Fall 2023 Special Town Meeting to restructure the district. Other major factors include changes to preschool, transportation, and student enrollment.

#6 to approve fy25 budgets of \$16,744,111 for Silver Lake and \$14,568,740 for Kingston schools

Motion: Carl Pike

Second: Debra Moran

Vote: 2-4-0

After additional discussion regarding how budget cuts may impact class size and the possible loss of programs and electives, the school budgets were revisited.

#6 to approve fy25 budgets of \$16,744,111 for Silver Lake and \$14,568,740 for Kingston schools

Motion: Carl Pike

Second: Michael Cowett

Vote: 3-3-0

The school budgets will be discussed again next week at the joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen.



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Adjourn

At 8:57pm a motion to adjourn was made by Michael Cowett, seconded by Elaine Fiore, and passed unanimously.

Next Regular Meeting

April 23 joint meeting with BOS at 6:00pm in room 200 and via zoom