



TOWN OF KINGSTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
OPEN SESSION
MINUTES
TOWN HOUSE-26 EVERGREEN ST. ROOM 200 & VIA ZOOM
OCTOBER 30, 2024

6:00 p.m. – CALL TO ORDER – ROOM 200

Chairman Eric Crone called to order the meeting of the Board of Selectmen at 6:00 p.m.—selectmen in attendance: Tyler Bouchard, Kimberley Emberg, Donald Alcombright, (virtual)and Melissa Bateman.

The Board opened the meeting with a roll call vote as Mr. Alcombright was virtual.

The Finance Committee opened their meeting.

Staff Present: Keith Hickey, Town Administrator, Finance Director Kathleen Barrette, and Patricia Tucker, Assistant to Town Administrator.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- This meeting is being recorded by The Local Seen. Anyone intending to make an audio or video recording of this meeting should notify the Chair at this time.
- Financial Assistance Applications are available on the town's website or by calling the Selectmen's Office.
- For anyone interested in volunteering, there are several vacancies on various boards and committees. Please check the website for a listing. There is an opening on the Wage and Personnel Board.
- Please check our website for any additional events or notices www.kingstonma.gov

Mr. Crone began by saying that the purpose of the meeting tonight is to get the budget process kicked off. The process used to be a representative from each board/committee met to discuss the budget process and at the Special Town Meeting in 2023 it was voted that a joint meeting of the entire boards was to happen prior to November 1st. instead of a budget advisory board meeting. Mr. Crone read the new bylaw that was adopted.

By November 1 of each fiscal year, the Board of Selectmen, Kingston School Committee, and Finance Committee. Shall meet to review the Five-Year Financial Plan and discuss and delineate their budget parameters for the coming fiscal year.

Mr. Crone continued to state that the discussion will not be specific and that this will be an overall discussion of the FY26 budget, and what the Town will be willing to spend for FY26. The discussion will be on the budget levy and if an override is needed for FY26.

OPEN FORUM: There was nobody for open forum.

APPOINTMENTS:

Joint Meeting with Finance Committee and Kingston School Committee to Establish FY26 Budget Goals

Mr. Crone stated that the Kingston School Committee couldn't make it to the meeting tonight.

Mr. Pike, the Chair of the Finance Committee, discussed that he feels this is the first attempt to Town Administration.

Mr. Crone asked for clarification on whether it is the tax levy and the limit the Town has and the excess capacity. He continued by asking when we have 2.9 million available, that means we can use up to that amount without having to go to an override.

Mr. Pike stated when he says excess capacity it means that for this particular year, we could have taxed another 2 million dollars without going over the 2 ½ override, however when you don't tax that 2 million dollars this year you in effect lose it however it stays in the base for what you can start off with for the next year, and it helps with the bond rating.

Mr. Crone asked the Selectmen if they had comments.

Ms. Emberg would like to avoid a proposition 2 ½ override.

Mr. Crone discussed the schools but stated they will be coming in, with an overwhelming budget.

The Finance Committee deliberated.

Mr. Hickey put together numbers he was expecting of increases. The issue and challenges is school increased a couple of costs with health insurance, public safety and additional budget needs that maybe proposed which is an increase of over a million dollars with a reduction in services. Mr. Hickey is not in favor of a proposition 2 ½. Mr. Hickey stated that there is no new development coming in due to the water moratorium and it is a 3–4-year challenge.

Mr. Fuller clarified with Mr. Hickey that the numbers provided for them do not include any cuts.

Mr. Hickey noted that the cuts he listed are just suggestions and are not in the numbers provided, he is willing to provide more and will most likely have to in the future.

Mr. Pike over a million dollars in increase from police and fire, he is not willing to cut something from the library without looking at the police and fire budgets.

Ms. Emberg made a note that the police and fire budget have not been provided at this time.

Mr. Crone stated he would like to get the school budget within the timeframe of the town's bylaw.

Mr. Alcombright asked what level services would come to and whether that number is not available at this time. Mr. Crone stated not yet.

The Finance committee voted, and it passed that they will not recommend any budget that would require a proposition 2 ½. The Finance committee voted to recommend a budget increase for Finance committee voted to recommend a budget increase for FY26 not exceed 4% and it passed.

Motion by Ms. Emberg seconded by Mr. and a 5-0-0 vote, by roll call vote

VOTE: I move to support the recommendation from the Finance Committee for a bottom-line budget increase for FY26 to not exceed a 4% increase over FY25.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

SELECTMEN COMMENTS:

Next Regular meeting has been changed to November 12th.

Motion by Mr. Bouchard, seconded by Ms. Bateman and a 5-0-0 vote, by roll call

VOTE: I move to adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Tucker

