



TOWN OF KINGSTON

Finance Committee

26 Evergreen Street

Kingston, MA 02364

October 16, 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: Michael Cowett, David Fuller and Debra Moran

Zoom:

Absent: Derek Billnitzer and Jonas Feit

Reorganization

A motion was made by Debra Moran to keep Carl Pike as Chairman and Michael Cowett as Vice Chair, seconded by David Fuller, and passed unanimously.

Reserve Fund Request

Discussion was held regarding a \$23,430.00 reserve fund transfer request by the Highway Dept. to replace the Waste Oil Heater due to the combustion tubes being cracked beyond repair.

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: David Fuller

Vote: 4-0-0

Review Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles (cont'd)

Discussion on the final article to be reviewed was tabled last week because not all of the projects had been voted on by the Capital Planning Committee yet. Capital Planning Committee Chairman Heath Emberg noted that at their last two meetings they approved all of the projects except the Police Comfort Dog vehicle. He also noted that unapproved projects should be removed from the Warrant. Some Finance Committee members felt that Capital projects should be part of the Annual Town Meeting and not a Special Town Meeting. When asked what the police department should use for a vehicle the response was there are two vehicles available in the town hall parking lot.



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#7 to fund Capital projects with free cash:

Motion: Michael Cowett

Second: David Fuller

Public Safety Radio Upgrades \$159,148 Vote: 4-0-0

Fire Engine Replacement \$1,082,769 Vote: 3-1-0

Police Comfort Dog Vehicle \$75,000 Vote: 1-3-0

Harbormaster Dock Replacement \$60,000 Vote: 4-0-0

KES Playground Repairs \$76,000 Vote: 4-0-0 (might be lowered at STM due to fundraising)

Preparation for Joint FY26 Budget Planning Meeting with Selectmen and Schools

Discussion was held in preparation for the FY26 budget season. Carl hopes the committee members will stand together with supporting a 3-3.5% increase limit to the FY26 budget. He is striving for numbers that won't cause Proposition 2.5 override. Michael feels a 3-3.5% increase won't fly with all committees and departments. However, members are in agreement that they for excess levy capacity and no override. David would like to see one million plus in excess levy capacity. Carl feels than an override might pass at town meeting but may not pass at the ballot. Carl noted again that salaries make up a huge portion of the budgets. Michael noted that new growth has dropped 75% and reiterated current and prior members' concerns that budgets are becoming unsustainable. David asked about level services versus level funding and what the consequences will be...how many layoffs? He asked for a breakdown of the cost of contractual obligations and expenses (plus 1% only) to avoid an override.

Adjourn

At 7:02pm a motion to adjourn was made by Michael Cowett, seconded by David Fuller, and passed unanimously.

Next Regular Meeting

October 30, 2024 Joint FY26 Budget Planning Meeting with Selectmen and Schools at 6:30pm in room 200 and via zoom

November 19, 2024 Special Town Meeting



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