

**TOWN OF KINGSTON
MASSACHUSETTS**

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

21 August 2008

Chairman Mathew Hamilton opened a meeting of the Finance Committee at 7:35 PM on 21 August 2008 at the Kingston Town Hall. Also present were Elaine Fiore, John LaBrache, Lawrence Hunt, Paul Ricci, and Claire Soares. Jason Lelio was absent.

The Chairman welcomed Town department heads to the meeting and invited them to offer suggestions as to how savings can be made and additional revenue generated for the FY10 budgets. He stated that reducing personnel is the Finance Committee's last option.

Town Treasurer John LaBrache reported on Moody's recent appraisal of the Town's financial status and its suggestions for maintaining or improving its bond rating. He advised that the Town's bond rating will be reflected in the cost of borrowing by Silver Lake. He also noted areas of increased costs and reduced revenues. He estimated the Town will begin the budget process with a \$1.2 million deficit.

The following suggestions were made:

To reduce the percentage taxpayers pay under the Community Preservation Act from 3 to 1 per cent (Elaine Fiore)

To expand central purchasing and to look at outsource copying and reprographics functions to less expensive sources, such as to Plymouth County Correctional Reprographics (Chief Rebello)

To investigate how changing hours of operation might result in savings (Tom Bott)

To support the Regional School Committee's request to state officials for full state funding of state-mandated costs (John Creed). Mr. Creed asked the Finance Committee to write to town officials endorsing the school committee's position on mandated costs.

To centralize collections and use lock box for collections (Eric Crone)

To include the cost of employee benefits when billing for police details (Joan Paquette)

To defer the annual town meeting budget question to June so the Town will know how Halifax and Plympton are voting on the regional school budget (Mary Lou Murzyn)

To eliminate stipends and benefits for part-time elected town officials (James Judge)

To consider Wage and Personnel Board's annual COLA increase and its effect on union negotiations (Sandy MacFarlane)

To change the method of allocating fuel costs to reduce the cost of reporting charges (Joan Paquette)

To have Inspectors' fees for reviewing construction plans based on square footage rather than the flat fee now charged to increase fees and make charges more equitable for residential and commercial applications (Chief Heath)

To gain support of unions for biweekly payrolls for savings (John LaBrache)

There was discussion of whether to have a ballot question for an override and, if so, in what form it should be presented. There was support, although not unanimous, for an override question. One department head supported a menu form. The majority of supporters of the question preferred that it be a single question. Librarian Sia Stewart said she believes voters should have the opportunity to consider the question even if they vote it down.

School Committeeman Joseph Chaves warned of an inevitable increase to school costs as the result of full-day kindergarten having been instituted for the 2008-2009 school year.

Assistant Superintendent Joy Blackwood reported that successful grant applications have added to school revenue.

Selectman Sandy MacFarlane advised that revenue acquired under the Wetland Protection Act can be used to pay salaries. Conservation Agent Maureen Thomas explained it is now used for legal fees.

The discussion having ended, the department heads left the meeting.

The Committee reviewed items on the agenda.

Upon motion made by John LaBrache and seconded by Claire Soares, following discussion, it was unanimously—

VOTED: To accept the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July
2008 as submitted.

Upon motion made by Paul Ricci and seconded by Elaine Fiore, following discussion, it was unanimously—

VOTED: To send letters to various state officials endorsing the Silver Lake Regional School District's letter asking that the state fully fund state-mandated school costs.

Upon motion made by John LaBrache and seconded by Claire Soares, following discussion, it was unanimously—

VOTED: To ask the Selectmen to include a proposal for biweekly payrolls in their union negotiations.

Upon motion made by John LaBrache and seconded by Paul Ricci, following discussion, it was unanimously—

VOTED: To adopt and propose to the Board of Selectmen FY2010 budget guidelines as follows: That town departments request only level personnel and level expenses; and further,

That each department propose where a 5-percent reduction could be made in its budget, if needed, and to explain the effect that reduction would have on the services now provided.

There was discussion of maintaining temperature controls in all town buildings. John LaBrache said he would obtain guidelines for the next meeting.

It was noted that the date of the Special Town Meeting has been changed to 1 October 2008. The next Finance Committee meeting was set on 18 September 2008.

There was discussion of the state's reducing the amount of the payment it makes to towns in accordance with the Community Preservation Act.

Upon motion made by Elaine Fiore and seconded by Paul Ricci, following discussion, it was—

VOTED: To request an article on the Special Town Meeting Warrant asking to reduce the percentage taxpayers pay under the Community Preservation Act from 3 to 1 per cent.

John LaBrache abstained from voting on the motion; all other members and voting supported it.

There was discussion of establishing a revolving fund for the Harbormaster's Department to make it self sufficient. The Committee agreed to meet with the Harbormaster during the FY2010 budget process.

Upon motion made by Elaine Fiore and seconded by John LaBrache, following discussion, it was unanimously—

VOTED: To request that the necessary action be taken to return the appropriations for gasoline expense to the Care of Municipal Property expense budget in order to simplify and expedite payment of charges but to continue recording fuel usage per department in accordance with monitoring by the Superintendent of Streets.

Upon motion made by Lawrence Hunt and seconded by Paul Ricci, following discussion, it was—

VOTED: To ask the Board of Selectmen to adjourn the next annual town meeting to a date in June for consideration of financial articles so as to have the most up-to-date numbers on which the voters can act.

There being no further discussion or vote, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM.

Respectfully yours,

Miriam MacInnis, Secretary