

**Kingston Municipal Budget Committee**  
**Public Meeting**  
**Kingston Fire Station - Meeting Room**  
**November 2, 2022, 6 p.m.**

**Members in Attendance:**

Trish Tidd, Chair  
Rick Russman, Vice Chair  
Stacy Dion, Secretary  
Chuck Hart, BOS representative  
Gary Finerty  
Nick Hilfer (left the meeting at 7:42 p.m.)  
John Pramberg  
Annemarie Roth  
Shaw Tilton

**Absent Members:** Claudine Dias

**Other Attendees:** Ellie Alessio, BOS  
Kathy Clark Chase, Secretary, Historical Museum Committee  
Marissa Federico, Recording Secretary  
Lesley Hume  
Chief Joel Johnson, Police Department  
Lynne Merrill, Chair, Planning Board  
Evy Nathan, Chair, Conservation Commission  
Steve Sousa

Trish called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**MM&S:** Stacy made a motion to approve the minutes as written for the KMBC meeting held on 10/19/22. Seconded by Annemarie. Rick abstained as he was not present. All others in favor.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- *ARPA funding:* No changes to ARPA funding.
- *Anticipated revenue:* No changes since last meeting.
- *Budget:* New budget shows an overall increase of 10%, but there are still some missing numbers.

- **COLA:** Stacy asked about the status of COLA. Chuck confirmed this will be a warrant article. There was a conversation about the possibility of including this in the budget, and Chuck explained there is a concern about the operation budget failing on the ballot. Ellie explained that COLA was included in the budget for the first time in 2022, and she stressed the importance of keeping salaries commiserate with comparable towns. Both Chuck and Ellie confirmed that the BOS have not voted on this yet and stressed that residents need to be educated about the budget process in consideration of high inflation rates. Annemarie agreed with Stacy's recommendation that COLA be included in the budget rather than a warrant article. All agreed that COLA should not be included in the budget concurrent with a warrant article. Annemarie noted residents expect the budget to go up in consideration of the economic climate. Ellie noted these discussions will include the KMBC.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- Trish brought in copies of all emailed documentation.
- The library provided the transfer sheet. It was confirmed that the library has \$39,000 in impact fees available.

#### **DEPARTMENT PRESENTATIONS:**

##### ***Police Department (4210)/Animal Control (4414):***

Nick explained the department is fully staffed. The police budget has been brought down by 20%. The increased line items are mostly from staffing and cruisers. Staffing is up, and wages have been increased to compete with other towns and to assist with officer retention. The cost of cruisers has increased, and Chief Johnson noted that a new cruiser was purchased in October and is not reflected in the actuals.

Discussion about specific line items:

- *Full-time salaries (4210-S1):* Projected \$681,180, now \$623,744. There were adjustments of part-time employees to full time, and some officers were promoted. There are now 9 FTE in the Department, an increase of 4 from last year. A COLA was also included. The Chief explained that 28 officers were lost in recent years due to various reasons and provided an overview of the incentive program he instituted to encourage officers to complete their 3-year commitments to the town. He noted that officer pay in town is still lower than comparable towns, and a sign-in bonus is not offered as is in other towns. John confirmed with Chief Johnson that in some cases, if an officer is hired by another town prior to the officer's 3-year commitment, the hiring town will pay the town of Kingston the required contractual amount.
- *Salaries-Secretary-Part Time (4210-S3):* Reduction from \$1,292 now \$792 to match actual spending.
- *Salaries-Overtime (4210-S4):* Reduction from \$25,630 to \$19,523
- *Salaries-Overtime Court (4210-S5):* Reduction from \$17,536 to \$13,357
- *Part-time salaries (4210-S6):* The amount of PTE has gone from 3 to 6. There is no COLA built into this line item, and there is no rate change for PT officer salaries.

- *Salaries-Seminars and Training (4210-S7)*: Reduction from \$35,931 to \$32,064. Chief Johnson noted that firearms instructors are volunteering their time for range days. The Department must meet State Police training standards with 48 hours of mandatory training that is considered overtime for all participants. There are also continuing education classes above what is mandated, and those are also considered overtime for participants.
- *Salaries-Quarterly Staff Meeting (4210-S8)*: Reduction from \$4,360 to \$3,928. Chief Johnson explained he hosts a quarterly staff meeting for department cohesion.
- *Ammunition (4210-02)*: Rick asked about the increased cost of ammunition. Nick noted they use multiple calibers. Chief Johnson added that he plans for 500 rounds/officer/year, which is not extravagant. He noted there are enough frangible rounds for new trainees, but more will be needed for next year.
- *Capital Equipment (4210-04)*: Reduced from \$4,967 to \$4,000 to align the budget with actual spending. The Chief confirmed that the IMC program that was obtained for cross-agency communication was paid out of ARPA funding. Chuck was concerned about inflation for future equipment purchases, but Rick believes costs may decrease due to rising interest rates that affect lending.
- *Computer (4210-05)*: Nick noted that actual spending for previous years is in line, and spending decreased in 2022. Chief Johnson noted he needs 2 laptops for cruisers with an earlier estimate of \$5,930.58, but he has been informed the price has increased to \$6,930.58. He also has an estimate of \$936 for desk-top computers. After a discussion, Chief Johnson agreed to keep the current budget and not increase it to adjust for possible price increases.
- *Cruiser Replacement (4210-07)*: The cost of a new cruiser was \$38,800, but Ford informed Chief Johnson that the cost has increased to \$43,000, so he cancelled the order for the new cruiser. He purchased a GMC Traverse and will have it customized at a cost of \$17,516. He also has an unmarked car with low mileage that can be customized to be a new cruiser. He is looking into purchasing a new cruiser.
- *Electric (4210-23)*: Nick noted that the budget for electric will be decreased from \$16,000 to \$7,387 to match actual spending. Stacy noted she believes the BOS informed departments to double the electric and fuel costs across the board due to increased rate announcements; Chuck confirmed this. Nick will increase the budget to \$16,000 for now pending further guidance.
- *Photo (4210-11)*: Nick proposed a reduction from \$1,200 to \$900 to reflect actual spending, but Chief Johnson requested this be brought back up to \$1,200.
- *Forms and envelopes (4210-12)*: Nick decreased the budget from \$1,200 to \$700 based on actual spending, but Chief Johnson requested to leave this at \$1,200.
- *Heat (4210-22)*: The budget will remain at \$8,000 per the BOS's guidance, but Nick noted that this may be overstated based on actual spending.
- *Intoximeter Supplies (4210-13)*: The budget will be reduced from \$400 to \$1 based on inventory on hand already. Chief Johnson noted they are more frequently utilizing blood tests rather than intoximeter readings.

- *Mileage and Meals (4210-14)*: Nick reduced the budget from \$500 to \$250 based on actual spending, but Chief Johnson noted some officers are using their own vehicles to attend training based on the location. Nick will bring this back to \$500.
- *Prosecutor (4210-15)*: There was a discussion about the prosecutor's increased compensation. Chief Johnson noted she works for 5 towns including Epping (\$42,000), Windham (\$80,000), Fremont (\$13,000), and Brentwood (\$14,000). He noted the cost for Brentwood will be increasing to \$16,000. In particular, the Chief noted the Epping's arrest statistics are similar to those of Kingston. It was confirmed that she has no staff and that she works from home. Chief Johnson expressed appreciation for her skill and added that the town does not pay her any benefits. Rick noted it is common for prosecutors to negotiate with each town. John expressed concern about her total annual salary in comparison to other prosecutors who do similar work outside of town government.
- *Surplus Equipment (4210-18)*: As there have been no expenses in recent years, this will be reduced to \$1.
- *Telephone/Internet (4210-19)*: Increase from \$6,500 to \$6,900 based on actual spending.
- *Uniforms (4210-20)*: Reduced from \$14,100 to \$13,600 based on the revised staff head count and needs.

**SUMMARY:** New Police Department budget at \$1,032,120, representing a 22% increase over the budget for 2022.

There was a general discussion about raises for department heads and the source of incomes for these raises. Chief Johnson noted for the Police, there were open positions, so the unpaid salary money could be utilized to pay for a raise. Chuck and Ellie explained that raises are built into the budget, and department heads are accountable for their spending.

Regarding Animal Control, Nick noted he has not discussed this yet with Chief Johnson. The Chief added that the costs of Mosquito and Pest Control have been moved from the Animal Control budget to the Health Department. He noted there has been no change to veterinary costs or the veterinarian utilized by the town.

### ***Conservation Commission (4619)***

Shaw noted that the budget as presented at this meeting is not correct, and the Commission is level funded for 2023. He added that the budget for trail maintenance in 2022 was \$2,000, which is not currently reflected in the budget.

- *Trail Maintenance (4619-12)*: There was a discussion about the actual spending of \$2,500 thus far for 2022. Rick serves on the Trails Subcommittee and noted there is over 200 hours of volunteer work done annually to maintain the trails with their own personal equipment. More trail work is being proposed for 2023. Evy noted that it was hoped to increase this number, but members wanted to be sensitive due to inflation and budget constraints for 2023. Evy noted that trail bridges need to be re-decked as well. Stacy asked if an increase will be formally requested for 2023. **MM&S:** Rick made a motion to raise the budget for

trail maintenance from \$2,000 to \$3,000. Seconded by Annemarie. Shaw abstained. Final vote: 4 in favor, 3 against, 1 abstention.

**SUMMARY:** New Conservation Commission budget at \$10,760, representing a 10% increase over the budget for 2022.

### ***Planning Board (4191)***

Lynne noted that the budget request is the same as 2022 with the exception of the part-time salary line (4191-S1) due to hiring the new land use board administrator. She noted that actual spending is low as the previous Planning Board admin left mid-year. She added that the site plan review fees bring in revenue to offset costs. Lynne informed attendees that there are 3 large projects occurring in next 12-18 months: The distribution center's driveway adjustment to adhere to NH DOT requirements, the proposed development across from Carriage Town Plaza and its associated litigation, and the Seminary property project.

- *Office Equipment (4191-09):* Although the actual figures for 2022 are lower than budgeted, Lynne explained that the new computer budgeted for the past 3 years was never purchased, but now the old computer is not holding data, so a new computer will be purchased soon. Lynne will try to buy this in 2022. Chuck suggested this be covered by ARPA funding, but Lynne noted this was incorporated in the budget years ago.
- *Planner (4191-10):* Lynne stated the town planner's contract is up at the end of 2022, and the town is soliciting proposals to fulfill this role. She added the figure could change. She explained that this is not a salaried position and is invoiced by the planner. The current planner has not submitted an invoice in 2022.

Stacy noted there is a lot of unused money. Lynne noted that the actuals on the current budget do not reflect all of the cost in 2022. Stacy asked if any line items could be reduced based on actual spending; Lynne explained there are big projects in the pipeline. Lynne noted there is a planned review and potential revision of districting to meet the needs of the community; this process may require consultants. Affordable housing may be a factor in this review.

### ***Historical Museum Committee (4589)***

Kathy noted the 2023 budget represents a decrease of 32% from the 2022 budget. She noted the planned computer work has been completed. She added that there are many visitors to the Museum inquiring about genealogy, land holdings, and old newspaper information. Kathy stated that Museum volunteers assist the archivist and transcriptionist with their duties.

- *Archival/Office Supplies (4589-01):* Volunteers are researching prices for acid-free archival boxes; they are trying to obtain these now at a discount. Chuck suggested that archival and office supplies be separated out; Lesley noted the previous finance director asked them to be together.
- *Archivist Consultant (4589-05):* This budget includes the professional archivist and the transcription of oral histories done by Marissa Federico (budgeted at \$1,175). The archivist's work was backlogged due to family illness but is now underway.

- *Computer and Equipment Supplies (4589-02)*: This is currently overbudget due to the underestimation of cost by Block5. The \$750 budget for 2023 represents the purchasing of external hard drives.
- *Computer Support (4589-04)*: This represents the cost for maintaining the computers. Remote access fees are also included in this line item. An invoice was just submitted for 2022 and is not included in the actuals.
- *Dues/Fees/Programs (4589-05)*: This includes memberships that renew in October as well as a 3-year voice library subscription for \$179 for an app that allows individuals to record oral histories at home and easily share them with the Museum.

### ***Human and Welfare Services (4441, 4442)***

*\*The minutes for this section were prepared by Stacy Dion as Marissa is the Director of Human Services.\**

Marissa presented a handout for the 2023 budget. Budget for the Human Services Department decreased by 12% and the General Assistance decreased by 3%. She also presented the guidance that the Public Utilities Commission has given on the approved electric hikes starting in December 2022. She also provided a breakdown of number of households looking for help and the amount of money they are looking for.

- *Salaries-Part Time 4441-S1*: The salary had been reduced based on the last two months of work. Shaw recommended that the salary be level funded since she had only been on the job for two months. The committee agreed to level fund.
- *Books 4441-01*: Reduced 28%.
- *Boxes 4441-06*: Reduce the budget for new boxes as the boxes are being reused and quantity of boxes is currently not needed. The use of gift cards is also being used instead of giving out of food. Budget was reduced by 50% from \$200 to \$100.
- *Dues 4441-02*: Dues to join both the NH Municipal Association and NH Welfare Association. Increase from \$30 to \$85.
- *General Assistance 4442*: General Assistance is being level funded. Based on the current need and the rising costs of fuel and electricity, the committee was concerned about meeting all the potential requests for help. Marissa stated that a lot of residents are being referred to state agencies for help and that at this time she does not see the need for any increases. John stated that if a person qualifies for services, the town is required to pay.

**NEXT MEETING:** Sunday 11/13/22 at 6 p.m.

Rick moved to conclude the meeting, seconded by Gary at 8:37 p.m.

**>>These minutes were voted as final without amendment on 12/28/22<<**