

Kingston Municipal Budget Committee
Public Meeting
Kingston Town Hall, also via Zoom
December 29, 2021, at 6 p.m.

Members in Attendance:

Chuck Hart, Chair
Kim Donahue, Secretary (via Zoom)
Marissa Federico, Recording Secretary
Claudine Dias
Stacy Dion
James LaValley
John Pramberg
Annemarie Roth
Trish Tidd
Shaw Tilton

Absent Members: Gary Finerty
Nick Hilfer
Rick Russman
Kevin St. James

Chuck called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. Zoom was not available until approximately 6:30 p.m. due to required system updates for the town's laptop.

OLD BUSINESS:

Approval of the minutes from the KMBC meeting held on 12/1/21: MM&S: Jim moved to approve the draft minutes as submitted. Stacy seconded. All in agreement.

Encumbrances of funds: Chuck stated the BOS will meet tomorrow to decide on funds to encumber. Chuck explained the process for encumbering funds. Chuck explained that there are many large building projects in town that are anticipated to bring in revenue to the town. Stacy stated there is conflicting information regarding whether the Museum Committee will receive the funds from the BOS for a new computer and possibly technology updates; this should be resolved tomorrow at the BOS meeting.

Warrant articles: Chuck gave preliminary updates on potential warrant articles, but more information will be available after the submission deadline of 1/11/22.

Budget considerations:

- ***Default budget:*** Chuck clarified that If this budget is voted down, the default budget will be last year's budget plus required funds to honor any existing contracts. With revenue offsets, the tax impact should be decreased for taxpayers.
- ***Cemeteries (4195)*** - There was a discussion about the financial process for burials at the cemeteries in town; the costs are partially offset by revenue. Shaw explained the labor-intensive process to mow lawns at cemeteries; this makes it difficult to obtain contractors willing to take on this work. There is currently no contract with the existing landscaper.

- *Inspectors (4240)*: The town is in the final process of interviewing candidates for the code enforcement officer position.
- *Social services agencies (4445)*: Kim stated both SoRock and One Sky will be submitting warrant articles.
- *Library (4550)*: The Trustees hired a new director to start in January 2022. They still have 2 open FT positions that are anticipated to be filled at some point in 2022 by the new director. Annemarie explained the transfer account budget (4550-04) has increased due to insurance costs as well as technology maintenance/upgrades. Chuck explained that last year, since there were open FT positions in 2021, money was returned to the town. There was a discussion of the potential salaries of the 2 other open FT positions (adult services librarian, children's services librarian) and the impact on the budget if these positions are filled mid-year. Annemarie stated the salary of the new director is unknown. Annemarie will contact the library to find out what salary was offered to the new director, to determine when interviews will be conducted for the other 2 open positions, and what the anticipated salaries will be for those 2 open positions.
- *Computer upgrade for multiple departments*: There was a discussion about the Block5 contracts and the technology upgrades across multiple departments. Stacy reminded members that there are ongoing costs with Block5, not just upgrade costs. The BOS have approved some town departments' requests for technology upgrades but have left other departments to budget independently.
- *Museum (4589)*: Stacy clarified that the museum is working on digitizing their files. It involves a large amount of data, and their computer is either failing or has failed. They have an archivist and are hoping to increase this individual's hours to help. They have the Friends, but it is believed this is a small group. Stacy was not sure how much fundraising is done by the Friends. After a discussion, it was decided that the request for a new computer is reasonable. The budget for Computer Equipment and Supplies (4589-02) includes \$3,750 to cover potential technology issues plus \$6,277 for technology upgrades through Block5. Stacy explained that backing up their data requires the Block5 upgrade due to the high amount of data needs. The money for the purchase of a new computer is on the list to be discussed at tomorrow's BOS meeting regarding encumbrances. Stacy's museum contact said she would pull out the cost of the curator from the budget, but this has not been officially done yet. The other possibility to fund the technology upgrade is a warrant article, but if it fails, the museum would be completely out of the requested funding without recourse. Shaw explained that although the KMBC is sympathetic to the requested technology upgrades, it may need to be parsed out over multiple years, they can raise funds, or write a warrant article. Trish suggested they have a warrant article for the \$6,277 Block5 upgrade.

Revenue: Revenue is up and will be transferred to 2022, which will offset the total budget. It is anticipated that some of this will be encumbered by the BOS.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chuck explained the process for the next meeting, Decision Day #1. The KMBC will hold a meeting after the public hearing. There was a discussion about Shaw recusing himself for voting regarding Conservation Commission and Cemeteries.

NEXT MEETING: Saturday, 1/8/22, at 9:00 a.m. in Town Hall.

Chuck adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

*****Minutes accepted and finalized without amendments 1/15/22*****