

Kingston Municipal Budget Committee
October 13, 2021 at 6 p.m.
Kingston Town Hall

Members in Attendance:

Chuck Hart, Chair
Kim Donahue, Secretary
Marissa Federico, Recording Secretary
Claudine Dias
Stacy Dion
Gary Finerty
Nick Hilfer
James LaValley
John Pramberg
Annemarie Roth
Kevin St. James, representative from the Board of Selectmen (BOS)
Trish Tidd
Shaw Tilton

Absent Members:

Rick Russman, Vice Chair

Chuck called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Members introduced themselves.

OLD BUSINESS:

Approval of the minutes from the KMBC meeting held on 3/31/21: MM&S: Jim moved to approve the minutes as written. Gary seconded. All in agreement.

Members confirmed that they have been sworn in.

NEW BUSINESS:

Kevin explained the BOS approved a 3% across-the-board pay increase for cost of living adjustments. He also stated the BOS has advised all departments to review their technology capabilities, especially in light of the pandemic. The library has a different process for pay increases than the town. Kim asked if departments are expected to justify their pay increases differing from the COLA adjustments, and Kevin believes that is reasonable. Kevin explained that it is important to look at COLA versus pay for performance figures when evaluating budgets.

Chuck discussed the ARPA grant received by the town. The town has 3 years to utilize these funds. Chuck explained that projects intended to be covered by these funds should not be included in the budget. Kevin stated there is one issue with the replacement of a copy machine in the Town Clerk's office that is required whether or not grant funds are used; the cost of this copy machine is in the budget.

Chuck also explained what impact fees are, particularly in relation to the Fire Department and the Library. These additional funds should be considered when evaluating these departments' budgets.

In reference to the library, they returned \$27,032 back to the town in 2021 due to the cost of benefits being lower than expected.

Chuck informed members that the KMBC Bylaws are on the town's website.

Chuck explained how the Social Services (category 4445) budget functions. A warrant article is needed for the first 3 years a program requests funding. After that time, the program is included in the budget without the requirement of a warrant article. This year, One Sky and SoRock require warrant articles. Chuck reached out today to Drugs are Dangerous and Seacoast Mental Health as they have yet to submit funding requests.

Chuck explained that under Library Transfer Account (4550-04), this number represents all other expenses by the library such as utilities, etc. A list of the expenses included in this line item has been provided to the KMBC.

He also explained that all line items in red on page 17 of the budget are due to warrant articles.

Members discussed the goals of the Committee in evaluating budget requests. It was agreed that caution should be exercised in consideration of the current economic climate.

Kim also suggested that it would be helpful to include the upcoming warrant articles in budget discussions, but those are not available until 1/11/22.

Kevin explained the difference between a technology upgrade due to aged technology infrastructure and ongoing technology maintenance.

Chuck emphasized that the revenue figures are also important to consider when examining the budget. Those will be provided by Cindy Kenerson, the town's Finance Director, as they are available.

Kevin explained that the 3 contracted employees for the town are Police Chief, Fire Chief, and Highway/Road Agent. Pay increases for those positions are contractual.

Claudine requested a list of what ARPA funds will be used for in the interest of budget transparency, and Kevin said he will forward that to the Committee when available.

Adherence to Robert's Rule of Order:

Chuck reminded members of the importance of adhering to the Robert's Rule of Order regarding member communications. Kevin explained that replying to the sender of an email is acceptable but replying to all is not.

Discussion of Calendar and Assignments:

No member had an objection to his/her department assignment.

There was a potential scheduling issue for the upcoming meeting on Wednesday, 11/3/21; four members are not able to attend this meeting. After a discussion, it was decided to keep the meeting at the same date/time as there are many scheduling constraints as well as potential issues obtaining a meeting room.

Chuck ran through the calendar and provided members with an overview of meeting structure.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, 11/3/21, at 6:00 p.m. in Town Hall.

MM&S: Chuck moved to end the meeting. Gary seconded

Chuck concluded the public hearing at 8:10 p.m.