

KENSINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
Virtual Meeting due to COVID-19
MONDAY November 30, 2020 – 6:30pm
Minutes - DRAFT

In attendance: Joe Pace, Vanessa Rozier, Bob Solomon

Others in attendance: Chief Scott Cain, Chief Jon True, Dave Buxton, Susie Gilbert, Kathy Felch, Fred Feldman

At 6:34pm, Joe called the meeting to order. At the start of the Zoom meeting, there were 10 participants on the call.

Joe explained that he, Kathy, and Chief Cain met to discuss the Police Department budget since the Budget meeting last week. As a result, numbers have been modified. The FT Salaries have been modified to ensure that everyone is on the proper pay plan and \$334,197 is an accurate number for the 2021 budget. Due to the unanticipated funds from grant income and federal support income, there is significant cash on hand. It was discussed that it may make sense to use the cash on hand to buy the 2 new leases outright this year rather than those funds going to the fund balance. The lease payments for 2021 are budgeted at \$21,436.00. There are enough unanticipated funds to potentially cover this expense fee simple. Joe would support using the cash on hand to make purchases that have already been planned for the next year as opposed to having to raise those funds. Vanessa asked that a balance sheet be provided and also a list from each department of items they planned to purchase in 2021 that could potential be purchased in 2020. Mr. Feldman commented that this budget appears to be asking for an increase of about 16% and feels the citizenry would be disappointed in that and he would like to see any funds used this year to decrease the budget for next year.

The Board reviewed Library 4550. Susie Gilbert, Director of the Library made a presentation to the Board highlighting what the library has done in the last year. She explained that she has included a 3% cost of living increase for all employees. Additionally, she would like to add a maintenance position to the library. It was explained that this would be helpful for small projects, lifting, and additional cleaning. Mr. Feldman encouraged her to include the presentation on the library website. Sydnee Goddard asked that the Board consider how a cost of living increase would be perceived in a year where many are not getting increases. The Board will review salary increases as a whole for the town.

The Board reviewed Conservation 4650. Sydnee Goddard, Chair of the Conservation Commission summarized their proposed budget to the Board. The Conservation Commission is not asking for an increase this year.

The Board reviewed Financial Administration 4150. Carleen Wiggin, Tax Collector summarized her proposed budget. There are no significant changes to the Tax Collector portion of the budget. There was discussion that Land Use Board support should be separate from Assessing support. There was brief discussion by the Board on administrative support needed. The Board feels that they may need to be additional support to the Assessing Office as well. Vanessa explained that the Planning Board is revising applications and procedures in an effort to make the process clearer and avoid legal costs. It was noted that there is an increase to assessing services, this includes online support and online access to tax maps and tax cards. Costs of supplies and auditing services also increased.

Dave Buxton, Road Manager, summarized his proposed budget 4312 Highways and Streets. He explained that in recent years there has been a shift in the plowing contracts based on a stipend program that was initiated by the State. Many contractors are leaning toward this kind of a program. There are two contractors that handle plowing for Kensington; Matrix and B&S Disposal. Dave explained the contracts that the Board approved for snow removal with Matrix and B&S Disposal. Dave feels that many other towns have much larger budgets for snow removal than Kensington. Dave summarized the repairs needed at the Town salt shed. Dave feels the funds that he gets are used conservatively. Fred asked questions regarding tree removal, culvert repair and replacement, and police details. Dave acknowledged that it has been a difficult year and that considered, his priority is Highland Road that will need repairs. Dave proposed getting a quote for the work on Highland Road and submitting that as the Road Reconstruction amount of the ballot this year to save on the tax bill, this being the only year road reconstruction is handled this way. The Board appreciated Dave's consideration although had concerns that this would potentially cause issues in future years if something is skipped now. Dave did not believe if there were other items skipped, there would be any significant impact.

At the next meeting, the Board plans to discuss the fund balance differential to be able to appropriately allocate unused funds.

The Board reviewed Election, Registration and Vital Statistics 4140. Sarah Wiggin, Interim Town Clerk, summarized her budget to the Board. Sarah explained the most significant change is the removal of the Deputy Town Clerk salary with an equivalent increase to the Town Clerk salary. Most other items are similar to last year though it was noted that there are fewer elections but expenses have slightly increased.

Kathy Felch summarized the Board of Selectmen budget 4130. It was noted that legal expenses are particularly difficult to budget however, there was a slight increase. Legal advertisements are getting more expensive. Health insurance rates increased about 7%. The rates changed depending on what plan was selected. Kathy provided a summary of the increases to the Board, comparing the monthly costs. The retirement system was also increased, mandated by the State; 28.43% for half of the year and the other half of the year.

Kathy Felch summarized the Planning and Zoning Budget Planning budget 4191. She had sent an email to Rob Chase, Chair of the Planning Board. The support person is added from the other part of the budget that was formerly under assessing support. Zoning books still need to be discussed. The RPC Circuit Rider Contract has increased, but it a set cost. Vanessa explained that now anything over 4 hours for each application is billed back directly to the applicant; the Board anticipates some revenue coming back as a result of this change.

Kathy Felch summarized the Government Buildings 4194 (for janitorial services) and General Town Hall (maintenance and repairs). Lawn care, janitorial supplies, new mats and treads for stairs, flag for Town Hall, alarm system, air testing, elevator inspection, HVAC maintenance, septic pumping, pressure washing, etc. are all items that are included in this area of the budget. The Board discussed if there are any items that might be able to be addressed prior to the end of the year. Additionally, payroll for cleaning services are not changing.

Kathy Felch summarized the Cemetery budget 4195. She explained that some of the anticipated expenses that were budgeted include wrought iron fence painting and repair, tree maintenance, and lawn mowing. There was discussion that some of these items could possibly be encumbered this year if there was a contract in place. Additionally, there is a fall cleanup that has not yet been encumbered that will be on this year.

Kathy Felch summarized the Insurance Budget 4196. The Town received a credit for having fewer claims which Kathy explained.

Kathy Felch summarized the General Government Operations 4199. There have been many increases in this area. The IT support has increased almost \$50.00 per hour and this year there have been additional IT needs. There is additional office software to include firewall for server and software, additional website costs and Microsoft email. There are also increases to hardware. There was some confusion as to what was being budgeted for in this account. Kathy is going to double check that everything is only budgeted for once reviewing the backup spreadsheet from last year.

The Board reviewed the Solid Waste Disposal 4324. Vanessa requested that B&S be removed from those line items. This may need to be increased by about \$5,000.00 to account for the last payment. Kathy briefly explained that there are differences in the new accounting software and where lines are broken out. Kathy will be able to go through the bills and can break them out. The Board also reviewed Solid Waste Collection 4323. Prior to Casella starting they were listed separately, but now Casella bills together. It was determined that \$5,000.00 would need to be added to the solid waste.

The Board reviewed Welfare 4442. There have not been any welfare requests/cases this year. The Board will leave the budget as proposed.

The Board reviewed Parks and Recreation 4520. The Board plans to leave this as is in the hope that they will be able to have events next year. Kathy said they may still encumber some funds for a New Years Eve event.

The Board reviewed Debt Service 4700. There is currently 1 payment; the Kimball Rd bond issue.

The budget currently has an 8.9% increase if the budget remains as is. The Board hopes to decrease that by identifying single purchases to bring 2021 purchases into 2020. The Board still feels this is higher than they would like it to be. Kathy has sent out an email to departments to see if there is anything that can be removed from their budgets for 2021.

Mr. Feldman expressed that he feels this budget is close and could potentially be lowered by offsetting expenses from funds this year. The Board plans to look at possible purchases that can possibly offset the 2021 budget at their regularly scheduled meeting on 12/7/2020.

At 9:17pm, Vanessa made a motion to adjourn. Bob seconded. Joe took a roll call vote. Vanessa voted yes, Bob voted yes, and Joe voted yes. The motion passes.

Respectfully submitted,

Chelsea Lalime