

KENSINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUDGET MEETING  
95 Amesbury Rd  
TUESDAY November 2, 2021  
Minutes – Approved 11/15/2021  
Meeting 6:30pm

At 6:32pm J. Pace called the meeting to order.

The Board signed the Tax Rate Acceptance.

The Board signed the Tax Rate Oath.

The Board started with an overall view of the Town Budget. The difference between the 2021 budget and the requested 2022 budget was an approximate increase of 11.8% at the beginning of the meeting.

The Board began with the Police Department budget. The proposed budget appeared to have a 19% increase. The Board discussed what the changes were with Chief Scott Cain. Chief Cain explained that there was a full-time position added in the middle of 2021, which accounted for much of the increase shown. With that position accounted for, the actual increase for the department was approximately 5%. Part time wages have decreased by nearly half which offsets some of the full-time wages. The department seeks to have competitive wages to keep officers in the department in Town. The Board discussed hourly coverage with the Chief. The chief explained that there is 7 days coverage with 1.5 officers per shift with 12 hour shifts and the Police Department is maintaining coverage with a full-time average of 40 hours per week. Staff support similarly had a 6% increase. The Board discussed overtime as the department has year to date used less than budgeted. Training costs will remain the same.

Equipment maintenance as well as IT support costs were discussed regarding increasing cyber security costs. Leased vehicles have been added back into the budget. The cars are rotated and will be leased for the next 3 years. The department has no payments on vehicles right now. J. Pace noted that he would like to get to a point where the revolving fund pays for the cars. He noted if the overall budget allows there may be an opportunity for making extra lease payments. Office supplies were discussed and reflect inflation. Chief Cain explained that the Office Supplies Budget item included wireless service for the vehicles and a lease for the copier. Fuel for the cruisers was discussed. The Police Chief explained that the department uses approximately 745 gallons a month. Discussion took place on the potential price of gas and the increase needed for this line item. The increase was negotiated to use \$3.50 as an average price for gas. The Outside Maintenance line-item takes care of oil changes and repairs that are emergencies for the cars. The Overtime budget was decreased to \$25,000 from \$32,500 for a difference of 7,500 and gas to \$29,400 from \$33,600 for a difference of \$4,200.

The Board spoke with Fire Chief Jon True about the Fire Department Budget. Chief True discussed broadly the budget for the Fire Department. He explained that Part Time wages, which are for both EMS and Fire calls, had increased slightly and are paid four times a year. He noted there had been a moderate increase to the Fire Chief position salary. The Chief described a physical test that is given to firefighters which the department would pay for the extra portion of the physical and the copay and the firefighter would be covered for the rest

under the Cancer Protection Act. The Chief discussed fire hoses that are required under Equipment Maintenance as well as chainsaws and the jaws of life. He discussed the goal of replacing some fire hoses next year, which should be done every 20 years. He also talked of refurbishing engine 3, which would be approximately \$100,000 to \$125,000 which would be covered by the Fire Capital Reserve Fund. He stated that there should be a full hose replacement on Engine 2, which would be approximately \$9,000. The possibility of ordering the hoses on this year's budget was discussed. Admin fees were for new software that is researched which requires a conversion of addresses will cost approximately \$1,000. Electricity and heating fuel had slight increases. Dues and memberships have increased which covers certificates for EMS and Firefighters. Office supplies remained the same, while training supplies decreased slightly due to the ARPA grant. The Chief explained that the fuel for the trucks is diesel which the department bids on and is delivered, keeping costs slightly lower. Vehicle repairs increased slightly as some vehicles age. He stated building maintenance had a slight increase, however he also noted that it is required to be at least 3% of the budget. He noted that last year the roof was replaced and that this year ideas include either sheetrock or paying for the process for looking into a new station. The Chief stated the ladders on the trucks need to be replaced. He noted that while Radio Repair and Maintenance stayed the same, the department may need to purchase new ones at some point in the future but he is working on a grant. He noted that the SCBA gear was due to be replaced in 2 years.

The Fire Fund has \$95,500 in it. The department has not sold Engine 1 because if Engine 3 were to need to go out for repair it may be for 3 to 6 months to get it back. The Water Supply fund has \$75,000. The chief explained that putting a cistern in would cost approximately \$90,000. He noted the department is looking into buying a new ambulance, which the Firefighter's Assistance grant may cover the cost minus 5% which the department would pay. The Board and the Chief discussed how to pay for the 5% match for the ambulance. The Board changed the line-item for Equipment from \$6,000 to \$5,000.

Emergency management was discussed. The department received \$16,155 as reimbursement from the REP program. J. Pace asked for a budget breakdown by category as the reimbursement funds do not align with the budgeted line items. He felt it would be helpful to see a broken-out budget. There was discussion about the REP monies and how they are accounted for and used in the budget. Chief True noted that this will be broken down moving forward and has been broken out differently due to new software. The Fire Chief salary as well as part time wages has raised slightly because the Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director may be separated in the future. There was discussion about the role of Emergency Management Director and whether other towns have shared roles. J. Gustafson felt the position should be separated in the case of an emergency so the Fire Chief would be free to do his / her role. The Board and the Chief will discuss the roles of the Emergency Management Director at future meetings. PPE was purchased under a grant and the cost of that budget item has decreased. The Chief described equipment that had been purchased, such as a conference phone that can be used in the absence of a board member and secondary telephone services in the form of a fiber optic line that was installed to provide backup to the Comcast connection.

It was explained that EMS costs come out of the Ambulance Fund. Fees for ambulance calls were discussed regarding the Ambulance Revolving Fund, which currently holds between \$178,000 to \$180,000.

The Board discussed General Government budgets. The Finance Budget was discussed. There was discussion about part time wages and what that consisted of. The Board pointed out the need for the budget to reflect the needs of wages. A change was made to Part Time Wages from \$195 to \$3,000. Kathleen explained that IT services had risen from \$125 to \$145 an hour and cyber security costs have also gone up, as have Assessing Services. There was discussion about moving the Assessing Clerk into the Financial Administration Budget under Part Time wages.

Legal and Professional Services were reviewed. Current costs year to date are under budget, therefore the Board moved to change that budget item to \$30,000 from \$35,000. Payroll and Social Security taxes were discussed. Health insurance has increased because of new hires but the rates remain stable, while retirement costs have increased.

The Planning Board Budget was discussed next, and was noted as remaining almost unchanged, however line-item descriptions had been edited for clarity.

General Government Buildings budget was discussed. The Board will discuss the Grange Hall at future meetings. Items such as supplies, building maintenance and inspections were shown as part of General Government Buildings. Heat tape and diversion of water were discussed regarding the Town Hall's maintenance needs as well as possible solutions. Workmen's compensation and property insurance have both increased.

Other General Government office supplies and miscellaneous expenditures would be for a printer and server expenses. There was discussion about a warrant article for cyber security and technology needs. \$6,000 was removed from the Other General Government budget. The Board will discuss at future meetings and raised the possibility of using the Fund Balance to pay for server needs of the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Clarke