

Board of Finance
Minutes Regular Monthly Meeting
Tuesday, March 17, 2015

Present: Jim Blackketter, Maureen Brady, Ed Epstein, Mark McWhinney, Nancy O'Dea-Wyrick, Mark Sebetic.

Public and Invited Guests: Bruce Adams, Darlene Brady, Paul Cortese, Debbie Devaux, Donna Hayes, Barbara Herbst, Joyce Kearns, CiCi Nielsen, Rick Osborne, Sam Rathbun, Mike Van Valkenburg, Lynn Mellis Worthington.

Chairman Nancy O'Dea-Wyrick called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Agenda: Mrs. Brady made a motion to accept the agenda as presented. Mr. Blackketter seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Mrs. Ferris noted the board clerk's salary should read "\$100.12/meeting" on the top of page 2 under Board of Finance Department Budget Submission. Mr. McWhinney noted it should read "Mr." Blackketter, also on the top of Page 2. Mrs. Brady made a motion to approve the minutes of the Feb. 17, 2015 meeting as corrected. Mr. Blackketter seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Correspondence: Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick shared a letter (attached) from Land Use Administrator Donna Hayes, dated March 13, 2015, informing the Boards of Selectmen and Finance that the Planning and Zoning Commission had voted to approve the proposed Five-Year Capital Plan.

Reports: Tax Collector: Debbie Devaux provided a written report (attached), noting the figures on the last page which show collections are consistent with last year at this time. Ms. Devaux said \$126,403 of the budgeted amount remains to be collected.

Board of Education: CiCi Nielsen distributed copies of the Kent Board of Education 2015-2016 Budget, dated March 5, 2015 (attached). Mrs. Nielsen noted the regional education budget still is a work in progress, and the school budget reflects the numbers the board had last week. She highlighted several items in the school budget:

- The pay for substitute teachers has increased to \$90/day
- The budget reflects projected salaries for four new teachers to replace the four who are retiring this school year; two positions are budgeted for a Master's Step 11 scale because they are considered hard-to-fill positions (foreign language and math) and two are budgeted at Master's Step 1 or 2 (social studies and art)
- The 15% retirement incentive is included
- Line 23: Power School increase is for training a new person on this system
- Line 37: purchase of new copies and related contracts
- Text book costs are down while teaching supply line is up
- Line 53: bulbs and battery costs have increased

- Line 62: purchase of new computer programs
- Line 68: purchase of new desks for upper grade classrooms

Mr. McWhinney questioned the contract for bus transportation. Mr. Cortese explained this reflects cost of the first year of a five-year contract with All Star Transportation. Fuel costs are separate. Mrs. Nielsen confirmed the cost of bus transportation is different from the cost for transportation to athletic events and field trips.

Mr. Cortese commented that health insurance costs are not a problem this year. The board also assumes family coverage for the new hires.

Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick asked how the enrollment projection looks for Kent Center School. Mrs. Nielsen said it looks pretty steady. Mr. Cortese said he would email those numbers.

Mr. McWhinney questioned if there has been any discussion on the school's leaky roof? Mr. Cortese said he believes business manager Sam Herrick had presented information to the Board of Selectmen and that Mr. Herrick is addressing the preliminary work so the project can be ready to proceed July 1.

Board of Selectmen: Mr. Adams said he had no report.

Treasurer: Mrs. Herbst said she had no report. Mrs. Herbst noted Catherine Bachrach asked after the Annual Town Meeting if "Nutrition Site" budget line could be renamed "Senior Center." Mrs. Herbst noted the town's lease is with the Kent Village Housing for Elderly, and these are expenses associated with that lease. Mr. Adams said he feels "Senior Center" should be included somewhere in the budget line and agreed to put the topic on a Board of Selectmen meeting agenda.

2016 Operating Budget: Board of Selectmen: Mr. Adams provided copies of the 2015-2016 Selectmen's Proposed Budget (attached). He gave an overview of the budget:

- 3% salary increase for non-union employees
- 2% salary increase for the union highway employees plus a 5.9% increase in pension (\$.12-\$.15/hour)
- Grants: met with recipients who receive \$10,000 or more:
 - Kent Nursing Association – reduced its request by \$10,000
 - Kent Memorial Library - \$4,000 increase
 - Kent Volunteer Fire Department – \$7,500 increase
 - Cemetery Association – no increase
 - Kent Children's Center – merging with Kent Community Nursery School next fall, no increase
 - Chore - \$2,500 increase
- Paramedic: cost increased by \$19,512 due to change in the way the cost is calculated. Mr. Adams explained the cost of the program, shared by seven towns, has been calculated on a population

base but will now be calculated on an average of percentage of the population plus call volume plus ride-in. Kent's share is 12% of the total or an increase of \$19,512 (double the current cost). Mr. Adams said he has met with the KVFD chief, president and ambulance chief, and they are looking at alternatives to lower this cost next year.

- Police: shows an increase of \$4,000, funding at 70% of the cost and not 100% as proposed by the governor. Mr. Adams noted the three private schools have committed to funding \$60,000 of the cost, which would be reflected on the revenue side of the budget.
- Litchfield County Dispatch: an increase of \$1,951, which is a fixed cost.
- Highway: an increase of \$109,563 – the road crew foreman has proposed an additional employee. The cost for sand and salt has increased by \$20,000 and equipment repair by \$5,000.

Mr. Adams noted most departments have held their budgets flat or near flat. The proposed selectman's budget reflects a 7.4 percent increase or \$230,520 over current spending. Overall the town budget would be a 3.3% increase.

Mrs. Brady asked if the paramedic calls includes calls from the nursing home. Mr. Adams said over 60 of the 177 calls last year for the paramedic went to The Kent. Mr. Adams said he asked the fire department how many of these calls are reimbursed by insurance in response to a question by Ms. Devaux. Mr. Adams said he is trying to get this information, but it is harder to obtain than he thought it would be. An outside company does the billing. Mr. Sebetic said the fire department is reimbursed for the paramedic, and the town is paying the cost? Mr. Adams said he is working on this and plans also to approach The Kent and High Watch, but it won't affect the 2015-16 budget. Mr. Adams said the first year of billing for ambulance service, there was \$240,000 in income, but he does not know what portion of this was for paramedic calls. The first selectman added that ambulance volunteers receive a \$50 stipend when they sign on to a specific ambulance shift.

Mr. McWhinney asked if the 3% salary increase is for full and part-time employees, and Mr. Adams said yes. Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick asked what these employees received last year, and Mr. Adams said 3%. Mr. McWhinney asked for clarification on the treasurer's proposed salary increase. Mr. Adams said it reflects the 3% increase plus an additional \$2,500. Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick asked if this is for extra hours. Mr. Adams said the treasurer made a presentation to the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Herbst said she prefers an executive session to discuss this. Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick said that could be put on a subsequent meeting agenda.

Mr. McWhinney asked how many men presently are on the town crew. Mr. Adams said there are six men, and Mr. Osborne said previously there were more men on the crew. A CDL driver is proposed. Mr. Adams shared "justification for a new Highway Employee (attached) with the board, noting the selectmen are unanimous in a decision for this proposed employee.

Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick questioned what is driving the \$4,000 increase for Kent Memorial Library? Mr. Adams said there are several factors. Mr. Sebetic, a library board member, said the library is facing a number of costs that traditional fund raisers are not able to fund, including about \$55,000 in capital expenses and \$20,000 to upgrade the computer system (server and computers the patrons and staff use). Mr. Sebetic said the new library director is "vibrant" and has many ideas but is frustrated by the budget staying flat. The library board is looking at new ideas for fund raisers and may add a new fund raiser, he added. Mr. Sebetic said he feels it is a fair question to ask what the Town would be without the library.

Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick asked for explanation of the increase in the KVFD grant. Mr. Adams cited increasing costs of running the day-to-day operation. He said the board met with the fire department. Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick asked if the \$7,500 increase has anything to do with a prior cut in the department's fuel costs. Mr. Adams said yes, it has everything to do with it, noting there was no requested increase last year. Mr. Adams said has provided the fire department with a connection to a company for a better price for fuel. Mr. Adams will try to provide the board with a total dollar amount that the Town gives the fire department.

2016 Capital Plan: There was no new discussion, and no action taken.

Town Budget Meeting Summary Format: Mr. McWhinney said he likes the form recommended by OPM and provided by the treasurer at the last meeting (attached). He said he feels the form is clearer. Mrs. Herbst said the bottom section would need to be updated to comply with state statutes.

Public and Invited Guests: Mrs. Nielsen urged the board to support the library, saying the library is the "heart of the town."

The next Board of Finance meeting will be a special meeting to work on the budget Tuesday, March 24, 2015 at 7 p.m.

Mr. Blacketter made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Lesly Ferris
Board Clerk

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
KENT TOWN CLERK

Minutes are not considered final until approved. Refer to the minutes from ensuing meeting for any changes and/or corrections.

2015 MAR 19 A 9:00

BY  TOWN CLERK