

Kingston Fire District
Finance Committee Meeting
August 20, 2020

DRAFT - Minutes

Call to Order: Ina Sciabarrasi called the KFD Finance Committee Meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. *The meeting was conducted by Zoom Videoconference due to the Covid-19 pandemic.*

Present: KFD Warden Ina Sciabarrasi, URI Director of Public Safety & Chief of Police Stephen Baker, URI Assistant Director of Emergency Management and Public Safety Samuel Adams (arrived at 9:39 a.m.), KFD Treasurer Tom Vignali (arrived at 10:11 a.m.), KFD Chief Nathan Barrington and KFD Office Manager Jenifer Madison.

Absent: None

Information/Comments/Questions from the Public: There was no one from the public present.

The Committee agreed to move the Treasurer's Report down the Agenda and review it once Vignali arrived.

Approval of Minutes: The members reviewed and approved the Minutes of the last meeting on 1/23/20.

New Business:

- **Planning for KFD-URI Cooperative Agreement 7/1/2021 – 6/30/2022** – Barrington let the Committee know that we needed to start planning for the next cooperative agreement between KFD and the University of Rhode Island (URI) and acknowledged that financial constraints caused by the Covid-19 pandemic need to be considered. He suggested keeping KFD's budget flat for FY2021-22 with URI funding staying flat and keeping the tax rate flat. He let the Committee know that in terms of the contract, we could propose either a one year extension of the current contract or another two-year contract with FY2021-22 being a flat increase and a 1.5% to 2% increase the second year. Barrington let the Committee know that once the revenue is set for FY2021-22, KFD will build its budget around those constraints. He noted that recruitment and retention will be a priority and other budget items adjusted if need be to accommodate this. He emphasized that KFD's tuition incentives are key to keeping our volunteer department operational. Barrington let the Committee know that KFD's equipment is in good shape. He also noted that KFD is in good fiscal shape right now and had a healthy surplus from FY2019-20. Baker noted that URI is still waiting for their budget from the state and that it is unpredictable right now due to the pandemic. He let the Committee know that URI is anticipating a potential shutdown and that there will be a big financial impact on the university either way. Adams added that URI is starting this year with a budget shortfall already. Both Baker and Adams let the Committee know that they think a proposal with level funding will be well received by URI's Division of Administration and Finance. The Committee agreed that it would be best for KFD to propose a two-year contract to URI rather than a one-year and to try and maintain the status quo of 2-year contracts. Baker said he will need to get a proposal to URI Administration and Finance Vice President Abigail Rider for review and approval. Barrington noted that the Committee needs to work on getting a proposal together sooner than usual this year due to the pandemic and the ensuing financial constraints. He asked Madison to distribute a copy of the current agreement to all the Committee members so they can review. The Committee also discussed that the Town of South Kingstown is considering whether they will need to pay for fire services in the future.

Treasurer's Report: Vignali presented and the Committee reviewed the Treasurer's report. Vignali noted that there is nothing unexpected to date in the FY2020-21 budget and financial statements. Barrington let the Committee know that Ladder 2 just went through its annual ladder testing and there were no deficiencies found. He also noted that Rescue 6's generator got replaced and it came out of our FY2019-20 budget. Barrington emphasized again that recruitment and retention and tuition incentives is key to the sustainment of our volunteer fire department. The Committee discussed maybe trying to get URI to offer in-state tuition to volunteer firefighters as another incentive.

Next Meetings:

- October 15, 2020 at 9:30 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:34 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenifer Madison
Office Manager

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