

# Kensington School Deliberative Session

## February 4, 2015

Community members gathered in the Kensington Elementary School Multipurpose Room. School District Moderator, Keith Johnson, called the session to order at 6:06 pm.

Mr. Johnson welcomed community members. He explained that Kensington is an SB2 town which has two sections to the process: the deliberative session, which is the opportunity to amend the warrant and the second session, voting to be held on March 10, 2015.

Mr. Johnson led the meeting in a salute to the flag. He then introduced the School Board members, Barbara Darby, Stacy Surprenant, Dennis Roffman, as well as Associate Superintendent Paul Flynn, Principal Rebecca Ruel, and School District Clerk Susan Lalime.

Mrs. Darby welcomed community members and shared that this was her 3<sup>rd</sup> and final year on the School Board. She read the warrant as follows:

### KENSINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT WARRANT, 2015-2016

To the inhabitants of the School District of Kensington, County of Rockingham, State of New Hampshire, qualified to vote upon District affairs:

You are hereby notified to meet as follows:

**FIRST SESSION:** At the Kensington Elementary School in said Kensington on Wednesday, February 4, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. for explanation, discussion, debate, and possible amendment of the following warrant articles:

1. Shall the District raise and appropriate an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$2,430,531? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$2,5006,068 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the District or by law or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. (The School Board recommends \$2,430,531 as set forth on said budget.)
2. To hear reports of agents, auditors, and committees or officers heretofore chosen.
3. To transact any other business which may legally come before the meeting?

**SECOND SESSION:** At the Kensington Elementary School in said Kensington on Tuesday, March 10, 2015 to choose the following School District Officers: One School Board Member for a three year term, One School District Auditor for a one year term, and vote on article 1 above, as this article may be amended at the First Session; by ballot, the polls to open at 8:00 a.m. and to close no earlier than 7:30 p.m.

Given under our hands at said Kensington on this 16<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2015.

KENSINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD:

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Barbara Darby

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Stacy Surprenant

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Dennis Roffman

Mrs. Darby highlighted some areas of the budget.

Projected enrollment for SY 2015-2016 is 118 which is down from 128 this year.

She reviewed enrollment numbers for each grade. There will be a single section of grades k thru 4 and 2 sections of grade 5. Special Education students with IEPs make up approximately 10% of the student enrollment.

Two fulltime teaching positions have been eliminated.

Two Special Education positions have been eliminated.

The Library Assistant position has been reclassified to Media Specialist.

The STEM position has been reclassified to a 60% teaching position.

The number of buses has been reduced from three to two, which will be a significant savings.

Buses will no longer stop “door to door” on side streets, bus stops will be created with the assistance of District Transportation Coordinator.

The budget has been reduced by 7% compared to 4.3% last year, and 9% the year before.

Mrs. Darby reviewed specific items by page.

On page 1 she spoke to the reduction in Special Education which includes the elimination of Special Education Aide positions and she shared that an out of district placement is no longer necessary.

Mrs. Darby reviewed changes on pages 4, 5, and 6. She noted that under the Maintenance Salary line the savings is attributed to benefit savings using two part time people instead of one full time person. Health insurance rate changes and teachers paying more into their benefits also attribute to savings.

**Mrs. Darby asked for questions from the floor:**

Mr. Douglas Almon – Wild Pasture Rd., Asked why enrollment is going down.

Mrs. Darby explained that Kensington is not an inexpensive town for young families, but also those families moving in to town seem to be those with very young children or students at the middle or high school. She shared that Exeter hired a demographer to analyze trends, and that she could not speak to exactly why families weren’t buying in Kensington. He also asked if people are working only part time in Kensington, where they working the rest of the day?

Mrs. Darby could not reply other than her knowledge of those employed at KES.

Mrs. Kathy Felch – Amesbury Rd., asked how many students were in each class. Mrs. Darby said the School Board likes to see class size average 14-17 students.

There are:

- 3 Preschoolers
- 18 Kindergarteners
- 19 Grade 1
- 14 Grade 2
- 17 Grade 3
- 21 Grade 4
- 14 Grade 5 Section 1
- 13 Grade 5 Section 2

The Board feels they are making progress in keeping class size down. It was emphasized that the determination of class sizes is not simply based on the number of students in the class, but there is also the dynamic of the students and their needs to consider.

Mrs. Maggie Kilcoyne – Osgood Rd., asked about the allocations for the Charter School. Mrs. Darby said there were none made.

Mrs. Patrice Baker – Amesbury Rd., asked what the STEM position was. Mrs. Darby explained that KES currently uses a paraprofessional to offer STEM to students. It is based on the Common Core and NH Standards. The Board felt it was in the best interest of the school and students to have a certified educator in that position.  
STEM = Science, Technology, Engineering, Math.

Mr. Rick Waldron – Cottage Rd., asked what the teacher's certification will be. Mrs. Ruel said someone who has their certification as a technical integrator. There is not an actual STEM certification, but the person needs to hold an elementary teaching certificate and a technical integration certificate.

Mr. Bob Long – French's Lane, asked about science and technology and the Common Core. Mrs. Ruel said they use different models to look at resources with technology.

Mrs. Darby shared that the cost per pupil at KES is \$18,000 compared to \$15,000 in Exeter. This is the highest in the district. The formula used to calculate the cost is not based solely on budgets and enrollment. Also factored in are retirement benefits for teachers and custodians. Mrs. Darby said there are no retirements planned for the upcoming year, so the number should go down.

Mrs. Marilyn Niles – French's Lane, asked what the enrollment numbers were for next year. Mrs. Darby said current projections are 118 with grade 5 being the largest with 27 students.

The number of kindergarten students coming in to KES is not enough to cover the number of students moving up to CMS. The board is very mindful that enrollments continue to decrease. Mrs. Darby also shared that with fewer students needs for space change, and there are opportunities for revenue such as offering a preschool and charging tuition. Other options include renting space, sharing resources or even administrators.

Mrs. Darby said people moving into the community are still drawn to KES and what it has to offer.

There was discussion regarding the 2014 annual report, which should be found on the SAU website, but was not. Mrs. Darby believed it was.

Mrs. Niles also asked whether the school owns the land it is on.

Mrs. Donna Carter –Amesbury Rd., said it is owed by the Kensington School District.

Mrs. Felch asked why the default number is not the same as the past budget. Mrs. Darby explained that it is their best projection using the last year's budget and the additional amounts required by the state to cover mandated increases.

There were no additional questions and no additional discussion.

School District Moderator, Mr. Johnson, accepted the Warrant as proposed for the ballot to be presented on March 10, 2015.

On behalf of the School District, Mrs. Surprenant thanked Mrs. Darby for her hard work and dedication for her service to the Kensington School District. Mrs. Darby was presented a plaque.

On behalf of herself and the KES staff, Mrs. Ruel thanked community members for attending.

The Deliberative Session was adjourned by Mr. Johnson at 6:40pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan M. Lalime  
Kensington School District Clerk