

Kensington Board of Selectman
Minutes
November 14, 2022

Date: November 14, 2022

Place: Kensington Town Hall

Members Present: Joe Pace- Chair, Bob Solomon, Bob Gustafson

Also in Attendance: Fred Feldman- Advisory Budget Committee

Opening:

Mr. Pace opened the meeting at 6:00

Library Budget Review:

Library Director Susie Gilbert, Library Assistant Dana Donovan and Library Trustees Heather Ritter, Susan Bascom and Lauri Murphy were present at tonight's meeting to discuss the proposed 2023 Library budget.

Mrs. Gilbert explained that they are looking to increase the library's budget by \$12,000.00 and noted that the library only makes up 5% of the total budget for the Town. Mrs. Gilbert added that they haven't asked for an increase in the operating budget in several years and with the prices of everything rising, it's a good time to adjust the budget so that the non-lapsing fund will stop having to pay the bills.

Mrs. Gilbert explained that they need a new furnace next year. She added that the library recently had a bad water test so the water system that is currently installed needs to be better maintained with regular filter changes. She noted that she had got a quote from Comac Pump and Well for the filter changes for \$5,000.00

Mrs. Gilbert added that they will also begin incurring legal expenses for review of various different policies that are in place. She noted that this was at the recommendation of the State. She added that the increase in the budget will also allow for new laptops and computers. She noted that there is a price increase for the maintenance of the security system as well.

Mrs. Gilbert also noted that she is looking to increase the wages of library employees by 5% as the rates Kensington is paying is on the lower end of the average.

Mr. Feldman asked why only \$29,000.00 has been spent out of the allocated \$40,000.00 or 72% of the budget that was allocated to them has been spent. Mrs. Felch noted that the town gives the library monthly payments to cover their expenses. There was discussion amongst the Board of Selectman and the Library Director and Trustees about changing the monthly payments from monthly to quarterly to help with larger expenses and to help the library not use their non-lapsing fund.

Mr. Feldman asked if the payroll was current as of November or October. Mrs. Felch said that it is current through this half of November. Mr. Feldman asked if the payroll was on budget for the year? Mrs. Felch said it was, as there was only 5 weeks left of the year.

The Library and Board of Selectman had discussion about encumbering funds for the water system upgrades that are needed for the library. Mrs. Gilbert noted that the Fire Department and library share a well and the Fire Department has better water testing results then the library which is why having these filter changes are important.

Town Clerk Budget Review:

Town Clerk Sarah Wiggin was present at tonight's meeting to speak on behalf of her budget. She noted that the election line item was over budgeted for the four elections that happened in 2022. She noted that she is hoping to use the unused funds to help cover the costs for the legal fees.

Mrs. Wiggin also proposed to allow for a part time deputy town clerk. Mr. Pace asked how many hours the deputy would be working. Mrs. Wiggins said that she has budgeted for 10 to 15 hours and added that she hopes to be able to expand the hours, once someone is trained, to allow for another night of office hours.

Mr. Feldman asked what the amount going to be spent at the end of the year will be for the Town Clerk line. Mr. Pace said its uncertain what the exact amount is going to be. Mrs. Wiggin noted that there are no known large expenses coming up for the rest of this year. Mrs. Wiggin added that she is asking for \$6,000.00 for the election line for next year in anticipation that Kensington will need a new voting machine.

Mrs. Felch noted that Mrs. Wiggin did not put in for a raise, but she added a 5% raise for Mrs. Wiggin.

Cemetery Budget Review:

Cemetery Trustee Jackie Benson was present at tonight's meeting to discuss the cemetery's budget. She noted that with the drought, the cemetery wasn't mowed as much as it usually is. She noted that they did have a fall cleanup done but added that she doesn't think a second one is needed. She noted that someone had mentioned that tree work may have to be done in the cemetery and added that she doesn't have a quote yet but will work on getting one.

Tax Collector and Assessing Budget Review:

Tax Collector Carleen Wiggin was present at tonight's meeting to discuss her budget. She noted that the cost for her computer software went down. Mr. Pace noted that there were changes to the payroll to allow for Kathy Felch to be paid more for the amount of work she does. She did note that they did have to pay additional costs for the assessing services due to an increase on the company's services.

General Government Budget Review:

Mrs. Felch noted that there were no additional changes needed for this budget. Mr. Solomon asked what the advertising line item is for. Mrs. Felch said that is for noticing of public hearings the Selectman need to hold like for the Barn Easements.

Legal Budget Review:

Mrs. Felch noted that there was a lot of different legal expenses associated with the elections and controversies with the voting machines. The board agreed to leave the legal budget at \$35,000.00.

Personnel Budget Review:

Mrs. Felch noted that the health insurance is high due to an increase in the number of family plans the town has.

Planning and Zoning Budget Review:

Mrs. Felch noted that she had increased the payroll line for the Land Use Clerk position. She noted that the increase was based on additional hours and a 5% raise. Mrs. Felch noted that this years wages will not be 100% used as the position was vacant for some time. She added that the plan for next year is to possibly add more responsibility for the position to include taking on permits with the building inspector.

General Government Buildings Budget Review:

There were no proposed changes to the General Government Building Line.

Insurance Budget Review:

Mrs. Felch shared that Primex is returning money from premiums for unused funds. She noted that there is no guarantee that money will be refunded every year so it cannot be planned for.

Other Government Budget Review:

Mrs. Felch noted there was a reduction in the miscellaneous supplies line as it wasn't being used much.

Building Inspector Budget Review:

Mrs. Felch noted that Mr. Rignoli was looking to implement a new online service for building permits. She added that the quote was \$5,600 for the first year and the following years would be \$800 to cover maintenance costs. The board discussed how this program would allow the office to save time with filing as there are multiple people keeping track of the same thing in multiple places currently. The board was in favor of getting a contract signed for this year.

Solid Waste Budget Review:

Mrs. Felch noted that there is an increase in the hauling and disposal of the solid waste which was anticipated. Mrs. Felch also noted that the Casella trash plant was willing to do a tour of the facilities for the Selectman. She noted that she believes it is located in Peabody Massachusetts. The board asked Mrs. Felch to get dates and times for the site visit.

Hazardous waste Budget Review:

Mr. Feldman asked what the dues were for? Mrs. Felch explained that the dues are for the household hazardous waste days that get held yearly. She noted that the board agreed to join Northeast Recovery Resource Association (NRRA) this year so they will begin to pay yearly dues starting in 2023.

Other Budgets:

Mrs. Felch noted that the Police and Fire budgets will be reviewed at Tuesday Nights meeting. She added the Road Manager will also be in attendance for review of his budget.

158 **Other Business:**

159 The board reviewed and signed off on the bills and payroll.

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161 Mr. Pace noted that the next meeting is tomorrow, Tuesday November 15,
162 2022 at 6:30 p.m. to continue budget review.

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164 **MOTION:**

165 Mr. Gustafson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Solomon
166 seconded. All in favor, the motion passed 3-0-0. Meeting ADJOURNED at
167 8:40 p.m.

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170 Respectfully Submitted,

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172 Colleen Olsen