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**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.

40 Mr. Feldman asked why only \$29,000.00 has been spent out of the allocated
41 \$40,000.00 or 72% of the budget that was allocated to them has been spent.
42 Mrs. Felch noted that the town gives the library monthly payments to cover
43 their expenses. There was discussion amongst the Board of Selectman and
44 the Library Director and Trustees about changing the monthly payments
45 from monthly to quarterly to help with larger expenses and to help the
46 library not use their non-lapsing fund.

47
48 Mr. Feldman asked if the payroll was current as of November or October.
49 Mrs. Felch said that it is current through this half of November. Mr.
50 Feldman asked if the payroll was on budget for the year? Mrs. Felch said it
51 was, as there was only 5 weeks left of the year.

52
53 The Library and Board of Selectman had discussion about encumbering
54 funds for the water system upgrades that are needed for the library. Mrs.
55 Gilbert noted that the Fire Department and library share a well and the Fire
56 Department has better water testing results then the library which is why
57 having these filter changes are important.

58
59 **Town Clerk Budget Review:**

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

64
65 Mrs. Wiggin also proposed to allow for a part time deputy town clerk. Mr.
66 Pace asked how many hours the deputy would be working. Mrs. Wiggins
67 said that she has budgeted for 10 to 15 hours and added that she hopes to be
68 able to expand the hours, once someone is trained, to allow for another night
69 of office hours.

70
71 Mr. Feldman asked what the amount going to be spent at the end of the year
72 will be for the Town Clerk line. Mr. Pace said its uncertain what the exact
73 amount is going to be. Mrs. Wiggin noted that there are no known large
74 expenses coming up for the rest of this year. Mrs. Wiggin added that she is
75 asking for \$6,000.00 for the election line for next year in anticipation that
76 Kensington will need a new voting machine.

77
78 Mrs. Felch noted that Mrs. Wiggin did not put in for a raise, but she added a
79 5% raise for Mrs. Wiggin.

80 **Cemetery Budget Review:**

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

87

88 **Tax Collector and Assessing Budget Review:**

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

95

96 **General Government Budget Review:**

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

101

102 **Legal Budget Review:**

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

106

107 **Personnel Budget Review:**

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

110

111 **Planning and Zoning Budget Review:**

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

118

119 **General Government Buildings Budget Review:**

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

121 **Insurance Budget Review:**

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

125

126 **Other Government Budget Review:**

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

129

130 **Building Inspector Budget Review:**

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

138

139 **Solid Waste Budget Review:**

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

145

146 **Hazardous waste Budget Review:**

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

152

153 **Other Budgets:**

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

157

158 **Other Business:**

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

160

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

163

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.

168

169

170 Respectfully Submitted,

171

172 Colleen Olsen