

Minutes of Kent Memorial Library Commission

April 26, 2022

Zoom Meeting

The meeting was opened by Chair Austin Roberts at 5:02 p.m.

Roll Call: *Commission Members:* Corbin Adzigirey, Michael Alexopoulos, Joshua Barrows, Eliza Childs, Sam Coatti, Becki Fuller, Austin Roberts, Christine Sinopoli, Despina Tartsinis and Bob White.

Board of Selectmen: Colin Moll and Jerry Mahoney

Board of Finance: Chris Childs

Town Attorney: Derek Donnelly

Guests: Raul Caneiro and Jim Irwin

New Business:

Increase of Library Director's Salary –

Austin Roberts spoke on the purpose of the meeting: to discuss the increase of the salary of the Library Director. The current salary is \$65,823, which is low compared to similar sized and neighboring towns. Colin Moll, First Selectman, and Karen Ziemba, Human Resources Director, researched the salary for a Library Director and suggested \$85,000 as a reasonable salary for Suffield CT.

Austin reported that the Commission had already adopted a new spending policy two months previous which covered the increase in salary, and the purpose of the meeting was to “ear mark” funds formally for the director's salary, as requested by the Board of Selectmen.

Discussion:

Collin Moll and Jerry Mahoney expressed the desire to have a written contract from the library commission formalizing the increase in spending for the library director's salary, so that they can't change the funding in years to come.

Austin requested a copy of the current contract between the Town of Suffield and the Library Commission for the \$64k the commission presently contributes to the library's budget each year by which to model the new agreement upon. There is no known contract.

Chris Childs was invited into the conversation to better explain the new commission spending policy and the benefits to the town.

Derick Donnelly, Town Attorney, pointed out that a contract would not work in this situation, as the town would be making a contract with itself, and such a contract would be asking the commission to violate the town ordinance on who controls the endowment funds.

Austin Roberts MOVED, it was SECONDED by Sam Coatti that The Library Commission makes available the funds from the library endowments to increase the library director's salary from \$64,823.91 to \$85 for the next five years.

Discussion:

Jerry Mahoney, asked to include in the motion both benefits, and potential increases in salary in the future.

Josh Borrows, asked questions on funding.

Michael Alexopoulos, corrected Austin in how the funds were allocated by the commission, and stated he is not comfortable with getting into an arrangement with the town on providing a portion of the director's salary, instead the commission should continue sending the funds to the town as has been done for the known history of the commission, and allowing the town to use the funds as needed. He commented that the library commission has done everything right in process, but is being asked to jump through hoops by the board of selectmen; that the commission is being asked to provide commitments, but the board of finance and selectmen are not offering any commitments back.

Bob White, agreed with Michael, the commission shouldn't be tying its endowment funds to any specific line item. Is concerned that our new salary is not high enough.

Jerry Mahoney, expressed that he asked for further commitments from the library commission because it wasn't clear what had been done or voted on and by what body. He wanted it clear for people in the future looking at the actions.

Austin Roberts, responded that the answer to Jerry's question was the same as had been previously provided at the board of selectmen meeting. He removed his motion for an increase in salary and Sam Coatti removed her second.

Derrick Donnelly, stated all the commission has to do is vote to request the board of selectmen increase the library director's salary.

Austin Roberts MOVED, Joshua Barrows SECONDED and it was unanimously VOTED that the Kent Memorial Library Commission officially request the Board of Selectmen increase the Director's salary and related benefits.

Austin Roberts adjourned the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Becki Fuller (Secretary)

Edited by Austin Roberts (Chair)