**Minutes of Statutory Budget Meeting held on 6th January, 2014 at 3.00p.m.**

**Cathaoirleach:** Cllr. P. Dunphy

**Councillors:** Cllrs. M. H. Cavanagh, P. Millea, M. Shortall, J. Brennan, C. Connery, J. Coonan, A. McGuinness, M. Noonan, D. Fitzgerald, M. Doran, T. Maher, P. Crowley, J. Moran, T. Prendergast, M. O’ Brien, S. Treacy, C. Long, T. Breathnach, A.M. Irish, E. Aylward, F. Doherty.

**In attendance:** J. Crockett, D. McDonnell, J. Mulholland, P. O’ Neill, M. Leahy, M. Delahunty and A.M Walsh.

**Apologies:** Cllrs. P. Cuddihy, M. Brett, B. Ireland, P. Crowley and J. McCormack Director of Services.

Cllr. P. Dunphy opened the Statutory Budget Meeting.

Cllr. P. Dunphy proposed and extended a vote of sympathy to Cllr. Paul Cuddihy and his extended family on the death of his father Kieran Cuddihy. Cllr. John Coonan seconded this. Cllr. M. H. Cavanagh, M. Noonan and M. Shortall were associated with the vote of sympathy.

Mr. Joe Crockett on his own behalf and on behalf of all staff extended condolence to the Cuddihy family. As a mark of respect the meeting was adjourned for 15 minutes.

The Statutory Budget Meeting resumed at 3.30p.m.

Mr. Crockett, County Manager outlined to the members the main factors influencing the 2014 budget. Total expenditure is €61.3m and the Local Government Fund is €8.5m. He advised the members that expenditure on water services is now a matter for Irish Water. The reduction in the Local Government Fund is due to the transfer of water services. Irish Water is also responsible for all capital projects for water and waste water. It should be noted that there is only one allocation from the Local Government Fund to cover Kilkenny County Council and Kilkenny Borough Council.

County Manager referred to a 2 page document circulated to members which shows the main changes included in the draft budget from 2014 compared to the 2013 budget. County Manager went through this document in detail and informed the members of the main changes and the reasons for the change in the service areas. He summarised the main changes as follows:-

**Housing:** Rents income up €150,000

 Expenditure on MARP €157,000

**Roads:** Additional expenditure of €200,000 provided, members to decide at Electoral Area on this spend

**Water:**  No provision provided – responsibility of Irish Water

 €100,000 provided for public convenience

**Planning:** €50,000 provided for Irish Translation of Development Plan

 €50,000 provided for Unfinished Development Reserve

**Library:** Additional €50,000 for book fund

**Financial:** Reduction of €22,000 in interest income.

 Increase in provision for legal costs – debt collection

**Payroll:** Additional expenditure required to cater for Redundancy Scheme and Lump Sum/Gratuities

It has not been possible to provide funds for specific projects such as Castlecomer Demense and

Thomastown Town of Food.

Contributions were received from Cllrs. M. Doran, M.H. Cavanagh, M. Shortall, T. Breathnach, D. Fitzgerald, J. Moran, S. Treacy, T. Maher, M. Noonan, J. Coonan, J. Brennan, A.M Irish, P. Dunphy, M. O’ Brien, T. Prendergast, P. Millea and C. Long.

The issues raised by members are as follows:-

* Flexibility in allocating the €200,000 to road works, provision of additional public lights, drainage proposals for works.
* Proposal to allocate €100,000 for public convenience, community groups to be involved, need to maintain this provision over a long period, health and safety requirements on existing buildings.
* Clarify cost of provision of Ferrybank Library and operational costs. Members welcomed the increase in the book fund.
* Current position in relation to bad debt provision, clarify MARP levy – mortgage arrears and repossession.
* Energy efficiency, grant to Carlow/Kilkenny Energy Agency
* Provision for Arts Grants, Amenity Grants etc.
* Rent for office accommodation, relocation of offices to the Mayfair
* Funding required for major capital projects
* Litter management, illegal dumping, new litter initiatives for 2014.
* Concerns raised in relation to no provision to assist major tourist attractions such as Castlecomer Demesne.

County Manager Joe Crockett, John Mulholland, Philip O’ Neill and Declan McDonnell responded in detail to all queries raised by the members. County Manager thanked Mr. Declan McDonnell, Finance staff and all Directorates for their input in producing a balanced budget in these challenging times. He also thanked the members for their careful consideration of the draft budget, at CPG meetings and Budget Committee meetings. All proposals were reviewed and amendments were made where possible.

Cllr. P. Dunphy asked the members to refer to the budget pack and reports circulated to them and requested there approval to the following:-

**Programme Group A**

The programme group was considered and noted.

**Programme Group B**

The programme group was considered and noted.

**Programme Group C**

The programme group was considered and noted.

**Programme Group D**

The programme group was considered and noted.

**Programme Group E**

The programme group was considered and noted.

**Programme Group F**

The programme group was considered and noted.

**Programme Group G**

The programme group was considered and noted.

**Programme Group H**

The programme group was considered and noted.

**It was proposed by Cllr. M. H. Cavanagh, Seconded by Cllr. J. Brennan and agreed:- “That the Budget of Kilkenny County Council for the financial year ending 31st December, 2014 as set out in Table B be adopted as amended”.**

**It was proposed by Cllr. J. Moran, Seconded by Cllr. T. Maher and agreed: - “That the Rates in Table A, of the Draft Budget of Kilkenny County Council for year ending 31st December, 2014 be determined in accordance with the said Budget to the Annual Rate of Valuation to be levied for that year for the purposes set out in Table A as amended”**

Cllr. Dunphy thanked all members for their detailed consideration of the Budget and their co-operation in the discussions on the Budget and looked forward to working with the members and management over the coming year.

The meeting concluded at 5.00p.m.

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 **Cathaoirleach**