

Town of Lincoln

Budget Board Meeting

October 25, 2007

Present:

Ken Booth Carl Dumas Jack Newman Joe Renning

Bob Ericson Linda Noble Carl Brunetti Cheryl Ethier

From the School Committee:

Superintendent Georgia Fortunato

MaryAnn Roll

Mary Varr

Elizabeth Robson

Absent:

Roberta Gosselin Greg Leonard Claudette Lussier

The meeting began at 7:35 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Georgia Fortunato noted that the schools will be using a zero-base budgeting system this year which should ensure that they get what is needed, but not necessarily everything that is desired.

The increase last year for pension contributions was 13.04%. In the coming year, it is anticipated at 14.86%.

There have been Health and Safety informational letters and 2 informational meetings were held.

The average attendance at the meetings was 6-8 people.

For salaries and contracts, Support Staff will expire in July, and Certified Staff expired on June 30th with negotiations set to begin in about a month.

For utilities costs, the schools have been working with Lou Fusco and meeting with consultants regarding. Gas and electric bills.

Middletown and Central Falls will team up for bids to get better rates for utilities, and hopefully Lincoln will also benefit.

For Special Education, they are attempting to keep as many students in town as possible.

Northern R.I. Collaborative has reduced their tuitions because of surplus, and Georgia Fortunato will also check into transportation for cost savings.

MaryAnn Roll noted that she did meet with Northern R.I. Collaborative for information.

Purchased Services are higher when are kept in the schools rather than sent to a tuition school because of the need for added services.

She also noted that 75 students with IEPs moved into Lincoln this year.

The teachers do have a sick leave bank where tenured teachers put in 2 days per year and can take up to 2 years leave using it.

Georgia Fortunato noted that the contract language should be more concise in this area.

Jack Newman asked if the teachers do not use the days they put in, do they get them back when they retire. They do not.

There is a Sick Leave Committee that decides what constitutes catastrophic circumstances that allow teachers to take an extended leave.

The schools will be sending letters out because they should be getting Doctors' updates quarterly on the teachers who are currently taking leave.

There is no Temporary Disability Insurance because of normal teacher contract standards.

However, the teachers do get 15 sick days, 5 family illness days, and 2 personal days.

The union agrees that the paid time off system is one that is abused.

Georgia Fortunato noted that 80% of the lines in the personnel budget are contractually obligated.

MaryAnn Roll noted that if there is going to be a no-growth model for the budget this year, there has to be incentive to find savings in the individual district budgets because the state has not helped with unfunded mandates, and there are a minimum of 330 mandates.

Bob Ericson noted that much of the 5.5% increase that is allowed for the budget will be absorbed by personnel costs

He also noted that there was an article that stated that Scituate is doing well with the new cap mandates, and Georgia Fortunato stated that she will talk to the Superintendent in Scituate regarding this to see if that would help the budgeting process.

MaryAnn Roll noted that she attended a RIPAC meeting and they gave examples of situations where they gave municipalities and schools less money in the budget and allowed the departments to keep any savings that they were able to find.

She also noted that another example of incentives would be Medicaid reimbursements going back to school surplus to pay for other things such as full-time Kindergarten.

Ken Booth noted that there currently is no mechanism to take money from the municipal budget and allocate it back to the schools, but in the future they may be able to use a reserve account.

Elizabeth Robson noted that it is a slow process to change fixed things in the budget or contracts, and that there may be things that can be changed but maybe not in this budget year or next.

Linda Noble suggested looking at state and school initiatives and come up with a definitive plan.

Georgia Fortunato noted that the schools will be proposing a more definitive plan this year.

Ken Booth asked if the expenditures for the first year in the new middle school were available yet.

Georgia Fortunato noted that in November, the figures will be available because the school will have been open for a full year.

Science kits are used by Kindergarten through Grade 5 and it includes consultants to ramp up their use.

They are designed to be more hands-on and they are large. Kits.

Georgia Fortunato noted that the interim Principal for the High School will be paid for by Personnel.

Ken Booth asked if any lines have been drawn beyond their balances. Georgia Fortunato noted that tuitions have been encumbered but the schools could get new students before the end of the school year that require those tuitions.

Cheryl Ethier noted that state aid for the schools has been level funded.

Georgia Fortunato noted that nothing has been done about that in the budget because the figures were passed at the Financial Town Meeting. Also, she has met with the Town Administrator about Medicaid reimbursements.

MaryAnn Roll noted that the budget was drawn up based on history so it did not show that it would be level-funded.

Georgia Fortunato noted that the next years' budget will not include any state aid.

Ken Booth asked if the town has to make up difference of that state aid if it would make the budget exceed the mandated cap.

Bob Ericson noted that the town and schools could shift utility bills for joint property, etc. between the budgets without violating the cap laws but it will be close.

Linda Noble asked about Professional Development. Stipends.

Georgia Fortunato noted that the line is used to push literacy, SIMS, new portfolio requirements, personal literacy plans, pay for Middle School team leaders, and 2 consultants for Math and English/Language Arts. Evaluations for the teachers do incorporate what they have learned through Professional Development.

Ken Booth asked how many students with lower reading skills came into the Lincoln school system in later grades. There were not too many.

Bob Ericson asked about low-cost versus high-cost IEPs.

Georgia Fortunato noted that speech and language IEPs tend to be lower cost.

Ken Booth asked about Vandalism/Theft

Georgia Fortuanto noted that she will find out what that line item is used for.

Georgia Fortunato also noted that there will be zero-base budgeting,

and all 8 School Administrators will be responsible for the individual school budgets, and they will continue to give monthly updates.

They will turn in their individual budget requests by November 15th which is when the budget process starts.

Cheryl Ethier noted that the Budget Board would like capital reserve information as to what has been done or not, etc.

Angelo Mennucci, Head of Grounds and Maintenance, will meet with each individual school to assess what they need and determine custodial expenses for each school

Jack Newman made a motion, seconded by Carl Brunetti to suspend the reading of the minutes of September 19th.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Jack Newman made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Bob Ericson.

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 pm.