

Town of Lincoln

Budget Board Meeting

March 20, 2008

Present:

**Ken Booth Carl Brunetti Roberta Gosselin Cheryl Ethier Joe
Renning Bob Ericson**

**Linda Noble Jack Newman Claudette Lussier Sheila Chisholm Greg
Leonard**

No members were absent.

The meeting began at 7:10 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ken Booth welcomed the public to the Public Hearing, which is the first reading of the 2008-2009 budget as proposed by the Town Administrator.

Ken Booth noted that the Town Administrator's recommended budget can also be found on the town's website.

Ken Booth, for the benefit of the public, described the budget process as follows:

On February 15th each year, the Budget Board is presented with a proposed budget by the Town Administrator, and they then have until April to review it and propose a budget for adoption or modification at the Financial Town Meeting in May.

Ken Booth noted that the current budget process has been one of the most difficult because of the new state mandated levy cap of 5%.

The Administration and School Department have been working hard to meet the cap requirements, and the reductions necessary will make it harder to run programs at the same level as in the past.

Ken Booth proceeded to read for the first time to the public the Town Administrator's recommended budget as follows:

Acct #	Department	Recommended	Decrease or Increase
	Amount of Change		
4100	Town Administrator	\$ 117,044	Decrease \$ 979
4110	Town Planner	\$ 109,716	Decrease \$ 3,400
4130	Personnel	\$ 85,978	Decrease \$ 13,201
4140	Town Clerk	\$ 255,611	Decrease \$ 47,650
4150	Finance	\$ 460,108	Decrease \$ 27,913
4160	Tax Assessor	\$ 110,974	Decrease \$ 14,444
4170	Information Technology	\$ 197,200	Decrease \$ 11,335
4200	Public Safety - Police	\$3,312,676	Increase \$399,533
4210	Public Safety - Rescue	\$1,308,390	Increase \$ 62,882
4230	Human Services	\$ 210,979	Increase \$ 30,016
4300	Public Works - General	\$ 102,374	Decrease \$ 2,922
4310	Public Works - Engineering	\$ 133,240	Increase \$ 5,237
4320	Public Works - Code Enforcement	\$ 171,869	Increase \$ 9,751
4330	Public Works - Parks & Recreation	\$ 595,758	Decrease \$

2,318

4340 Public Works - Animal Control	\$ 113,308	Increase	\$ 13,203
4350 Public Works - Tree Warden	\$ 49,883	Decrease	\$ 3,500
4400 Public Works - Public Buildings	\$ 305,040	Increase	\$ 3,994
4400 Public Works - Central Services	\$2,922,953	Increase	\$169,895
5000 Recycling	\$ 150,715	Increase	\$ 2
5100 Public Works - Sewer Division	\$ 482,471	Decrease	\$ 19,614
4800 Public Library	\$ 995,471	Increase	\$ 31,556
4820 Town Council	\$ 52,500	Increase	\$ 1,000
4830 Town Solicitor	\$ 165,189	----	----
4840 Probate Judge	\$ 4,352	----	----
4850 Town Sergeant	\$ 1,400	----	----
4860 Board of Canvassers	\$ 1,700	----	----
4600 Budget Board	\$ 2,250	Decrease	\$ 250
4870 Zoning Board of Review	\$ 9,520	Decrease	\$ 500
4880 Planning Board	\$ 10,570	Decrease	\$ 750
4890 Board of Assessment Review	\$ 1,890	----	----
4910 Tenant Board	\$ 1,388	----	----
4920 Conservation Commission	\$ 2,150	Decrease	\$ 1,000
4930 Sewer Appeals Board	\$ 100	----	----
4940 Personnel Board	\$ 1,800	Decrease	\$ 300
4960 Juvenile Hearing Board	\$ 1,500	----	----
4970 Parks & Recreation Commission	\$ 1,000	----	----
5200 Land Trust	\$ 800	Decrease	\$ 500
5300 Municipal Court	\$ 24,200	----	----
4500 Grants & Contributions	\$ 66,000	----	----

4700 Fixed Charges \$3,861,693 Increase \$249,748

Capital Improvements \$ 539,000

4950 Debt Service \$2,660,714 Decrease \$505,949

School Debt Service \$3,439,975 Decrease \$381,582

Total Debt Service \$6,100,689 Decrease \$124,562

Administrator's Recommended Education Budget \$47,272,597

Decrease \$ 644,948

Total Combined Budgets \$70,849,445 Increase

\$1,254,151

Municipal Revenues \$70,849,445 Increase

\$1,254,151

Local Revenues \$ 2,986,900 Decrease \$ 133,200

Ken Booth opened the meeting to the public for comments and questions, and noted that the Budget Board would refer to the Town Administrator to answer questions about the budget.

Mike Napolitano asked if increases in the salaries line in the Police Department budget are for added positions.

The Town Administrator stated that there are no new positions and that the increases are for adjustments needed for a new contract because the previous one had been unresolved.

Keith Macksoud asked about Rescue and Emergency Management Expenses.

The Town Administrator stated that this expense is not for salary stipends, but that it is for equipment.

Mike Napolitano asked if for health care, the town bids out for services or do they just always use the same provider.

The Town Administrator stated that the town can bid out for health care, but most of the collective bargaining agreements call for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of RI or an equivalent. If the contract is open, the town could bid to United Health Care because they are really the only other comparable company to Blue Cross.

If the town does end up having a collaborative grouping for health care, they can anticipate a \$2,000-\$3,000 savings. This year for Blue Cross, the increase rate did come in lower at 5.9% than expected, which was 11%.

Ed Slattery asked if there were any other resolutions anticipated for the Financial Town Meeting at this time.

The Town Administrator stated that there are some litigations that exist, including one that was just settled for \$132,000 that may require a resolution.

Ken Booth noted that the public also have the right to file resolutions to be put up for vote at the Financial Town Meeting.

Mike Napolitano asked if there has been a salary study or if issue be brought up again at this years' Financial Town Meeting.

Ken Booth replied that the salary study had been funded and has

been completed.

The Town Administrator added that the town now will be able to utilize the salary study for non-union employees only. Anyone that was below the minimum levels on the study have had salary adjustments, and all positions are assessed based upon level of responsibility.

Ken Booth noted that for revenues, the town is now in its 3rd quarter of the current fiscal year, and these are a major factor of the budget.

Mike Napolitano asked about revenues from the Twin River establishment.

The Town Administrator replied that the establishment has completed its construction phase, and that revenues have trended below anticipation until recently in the 3rd quarter when they are now trending towards the anticipated amounts, with no projected increase.

Ed Slattery asked about Financial Town Meeting quorum charter changes.

Ken Booth noted that there is not enough time this year before the meeting to change the charter, but that we could possibly look at having a charter review in the coming year to look at some options to change the Financial Town Meeting quorum rules.

Keith Macksoud noted that there was a resolution that was deferred that would allow the town to wait one hour at the Financial Town Meeting, and then if there is still no quorum the budget would pass as

presented.

Mike Napolitano asked if the budget presented by the Town Administrator takes into account the 5% cap mandates

Ken Booth noted that the budget read at the public hearing is not the Budget Boards' recommended budget, but that it is the Administrator's proposed budget, and that the Budget Board does have to go into the process with the cap and what taxpayers can afford to pay in mind.

The Town Administrator added that the budget book presented tonight does include a budget message that describes that the Administrator's proposal is a 1.8% increase which translates to a 3.6% increase on last years' levy due to revenues.

Rene Remillard asked if the Administrator's proposed budget is not yet analyzed by the Budget Board as to the cap compliance.

Ken Booth replied that all of the time spent so far by the Budget Board in analyzing the budget was on the issue of the cap and funding within that to also be able to run programs and services.

Ted Ferreira asked if the town was going to initiate a hiring freeze.

The Town Administrator stated that the town has reduced 4 full-time positions this year, and if someone leaves a position it is evaluated and not necessarily filled right away. 3 Highway Department positions have been reduced, and the town is not hiring any new employees at this time.

Georgia Fortunato stated that at the schools, a part-time Human Resources Assistant and Science Teacher are being added, but that within the administration they are taking on more responsibility to get by with less employees to be fiscally responsible.

Rene Remillard asked who conducts collective bargaining for the schools' unions.

Georgia Fortunato stated that there is a Chief Negotiator, the Superintendent, Business Director, and School Committee that conduct collective bargaining.

The Public Hearing portion of the Budget Board meeting adjourned. The Budget Board took a short recess and then rejoined.

Ken Booth stated that he met with the Superintendent of Schools and the schools' attorneys today and that along with letters sent by the Town Administrator seems to have drawn a response from them.

Ken Booth asked the Town Administrator about detail per department that John Ward was to provide.

Roberta Gosselin asked if the newest version of the budget is on the town's website. It is not.

Greg Leonard expressed concern that there is talk about the 5% when in reality the percentage wouldn't be 5% after everything is taken into account, and that the expectation of 5% is set for Financial Town Meeting.

Ken Booth suggested that the Budget Board should address the issue of the cap in a news release

Linda Noble noted that the cap is 5% of the levy but taxpayers may not understand what the levy is.

Ken Booth noted that the Town Administrator would like to have a pre-Financial Town Meeting seminar because everything is so complex this year,

Ken Booth also spoke with the Department of Municipal Affairs and the Town Solicitor, who all interpret the cap legislation in the same way.

Bob Ericson noted that in the Providence Journal information , Smithfield seems to have less support staff than Lincoln for more students.

When meeting with the School Department, Ken Booth was told that the \$500,000 surplus was because of a lot of breakage

Ken stated that the surplus could be used to allocate to something like capital improvements that doesn't compound. He also believes the schools should set up a revenue side to their budget to see where they have money coming from.

Cheryl Ethier noted that the Budget Board could do that for the revenues that they know about.

The Budget Board discussed setting up a Medicaid revenue fund.

Ken Booth suggested maybe setting up a separate chart of accounts for Special Education that tie into the total budget in the end.

The School Subcommittee will look at what is requested in capital improvements, what they want to see to justify in order to set up a school tour.

The Budget Board discussed the scenario of if the School Committee doesn't come in with another requested budget under the cap, whether the Budget Board should present the Town Administrator's proposed school budget.

Bob Ericson noted that the Cap Development Committee cut the space required for the school administration building from 28,000 to 13,000 sq. ft.

The Budget Board split into Municipal and School Subcommittees and then reconvened.

Notes from the School Subcommittee meeting can be found attached.

Ken Booth stated that the Town Solicitor was to send a list of all estimated exposure, and that there were 2 law suits that were unexpected including one for the purchase of the Middle School property, and one for discrimination filed by an applicant to the Zoning Board.

The Solicitor has been trying to set the law suits up so that if the town should lose, the payments can go over a few years instead of in a lump sum.

**Jack Newman made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Greg Leonard.
The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.**

3/20/2007 – School Subcommittee Meeting

The Subcommittee went through capital requests to see what locations should be visited on the school tour.

High School

The Security System for \$45,257 had previously been taken out because of a grant from homeland security.

Re-key exterior doors is for security purposes and the subcommittee will ask about the \$8,000 cost

The subcommittee decided to make a stop at the High School when touring the schools.

Northern Elementary

Requests include carpet replacement, and repaving of front roadway

The school lettering for \$1,200 should be funded by the PTO

The subcommittee decided that no trip to Northern Elementary is needed when touring the schools.

Northern ELC

Linda Noble wondered why some of the remodeling capital requested was not put into the bond from the Middle School, and she also noted that unless carpeting is hazardous, this is not a good budget year to

replace it.

The subcommittee decided that a trip to Northern ELC is not needed when touring the schools.

Middle School

The schools can justify the exterior lighting and the subcommittee decided they don't need to go to the Middle School when touring the schools.

Central Elementary

The subcommittee decided that lav replacement and plumbing fixtures should be justified, and they decided to go to Central when touring the schools.

Lonsdale Elementary

The subcommittee decided to visit Lonsdale when touring the schools to look at the hallway carpeting and lighting.

Saylesville Elementary

The subcommittee decided that they do need to see Saylesville when touring the schools for justification of the capital requests there.

Fairlawn ELC

The carpet in library must already exist because there is no abatement needed.

The subcommittee decided that the request for carpet in the

Principal./Secretary./Teacher's room be taken out.

The subcommittee decided to go to Fairlawn when touring the schools, mainly to justify lighting in hallways and outdoors.

Administration Building

Carl Brunetti noted that the emergency notification system was placed in this part of budget to get 30% reimbursement, but part of the system would be for Town Hall.

The subcommittee decided that since this was the only item they considered at this location, they do not need to visit the administration building on their tour of the schools.

Cheryl Ethier stated that she would request a tour on April 5th right after the Town Tour.

The subcommittee came up with the following questions:

-\$176,000 for electric savings

-Reconciliation of capital

-Where \$500,000 surplus came from

-Health and Dental increase rates

-Job description of Reform Facilitators for \$136,000.

-Joe Renning wanted to know if there was a plan to fix the roadways at the High School because they are bad.

-New positions - .5 HR Assistant and Science Teacher

Jack Newman believed that if there is no justification of capital

requests, the subcommittee should not go on a tour of the schools.

The subcommittee discussed breakage to try to figure out why there would be such a large amount.