

**Town of Lincoln**

**Budget Board Meeting**

**April 8, 2008**

**Present:**

**Ken Booth Carl Brunetti Claudette Lussier SheilaChisholm Linda Noble Bob Ericson**

**Jack Newman Cheryl Ethier Joe Renning Roberta Gosselin Greg Leonard**

**No members were absent.**

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

**The minutes of April 2nd, 3rd and 5th (Municipal and School Tours) were reviewed.**

**The minutes of April 7th were distributed but not reviewed at this time.**

**-Cheryl Ethier made a motion, seconded by Claudette Lussier to accept the minutes of April 2nd.**

**The minutes were approved by a vote of 8-0. Roberta Gosselin, Greg Leonard and Jack Newman abstained because they were not present on April 2nd**

**-Carl Brunetti made a motion, seconded by Greg Leonard to accept the minutes of April 3rd.**

**The minutes were accepted by a vote of 9-0 with Jack Newman and**

**Roberta Gosselin abstained because they were not present on April 3rd.**

**-Greg Leonard made a motion, seconded by Carl Brunetti to accept the minutes of the Municipal Tour on April 5th.**

**The minutes were accepted by a vote of 4-0 with Jack Newman, Cheryl Ethier, Claudette Lussier, Sheila Chisholm, Roberta Gosselin, and Linda Noble abstaining because they were not present at the Municipal Tour on April 5th.**

**-Carl Brunetti made a motion, seconded by Greg Leonard to accept the minutes of the School Tour on April 5th.**

**The minutes were accepted by a vote of 8-0 with Jack Newman, Roberta Gosselin, and Claudette Lussier abstaining because they were not present at the School Tour on April 5th.**

**Finance Director John Ward was present to discuss revenues and distributed information.**

**At the current point of 9 months into the budget, realized revenues are at about 75%.**

**VLT are currently at about \$1,355,000 for the quarter and were projected at \$1.2 million for the quarter so they are slightly above the projection, but the Finance Director cautioned not to be too optimistic about that.**

**Local revenues in the 3rd quarter are at about 85% for the year, because some are up and some are down from the projected numbers.**

If they have gone up it is generally because they are interest-earning and they have already been projected to increase for next year.

The Finance Director distributed updated revenue charts, and noted that none appear to make a case to raise projections for next year, and that the town needs to be conservative with revenue projections or risk having to go to surplus to cover the difference.

Ken Booth noted that his concern with the proposed school budget is that there are no structural changes suggested.

John Ward noted that capital is always the first thing that the schools tend to cut, and that because the money is appropriated to them they can choose how to spend it and are autonomous in how they appropriate that money.

Cheryl Ethier asked if the Budget Board could put money into the capital reserve without a project attached. They could but that money would not get reimbursed until it is spent on a capital project. It can also carry over in the capital reserve, and the schools could only spend that money on capital items.

John Ward noted that there are guidelines as to what qualifies for capital projects, that go not necessarily by the amount of the cost. but by whether it is a project as opposed to one single improvement..

Bob Ericson noted that the increase scenarios presented by the schools at 2%, 2.5%, and 3% do not include the \$500,000 in capital.

**Bob Ericson noted that other schools in Rhode Island do not graduation by proficiency in place yet because it is not mandatory until after 2008.**

**Ken Booth noted that the Budget Board would have to evaluate what is sustainable next year for the schools because they are saying there may be 1% - 1 ¼ % raises for teachers.**

**Roberta asked for 12/31/06 certified and 12/31/07 assessed values  
They are expecting 1% net growth, which in doing quick math would give a \$1.2 million increase in tax levy.**

**The growth would be on real estate and commercial properties, and there would not be growth on motor vehicles or tangibles.**

**Also, this does include the conclusion of work done at Twin River**

**Bob Ericson noted that the Budget Board would be able to take on the 2.5% increase scenario provided by the schools which would a 4% increase in spending, and a 4.5% on the levy.**

**The 3% increase scenario would not fit under the budget cap requirements.**

**Linda Noble noted that the School Subcommittee does have other adjustments to the schools' budget that are less radical than the ones that the schools recommended.**

**The Town Administrator Joe Almond was present.**

**The Administrator noted that the schools put back into their request the \$200,000 renovation for Northern ELC, which could have been funded as true capital, and not operating capital.**

**The Budget Board discussed charging for programs and busing, and it was noted that it is illegal to charge for things that are part of the free educational system.**

**Jack Newman asked what buildings the Town Administrator plans to close.**

**The Town Administrator noted that they could incorporate Fairlawn ELC into other schools, that the schools are now talking about closing Lonsdale Elementary but they have just spent money there for renovations.**

**For closing Fairlawn ELC, he is going to see what their process is first, and suggested that maybe the Budget Board could recommend a budget with those things in mind.**

**Ken Booth suggested that maybe in a press release it could be mentioned that they could keep all programs as they are if they were to consolidate those buildings.**

**Jack Newman asked about the life of the modulars at the High School because the administration will now push classes out of the old middle school wing.. Ken Booth said that they have a 5-7 year life.**

**The Town Administrator noted that at the High School, they are at about 80% capacity right now.**

**Bob Ericson noted that if they moved the administration to the old middle school, they could front fund the renovations for the old middle school until the sale of the current school administration building.**

**The Town Administrator noted that they had to look at office space needed and how many employees are in the building.**

**The mandatory firebox upgrades for \$15,000 has to be done by May of 2009, and it was noted that it is just a radio call box, so the price seems high.**

**Jack Newman noted that they have known since last February that this would have to be done, and they the funds this year to do it so it should be done in the current year.**

**In regards to the Emergency Notification System, The Town Administrator noted that the \$40,000 is the schools' share, and that is just service and not equipment and that they need to identify how they will use the system to determine the costs because it operates like a telephone bill.**

**Ken Booth noted that the Budget Board suspects that there is extra money in the Special Education budget.**

**John Ward noted that he had never heard of the "Rule of 10" which says that where students are sent for tuition schools cannot be divulged for confidentiality reasons, but he suggested looking at each schools' detailed expenditures to get the growth figures and see if**

**they go up or down without finding out how many students go there, and he did believe those cash disbursements are public information.**

**The Budget Board discussed expenses related to Camp Bourndale. They do collect fees for that from children who attend, which must offset the expense of going.**

**Roberta Gosselin noted that they do give scholarships to attend for some who cannot afford to go.**

**There is a negative amount of \$10,000 in the library budget because they took out Information Technology out and it is now shared with the town, and they added janitorial work because they do have their own janitor.**

**The Budget Board split into Municipal and School subcommittees and then reconvened.**

**Notes from the School Subcommittee meeting can be found attached.**

**In a school subcommittee update, it was noted that they have been able to recommend that the schools' budget be decreased by \$1.4 million without decreasing any programs, and they detailed what they have worked on to come that number.**

**They will recommend a total capital budget of \$503,239, with \$352,286 of various capital improvements and \$150,953 for the school administration relocation to the old middle school.**

**The total school appropriation that they are currently recommending**

is approximately \$47,500,000, and they will have to analyze that to see what kind of a percentage increase that would be over last year.

The Municipal Subcommittee gave their recommended municipal budget as follows for review by the Budget Board as a whole:

Town Administrator	\$	117,044	Information Technology	\$	197,200
Town Planner	\$	109,716	Public Safety – Police	\$	3,312,676
Personnel	\$	85,978	Public Safety – Rescue	\$	1,305,390
Town Clerk	\$	257,218	Human Services	\$	210,979
Finance	\$	460,108	Public Works – General	\$	102,374
Tax Assessor	\$	110,974	Public Works – Engineering	\$	133,240
Code Enforcement	\$	171,869	Board of Canvassers	\$	1,700
Parks & Recreation	\$	595,758	Budget Board	\$	2,250
Public Works – Animal Control	\$	113,308	Zoning Board of Review	\$	9,520
Public Works – Tree Warden	\$	49,883	Planning Board	\$	10,570
Public Works – Public Buildings	\$	305,040	Board of Assessment Review	\$	1,890
Central Services	\$	2,922,953	Tenant Board	\$	1,388
Recycling	\$	150,715	Sewer Appeals Board	\$	100
Sewer Division	\$	482,471	Personnel Board	\$	1,800
Town Council	\$	52,500	Juvenile Hearing Board	\$	1,500
Town Solicitor	\$	165,189	Parks & Recreation Commission	\$	1,000

**Probate Judge   \$   43,052   Land Trust   \$   800**  
**Town Sergeant   \$    1,400   Municipal Court   \$24,200**

**Grants & Contributions   \$   66,000**  
**Capital    \$   539,000**  
**Debt Service   \$6,100,659**

**Bob Ericson made a motion, seconded by Greg Leonard to increase the Conservation Commission budget by \$1,000, making the total \$3,150. The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

**Carl Brunetti made a motion, seconded by Greg Leonard that Health Care be recommended at \$2,175,000, which would make Total Fixed Charges \$3,761,693, an increase of \$149,748. The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

**Bob Ericson made a motion, seconded by Jack Newman to delete the line labeled Open Space Reserve due to inactivity.**

**Jack Newman made a motion, seconded by Greg Leonard to accept the Municipal Subcommittee's recommended budget as presented. The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

**This vote did not include the Public Library budget, because they still need more information, or the total municipal budget figure.**

**Bob Ericson noted for informational purposes that revenue line**

**changes cannot be made at the Financial Town Meeting per the Town Solicitor.**

**The Budget Board discussed the school capital reserve fund and noted that ultimately the fund could be used for whatever the schools deemed necessary as long as it is used for capital.**

**The Budget Board discussed the idea of sending out a press release.**

**Roberta Gosselin noted that using Town Administrator's calculations, there would be a projected .53 cent increase on property taxes.**

**Before the next Budget Board meeting, Carl Brunetti will analyze the school subcommittee's recommendations to see what percentage increase they would be recommending.**

**Jack Newman made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Greg Leonard. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 pm.**

#### **4/8/08 – School Subcommittee Notes**

**The subcommittee decided to take technology items out of the operating budget and place them in the capital budget for a total of \$137,129.**

**The subcommittee decided to place painting back into the operating budget for a total of \$79,000.**

**The subcommittee noted that the schools are asking for tuitions of \$1.7 million, which is an increase over the audited 2006-2007 budget of \$1.2 million, even though their philosophy is to bring students back into the system versus outsourcing their costs.**

**As of 12/31/2007, the expended number for tuitions is \$630,000 which makes the projected total expense closer to the \$1.2 million.**

**It was noted that at the High School they are getting rid of the Physics First program**

**The subcommittee went through the list of reductions they are already recommending, which added up to \$1,476,910 so far.**

**They will analyze the new recommended budget to see what percentage increase it is and where it falls in relation to the schools' recommended 2.5% increase scenario.**

**The subcommittee recommended a total of \$352,286 for capital, which did include technology being added in.**

**The subcommittee discussed the capital recommendations and the fact that the schools can use the capital reserve for any capital they deem necessary, but that they should choose carefully because they may need to use some of the capital reserve fund next year.**

**The subcommittee determined that the total surplus available to roll over to capital is \$503,239**

**Joe Renning recommended taking the additional surplus after the \$352,286 for capital is considered, and make the remaining \$150,953 to be used for the school administration relocation.**