

Town of Lincoln

Budget Board Meeting

November 20, 2008

Members Present:

Ken Booth Carl Brunetti Claudette Lussier Bob Ericson

Joe Renning Cheryl Ethier Hagop Jawharjian Linda Noble

Members Absent:

Roberta Gosselin Greg Leonard Sheila Chisholm

The meeting began at 7:40 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

In correspondence, information received from the School Department was discussed.

Chairman Ken Booth turned the meeting over to Town Administrator Almond, assisted by Finance Director John Ward, in order to discuss the School Budget and also the state of revenues within the Town and the State of Rhode Island.

School Capital was discussed, and it was noted that there had been a meeting between the School and Town Administrations.

Money received by the schools from Northern RI Collaborative was discussed. The check was for \$187,000 and was because of a suit against NRIC that they were overcharging. The schools chose to take the money rather than take a tuition reduction.

There was discussion regarding surpluses and capital reserve funds having to do with the schools.

It was noted that one of the issues when planning the school budget this year would be the base figure that they would be starting with to add their increase to since there was added money at the Financial Town Meeting, additional money in health care, and Medicaid/Special Ed Reserve money that had not been spent yet also.

It was noted that on the municipal side of the budget, there were only 2 outstanding lawsuits and no new suits had been filed in 2 years. For the two that have not been settled yet, it would be difficult to budget for them because it would be known how much they had to go into negotiations.

Revenues from Twin River were discussed.

It was noted that \$4.4 million of tax revenues come from Twin River, as does \$5.2 million worth of VLT revenues from the state generated by Twin River.

The Town of Lincoln may actually receive less state aid in coming years due to the fact that they receive this revenue.

The pension system, health care, and post-retirement benefits were discussed.

The Administrator noted that there may be changes to the pension system to make it more uniform.

Also, the state is pushing for all towns to be on the state health care plan, which the Administrator is against.

The Finance Director noted that the Town will have to calculate post-retirement benefits next year.

Property assessments were discussed.

Bob Ericson asked whether the changing of perimeter properties to Twin River to CR-2 Zoning cause evaluations to go down.

The Administrator noted that the values decreasing were probably attributed to the market, and that in a good market a CR-2 Zoning adds value to property.

It was noted that the Town did go out to bid for Workers Compensation last year, and they will be having an auction this year.

The Capital Improvement team has been meeting, and it was noted that the fact that 2/3 of the money that the committee approves in capital expenditures is for the schools shows credibility.

The next projects that they have been and will be working on will be a new Senior Center, Lonsdale Park, Finishing up at the Middle School, Northern ELC, and Manville Park.

The new Senior Center Project was discussed.

There are currently wetlands applications and boundary line questions being worked on.

They are now concentrating more on engineering, utilization, etc. and are applying for a grant which would be for a generator to make it eligible as a community center and emergency shelter.

John Ward noted that in the past, the Town had budgeted at 100% tax collection, but the real estimate this year will be 97 or 98% and new taxes will go into a separate account from uncollected older taxes.

It was also noted that Lincoln has experienced minimal foreclosures, and that in the case that it does occur, the lender usually pays the taxes.

There will be a reassessment of property values next year, and there is legislature in the works to go back into a 10-year cycle with them.

The Town Administrator and Finance Director adjourned from the meeting.

The possibility of getting an electronic voting system for the Financial Town Meeting was discussed.

The School Subcommittee's process of meeting with the School

Department to review their budget was discussed.

The subcommittee would like to meet with the School Department before the budget process begins, so that it will be clear what is expected of their submittal.

The information that they are now seeking is a 5-year summary, energy efficiency information, and new hires in the current year with which employee they replaced.

The subcommittee also discussed the possibility of combining maintenance staffs of the Schools and Parks, etc. in order to facilitate consolidation and regionalization.

**Joe Renning made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Linda Noble.
The meeting adjourned at 9:50 pm.**