

Town of Lincoln

Budget Board Meeting

February 19, 2009

Present:

**Ken Booth Roberta Gosselin Claudette Lussier Joe Renning Sheila
Chisholm**

**Greg Leonard Carl Brunetti Hagop Jawharjian Linda Noble Bob
Ericson**

Absent:

Cheryl Ethier

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

**The agenda was adjusted so that New Business, and the presentation
of the Administrator's recommended budget, would be before Old
Business.**

Ken Booth turned the meeting over to the Town Administrator.

The Town Administrator summarized his budget message, and presented a recommended budget that contained the following:

A Municipal Budget of \$15,432,327, which represents a decrease of \$1,039 from the previous year's budget.

A School Budget of \$48,511,758 which includes \$542,557 in capital expenditures.

State Aid was recommended at a decrease of \$180,809 from last year, which made the total recommendation \$7,222,459.

The total Combined Operating Budget was recommended at \$70,813,109, which is a decrease of \$524,185 from last year)

It was noted that all municipal employees conceded a wage freeze with no deferred payments, which saved the Town \$286,000.

The School recommended budget, however, still contains \$840,000 in wage increases.

If the wages for the schools are frozen, the step increases would still be in place, just at the previous rates as per the freeze.

The Town Administrator noted that some capital projects for the town have also been submitted through the Stimulus Package, such as the fixing of the dams.

A sewer enterprise fund was discussed, which may cause a slight loss for the coming budget but could result in new sewer assessments.

Also, there are current sewer bonds that will be retiring.

The sewer enterprise fund would pay for sewer employees and expenses.

Twin River was discussed.

The Town Council has given permission to obtain an expert to audit the Twin River tax accounts.

There are two lawsuits in place between Twin River and the town, one for tangible property, and one for real property. The liability for the town could be approximately \$500,000.

Previously, the town did bid out for workers compensation and saved \$100,000.

This meant a change in the insurance carrier, but it ended up being worth the initial fee the town absorbed to withdraw from the previous carrier.

Roberta Gosselin noted that the Budget Board would need detailed data on salaries and benefits.

Various town programs were discussed, and it was noted that, for example, the Parks and Recreation Department would have revenues separated to set up budgets for individual programs.

For pension funding, the town does not have final reporting yet, but it is believed to be close to 100% funded.

It was noted that the Town Administrator's vehicle is in the Police budget because it did go through the Police vehicle bid so that the town received a better deal.

It was noted that the Budget Board will be responsible for a resolution for \$450,000 for maintenance of recreational and open space, which will be for the capital restricted account.

In discussion of the School budget, Rick Battistoni of the School Committee noted that there is a difference between the School Committee's recommendation and the Town Administrator's recommendation, and that they understand it is a tough budget year but they would like to be part of the process.

Town Council President Ron McKenna noted that School Committee members did not object to the increasing of the school budget on the floor of the Financial Town Meeting last year.

He noted that in a year that 20-30% increases in pension costs can be expected, the concession of municipal employees of their wage increases was appreciated.

The meeting was opened to Public Comment and Questions.

Town Councilman John Flynn noted that he does not feel that the municipal infrastructure gets the same amount of discussion that the

schools do.

By taking care of small projects, the town can eventually take bonds to be appropriated for capital improvements to things such as sewer, water, roads, etc.

Mr. Flynn also inquired about combining the Finance Departments of the municipal and school sides.

In the past, the town has looked at software packages to do so, and have already done so with health care.

Bob Ericson noted that the Municipal Finance Director has a system of showing salaries that works because any changes show clearly throughout, and that the schools should attempt to show their information similarly.

The Town Administrator noted that by using a 0-base for budgeting, with the schools and municipal budgets, the town has saved \$600,000-\$700,000 a year.

Also, the Town Administrator noted that there have been reductions for two years now in municipal staff, and there have been no departmental budget increases.

The Budget Board took a short recess, and then reconvened.

In Old Business:

There was no action to update on the Governor's proposed budget at the time.

For the 2009 Financial Town Meeting:

The secret ballot resolution will not be acted upon by the Town Council because the vote was to deny it going to the Ordinance Committee.

The ordinance that would not allow people other than town residents, press, or Department Heads, did go to Committee.

This may provide for a live feed of the meeting to those who will not be allowed to attend.

It was noted that the ordinance may need to be amended to allow the attendance of people who's knowledge may be needed but who are not Department Heads, such as actuaries and architects.

Standing votes were discussed.

Only those who are recognized by the Moderator may call for a standing vote.

The option of using electronic voting was discussed, which the town may be able to borrow from a local corporation.

The next meeting of the Budget Board will be Thursday, February 26th at 7:30 pm.

The minutes of January 15th were distributed for review.

Carl Brunetti made a motion to accept, seconded by Bob Ericson.

The minutes were approved by a vote of 10-0.

The minutes of February 12th were distributed for review.

Carl Brunetti made a motion to accept, seconded by Greg Leonard.

The minutes were approved by a vote of 10-0.

An electronic copy of the budget was already distributed to Budget Board members.

There was a motion to adjourn by Carl Brunetti, seconded by Roberta Gosselin.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 pm.