

Town of Lincoln

Budget Board Meeting

PUBLIC HEARING

March 24, 2009

Present:

Ken Booth Claudette Lussier Joe Renning Sheila Chisholm Bob Ericson

Greg Leonard Roberta Gosselin Hagop Jawharjian Linda Noble

Absent:

Cheryl Ethier

The meeting began at 7:07 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Ken Booth welcomed the public to the first public reading of the Town Administrator's recommended 2009-2010 budget, and policy and procedure of the budget process were discussed.

The budget was read as recommended from the Town Administrator. Total Combined recommendation was \$70,939,987, for a decrease of \$879,778 from last year's budget.

The Budget Board discussed revenues.

Chairman Ken Booth opened the meeting to public comment and

questions.

Linda Andrews discussed the fact that there was no backup information to support the schools' recommended budget, and the taxpayers cannot make an educated decision without seeing the information broken down.

It was noted that the Budget Board will attempt to provide as much information as possible at the Financial Town Meeting, and that when the specific information is discussed at Budget Board Meetings they are open to the public.

Linda Andrews also noted that the Town cannot afford a tax increase when people are facing unemployment or frozen wages.

Ed Slattery discussed the \$517,000 approved for the schools at the Financial Town Meeting last year, and it was noted that this was funded as a resolution that will be proposed to take out of surplus to use in the operating budget.

Mike Napolitano expressed his gratitude to the Town of Lincoln Municipal Employees for their wage concessions, and also discussed having more detailed information about the school budget.

Mary Ann McComiskey discussed her concerns with the cuts to the school budget because it is a bottom line budget, and she felt that the concessions that the schools made with things like health insurance co-shares should make up for the wage increases.

The Town Administrator noted that he does appreciate their efforts, but also noted that the municipal employees have made concessions in things such as co-shares and co-pays and prescription plans as well.

Paul Zimzik (sp?), a Representative of the Support Staff, questioned the anticipated salary increase line in the budget.

John Ward, Finance Director, explained that those numbers were for anticipated increases that were just transferred into their appropriate accounts in February.

The Town Administrator noted that no municipal employee is getting a cost-of-living increase, but he had to put some money in for possible increases before going into negotiations.

Jack Santos noted that he did not think that it was fair that the Financial Town Meeting operated so that the schools items were passed later on in the evening, and it seemed to favor them.

Paul Sylvestre questioned why some items voted upon at the Financial Town Meeting do not match expended figures, and also talked about longevity for the schools being at a lesser rate than the municipal employees, and the fact that the municipal and schools are so different that they are not easily compared.

Wayne Brooder, Union Vice President, noted that the Lincoln schools were the first to go to a 10% copay, and they are now in the 25th

percentile with a 15% copay.

Their health care is not locked in so if there are increases in the cost of that insurance, they will pay the extra amount.

Maureen Smith noted that the municipal employees have conceded a 20% copays, and that they have made concessions all along but still conceded wage increases.

The Budget Board closed the public hearing portion of the meeting, took a brief recess and then reconvened.

John Ward, Finance Director discussed the fact that the Town still does not know what the State will give for local aid, and also noted that tax collection is over-estimated, and this year it should realistically be projected at a 97% collection rate.

The Budget Board discussed a tax increase, and the minimum amount that would be a maintenance of effort.

Capital items, as to whether or not they were reimbursable, were discussed.

The Town may be mandated to spend 80% of the amount of last year on capital improvements.

The Finance Director has not yet seen the feasibility study regarding the school administration building, and it is unclear whether the Town

Administrator has seen a copy.

The school budget detailed information being put on the website was discussed.

Also, perhaps a press release making people aware that the information would be available online.

The schools' wage freeze dilemma and possible pension exposure were discussed.

In school salaries, the fact that there were no retirees or breakage was discussed.

The Budget Board discussed once again whether or not they feel the Town could handle a tax increase.

Parks and Recreation Program Fees were discussed.

Public Safety – Police, salaries were discussed, as well as an increase of \$93,103 for patrolmen.

The Budget Board discussed potential attendance at the Financial Town Meeting, and the possibility of moving the location to CCRI.

The Budget Board will request a list of potential school retirees and their hire dates.

There will be a meeting on Saturday, March 28th at the Lincoln Public Library to review a new scanned voting system as a possibility for the Financial Town Meeting.

Joe Renning made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Roberta Gosselin.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 pm.