

Town of Lincoln

Budget Board Meeting

April 4, 2012

Present:

**Linda Noble Claudette Lussier Carl Brunetti Domenic Ricci
Mike Babbitt William DiBiasio Richard Foster Bob Turner
Paul DiDomenico Maria Marcello Hagop Jawharjian**

There were no members absent.

Call to Order

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

Correspondence

For the school capital proposed by the Town Administrator, he noted that he worked on their highest priorities until he got to a number he was comfortable with which ended up being Priorities 1 and 2.

Town capital was lowered \$50,000 because the Town received a grant for Parks and Recreation.

The Administrator noted that he would be comfortable with taking \$100,000 out of the number proposed for the revaluation.

The Budget Board noted that they may consider the high school tennis courts because they do feel they are a safety issue.

The Lime Acres tennis courts came to \$110,000 including fencing.

For the dam work, \$600,000 would come from Fund 50 and \$500,000 from Fund 11.

Public Comment

There was no public comment or questions at the time.

Minutes

The minutes of March 28th were distributed for review.

William DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Mike Babbitt, to accept the minutes,

The minutes were accepted by a vote of 8 -0 with William DiBiasio and Domenic Ricci abstaining because they were not present on March 28th.

The minutes of March 29th were distributed for review.

William DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Richard Foster, to accept the minutes.

The minutes were accepted by a vote of 9-0 with William DiBiasio abstaining because he was not present on March 29th.

The minutes of March 31st, the Municipal Tour, were distributed for review.

William DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Carl Brunetti, to accept the minutes.

In discussion about the Chase Farm House, the Town Administrator

noted that it is not a part of the Town's capital plan and that there is no historical value to the property but that the Friends of the Hearthside had been interested in taking it over.

The minutes were accepted by a vote of 6-0 with William DiBiasio, Mike Babbitt, Maria Marcello and Claudette Lussier abstaining because they were not present on March 31st.

Discussion/Final Vote

Supplemental Resolution

Bob Turner made a motion, seconded by Richard Foster, to postpone discussion of the Supplemental Resolution until later in the meeting. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

School Technology Plan

The Budget Board discussed the Technology Plan and whether they would support it and at what amount.

Mike Babbitt noted that after speaking with the Technology Consultant, he would be comfortable supporting the plan at \$2.2 million which would include a deduction of 10% for buying in bulk and more deductions for current equipment that won't be used that can be sold, or will be used to reduce the amount needed.

The Technology Consultant did say that he recommends the project be done all at once.

Carl Brunetti noted that he still felt that \$1,000 per computer in the

media centers, and \$800 per computer for laptops, was high.

Also, some of the existing technology is older but some may still have value.

So he agrees that he would support the project, but at a lower cost.

Domenic Ricci noted that he felt the project was a good one, and that he would not be opposed to it but also agreed that the funding should be on a lower amount.

Linda Noble noted that while the School Department said they would use evaluations to make sure the teachers are using the new technology, it would be difficult to do anything about it if they were not using the technology if they were fulfilling their requirements as teachers.

That is why it would be important to entice them to use the Professional Development.

Also, the High School took 10 classes out of the modular rooms and still are requesting that the technology plan include 60 classrooms, and they will be using the Old Middle School, or North Wing.

Claudette Lussier wanted to know how the funding for the project would work, which was discussed later in the meeting.

Maria Marcello noted that she felt it was a good idea, but she didn't feel they needed all of the classrooms that they requested to have the technology, and she also felt the plan was more high-end than was

needed.

Paul DiDomenico noted that he also thought the plan was a good idea, but that the schools did not really have a handle on what equipment they currently have, how it is used, what they would need and how it would relate to what they are doing now.

He thought that if the plan was delayed it would give more time to explore the plan and what currently exists.

Bob Turner noted that he was in support of the project at \$2.2 million

Richard Foster questioned whether the state bond for \$580,000 for the fiber optic piping would affect the project.

It was noted that it would only make the new plan better.

There were also questions about the different plans for different amounts that had been presented so far, and it was noted that the \$2.2 million was arrived at by taking the original \$1.98 million plan and adding the Language Arts Lab, or by taking the highest proposal of \$3.2 and subtracting 10% for buying in bulk and then subtracting for items that could be sold or used to decrease the amount that would need to be purchased.

Bill DiBiasio noted that he was in support of the project because he feels the Lincoln schools need to be leaders, and that it would even attract businesses, but he noted he was in favor of doing it all at once.

The Administrator gave his recommendation that he would go with the highest, most recent proposal and deduct from there for things like buying in bulk and selling off current technology that won't be needed, and those savings could also be written right into the resolution.

The funding of a \$2.2 million plan would be to take \$1.5 million from the schools' capital surplus and then take \$700,000 from Municipal Fund 50.

Professional Development is included in the plan.

It was noted that this project would not be part of the Maintenance of Effort going forward.

Bob Turner made a motion, seconded by William DiBiasio to approve the School Technology Plan for \$2.2 million, with \$1.5 million coming from School Capital Surplus, and \$700,000 from coming from Town Fund 50.

The Budget Board noted that some of the items being purchased could be purchased for less than the requested amount, particularly the computer carts.

The Budget Board discussed where revenues from the sale of existing equipment that won't be used would go, and the possibility of setting up a technology fund for future projects and maintenance.

The Budget Board discussed the fact that they do not want the High School to use the North Wing, but that they could not put wording in the resolution stating that technology should be put only in the other side of the High School.

They have forced more efficiencies though since the High School will now stop using the modular classrooms and lower level of the North Wing.

Careful wording of the resolution would ensure that if the schools receive any grants for the technology, those funds would offset the expenses that came out of Fund 50 first.

The motion passed by a vote of 10-1 with Richard Foster opposed.

The Budget Board discussed whether software would be considered a capital expenditure.

Supplemental Resolution

Hagop Jawharjian made a motion for discussion purposes, seconded by William DiBiasio, to add resolutions for improvements to Chet Nichols Field and Manville Park to be brought before the Financial Town Meeting.

In discussion, the opinion of the Budget Board as a majority was that the resolutions should be put in to answer questions, inform taxpayers, and balance the books by showing expenditures that

occurred and how the money was spent.

The Town Administrator noted that he believed that the resolutions should not be put forward to the Financial Town Meeting because:

-The money was already spent, even if the reason was not an emergency, so a resolution where a vote would occur would not be proper

-The Town Solicitor had already provided an opinion that the Town had in fact acted lawfully when it approved those funds, therefore the approval of the Financial Town Meeting is not necessary.

-It would, in fact, call to attention and question the legality actions of the Town Administrator and Town Council who had in fact acted lawfully according to the Town Solicitor.

-The budget is already “balanced” and does not need a resolution to do so.

It was noted that if the resolutions were not put in, the expenditures would be seen anyways in the monthly reports or yearly audit.

The Budget Board requested a copy of the original Solicitor opinion, rendered approximately 5 years ago, with backup that made the approval of the funds possible.

The Town Administrator noted that he would provide that for the Budget Board.

William DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Richard Foster, to table

further discussion and vote on the resolutions until further information is provided.

The Town Administrator will check with the Town Planner about information regarding the canopy for the bocce court at the Senior Center.

He will get the quote information to the Budget Board, and noted he recommends a structure rather than a canopy.

The Budget Board wondered if there were numbers of what it would cost to beautify Barney Pond after the dam is fixed.

The Town Administrator noted that he would check if his Public Works Director has that information, but noted he would probably wait until after the dam is fixed to undertake the beautification project, which would be the next fiscal year.

The Town Administrator noted that there will probably be a major settlement with Amica in the coming year regarding their valuation, which will put a strain on the tax levy.

School Committee Operating Budget

Information received by the Budget Board from the Town Administrator noted that the Town can legally lower the Maintenance of Effort by 10% of the additional state funding received, which would amount to \$83,642.

The original School Committee request was for \$48,840,433.

The Town Administrator recommended \$48,600,720.

In Pensions and Benefits, the Budget Board analyzed the 4 different pension systems and what is being paid into them, what is anticipated to be paid in and paid out, and they all met all state and federal guidelines and seem to be funded exactly as they should be.

For example, the total certified/non-certified payroll is \$29,027,000 and \$3,364,000 is being paid into the pensions which is 11.7% which is a good amount.

In Health Care, it was noted that the Town is self-insured with a cap.

The proposed increase in charges is proposed at 8% which is comparable with other towns so that number also seems accurate.

In looking at the School Administration, it was noted that while it seems Lincoln is administratively heavy, the salaries seem to be within the ranges according to salary studies.

The Budget Board believed breakage should be recommended at \$54,000 higher.

The position of Data Manager was discussed because it was one of the ones that was going to be replaced.

It was noted that the Curriculum Coordinator could perform the tasks of the Data Manager.

The Budget Board discussed the fact that there are currently 417.5 FTE's but only 400 had been recommended in the previous year's budget.

\$48,517,078 would be the Maintenance of Effort minus the \$83,642.

Richard Foster made a motion, seconded by William DiBiasio, that the Budget Board recommend funding of the school budget at \$48,517,078.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

School Committee Capital

High School

The Budget Board is recommended replacement of just tile in the connector hallway

The Budget Board is not recommending roof replacement on the modular classrooms, but after discussion with the School Department, they are recommending the removal and disposal of the modulares with the lowest bid being \$31,300 excluding utility termination.

The Budget Board discussed placing the removal and disposal of the modular in its own separate resolution, and it was noted that the School Committee had not yet voted on the project.

The Budget Board decided not to recommend funding of the refurbish of the lavs, but did recommend the replacement of the auditorium

doors.

The Budget Board is recommending the tennis court project for \$120,000.

This brings the total for the High School capital projects to \$152,650, excluding the modular classroom removal project.

Northern Elementary

The Budget Board is recommending that the removal of the stone wall should be done with in-house labor.

In discussion on parking lot repairs, the Budget Board noted that the curbing and sidewalk needed repairs but that the parking lot was not in bad shape.

This brings the total recommended for Northern Elementary to \$7,200.

Middle School

The Budget Board decided not to recommend funding of security cameras at the Middle School.

Central Elementary

The Budget Board discussed the project to add parking spots, which was determined to be a safety issue and would be \$103,000 or \$3 per square foot.

With fencing, the project would cost approximately \$124,000.

The Budget Board decided not to replace any carpeting at Central.

Lonsdale Elementary

In discussion of the library in relation to the technology upgrades that would be putting many computers in that room, the Budget Board decided that the carpeting of the room should be done as well.

The Budget Board recommended funding the abatement and carpet installation at \$9,000.

The extension of the asphalt walkway was discussed for \$4,000 or \$4 per square foot.

Saylesville Elementary

The Budget Board felt that \$20,000 should be more than enough to do whole job including painting, etc. for all of the skylights.

Administration Building

For the mandatory fire alarm upgrades, \$50,000 was the lowest bid.

The Budget Board discussed the entrance stairway work as being necessary due to safety issues, and noted that the work would need to be done if the Town eventually wanted to sell the property.

They felt the bid of \$10,750 was high, so they recommended subtracting 30% which brought the amount to \$7,500.

The total of the capital that the Budget Board discussed and agreed to recommend funding was \$387,850, which is 12% of the original request.

Bob Turner made a motion, seconded by William DiBiasio, to fund school capital resolution expenses at \$387,850.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Public Comment

There was no public comment or questions at the time.

Adjourn

William DiBiasio made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Hagop Jawharjian.

The meeting adjourned at 10:49 pm.