

## **Town of Lincoln**

### **Budget Board Meeting**

**March 19, 2015**

#### **Present:**

**Carl Brunetti Mike Babbitt Rhonda Lacombe Bob Turner  
Chris Weggeland Bill McManus Paul Deutsch Richard Foster  
Bill DiBiasio Felix Fernandes Mike O'Connell**

**There were no members absent.**

#### **Call to Order**

**The meeting began at 7:30 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.**

#### **Approval of Minutes**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Richard Foster, to defer the review of the minutes of March 12th and March 18th.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

#### **Correspondence**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Mike Babbitt to defer Correspondence.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

#### **Business**

**Members of Board and Commissions were present to discuss their**

**budgets.**

### **Town Council**

**Keith Macksoud was present representing the Town Council.**

**He noted that the Town Council did not have any issues or concerns with their recommended budget.**

**There were internal issues with the audit company that caused the audit to be late, but the findings of the audit indicate that there were no deficiencies and no reportable conditions and therefore there will be no management letter included with this year's audit.**

**The final audit will be received for recording at the April 28th Town Council Meeting.**

**The Town Administrator noted that he has had discussions with the Town Council President because certain things, such as awards, that should be charged to the Town Council expense budget were being funded out of the Administration or Town Clerk's Office instead, but that has been corrected.**

**He believes that even though those expenses do vary, the recommendation put forth is sufficient.**

### **Conservation Commission**

**Leslie Alexander and Jared Bethel were present representing the Conservation Commission.**

**Leslie noted that Recording Secretary should be reduced from \$1,150**

to \$550 to better represent expenditures, and she asked that that \$600 be added to the Expense line instead as well as an additional \$500 increase to that.

It was noted that the Conservation Commission also takes care of the Butterfly Garden as well as a few other open Town properties including the Hot Potato Schoolhouse landscaping when it's completed.

They would like to purchase a more durable picnic table for the Butterfly Garden.

The Town Administrator noted that while the Conservation Commission does do a lot of work at the Butterfly Garden, their purpose by charter is not to manage/administer properties so the Town should be careful in regards to that.

What they could do as an advisory committee is develop a plan and go to the Town Administrator with their requests. This may actually allow them to accomplish more by working with the Town.

For example, this year the Town is looking into purchasing some open space at the Jergensen Property and the Commission could be a part of that discussion and work with the Town on that project.

## **Water Commission**

Romeo Mendes, the new Head of the Water Department, and Maureen Smith were present representing the Water Commission.

There was not an increase in staff, in fact they have actually downsized, but there were a number of water breaks this year that required overtime pay.

**Romeo has only briefly looked at the audit but noted that he would review it in more detail and discuss with the Budget Board.**

**The Water Department reports to the Finance Director monthly after the Water Commission meetings with financial information.**

**The Town's water is received from the Providence Water Supply.**

**Changes in Wages/Utilities could be caused by layoffs, changes in wages themselves, as well as employees that are now working salary and therefore not being paid overtime.**

**Utility in that line represents utility workers, and not the actual utilities.**

**There is no water rate increase anticipated for at least the next few years.**

**John Sharkey, Little League President, was present to discuss the Saylesville Softball Field Dugouts and Roof.**

**He noted that the field was done in 2000 or 2001 and the project should have been completed then, but the funds were not available.**

**It was noted that the structures will be permanent, not removable, and that roofs on dugouts are pretty much the standard now.**

**In response to the Budget Board questions regarding Ordinance Codification, the Town Administrator noted that codification is normally the responsibility of the Town Clerk, and that there would be research done to identify where that has been charged to because it has been occurring.**

**The costs for codification may be smaller now that everything is done**

**electronically, with the exception of a year of full charter review where the expense would be larger.**

**In particular, the Town may need to change some things this year in the Zoning Ordinance depending on how things go with the hotel at Twin River.**

**The Finance Director noted that the reconciliation document is normally more informative to review than the audit because the audit will only show the original budget against the actual expense, and would not account for any transfers or amendments made to the original budget.**

**The Budget Board would like more information on the Jergensen Property, even if just a map of the property.**

**The Finance Director noted that the current owners of that property are currently up to date on their taxes.**

**The Town Administrator and Finance Director answered questions previously sent from the Budget Board.**

### **Tax Assessor**

**There will be a statistical revaluation, which may lead to appeals, necessary notifications of hearings, a stenographer etc.**

**There is legislation in the works that would make revaluations a 5 year cycle so that instead of statistical revaluations every 3 years, they would occur every 5 and a full revaluation would still occur every**

**10 years.**

### **Public Works, Code Enforcement**

**Demolition is used for buildings that need to be boarded up due to fires, vacancy, etc.**

**The Town does pursue liens if they are forced to board up private houses, and they did have to board up 2 houses last year.**

### **Public Works, Parks and Recreation**

**Sponsored Programs is for things like Little League Grants and Parks and Recreation sponsorships, trips, the Youth Center, the Special Needs Alumni Group, etc.**

**Historically, the Town only sponsors the Little League and no other sports organizations with the understanding that they produce a receipt and they use the funds for equipment and supplies, and they also help the Town out with the various fields that they use on different occasions.**

**Also, no other organizations have ever asked the Town for funds.**

**Special Events would be things like tournaments, Chase Farm events, etc.**

### **Library**

**In Health Care costs, it is the same number of employees that will be covered but one did go from family coverage to single coverage.**

**Also, collective bargaining has increased the employee share of**

**health care so that the net expense to the Town has decreased.**

**Additionally, when last year's budget was prepared, an 8% increase working rate was presumed but that increase didn't end up occurring. The working rate this year does include average claims as well as anticipated stop loss, etc.**

**Now that the Governor's budget has been released, the Finance Director will review everything to ensure that the Minimum Maintenance of Effort is met.**

**The Library Director was concerned about part-time employees not getting wage increases because if the minimum wage is increased as it is anticipated to do, some of the budgeted salaries may fall below the new minimum.**

**The Town has attempted to get co-share amounts close to 20%, but some are grandfathered in if they were hired before 1995.**

**The Town Administration noted that these are things that can be worked on in negotiations.**

**The Budget Board discussed the difference in retirement ages for the Town and Schools.**

**The Street Sweeper that will be purchased has to have vacuum capability to receive the matching grant for it.**

### **Debt Service**

**The refinancing of bonds won't actually be done until next year, so while the Town is taking steps to enable that to happen, it will not**

**affect the line until the following year.**

**They are refinancing in order to take advantage of a state incentive that will allow the Town to keep 80% of the savings by refinancing.**

**The bond expiration dates will not change, and the rates will go from approximately 4.3% that it is now to 2.3%.**

**The Medicaid reimbursement recommendation is an estimate which may change based on actual services provided as well as changes in the amount of federal funds that come in.**

**The Schools are trying to bring more students back into the system as opposed to out of district placements, which may also change the amount received.**

**However, while having the students in district will lower reimbursements, the costs overall will still be less for those students than if they were outsourced.**

**The estimated numbers don't include any unexpected students that may come to Lincoln as new students during the year.**

**It was discussed that it would help the Town to have a system of evaluation for students at an early age so that they would be able to track students and better determine their future costs to the Town.**

**The Town Administrator gave an update on the ongoing pension settlement.**

**There is a gag order, but it appears to be in full swing with the unions having voted.**

**It may increase the prior settlement by 4%, which may translate to**

**\$75,000 or up to \$300,000 if the Town chooses to re-amortize that and stretch the payments out.**

**There is a state program that would help with things like utilities, road repairs, etc. but it appears the only thing that would be eligible for the Town of Lincoln would be the Sewer Enterprise Fund.**

**In the Hot Potato School House Project, there is enough funding in the resolution/budget to actually move the building to Chase Farm, but the Town is working on the rest of the project by gathering private funds.**

**The timeframe of the project is slated for this spring.**

**The Town Administrator and Budget Board discussed how the Town should handle an overexpenditure in a line such as Snow Removal.**

**The Town Administrator believes that as long as the overexpenditure is unintentional and every attempt is made to rectify that in the Operating Budget, and the proper state departments have been notified, that the Town could run a deficit for the year.**

**He does not feel a supplemental appropriation makes sense since the Town would not know the amount before the close of the Fiscal year on June 30th.**

**For larger items, a Special Financial Town Meeting may be needed.**

**The Finance Director is still working with the Public Works Director to determine what the FEMA Reimbursement will be for the snow storm**

**that caused a State of Emergency.**

**The Town Administrator is still working on a full analysis of the existing and possible future recycling programs for the Budget Board.**

**The Budget Board noted that an extraordinary breakdown of pension information was received this year.**

**The Library and the Water Commission have separate accounting for that.**

**It was noted that the majority of employees choose the Family Coverage at a cost to the Town of \$1,332.71 per family per month, whereas the Single Plan costs \$553.22 per person per month.**

**Delta Dental costs \$13.99 for Family Coverage, or \$5.80 for an individual per month.**

**The self-insured working number this year, after backing out the Library and OPEB, is \$2.45 million.**

**3 Fire Districts (Saylesville, Lonsdale and Lime Rock) out of 6 pay for their own health care, OPEB, etc.**

**Some of that money is supposed to be reimbursed, but that is not always received.**

**Employee and Employer contribution rates for post retirement benefits for all of the various plans carried by the Town were discussed.**

#### **Department 4160 - Tax Assessor**

**The Budget Board discussed information received regarding Legal Notices.**

**Bob Turner made a motion, seconded by Richard Foster, that the total recommendation for the Tax Assessor be \$281,290.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

#### **Department 4320 – Public Works, Code Enforcement**

**The Budget Board discussed information received regarding the Demolition line.**

**Mike Babbitt made a motion, seconded by Bob Turner, that the total recommendation for Code Enforcement be \$194,086.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

#### **Department 4330 – Public Works, Parks and Recreation**

**The Budget Board discussed the information received from the Town Administrator regarding Special Events and Sponsored Programs.**

**They discussed the possibility of setting up grants for other sports organizations besides Lincoln Little League in the future.**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Mike Babbitt, that the total recommendation for Parks and Recreation be \$627,383.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

#### **Department 4820 - Town Council**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Mike Babbitt, that the total**

**recommendation for the Town Council be \$69,500.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

**Department 4830 - Town Solicitor**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Bob Turner, that the total recommendation for the Town Solicitor be \$160,189.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

**Department 4840 – Probate Judge**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Bob Turner, that the total recommendation for the Probate Judge be \$4,352.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

**Department 4850 - Town Sergeant**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Mike Babbitt, that the total recommendation for the Town Sergeant be \$1,400.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

**Department 4860 - Board of Canvassers**

**Mike Babbitt made a motion, seconded by Bill DiBiasio, that the total recommendation for the Board of Canvassers be \$1,700.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

**Department 4600 – Budget Board**

**Richard Foster made a motion, seconded by Rhonda Lacombe, that the total recommendation for the Budget Board be \$2,050.**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Mike O'Connell, to increase Recording Secretary from \$1,750 to \$2,000 based on historical expenditures.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Rhonda Lacombe, that the new total recommendation for the Budget Board be \$2,300.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

#### **Department 4870 – Zoning Board of Review**

**Richard Foster made a motion, seconded by Bill DiBiasio, that the total recommendation for the Zoning Board of Review be \$1,820.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

#### **Department 4880 - Planning Board**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Mike O'Connell, that the total recommendation for the Planning Board be \$8,870.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

#### **Department 4890 - Board of Assessment Review**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Mike Babbitt, that the total recommendation for the Board of Assessment Review be \$2,190.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

#### **Department 4910 – Tenant's Board**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Richard Foster, that the total recommendation for the Tenant's Board be \$1,388.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

#### **Department 4920 - Conservation Commission**

**Mike Babbitt made a motion, seconded by Bill DiBiasio, that the total recommendation for the Conservation Commission be \$3,150.**

**The Budget Board discussed the Commission's request that Recording Secretary be reduced to \$550 with \$600 transferred to the expense line as well as an additional \$500.**

**Richard Foster made a motion, seconded by Paul Deutsch, that Recording Secretary be adjusted to \$550 and Expenses increased to \$2,600.**

**The Budget Board discussed the purview of the Conservation Commission and whether some of those expenses should be brought to the Town Administrator as requests instead.**

**The motion failed by a vote of 3-6 with Rhonda Lacombe, Richard Foster, and Paul Deutsch voting in favor of the changes.**

**Richard Foster made a motion, seconded by Bob Turner, that Recording Secretary be lowered from \$1,150 to \$600. based on the request of the Conservation Commission and historical expenditures.**

**The motion passed by a vote of 7-2 with Mike Babbitt and Chris Weggeland opposed.**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Bob Turner, that the new total recommendation for the Conservation Commission be \$2,600.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

#### **Department 4940 - Personnel Board**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Mike O’Connell, that the total recommendation for the Personnel Board be \$1,600.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

#### **Department 4960 – Juvenile Hearing Board**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Richard Foster, that the total recommendation for the Juvenile Hearing Board be \$750.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

#### **Department 4970 – Parks and Recreation Commission**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Mike O’Connell, that the total recommendation for the Parks and Recreation Commission be \$1,000.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

#### **Department 5200 - Land Trust**

**Richard Foster made a motion, seconded by Bill DiBiasio, that the total recommendation for Land Trust be \$400.**

**Felix Fernandes made a motion, seconded by Mike Babbitt, that “Expenses” and “Community Outreach and Education” be adjusted to \$100 each based on historical expenditures.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Mike Babbitt, that the new total recommendation for Land Trust be \$200.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

**Department 5300 - Municipal Court**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Paul Deutsch, that the total recommendation for Municipal Court be \$20,500.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

**Public Comment- none at this time**

**Adjourn- Mike Babbitt made the motion seconded by Felix Fernandes and the meeting adjourned at 9:51pm**