

# **Town of Lincoln Budget Board Meeting April 7, 2015**

**present:**

**Carl Brunetti Paul Deutsch**

**Bill McManus**

**Rhonda Lacombe Mike O'Connell Mike Babbitt**

**Bob Turner**

**Richard Foster**

**Chris Weggeland**

**Bill DiBiasio**

**Absent:**

**Felix Fernandes**

## **Call to Order**

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

## **Approval of Minutes**

**The minutes of April 2<sup>nd</sup> were distributed for review.**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Rhonda Lacombe, to accept the minutes. The minutes were approved as amended by unanimous vote.**

## **Correspondence**

**There was correspondence from the Town Administrator that noted that the Library Roof project will cost \$40,000 more than anticipated because of asbestos found during initial testing of the project area.**

**The additional funds will come out of Capital Fund 50.**

**The Budget Board Chair received a conference call from the School Administration and School Committee Chair regarding the Budget Board's recommended adjustments to Health Care and Dental as well the adjustment to additional FTEs.**

## **Public Comment**

**There were no public comments or questions at the time.**

## **Business**

**Municipal Budget**

## **Resolution VIfl**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Richard Foster, to add an additional \$40,000 out of Fund 50 to the Library Roof project for a total of \$179,000.**

**Any unexpended funds would be returned to Fund 50. The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Richard Foster, that Total Municipal Resolutions be \$1,150,556. The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

## **Education Budget**

**The Superintendent and Business Manager were present to discuss their concerns with the Budget Board's recommendations to the Education Budget.**

**They noted that they are unable to get into specifics because they are still in negotiations, but that there has been a change to the originally proposed Health Care numbers and they urged the Budget Board to restore their recommended adjustment to the original estimate pending further information regarding that.**

**They will provide all information on the outcome of the negotiations when they are able to.**

**In discussion of the Budget Board's recommendation to hire 4 less FTEs next year, the Budget Board noted that enrollment has been declining in the long term.**

**It was noted that approximately 80% of the Town's budget is the Education Budget and approximately 80% of the Education Budget is personnel costs, so the schools should be looking at not hiring as many teachers, and not replacing some of the ones that leave for retirement or otherwise in order to begin cutting costs for the upcoming reductions to state aid.**

**It was noted that the Education Budget was not cut by \$1 million, but that the School Department's recommendation was reduced by that total amount in the final budget board recommendation.**

**The schools have lost some students to charter schools, but they also are adding a Pre-K class next year.**

**The Charter School tuitions are figured by taking the Maintenance of Effort divided by the Average Daily Membership. This is starting to be looked at, at the state level, to rectify inequities in the formula among communities, but the School Administration believes that relief will be incremental and not significant.**

**The Town Administrator noted that none of the public charter schools are for profit.**

**Overall, there may be a possibility of a school closing within 5-6 years if declining enrollment calls for it.**

**The Budget Board and School Administration discussed the replacement of positions that retire or leave and that given equal qualifications, seniority prevails when selecting the person to fill the position.**

**Also, rather than having a Job Fair where everyone bids on jobs based on seniority, the Administration now interviews personnel over the summer to make sure that employees are in the best suited positions for them.**

**The Superintendent and Business Manager adjourned from the meeting.**

**The Town Administrator discussed the FTEs and the fact that as enrollment is declining and Charter Schools are gaining students, staffing needs to be realigned to match that new level of students.**

**He noted that the Pre-K program is expanding, but not because enrollment is growing, and that while students with IEPs do not pay tuition for Pre-K, students who attend who do not have IEPs do pay a small stipend.**

**The Budget Board discussed the fact that the state is currently looking at state aid funding in relation to charter schools and how it has been unequal in that Lincoln in particular pays more per student than other communities.**

**The Budget Board discussed that the schools should be able to begin reducing personnel, even if it requires a restructuring, and that they have to also have a 3-5 year expense reduction plan as it should not be up to the Town to provide more funding when additional state aid is phased out.**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Bob Turner, that the recommended reduction to Health Care be restored at \$262,868.**

**In discussion, the Budget Board noted that the Education Budget is a bottom-line budget but that they do normally make recommendations for adjustment but that in this case, they made the initial adjustment in error.**

**The motion failed by a vote of 5-5 with Rhonda Lacombe, Mike Babbitt, Richard Foster, Mike O'Connell. and Paul Deutsch opposed.**

**After discussion Rhonda Lacombe made a motion, seconded by Bob Turner, to reconsider restoring the reduction recommended to Health Care.**

**The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Bob Turner, to restore the recommended reduction of \$262,868 to the Health Care budget.**

**This would make the Total Education Budget an increase of \$470,000, which is still less than the Town Administrator's recommendation.**

**The motion passed by a vote of 9-1 with Richard Foster opposed.**

**It was noted that the recommended adjustment to FTEs was for non-replacement of 4 positions for \$218,060, not actually a reduction of the current staff.**

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Bob Turner, that the Total Education Budget be recommended at \$52,092,668. The Municipal Local Contribution would be \$40,705,952, an increase of \$460,527 or 1.15%.**

**The motion passed by a vote of 9-1 with Richard Foster opposed.**

**DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Mike Ba bbitt, that the Total Combined Municipal and Education Budgets be \$77,579,351.**

**This makes the Tax Levy \$53,629,338 and Tax Collections \$53,288,605.**

**The Ferguson Field Committee met to open the bids from contractors for the project. The low base bid for just the actual construction work was \$1,456, 100.**

**The low bid for the alternate to do the Press Box and Bleachers came in at \$315,000.**

**The base bid plus three alternates (with the exception of the Bleachers) was \$1,508,000.**

**Therefore, the entire cost for construction (including those alternates) was \$2,099,000, and there would then be \$139,200 plus 10% in contingency costs.**

**This would make the grant total of the project, plus alternates, soft costs and contingency \$2,472,020.**

Therefore, it was discussed that even if the schools do not complete the Concession Stands, the Town would need to provide an additional \$218,000 in capital funds to complete the project with alternates, excluding the Concession Stand. The Town Administrator noted that he has supported all of the capital funding he felt he could in his recommendation and that his proposal had been to do the Concession Stands out of Fund 50 only if enough funds have been returned there next year.

Another option discussed would be to get town-wide sponsors to raise the money to complete the Concession Stands. It was noted that if the Concession Stands were completed, the Schools would need to create a storage space for Grounds and Maintenance equipment that was stored there currently.

Also, instead of the prefabricated building that is being recommended, it was noted that the buildings that have been done at the parks recently could be used as an example of an alternative of what could be done there.

Since the bids are in and the costs have been laid out in detail, it was discussed that the school could possibly adjust to a 5% contingency fund for the project as opposed to 10% with any overexpenditures over that coming out of the school surplus.

Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Mike Babbitt, to approve recommendation of Resolution XVII as amended for a total of \$550,000.

The motion passed by a vote of 9-1 with Richard Foster opposed.

**Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Bob Turner to remove Resolution XVIII. The motion passed by a vote of 9-1 with Richard Foster opposed.**

### **Public Comment**

**There were no public comments or questions at the time.**

### **Adjourn**

**Rhonda Lacombe made a motion, seconded by Mike Babbitt, to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 10:27 pm.**