

**Litchfield Board of Finance
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 14, 2016**

Call to Order: Chairman David Geiger called the meeting to order in the LIS Art Room at 7:00pm with Ed Gadomski, David Wilson, Mitchell Fishman, Helen Bunnell, Sky Post (Alt.) present.

Absent: Rose Blondin (Alt.)

Late: Anne Dranginis arrived at 7:45pm

Also present: Leo Paul, Stacey Dionne, Kathy Brown, Lynn McMullin, David Fiorillo and Frank Simone

Appointment of Alternates:

Chairman Geiger appointed Sky Post a full member until Helen Bunnell arrived at 7:05pm.

Agenda Change:

Motion: David Wilson moved to change agenda item 7a Financial Transfers to agenda item 4b. Mitchell Fishman seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion: Ed Gadomski moved to accept the 1-11-16 regular meeting minutes. David Wilson seconded the motion. All voted aye with Mitchell Fishman abstaining and the motion carried.

Public Comment:

Diane Wilson lauded the new math program, especially for the youngest students, and expressed appreciation for the school security measures.

Grand List for the 2016/2017 Budget – Kathy Brown, Tax Assessor:

Kathy Brown said the net taxable Grand List for October 1, 2015 as filed is \$1,030,341,290, prior to BOAA changes. This is a .3% increase over the 2014 Grand List after reductions of \$381,250 made by the Board of Assessment Appeals. In the breakdown, personal property is down 1.32% and motor vehicles are down .02%. She answered questions about out-of-state motor vehicles, and mil rates for personal property and real estate.

New Business: Financial Transfer:

Leo Paul said the Finance Department is requesting a budget transfer of \$4,000 into the Incentive Award line item (8101-56108). This line item presently has a zero amount budgeted, but had previously been used. He said the purpose was to offer a bonus to town employees who are doing more than their job requirements.

Motion: Mitchell Fishman moved to make the transfer of \$4,000 from the Contingency Acct 01-1903-51703 into the Incentive Award Acct 01-8101-56108. Ed Gadomski seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Leo Paul said the BOS will present their budget to the BOF, including operating and capital budgets, on March 21. There are discussions about raising thresholds for new construction and remodeling, and

Labor wants to make a change with non-exempt employees. For any project that is done with Federal funds, employees must be at prevailing wage. He gave an update on the sale of the Donahue Road Extension property and answered questions about delinquent taxes for motor vehicles.

Assistant Director of Finance's Report of Revenues & Expenditures:

Stacey Dionne, Assistant Director of Finance, distributed the financial overview as of February 29, 2016. The Town has collected 94.3% of revenue compared to 90.4% same time last year and has spent 65.2% of the BOS Budget (compared to 83.5% last year.) The estimated fund balance is \$4,476,000 (15.15%). Current year property taxes collected are 99.2%. vs.97.5% same time last year and all tax revenue collected was 98.8% of original budget.

Superintendent's School Budget Presentation for 2016/2017:

Superintendent Lynn McMullin gave a presentation that highlighted new programming, including an alternative education program at the high school, the use of computing devices at the middle school, Replacement of the oldest desktops, planned restructuring of food services to collaborate with neighboring districts and to break even financially, and a plan for curriculum writing and publication through a new internet-based platform.

The Litchfield Schools 2016/2017 budget as approved by the BOE is \$17,481,890, which represents a \$481,890 increase, or 2.83%. Superintendent McMullin said their goal is to attract and maintain Litchfield students. The new enVisionMath2.0 curriculum produced successful results in 2015/2016 and they believe the new platform Rubicon Atlas will also help students with greater percentages meeting benchmarks. They have received NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) accreditation to operate for the next ten years.

Priority #1 for 2016/2017 is to replace 163 student laptops for 7th & 8th grades; Priority #2 is to replace 103 desktops district-wide and Priority #3 is curriculum revision. Administrative requests were reduced by 2.4% to reach this budget. David Fiorillo said the schools' priorities are what drives the costs in the budget. He answered questions about Vo-Ag: 33 Litchfield students attend Oliver Wolcott and 22 students go to Wamogo.

Chairman Geiger asked for more details on costs for each initiative and depicting increases from last year with an explanation. The BOF would like to see justification for the top 20% of line items with significant increases. He noted that the largest portion of the increase is in wages & benefits, but that should not have risen that much.

David Fiorillo answered questions about a detailed breakdown of computer models, life expectancy, warranties and locations, student enrollment in various classes and the possibility of regionalization being state-mandated if school budgets continue to rise while enrolments do not. He detailed health insurance costs and OPEB donations, saying OPEB is funded 100% this year. He agreed to provide more details on salaries and said the BOE would consider any reductions the BOF would recommend.

Chairman Geiger polled BOF members for input on the budget increase percentage, saying it should be below 2%, and the 5-year capital plan should be leveled by shifting computer items to another year.

Frank Simone said the BOE believes this is a fair budget for taxpayers but he will present BOF recommendations to the BOE for discussion. They will return in two weeks.

New Business:

a. Correspondence:

There was no correspondence.

b. Payment of Bills:

There were no bills to pay.

Future Agenda Items:

Ed Gadomski requested to make a Green Team presentation at the next meeting.

Adjournment:

Motion: Helen Bunnell moved to adjourn at 10:55pm. Anne Dranginis seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

The next meetings will be a special meeting on March 21 to review the BOS budget and a special meeting on March 28 to revisit the BOE budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann Jaacks
Recording Secretary