

**Litchfield Board of Finance
Special Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2016**

Call to Order: Chairman David Geiger called the meeting to order in the LIS Art Room at 7:04pm with Ed Gadomski, Anne Dranginis Mitchell Fishman, and Rose Blondin (Alt.) present.

Absent: Helen Bunnell

Late: Sky Post (Alt.) arrived at 7:06pm and David Wilson arrived at 7:08pm

Also present: Leo Paul, Stacey Dionne, and David T. Wilson

Appointment of Alternates:

Chairman Geiger appointed Rose Blondin a full member until David Wilson arrived at 7:08pm.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Board of Selectmen Budget Proposal:

Library Director Ann Marie White distributed the Oliver Wolcott Library Report to Our Community 2015 report and two pages of charts depicting library visits per capita, program attendance, circulation, wages and salaries, the library's municipal appropriation as a % of their total operating income and a pie chart showing that only 1.2% of town tax dollars go to the library. She said OWL outperforms other area libraries of comparable size and continues to add new programming. She answered questions about fundraising, benefits & insurance increases and the correlation between OWL and the Litchfield schools.

Mitchell Fishman distributed a comparison of "OWL Metrics" for FY 2012 through FY 2015, using the last three OWL Annual Reports as a source. Ann Marie White responded to questions about this document.

Fire Commissioner Campbell discussed the necessity of regularly changing, and interchanging tires on town trucks, answered questions about breathing apparatus packs, the roof leak on the Litchfield firehouse and the need for ADA-compliant bathrooms.

Leo Paul said the BOS Budget Proposal of \$9,270,605 represents a 2.61% increase, which was approved by the BOS. He noted that the total of departmental requested increases of \$362,798 were reduced by \$126,577. The net collectible grand list has increased. He answered questions about a Contingency transfer from legal fees, the resident trooper package, and the plan for conservation and development. He said the Public Works budget increased by only 1%. The preliminary town budget, post BAA appeals, would result in a 0.6 mil rate increase – from 26.2 to 26.8.

Public Works Director Raz Alexe answered questions about gasoline usage, calcium chloride use on roads during the winter and collaboration with Eversource on tree-cutting. He noted that when the courthouse departs the Bantam Annex in January-February 2017, the town will lose that rental income.

Leo Paul said the Facilities Committee is investigating future rental use for that space or the feasibility of demolishing the buildings and selling the property for residential use.

Capital & Debt Service Budget:

Treasurer David T. Wilson answered questions about the proposed capital spending and debt budget of \$3,742,749, including financing through pay-as-you-go, bonding, grants, etc. He said the police cruiser may be a pay-as-you-go purchase. He said the Capital Improvements Committee reviewed all the requests for capital spending. The Debt Service next year will be \$3,757,255 which is a 7.05% increase. The town did not borrow last year.

Leo Paul said the town applies for STEEP grants every year to help with the town's capital improvement program.

Raz Alexe gave details about the recycling center project, the Public Works building project and specific bridges targeted in the Bridge Project at a total cost of \$11,111,412. He said there will be a new electronic sign at LHS for next year.

Chairman Geiger polled BOF members about the BOS budget and capital projects and the majority of responses were favorable toward the proposed budget.

Adjournment:

Motion: Anne Dranginis moved to adjourn at 9:52pm. Ed Gadomski seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

The next meeting will be a special meeting on March 28 to review the BOE budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann Jaacks
Recording Secretary