

**Litchfield Board of Finance  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
April 13, 2015**

**Call to Order:** Chairman David Geiger called the meeting to order in the LIS Art Room at 7:03pm with Anne Dranginis, Mitchell Fishman, David Wilson and Ed Weik (Alt.) present. Absent: Ed Gadomski, Brenda Barnes, and Sky Post (Alt.) Also present: Leo Paul, Amaechi Obi, Frank Simone, Wayne Shuhi, David T. Wilson, John Bongiorno, Jeff Zullo, Jack Healy, Stacey Dionne, and John McKenna

**Appointment of Alternates:**

Chairman Geiger appointed Ed Weik to full member in Brenda Barnes' absence.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion:** Mitchell Fishman moved to approve the 3-9-15 regular meeting minutes. David Wilson seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion passed.

**Motion:** Mitchell Fishman moved to approve the 3-16-15 special meeting minutes. David Wilson seconded the motion. All voted aye with Ed Weik abstaining and the motion passed.

**Motion:** Ed Weik moved to approve the 3-23-15 special meeting minutes. David Wilson seconded the motion. All voted aye with Anne Dranginis abstaining and the motion passed

**Motion:** Mitchell Fishman moved to approve the 3-30-15 special meeting minutes. David Wilson seconded the motion. All voted aye with Ed Weik abstaining and the motion passed

**Public Comment:**

Vice Chairman David Wilson read a comment from Christian Bratina that was left on the town website expressing the opinion that the BOE should cut their budget so their increase is less than 2.5%.

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

Stacey Dionne, Assistant Director of Finance, distributed the financial overview as of March 31, 2015. The Town has collected 95.4% of revenue compared to 97.1% same time last year and has spent 81% of the BOS Budget (compared to 91% last year.) The estimated fund balance is \$3,689,728 (12.91%). Chairman Geiger said this is a high percentage and if needed, it was possible some of the fund balance could be spent.

Current year property taxes collected are 98.2%. vs. 98.9% same time last year and all tax revenue collected was 97.7%. There is \$700,000 in state funding expected to come in by the end of April 2015.

**Consider the Proposed Combined Budgets for BOS, BOE and Capital/Debt:**

Chairman Geiger said the three budgets will have one final review and will be presented at a town budget hearing to be held in the LIS Auditorium on April 29, 2015 at 7pm and all interested taxpayers are welcome to speak. He asked BOE representatives and their new Business Manager to keep the BOF updated.

Leo Paul said the BOS discussed ideas for cutting their budget and ultimately cut \$100,000 from the spending plan as requested by the BOF. These cuts included \$70,000 for a salaried Public Works position that will not be filled, \$5,000 in fringe benefits for that position, \$15,000 in computer upgrades for Town Hall and \$10,000 budgeted for contingency. He said the BOS voted 4-1 in favor of these cuts. Selectman Jeff Zullo said he was the dissenting vote since he believed the budget was still too high and would be a burden on taxpayers.

Leo Paul answered questions from BOF members about school maintenance costs, pay-as-you-go figures, health and medical cost increases and said Litchfield has considered ways to partner with other towns such as shared animal control and home re-valuations. Jack Healy responded to questions about the chip-sealing process. Stacey Dionne said the Debt Service is 76% principal and 24% interest.

David T. Wilson, who is Chairman for the Capital Improvements Committee, said the Capital Budget was intact but one possible cut would be the \$25,000 electronic school message sign. Chairman Geiger declined to support that cut since he felt the sign should reflect the quality of Litchfield schools. Mr. Wilson answered questions about the LHS gym window drapes, major road projects and debt services. Chairman Geiger noted that if 10% of the town's budget goes to debt service, that is a good ratio.

David Wilson asked if the town will speak to Morris about the Sandy Beach Commission's \$85,000 cost for a new septic system, et. al. Leo Paul said he has not heard from them yet.

**Motion:** Ed Weik moved to accept the BOS budget of \$9,034,384 with the \$100,000 in cuts for the operating budget and accept the current Capital/Debt Service budget with an overall 4.5% increase. Anne Dranginis seconded the motion. All voted aye with Ed Weik voting nay and the motion passed.

David Wilson said the BOE had been asked to make cuts to their budget as originally presented and had declined to do so (although they had initially cut \$89,000 as adopted on 3-4-15). Wayne Shuhi described the process used by Superintendent McMullin in developing the budget. They had identified three Tier levels of cuts.

Chairman Geiger said the BOF has the responsibility to make sure the BOE provides an excellent education to each student as well as an affordable cost to the taxpayers. He said the BOF would not want to eliminate a sports program since those are valuable for students as a healthy activity. He asked BOF members individually to review the BOE budget for possible cuts and there was discussion about an overall percentage of cuts, ranging from 2.2% to 2.8%.

**Motion:** Ed Weik moved to request the BOE reduce their budget to \$17Mil, a reduction of \$183,981. Mitchell Fishman seconded the motion. Mitchell Fishman, Ed Weik and David Geiger voted aye, Anne Dranginis and David Wilson voted nay, and the motion passed.

Frank Simone said he would bring this directive to the next BOE meeting scheduled for April 22.

**Discuss and Approve for Publication the Proposed Spending Plan:**

Chairman Geiger said there will be a special BOF meeting on April 27. Frank Simone noted the next BOE meeting would be held on April 22 and that would not be sufficient time to meet the publication deadline. Chairman Geiger said the town budget hearing might have to be postponed to no earlier than May 6.

**New Business:**

- a. **Financial Transfers:** There were no financial transfers.
- b. **Correspondence:** There was no correspondence.
- c. **Payment of Bills:** There were no bills for payment.

**Adjournment:**

**Motion:** Ed Weik moved to adjourn at 9:45pm and Mitchell Fishman seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann Jaacks  
Recording Secretary