

Litchfield Board of Finance
Annual Town Budget Hearing Minutes
April 29, 2015

Call to Order: Board of Finance Chairman David Geiger called the Annual Town Budget Hearing to order in the LIS Auditorium at 7pm before a crowd of approximately 60 people. Board of Finance members in attendance were David Wilson, Ed Gadomski, Ed Weik, Mitchell Fishman, Anne Dranginis and Brenda Barnes.

Overview of the Proposed Budget for the Town of Litchfield for 2015-2016

Chairman David Geiger opened the hearing by noting that the Grand List has declined for the second year in a row, and this year by \$3Mil. The proposed town budget of \$29,544,201 includes \$17,000,000 for the BOE, \$9,034,384 for the BOS, \$3,434,817 for debt payment and \$75,000 for capital improvements and represents an overall increase of 3.40% from last year's budget.

First Selectman Leo Paul spoke about the BOS budget, which represents a 4.56% increase compared to last year, explaining major areas of increase and decrease. Superintendent Lynn McMullin made a presentation for the BOE budget, which represents a 2.53% proposed percentage increase over last year's budget. She discussed the BOE mission, academic ranking, Advanced Placement statistics, and commitment to sports and music.

Chairman Geiger then opened the hearing for questions and comments from the audience. Fourteen members of the audience raised issues including the downward trend of school enrolment, unfunded pension liability, concern about a rising mil rate and declining Grand List, regionalization and consolidation, average salary increases and medical benefits for town employees, unsustainability of increased spending, shared services, high borrowing, recycling fees, unfavorable comparisons to mil rates of other Litchfield County towns, etc.

After everyone wishing to speak had the opportunity to do so, Chairman Geiger said the Board of Finance would be meeting on the dais to discuss the total proposed town budget of \$29,544,201 with the intention of reaching consensus to present at the May 13, 2015 Town Budget Meeting. He then concluded the Hearing at 9:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann Jaacks
Recording Secretary