

**Litchfield Board of Finance  
Annual Town Budget Hearing  
April 25, 2012**

The Annual Town Budget Hearing began at 7pm in the Litchfield Intermediate School Auditorium.

Board of Finance Chairman David Geiger opened the meeting by explaining this public forum was an opportunity for townspeople to speak and ask questions concerning the proposed 2012/2013 budget of \$27,230,401. Of this total, \$16,711,751 is proposed by the Board of Education to run the schools, \$7,184,637 is proposed by the Board of Selectmen, and \$3,334,013 is the proposed Debit/Capital Outlay.

Mr. Geiger noted the COL has risen 2.3% in the past year. There is \$285,000 of additional spending in this budget between the BOE and BOS. The Grand List increased 0.73% and that additional revenue covered about half of the \$285,000.

Mr. Geiger encouraged those in the audience to actively participate in the Hearing, and several questions and comments were addressed.

First Selectman Leo Paul made a brief presentation about the Board of Selectmen proposed budget, noting their goal of a minimal budget increase while maintaining services resulted in a low 1.75% increase from last year and that the Board of Finance had endorsed this proposed budget. Major areas of departmental increase were in road maintenance, Public Works salaries and wages and fringe benefits while major areas of decrease were salary savings in police coverage and parking control.

Mr. Paul said the significant accomplishments by the town of Litchfield included refinancing \$12.425Mil of debt service, maintaining an Aa2 bond rating, converting to single stream recycling, maintaining a fund balance percentage of over 12%, construction of the Campville Road Bridge, installing two grant-funded new boilers at Center School, and improvements of Center School playground.

Town initiatives underway include proposed efficiencies for the school maintenance program, preparing an application for a Small Cities Grant for affordable housing, centralized management of office and data processing supplies, and a full property revaluation in FY13 that will include property inspections.

Mr. Paul said the goals of the 5-year budget projection are to serve as a “road map” for Town Administration to use in developing operating budgets and allow departments to begin planning for future needs. The Board of Selectmen 5-year projection assumes salary increases based on prior year contracts, takes into account a 5-year plan created by Public Works and Parks & Recreation, and departmental projections based on prior year spending.

Superintendent Deborah S. Wheeler, EdD presented the Board of Education budget adopted for 2012/13, with a .99% increase but decreased FTE's. Priorities are to protect the quality of

instruction in core content areas, maintain reasonable class size, increase capacity for in-district programs such as Special Education, Capstone and Student Success Planning, sustain existing student opportunities and expand regional collaboration.

Board of Education goals for 2010-2015 are to ensure that Litchfield public schools graduates will be prepared to effectively utilize necessary skills for success in post-secondary endeavors and Litchfield public schools will continue to provide educational services to support students' achievement of their post-secondary goals while maintaining fiscal accountability aligned with student enrolment.

BOE efficiencies include allocation of ARRA/Federal Jobs Funds without need to increase their budget, conservation measures to save on electricity costs and cooperative purchasing on fuel oil, materials and supplies and Special Education transportation. Their new technology plan will continue to be under development for future implementation.

Mr. Geiger said the Board of Finance believes the BOS and BOE have made excellent presentations and have crafted tightly controlled budgets. The Board of Finance Budget Proposal for 2012-2013 shows the mill rate will remain at 22.2 so the majority of townspeople should pay the same property taxes this year as last year, unless they made home improvements. He also noted the greatest increase in the Grand List was from automobile taxes rather than property taxes.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jo Ann Jaacks". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Jo Ann Jaacks  
Recording Secretary