

Minutes of Litchfield Budget Committee

April 20, 2015

Present: Rodney Allen, David Blocher, Don Jenkins, Richard Lane, Pat Soboleski,
Elton Wade

Absent:

The committee received word that Elton Wade was unable to attend due to a medical emergency. We wished him a speedy recovery.

Reports:

1. Reviewed and accepted minutes from March 16 meeting.
2. Don reported that he met with the Town Manager, Trudy Lamoreau on April 8 regarding the work on the Capital Improvements Program (CIP). He gave her the data we helped to collect so far and summary sheets on capital assets and proposed projects. She will review the data with the Department Heads and give her recommendations to the Selectmen on April 27 or May 11.
3. Richard reported that the Road Advisory Committee met on April 15 and is recommending that the Selectmen reserve \$610,000 annually for the next five years to be used to improve and pave our roads. This is an increase from \$210,000 for paving in 2014-15, but the roads have deteriorated significantly over the past ten years.
4. David reported that the RSU#4 School Board voted on April 8 to increase next year's budget by \$705,084 or 3.9% and Litchfield's assessment by \$159,406 or 4.6%. David told them that school expenses are growing too fast that that Litchfield is facing a big increase in its municipal budget this year. Several of the Sabattus Directors tried to reduce the budget increase to 3.0%, but the motion failed.

Work Session:

5. David presented a rough draft of a letter from the Litchfield Budget Committee to the RSU#4 School Board of Directors asking them to reconsider the budget they are proposing to the Unit meeting on June 3. His analysis shows that limiting the increase in the total budget to 3% would reduce the increase in Litchfield's assessment from \$159,406 to \$86,171. The Committee voted to send the letter and ask them to adopt a 3.0% increase. [Note: following the Selectmen's meeting on April 27, all members being present, the Committee voted to change the request to limit the budget increase to 2.5% and Litchfield's assessment to \$45,084 or 1.29%.]

6. The Town Manager and Selectmen are continuing to develop and review the Town Budget. This process will continue at meetings on April 27 and May 11. Major concerns are the impacts of the Capital Investment Program and Town roads. Our current debt load and interest rates are very low, so it may be possible to borrow to help fund some projects over time. We will discuss this at our next meeting.
7. Richard asked who collects and manages local recreational and Whippoorwill Park fees. They do not appear in any town reports, even though the Town contributes to the recreation program. David will investigate.
8. We need to know when the Town Warrant will go to print. The Selectmen should finish their work on May 11 and Budget Committee is planning to meet on May 18. [Note: Trudy says that the Warrant has to go to the printer on May 14. The Budget Committee meeting is now moved to May 13.]

Next Meeting:

9. Next meeting is 6:30 PM on Wednesday, May 13, downstairs at the Town Office.
 - a. Report on recent activities
 - b. Discuss RSU#4 proposed budget and propose actions for RSU#4 meeting on June 3
 - c. Review Warrant Articles and make Budget Committee recommendations
 - d. Discuss alternatives for funding capital requests

Respectfully submitted,

David Blocher, Secretary