

Minutes of Litchfield Budget Committee

May 13, 2015

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

Reports:

1. Reviewed and accepted minutes from April 20 meeting.
2. All members of the Budget Committee attended the Board of Selectmen's meetings on April 27 and May 11 and participated in the deliberations over the municipal budget.
3. Richard reported that the Road Advisory Committee will meet again on May 20 to explain the necessity to increase the total for PAVING and the Capital ROAD IMPROVEMENT accounts by \$400,000 and to prepare a plan for work to be done next year as a start to catch up on road maintenance.
4. Don reported that he met with Town Manager Trudy Lamoreau to go over the status of the Capital Investment Program and Capital Asset Replacement List. These have gone about as far as they can this year. It was a good start this year. Hopefully, the Town Departments will start updating them during the winter and improve on the process and documentation for next year.
5. David reported that he had meetings with RSU#4 Superintendent Jim Hodgkin and Business Manager Scott Eldridge as well as numerous exchanges of emails with Jim, Scott and School Board Chairman Bob English. Earlier today he sent them an email titled "RSU#4 Budget Discussion" with questions about specific budget items and several proposals to reduce the impact on taxpayers. A copy is attached.
6. Richard reported that he has posted public notices around town notifying taxpayers about impending tax increases and urging them to participate in the upcoming meetings that will set the School Budget and Municipal Budget.

Work Session:

7. The Committee went through each line item of the Municipal Budget to double check the changes made at the Selectmen's Meeting on May 11. We corrected line 63-6 Newsletter by adding \$240 for stipend and travel. The new total before Overlay is \$2,393,080. David will pass this on to Trudy.
8. The Committee then went through the Warrant Articles for the Town Meeting. We made several corrections to amounts, wording and account titles. For account titles, we propose that the Warrant Articles use caps for the account names as they appear in the Annual Audit Report and lower case for modifiers (e.g. CAPITAL ROAD IMPROVEMENT Reserve Account). We also recommend that the order of articles follow the order of budget categories to make it easier to follow at Town Meeting. The Committee voted to recommend the same amounts as the Selectmen for all warrant articles.

9. The Committee voted to support the email David sent to the RSU#4 Administration and School Board as the Committee's position on the School Budget. The attachment entitled "Proposed Budget Changes" proposes expense reductions of \$150,450 and alternate sources of income of \$261,000 resulting in a net reduction of \$91,243 in the amounts to be raised through taxes compared to last year. Litchfield's share would be a reduction \$41,379 instead of an increase of \$159,406. The Committee authorized David to continue to negotiate a workable School Budget in its behalf. We also agreed to prepare and hand out a "Voters Guide" stating our recommendations at the RSU#4 Budget Meeting on June 3.
10. The Committee endorsed Richard's public notices and voted to prepare a letter to be published in the Litchfield Sodalite urging taxpayers to attend the various decision meetings scheduled to decide the Municipal and School Budgets. These meetings are:
 - May 27 RSU#4 Public Hearing on a proposal to issue bonds to finance school repairs
 - June 2 Litchfield Public Forum to discuss the Municipal Budget
 - June 3 RSU#4 Annual Budget Meeting to vote the School Budget and set the amounts to be raised and spent next year
 - June 9 Litchfield local elections and ratification/rejection of RSU#4 School Budget adopted on June 3
 - June 13 Litchfield Annual Town Meeting to vote the Municipal Budget and set the amounts to be raised and spent next year

Next Meeting:

11. Next meeting is 6:30 PM on Monday May 18 to prepare an article for the Litchfield Sodalite. Depending on how negotiations go with the RSU#4 School Board, we may need to meet again on June 1 and/or June 8 to determine our position regarding the School Budget.

Respectfully submitted,
David Blocher, Secretary

Attachments:

1. **RSU#4 Budget Discussion Email 2015-05-13.pdf** - email from David Blocher to RSU#4 Administration discussing possible areas to reduce
2. **RSU#4 Financing Delayed Reimbursement 2015-05-12.pdf** – worksheet giving methodology for smoothing local impact under a delayed reimbursement policy
3. **RSU#4 Special Ed Reimbursement Plan.pdf** - worksheet giving sample of methodology using RSU#4 budget numbers
4. **RSU#4 Budget Proposal Email 2015-05-14.pdf** - email from LBC to RSU#4 asking School Board to support LBC proposed changes
5. **RSU#4 Proposed Budget Changes 2015-05-13.pdf** – worksheet giving Litchfield Budget Committee recommended changes to RSU#4 Budget