

**Minutes of the
Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting
Held on October 5, 2017**

The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, October 5, 2017 at Campbell High School, One Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

PRESENT: C Couture (Chair), R Keating, E MacDonald (School Board Representative), J Brunelle (Selectmen Representative)

Absent: J Spotts, D Miller, J Green, J Bourque, K Douglas

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Couture announced that there was no quorum at the start of the meeting. She indicated that there will be a community presentation event, but this will not be an official meeting unless we have a quorum.

- **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- **REVIEW/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA**

There were no additions to the agenda.

2. BUDGET PRESENTATION: TOWN

Troy Brown, Town Administrator, presented the following proposed budgets for 2018:

- **4140.1 Town Clerk**

The proposed 2018 Town Clerk budget is \$115,399, which is an increase of \$6,829. Increases/decreases: wage increases are due to the wage implementation plan performance reviews; a part time clerk to extend hours on Mondays/Thursdays to 6 pm.

Mr. Brown commented that the town employees are now in a “merit based” performance review system for wages, which has been met favorably. The Board of Selectmen are aware that they need to address issues in the Town Clerk office and have proposed a third part time clerk to extend customer hours on Mondays and Thursdays from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. He indicated there is great demand for early morning and evening hours.

Mrs. Couture asked about the software budgeted. Mrs. Briand, Town Clerk, explained that the software provides the list price for the clerk so that once the VIN number is entered the software populates all the information needed to register the vehicle.

- **4150.4 Tax Collection**

The proposed 2018 Tax Collection budget is \$113,501, which is an increase of \$9,808. Increases/decreases: a postage increase due to an error in where it has been charged; health insurance reflects an estimated 10% increase.

- **4130.3 Town Meeting**

The proposed 2018 Town Meeting budget is \$15,975, which is an increase of \$8,635. Mr. Brown indicated last year we budgeted for one election and in 2018 there will be four. He commented that there is an increase in increased \$500 each booth -

Terri – have to scan before and after election – has to be done connected to the state – more work involved –

programming support increased \$3,500 because of the number of elections – election provisions are for refreshments for the workers – election supplies increase of \$2,700 as we are purchasing voting pods – there are four or five booths per pod – trying to purchase some every year –

- **4321.1 Sanitation Administration**

The proposed 2018 Sanitation Administration budget is \$395,787, which is an increase of \$14,351. Increases/decreases: no increase in staff hours, but an increase in wages due to performance reviews; a 5% anticipated increase in electricity; estimated 3% increase in the disposal contract for hauling and per ton disposal.

- **4215.1 Ambulance**

The proposed 2018 Ambulance budget is \$67,500 with no increase. The ambulance service charge is the fee we pay to Hudson and is based on the number of calls received; ambulance bad debt is the amount the town pays if unable to collect fees on calls.

Mr. Brown indicated that a collection agency has been retained and is working out well.

Mrs. Couture asked about the cost for the collection agency. Mr. Brown indicated they work strictly on commission. He explained the initial bill is sent out by ComStar from Hudson and they will try two times to collect. If the bill is not paid Hudson will bill Litchfield and after 60 days, if unpaid it will go to collection.

Mrs. Couture asked why the \$10,000 revolving fund is needed if collections are doing well. Mr. Brown indicated there is \$15,000 currently in the revolving fund and we tend to see larger amounts paid out in the fourth quarter. He suggested a balance of \$30,000 would benefit the revolving fund.

- **4220.1 Fire Department**

The proposed 2018 Fire budget is \$635,193, which is an increase of \$67,568.

Chief Fraitzl highlighted increases and decreases: wage lines increased due to adjustments; increase in training line that was reduced last year; increase in the Hudson contract; increase in equipment repair/maintenance due to radio replacement, \$30,000 to replace hydraulic rescue

tools on the rescue vehicle that are 20 years old; increase in uniforms/accessories as dress uniforms reduced last year; increase in medical supplies (cost increase).

Mrs. Couture asked if it would make sense to put the tools on a warrant article so people can see the dollars and importance of the tools.

Mr. Brunelle indicated if these were new items it would make sense to put them on the warrant as done in the past; however, these are replacements.

Mrs. MacDonald asked if gear is replaced in sets every year. Chief Fraitzl indicated the replacement program is to replace five sets of gear per year. He noted that everyone has a primary set and we have a back-up set, and all protective clothing is required to be replaced 10 years from the date of manufacture regardless of use or non-use.

Mr. Keating asked about the increase in training. Chief Fraitzl explained that is for continuing education for EMS requirements to recertify every two years. He noted EMT's have two trainings per month and we pay for the school and the time.

Mrs. Couture asked if we require them to stay with us once they go through the training. Chief Fraitzl indicated there is no formal requirement and we have not had an issue.

Chief Fraitzl commented there is money in the budget to continue the thermal imaging purchase program. He noted that two of the three imaging cameras have been replaced. He indicated there is a new camera that fits on the mask (as seen at a trade show) that is less costly than one thermal imaging camera. Chief Fraitzl explained 8 masks can be outfitted for the price of one conventional camera and can be updated by computer.

A mask outfitted with the camera was demonstrated to all members.

- **4220.9 Fire Hydrants**

The proposed 2018 Fire Hydrant budget is \$449,123, which is an increase of \$152,935. Chief Fraitzl commented that town protection went from 62% to a bit higher than 90%. He noted the advantage going forward is that we will be able to evaluate what we need (or do not need) for apparatus.

Mrs. MacDonald asked if this is an annual increase. Chief Fraitzl indicated it is just for this year. In subsequent years, the total budget will stay at \$449,123 plus the annual increase from Pennichuck.

Mrs. Couture notices one hydrant is listed as Manchester. Chief Fraitzl indicated the hydrant is in Litchfield, but is on the Manchester system, so we have to pay them.

Mr. Brown commented we have 50 new hydrants and going forward any new development that picks up a new hydrant in town will reflect an increase.

Mr. Keating asked if any of this is being mitigated by St. Gobain. Mr. Brown indicated it is an ongoing discussion.

Chief Fraitzl mentioned included in the fee is the usage. He noted we are not charged every time we use a hydrant and Pennichuck plows and maintains the hydrants.

- **4241.2 Code Enforcement**

The proposed 2018 Code Enforcement budget is \$83,920, which is an increase of \$2,697. Mr. Brown indicated increases are due to wage and anticipated health insurance rates.

- **4290.1 Emergency Management**

The proposed 2018 Emergency Management budget is \$14,522, which is an increase of \$250. Chief Fraitzl indicated there is an increase in Haz Mat dues.

- **4411.1 Health**

The proposed 2018 Health budget is \$1,755 with no increase.

- **4130.1 Board of Selectmen**

The proposed 2018 Executive budget is \$116,450, which is an increase of \$4,320 due primarily to anticipated health insurance rates.

- **4150.1 Accounting**

The proposed 2018 Accounting budget is \$250,907, which is an increase of \$11,381. Mr. Brown indicated there were three positions in the accounting department with wage increases; the town and deputy treasurer stipends were increased; training and auditing is slightly increased; and an anticipated increase in health insurance rates.

- **4152.1 Revaluation of Property**

The proposed 2018 Revaluation of Property or Assessing budget is \$50,702, which is an increase of \$96.

- **4153.1 Legal Expenses**

The proposed 2018 Legal Expenses budget is \$75,000, which is an increase of \$60,000. Mr. Brown indicated the increase is for special counsel for the St. Gobain issue. He believes St. Gobain has focused efforts on getting the drinking water to residents. He noted we believe we will see more activity in 2018 and if that is not the case, we will take the next step. He indicated that discussions include the impact to our town water and the impact on the real estate market.

- **4191.1 Planning Board**

The proposed 2018 Planning Board budget is \$43,943, which is an increase of \$4,325 and is driven by contracted planning services by NRPC, which is driven by the Planning Board's need for additional hours for working on the master plan.

- **4191.3 Zoning Board**

The proposed 2018 Zoning Board budget is \$596 with no increase.

- **4194.1 Cemeteries**

The proposed 2018 Cemeteries budget is \$7,483 with no increase.

- **4197.1 Advertising & Regional Associations**

The proposed 2018 Advertising and Regional Associations budget is \$15,520, with an increase of \$546.

- **4316.3 Street Lighting**

The proposed 2018 Street Lighting budget is \$13,250, which is an increase of \$400. Mr. Brown indicated that represents a 5% estimated increase.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Recorded by: Michele E. Flynn, Recording Secretary

Approved: