

**Litchfield Board of Finance
Annual Town Budget Hearing
April 23, 2026 ~ 7:00 p.m.
Litchfield Intermediate School Auditorium**

Chairman Sam Olmstead opened the meeting at 7:02 p.m. Board of Finance members in attendance were Sam Olmstead, Patrick Allers, Matt Dwyer, Stephan Krucker, Kristopher Wright, Elliott Fuessenich, and Jennine Lupo. John Keilty was absent. Also in attendance were Finance Director Amaechi Obi, Treasurer Erich Marriott, First Selectman Denise Raap and members of the Board of Selectmen. There were 13 members of the public present.

Litchfield Town Budget 2026/2027

Mr. Olmstead introduced and turned the meeting over to D. Raap for a presentation of the proposed Selectmen's operating budget.

Selectmen's Budget

D. Raap presented a proposed Selectmen's request of \$9,974,395, a 5.9% increase with a .9% mill rate increase. This year's grand list went up slightly by .2%. She then highlighted some of the budget drivers: new auditor King & King, health insurance up 12%, wage increases for Registrar of Voters up \$30,000, full time Assessor at \$103,000, pay-per-call program fully funded at \$160,000, Wetlands Commission up \$1,000 for mandated continuing education, Town Counsel rate increase, increased litigation cases, Probate costs, health insurance up 12%, 3% contracted wage increases, increased liability insurance, unemployment costs from the Litchfield Board of Education members now that it no longer exists, and other department increases. She also called for public sentiment on the use of State Troopers and Constables. We are now budgeted for three State Troopers at \$450,000. To add a Constable, it would be \$250,000 – \$275,000 for the first year due to the requirements of the police accountability bill. She said the CT Commissioner of Public Safety said Litchfield is at the top of the list for a third Trooper when one is available.

Questions

Matt Tobin asked if the constables were in the budget and for clarification on the cost of the Resident State Troopers, and D. Raap explained there are no constables in the budget and that the \$450,00 was for three Troopers. There was also a question on the substantial increase in the Buildings & Grounds 3105, and it was described as the hiring of an outside cleaning company instead of using our employees.

Capital Improvement Budget

Erich Marriott went through the Capital portion of the budget, with Park & Rec asking for \$474,000, Public Works \$3,272,858, and Fire & EMS at \$695,000, for a total of \$4,501,858. Grants will cover \$1,611,468 and pay-as-you-go will cover \$500,000, for a total of \$2,390,390 to be borrowed in the form of a bond. He noted also that we plan on borrowing not to exceed \$1.5 million for the Litchfield Volunteer Ambulance Building Project. The proceeds will be issued to LVA as a grant, which is the best way for the Town to take advantage of the tax-free status of our debt to provide a lower cost of borrowing to fund the project.

Questions

Patricia Pfeiffer had questions about the LVA building project, and John Pudlinski, Chief of LVA, explained the history of the project and noted a grant they have already in place. Originally the project was estimated at \$1.8 million and is still the same. The \$1.5 million bond includes a safety net, but they will not use more than \$1.3 million. This is LVA's project, putting \$100,000 of their own money into the project. The Town is holding the note to provide the lower cost of borrowing.

Matt Tobin then asked for clarification of Region 20 debt and was told by D. Raap that there was a \$433,000 cushion left in Fund Balance to pay for the second year.

Patricia Pfeiffer noted Fire Protection is up 32%, but we don't have the Police coverage. She was told that if the allotment for the third trooper is not used, it will fall back to Fund Balance. She insisted the Town needs more Police coverage and argued that the public wants this. D. Raap said that if the public wants a constable, it will increase the budget by \$250,000 - \$275,000. The Board of Finance will decide if it wants to add the cost into the proposed budget.

Hearing no further questions, Board of Finance Chairman Sam Olmstead adjourned the public hearing at 7:45 p.m.

Ann D. Combs
Recording Secretary