

**Litchfield Board of Finance
Special Meeting Minutes
March 26, 2018**

Chairman Helen Bunnell called the meeting to order in the LIS Art Room at 6:45p.m. with Richard Quay, Erich Marriott, Ed Gadomski, and Richard Furniss (Alt.) present.

Late: Sky Post arrived at 6:55p.m. and James Stedronsky arrived at 7:08p.m.

Absent: Rose Blondin (Alt.)

Also Present: Leo Paul, Raz Alexe, Amaechi Obi, Stacey Dionne, Sherri Turner, David Fiorillo

The Chairman appointed Richard Furniss a full member in the absence of Sky Post.

Discussion and Possible Action on the 2018-2019 Capital Budget

In reply to a question about the item \$3.4Mil for vehicles, Leo Paul said the Northwest Hills Council of Governments has a shared equipment agreement among the member towns; four pieces of equipment are involved. Litchfield also shares fire department personnel and equipment with Bethlehem and Bantam. He explained the pay-as-you-go items, and discussed chip sealing and grants that come in for roadwork (LoCIP and TAR).

There was discussion about the East Litchfield firehouse and Leo Paul said this fire department works closely with the town to reduce their budget.

Motion: Richard Quay moved to approve the 2018-2019 capital budget of \$5,637,685. Sky Post seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Discussion and Possible Action on the 2018-2019 Board of Education Budget

Superintendent Sherri Turner presented the mission of the Litchfield public schools and district goals. She discussed their continued focus on collaboration with Region 6, noting they are also exploring other areas. She answered questions about the District Reference Group (DRGs) comparison on spending per student and discussed state funding reductions. She said school staffing has been reduced by .9% as enrolment has declined.

The Superintendent's proposed zero per cent budget of \$18,933,526 was achieved by making cuts as needed to maintain the same budget as last year. The BOE, in response to parent feedback, voted to add \$60,000 to this budget. This was to retain the Spanish teacher for LIS.

She discussed outside tuition and employee benefits, which are up by 10%. Plant operations, which includes custodial, maintenance, fuel oil, etc., is up by \$60,305. There was discussion about the 2017 custodian and maintenance history between the town and the schools. She said they are asking for a 1% reserve fund for special education, plant operations and health insurance, which are all variables.

She answered questions about the method used to determine which students would be special education candidates, noting there are approximately 100 students with this designation. David Fiorillo said 90% of the special education students are educated in the District.

Sky Post said the .3% increase is minimal but it could be argued that the \$60,000 increase could be taken out. James Stedronsky noted that the town did the same budget process and came up with a zero per cent increase. Richard Quay said he supports a zero per cent increase, the same as the BOS presented, and noted that deleting the \$60,000 does not mean the school system would give up the Spanish program, but could look at other places to save. Richard Furniss asked about the need for a Spanish teacher. Leo Paul talked about the anticipation of losing more funding in ECS, and the future budget for the BOS.

Motion: James Stedronsky moved to approve the BOE budget as adopted with the additional \$60,000, resulting in a budget of \$18,993.526. Erich Marriott seconded the motion.

Erich Marriott asked about healthcare increases. David Fiorillo said the challenge is that they have an anomaly this year but it may also be the new norm. He said there are 450 participants for the \$3.5Mil in insurance costs. Erich Marriott noted that the Superintendent had presented a proposed zero per cent budget that could still provide a quality education. James Stedronsky recommended that BOF members attend joint meetings with Litchfield and Region 6. He suggested having a sports and finance subcommittee from the BOE and said any monies that come in that are not education-related should go to the town.

Chairman Bunnell called for a roll call vote on the BOE budget with the following results and the motion carried.

Erich Marriott	Aye
Sky Post	Aye
James Stedronsky	Aye
Richard Quay	Nay
Ed Gadomski	Aye

Adjournment

Motion: Sky Post moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:58p.m. Erich Marriott seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann Jaacks
Recording Secretary