

Litchfield Board of Finance Regular Meeting Minutes February 27, 2017

Call to Order: Chairman David Wilson called the meeting to order in the LIS Art Room at 7:00p.m. with Mitchell Fishman, Anne Dranginis, Helen Bunnell, Matt Terzian, Ed Gadomski, and Sky Post (Alt.) present.

Absent: Rose Blondin (Alt.)

Also present: Leo Paul, Amaechi Obi, Stacey Dionne, and Raz Alexe

Approve Meeting Minutes

Motion: Helen Bunnell moved to accept the 1-9-17 regular meeting minutes. Mitchell Fishman seconded the motion. There was discussion about a change in the minutes.

Motion: Helen Bunnell withdrew her previous motion and moved to accept the 1-9-17 minutes with the following change: On pg 2, New Business a) Financial Transfers should open with the sentence “Chairman Wilson turned the meeting over to Mitchell Fishman and recused himself from discussion and approval of transfer #5 for \$13,000.” All voted aye and the motion carried.

Public Comment

Public comment included several questions about when waivers for the bidding process are allowed (as in relation to the school transportation contract), the process for multi-year contracts for the school system, and the impact on municipalities from the state budget issues.

Discussion and Possible Action on School Transportation Contract

Chairman Wilson noted that the BOE transportation contract was executed by the Board of Education last March 2016 with no town meeting approval, no mention in the budget cycle and without BOF review or approval. There is also a request to waive the competitive bidding process for this contract.

He distributed copies of a letter he received from Attorney Frederick L. Dorsey of the firm Kainen, Escalera and McHale, PC, outlining the statutory authority of the BOE. There was discussion about the lack of competitive bidding for this contract. Chairman Wilson noted that he believed that this contract was not ratified by the full Board of Education. He said the BOF needs to be proactive in watching over taxpayer dollars and he would like the BOE to attend a BOF meeting to explain their decision. He said there is also a concern about the number of busses.

Board of Education Financial Report – David Fiorillo

A one-page report was sent, but Business Manager David Fiorillo was not present to answer questions.

Assistant Director of Finance’s Monthly Report

Assistant Finance Director Stacey Dionne said that as of January 31, 2017 the town has collected 91.1% of revenue compared to 90.9% same time last year and total expended is 60.9% of the BOS budget compared to 63.98% last year. The ending fund balance is \$4,655,377.10 or 15.3%, which has dropped slightly.

The current year property taxes collected are 96.2% compared to 95.8% same time last year. All Tax Collector revenue collected was 95.7%.

BOS, Capital and Debt Service Budget Presentations

First Selectman Leo Paul noted that Public Works only has a \$6,000 increase and the total BOS budget of \$9,346,964 represents a .82% increase. He said as of July 1, 2017, the town will have a full-time finance director at a salary of \$115,000. Amaechi Obi has been working as a contracted employee for three years, but a FT director would improve the efficiency of the finance office. The fire marshal position will become a part-time position with two hourly deputies working for him, and a proposed part-time emergency management director would be paid \$12,000 annually. Mr. Paul stated that, because the Governor had proposed to reduce state aid to towns in FY18, he had included only 75% of anticipated state funding in his operating budget. There was discussion about how the shortfall would be covered.

The First Selectman answered questions about contract prices for fuel oil, Resident State Trooper Jim Holm's narrative for trooper use, contingency increase from \$65,000 to \$97,500, a 57% increase for fire turnout gear, which must be replaced every ten years, chip and crack sealing plans for town roads, and the cost of \$35,000 to clean the 700 catch basins. He said there are increases in salaries and debt service for bonding. He expects town approval to be required for a \$3.3Mil bonding package although some of this could be pay-as-you-go for capital items.

Public Works Director Raz Alexe presented the Public Works Department's proposed capital budget for FY18 and answered questions about the bridge program for 2017-2018, preservation bridge program, vehicle and equipment replacement, major road projects, town and school maintenance. There was discussion about where possible cuts could be made. Leo Paul said he will be out of town for the next March 13th BOF meeting.

Motion: Anne Dranginis moved to approve the BOS operating budget of \$9,346,964. Matt Terzian seconded the motion. There was discussion about any new positions or changes in positions, fringe benefits, and a 3% increase for elected officials. All voted aye except for Ed Gadomski who voted nay and the motion carried.

Motion: Mitchell Fishman moved to postpone discussion of the proposed capital budget until the next BOF meeting so that members have sufficient time to review it. Matt Terzian seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

New Business

- a. Financial Transfers: There were no financial transfers.
- b. Correspondence: Chairman Wilson said he has a copy of a letter detailing the TAHD costs for the town of Litchfield if any BOF member would like a copy.
- c. Payment of Bills: There were no bills for payment.

Future Agenda Items

Assessor Kathy Brown will be on the agenda for the March 13, 2017 meeting.

Adjournment

Motion: Helen Bunnell moved to adjourn at 9:30p.m. Anne Dranginis seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

The next meeting will be a regular meeting on Monday, March 13, 2017 at 7:00p.m. in the LIS Art Room, a special meeting on Monday, March 20, 2017 for debt budgets, and if needed, another budget meeting on Monday, March 27, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann Jaacks
Recording Secretary