

**SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING
OF THE LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2013
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING ~ 5:30 P.M.**

1. Call to Order: First Selectman Leo Paul, Jr. called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. All Selectmen were present: Jonathan Tarrant, Diane Knox, Paul Parsons, and Jeffrey Zullo.

Motion: J. Zullo moved to revise the order of agenda items with Operating Budget discussion before Capital Budget. J. Tarrant seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

2. Discuss/Approve 2014/2015 Operating Budget: Mr. Paul passed out a worksheet to the Board. He explained reductions made as follows: \$150,000 from Highway, \$14,000 from P&Z Legal, \$7,000 from Inland Wetlands Legal, \$8,000 from Building Department, \$25,000 removed completely from Bantam Lake, and \$50,000 to go back into the Canine Account. Further, he would like to take \$42,000 from 1502-Technology Department in the operating budget and place it into the capital budget for Public Works software, with the understanding that they will recommend to the Board of Finance it be a pay-as-you-go cash item. Finally, Mr. Paul recommended that \$58,000 be taken from 8101-Fringe Benefits, as new information from Bob Lindberg indicates that insurances will remain flat. Increases will occur only in the HSA plan, where we have no employees enrolled.

J. Zullo questioned the high increase items. Regarding the added land use secretary in 1401-P&Z, Mr. Paul said they wanted someone present to record the P&Z meetings, which he found hard to refute when the Board of Finance and Inland Wetlands both have secretaries. Under 1108-Elections, Mr. Paul explained that wages increased, but larger still is that the State is no longer funding repairs or preparatory costs for referenda, plus there is also money allocated for potential primaries. Mr. Zullo then questioned 1501-Building Department as to why they would not charge the applicants for the consultant fees. Mr. Zullo noted that over 10% of the budget increase is for 2101-Police. Mr. Paul said there is nothing they can do about the State Trooper-contracted wage increase. Increases in Public Works are for materials and equipment and are completely necessary. Mr. Zullo asked about the savings realized from Public Works taking over the school maintenance, and Mr. Paul said it was about \$90,000 last year.

Motion: P. Parsons moved to propose the 2014/2015 budget of \$8,640,731.00, an increase of \$242,251.00, or 2.9%, and J. Tarrant seconded.

Discussion: There was discussion on cutting the secretarial for P&Z, and Mr. Paul said if they did that, they should also cut the secretary for Inland Wetlands. Mr. Zullo said the budget increase of 2.9% is too high, too much of a burden for the taxpayers, and he would not support the motion. D. Knox said she realizes it is hard to keep expecting a zero-based budget; and although she is not happy with the increase, she does understand it. Mr. Zullo asked how the State justifies a 35% increase on the Resident Trooper program. Mr. Paul said salaries have gone up, the contract has been ratified with back pay, with our Trooper reaching the pinnacle of his pay step. Mr. Zullo challenged the efficiency of this budget, as there is no growth in Litchfield to support the increase. He asked to creatively change the way the Town does things. Cutting the increase in the budget and managing more efficiently gives the taxpayer a better sense that we are managing their money better. D. Knox said she questions the Resident Trooper program and many residents do also. Mr. Paul said if we don't have a Resident Trooper, we cannot have a police force. J.

Zullo then suggested and discussion ensued on deleting the Contingency line item, \$90,000. D. Knox asked if the Contingency could be decreased and Mr. Paul explained why the cushion is needed, for example, Public Works overtime alone is \$50,000 over budget year. He said he has had to put a freeze on spending.

Vote: Upon voting all voted aye, except Mr. Zullo, who voted nay, and the motion carried.

3. Discuss/Approve 2014/2015 Capital Budget: Capital Improvements Committee Chairman David T. Wilson was present to explain the plan. He said that although the 2.6% increase is not favorable, the Committee and departments are used to this five-year process and they have pushed out and cut items as much as possible. Everything in the plan is justifiable in order to maintain the Town without compromise. Anything that is cut at this point will be felt.

After much discussion, further adjustments were made as follows:

- \$42,000 – From Operating Budget to Capital, PW, for software
- \$30,000 - Move BOE security cameras from 15/16 to 14/15
- \$30,000 - Move BOE LCS phone system from 15/16 to 14/15
- \$112,000 - Move BOE smart boards from 14/15 to 15/16
- \$32,000 – Move PW Public Facilities HS Storage Shed from 14/15 to 15/16

Motion: D. Knox moved to submit the Capital Budget of \$2,590,066 to the Board of Finance, and P. Parsons seconded. All voted aye except J. Zullo, who voted nay, and the motion carried.

4. Adjournment: Motion: P. Parsons moved to adjourn at 7:21 p.m. and J. Torrant seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Leo Paul, Jr.
First Selectman