

Town of Lyme
Budget Committee
January 26th 2008
7:00PM
Fire Station Training Room

Approved: February 12, 2008

Present at this meeting: Selectmen: Richard Jones & Simon Carr. Budget Committee Members: Barney Brannen, Josh Kilham, Freda Swan, Jeff Lehmann, Gibb Cornwell, Dave Caffry & Elizabeth Glenshaw. School Board Representative: Kathy McGowan. Public: Earl Strout, Barbra Roby, Tish Smith, Ross McIntyre, Jackie & Harry Glass and Julia Elder. Staff: Administrative Assistant Carole Bont & Bookkeeper/Scribe Dina Cutting.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chair Brannen.

Mr. Jones moved to approve the minutes of the January 3rd Budget Committee meeting. Seconded by Mrs. Swan. Mrs. McGowan clarified that the bottom line increase for the school budget is 2.4%. Various corrections were offered. Mrs. McGowan offered a change to section number 14. Delete last sentence and add her written change. Motion voted unanimously in favor with corrections noted.

The approval of the minutes of the January 9th, 2008 meeting was postponed until the next meeting. Mrs. Glenshaw felt the minutes were missing the financial discussion from this meeting. Mr. Caffry noted he chose to be part of the discussion instead of taking notes. Mrs. Glenshaw will draft something to up-date these minutes and send it out prior to the next meeting.

Mr. Brannen noted the proposed 2008 budget can be voted at tonight's meeting if the Budget Committee feels they are ready to vote on it. If no major changes take place, the Budget Committee will not need to have the second public hearing.

1) Mr. Jones moved the proposed current year appropriations for 2008 at \$3,246,303.00. Seconded by Mrs. Swan.

Mr. Jones offered the following changes to this budget.

- Line 32 Town Clerk Computer Software. In order for the Town Clerk to continue registering vehicle, this program needs to be purchased. This is an increase of \$1,000.00. The Total for Elections, Registrations and vital statistics will be \$78,365.00.

Mr. Jones moved line 39 at \$78,365.00. Seconded by Mrs. Swan. Voted 7 in favor and 1 opposed (Mr. Lehmann). Motion passes.

- Lines 94 & 95 Planning and Zoning wages and benefits. The Selectmen recommend changing the benefits line to \$10,195.00. This is a decrease of

\$8,000.00. The original figure was for a family benefits insurance package. A single insurance package is needed. Then the Selectmen recommend adding \$3,000.00 to the wage line. The wage line will be \$44,600.00. The net effect is a \$5,000.00 decrease to the total Planning and Zoning department.

Mr. Jones moved line 104 at \$71,645.00. Seconded by Mr. Caffry. Followed was a discussion concerning the wage line. There were concerns expressed with increasing this line. The Selectmen feel the Planning and Zoning Administrator can help significantly with the Master Plan. This should save money in the cost for the Master Plan. The motion was voted 6 in favor and 2 opposed (Mr. Lehmann and Mr. Cornwell). Motion passes.

- Line 178 Station Equipment.

Mr. Jones moved to change line 178 to \$1,500.00 this is a \$6,000.00 decrease.

- Mr. Jones explained the Fire Department budget has had a high increases in their budget. In the past 5 years, there has been a 13% increase. This is just too much. Mr. Kilham seconded this motion for discussion. Followed was a discussion reviewing the needs for the generator. It was noted by a community member that this was an example of the difference between needs and wants. This could be on the wish list and the Fire Department could take donations towards this project.

The motion was voted 5 in favor and 3 opposed (Mrs. Glenshaw, Mr. Cornwell & Mr. Caffry). Motion passes. (Mrs. Swan left the meeting at this time)

2) Bond:

The bond will be presented in 2 stages. 1) \$850,000.00 and 2) \$75,000.00 for the Police addition to the same site. The addition of the Police Department to these plans is a very different direction than when the Town Offices Committee started. The Committee felt it was important to keep this separate from the original bond. Followed was a brief discussion on the addition for the Police Department. The numbers for the project were reviewed. Followed was a discussion concerning the option of voting on these figures tonight. The Budget Committee can always decrease the numbers but they can not increase the numbers more than 10% of the total budget. Followed was a review and discussion on the projected revenues. Comments were made of concern of affordability of this project for the town. There will be no effect on the 2008 taxes. Mr. Carr explained that in the long run adding the Police Station will save money for the Town once the rental expenses for the present Police Station are gone. Then factor in the rental house income on the proposed site. The end effect is that the Town will start to see a savings by the year 2013. Followed was a discussion on the % increase in taxes. From existing Capital Reserve Funds the following line items will change: Line 383 account # 4901 Land will change to \$140,000.00. Line 409 account #4903 will increase to a total of \$989,000.00.

At this time, there was a discussion on the accuracy of the spread sheets and the amount to be raised by taxes. Various Budget Committee members refigured the figures. The current year appropriations figure was confirmed at \$3,395,303.00 without the \$75,000.00 for the Police Station addition. Mr. Jones moved to approve the total appropriations for the 2008 budget at \$3,395,303.00 Seconded by Mr. Cornwell. The Police Station addition and the pros and cons of adding this to the bond project was briefly discussed.

- At this time Mr. Cornwell moved to amend the amount by adding \$75,000.00 for the Police addition. Mr. Jones accepted the amendment. The total moved is \$3,470,303.00.

Followed was a discussion concerning voting the bond before the public hearing on the Bond. The hearing will not happen until the 30th of Jan. Should the Budget Committee wait until the meeting of the 12th before voting the bond money. There were some clarifications on the operating budget: Police, Library, and Land Use Change Tax.

- Concerns from the public were noted that the Police department has been allowed to blossom out of control. People are very concerned about being able to pay their taxes.
- The Library budget was reviewed. The school issues concerning the certification for the media specialist was reviewed. The School does not know what will end up happening with this issue. The public noted this is a very unhealthy direction for the school/library to be going. The Budget Committee noted at this time that they were against this change but Town Meeting voted it through. It is now the Budget Committees job to aid the school in addressing this issue the best way they can.
- Land Use change tax was briefly discussed. It was noted by the public that it may be time to have some of this money go towards lowering the tax rate. The Budget Committee noted they tried to do this once and the Town would not pass it.

Mr. Brannen thanked all the Community members for coming.

The motion was voted 4 in favor, 1 opposed (Mr. Lehmann), 2 abstained (Mrs. McGowan & Mrs. Glenshaw). The motion passed.

3) School: Mrs. McGowan moved the total school budget at \$4,595,526.00. Seconded by Mr. Jones. Mrs. McGowan was asked if the administration has had any luck in saving the \$32,000.00 in transportation of students. Mrs. McGowan noted the School Board had not actively met with Mr. Schnare since the last Budget Committee meeting but that Mr. Schnare was working on this issue. Mrs. McGowan briefly reviewed the procedure of putting surplus from the school budget into the High School Tuition Capital Reserve Fund.

The motion was voted unanimously in favor.

4) At 9:25pm Mr. Jones moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mrs. McGowan. Voted unanimously in favor.

Reminder: Next Meeting February 12th, 2008 Public Hearing for warrant articles containing money.

7:00pm at the (note the change in location) **School Cafeteria.**

Respectfully Submitted,
Dina Cutting

