

Approved: December 4th, 2013

Town of Lyme
Budget Committee
November 6, 2013
7:00PM

Town Office/Police Station Conference Room

Present –

Budget Committee Members: Judy Brotman, Charles J. Smith, Richard Jones, Charles Ragan, Lazlo Bardos, Morton Bailey, and Elizabeth Glenshaw.

Selectboard member: Susan MacKenzie. Road Agent: Fred Stearns. Library Trustees: Patty Hudson & Mardi Bowles. Librarian: Judy Russell.

Scribe: Dina Cutting.

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

1. Ms. Glenshaw moved to approve the minutes of the September 25th, 2013. Seconded by Mr. Ragan. Voted unanimously in favor with some minor grammar changes noted.
2. Selectboard update: Mr. Smith reviewed the proposed 2014 budget and answered questions on the following items in the budget:
 - The New England region CPI is 1.5%
 - The large increase in the retirement line reflects the difference between last year's 6 month period compared to this year's 12 month period at the higher rate.
 - Fuel oil and propane costs have increased 8.5% and 13 % respectively.
 - Health insurance costs have increased by 7.9%
 - Personnel cost are down in the Selectboard office due to a change in staffing.
 - All town-wide mowing has been contracted out, creating an estimated savings of between \$7,000 to \$8,000. The town's large mower will be sold in the spring.
 - The Selectboard is waiting for the ambulance and communications cost estimates. Because Hanover is on a different financial calendar it impossible to have firm numbers at this time. The Board is hoping for some estimates by the December 4th budget committee meeting.
 - The Town Clerk office has an increase in wages due to hiring an additional part-time employee to offer back-up coverage in the office.
 - Vital records restoration includes restoring the 1872-1892 volume, which is in dire need of restoration.
 - Timber Tax consultant has an increase in hours due to the increase in the number of timber cuts.
 - Town Report – possible options to contain the cost of the report include possibly reducing the size of the report by limiting the material contents, not doing a town-wide mailing, relying on having the report available on the Town web site, and other possible cost savings.
 - Utility appraiser costs - the legal costs associated with the utilities court case are estimated to be \$5,000 for next year.
 - Legal Expense – 4 cases are still active, so no reduction in the legal expense line is anticipated.
 - Personnel Administration costs were discussed.
 - Planning & Zoning – the costs associated with advertising and postage for department mailings were discussed.

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- General Government - The Selectboard will be reviewing the Lyme Center Academy Building costs and revenues. The goal is to have the revenue cover the heat and electricity costs.
 - Cemetery – The Sexton stipend has been increased. The town mowing contract needs to be split between parks mowing and cemetery mowing.
 - Police – The amount of hours for overtime and the part-time officer have been increased. It is hoped that the extra part-time hours will help in hiring a part-time officer for the department.
 - Fire – a 4.7% increase proposed, mostly for station maintenance.
 - Emergency Management – the planning and training line was questioned.
 - Highway – Ms. MacKenzie reviewed the work currently being done on a 10 year plan. The Roads Committee is working to come up with a long range maintenance plan for both paved and dirt roads. Consideration is being given to leasing a roller to help with road maintenance. If proposed, this will be a separate money article. The proposed budget includes purchasing a steamer to keep the culverts open. Mr. Stearns discussed equipment costs. The condition of our bridges and issues on the condition of River Road were discussed.
 - Library - Ms. Russell reviewed the Library budget.
 - Transfer Station - It was noted the present workers are doing a great job. A lively discussion was held on Zero sort collections and other related transfer station concerns!
 - Health Agencies - The Budget Committee would like to have the Selectboard present a review of the various social agencies requesting town funds to ensure that we are funding those groups that directly serve residents of Lyme.
 - Parks - The Budget Committee would like to see the mowing contract split between Cemetery and Parks.
 - Mr. Smith informed the Budget Committee that the projected increase to next year's tax rate would be 7.67%. Revenues are down. The undesignated fund was used again this year to keep this year's tax increase as low as possible without going under the 7% funding level that the Selectboard has set as a policy for the undesignated fund balance.
 - The overall increase for the Selectboard proposed 2014 operating budget at this time is 2.11%
3. The Budget Committee was not ready to take an advisory vote on the draft budget put forward at this time. The committee would like to review the Capital Reserve Fund and Trust Fund budget requests prior to taking the advisory vote. The Selectboard was requested to come back to the Budget Committee with the additional information requested at the next meeting.
 4. It was felt the meeting scheduled for November 13th was too soon to have the additional information. It was decided that the Budget Committee would meet on December 4th, 2013 to review the additional information and take an advisory vote on the proposed operating budget.
 5. The proposed School budget review will be presented on December 11, 2013.
 6. At 8:58PM Mr. Jones moved to adjourn. Seconded by Ms. Glenshaw. Voted unanimously in favor.

Sincerely,

Dina Cutting