

Lyndeborough Budget Committee

Tuesday, January 8, 2013

MINUTES

All members present. Budgets presented by Town Administrator Kate Thorndike.

Budget sheets incorporate the latest changes. The 2012 figures are not year-end final amounts.

Cultural: *Lyndeborough Views* funding increased from \$3,300 to \$3,800 to cover postage and printing costs not covered by advertising. It was requested that next year a detailed accounting of costs be prepared. E-mailing the newsletter is not an option as they can't receive the lower postal rate unless it goes to all residents via the P.O. Community Day funding increased by \$250 to cover gunpowder costs for the artillery cannon firings.

Assessing: no change in costs for the assessor who updates values for new construction and renovations plus does the "measure and list" portion of a reval for a quarter of the town each year. The software annual license, supplies, and tax map updates are also covered in this budget with very minor cost adjustments. Kate took away suggestions regarding notification of residents before the assessor shows up to inspect.

Building Inspection: Peter Hopkins is retiring and a new inspector hired. No change in cost. Duties to also include code enforcement as with Peter. Activity was a bit higher than normal in 2012 due to a backlog.

Legal: budget is increasing from \$15,000 (what is typically needed for routine legal work in a year) to \$25,000 to cover the costs associated with the court case with Wilton over \$141,000 from 2010 school costs. A mistake was made in determining how costs should be split that year but not caught until later. Town council says the Selectmen do not have authority at this point to ask 2013 taxpayer to pay a 2010 bill. The court will decide. Walter Holland asked a number of questions pertaining to the 2012 legal costs focused on the Stein law firm and their use in the matter concerning Selectman Sawin and the Police Department rather than LGC or Town Counsel. The only other litigation now is with Wilton - and the Burke/Roy suit that hopefully will be covered by our insurance carrier (LGC). Previous Police Chief Basinas wished to re-open his case but the court recently denied his request.

Insurance: the property/liability insurance budget remains the same all though a "contribution holiday" amount of \$4,125 in 2013 will go to the revenue side of the budget. There is a \$1,000 deductible and because of the roof claim at the Highway Dept. that line is being increased from \$1,000 to \$2,000 to allow any other claim deductible amounts to be absorbed. Is more money needed should a new police vehicle be purchased? No, because the old one would be sold.

Regional Planning: the town pays a fee annually for the services of the regional planning commission and that fee remains the same – it is based on population.

Street Lighting: this is down by \$300

Welfare: budget was reduced to \$13,950 from \$15,000 as spent little in 2012 but given the economy that seemed an aberration especially with the State cutting services too. Welfare costs must be covered if a person is eligible. Lack of funds in the welfare budget line are not a reason not to provide assistance.

Financial Administration: Trustees of Trust Funds will no longer complete the MS-9 form so the \$350 stipend is being deleted. Changing investment firms to obtain a better rate of return on trust assets and they will do the MS-9. The new firm does charge a fee based on assets held and that is expected to be around \$3,500 or 5%. Fee for the annual audit has decreased by \$3,000. Forester cost is down by \$400 as using less often. After some discussion it was agreed Kate would look into other payroll services –we now pay around \$3,000/year. Costs for the Town Clerk software, general technology support, and the hosting of the new town website are up. Most of the \$1,500 increase is to allow for an expanded service agreement with our tech support company. One new computer is planned for 2013 per the replacement plan. Selectmen office assistant Cindi will get the new one with her old one going to the Treasurer who uses hers in a limited fashion.

Government Buildings: the cost of all the alarm, sprinkler, fire extinguisher, etc inspection costs have been shifted from the individual department budgets (except for the library) to this one as well as the emergency generator maintenance costs. The amounts for routine repairs at Citizens and Center hall were left unchanged. Savings from better pricing for heating fuel (propane) were offset by increased electricity costs. What looks to be a \$2,000 increase is really due to the consolidation of expense as previously explained.

Executive: this account is distorted by the inclusion of “contracted services” for \$12,500 which is the Safe Routes To School project and it is totally offset by grant money on the revenue side of the budget. The Sel misc line was increased \$400 to allow for employee recognition awards. Full time staff line is up because last year this reflected Kate being in the office assistant position for half the year and the town administrator the other half. Part time wage line is down mainly because last year this line had the part time town administrator in it for half a year. With Kay retiring as bookkeeper, \$10,000 was inserted in case we need to hire someone until a new person can be hired and trained. Except for \$250 being added to the phone account to allow faster internet access, the other lines had either minor or no changes.

Personnel Administration: Health insurance was bid but the Selectmen decided to stay with the current carrier (School Care) as they were the lowest cost. The plan remains unchanged and the employer/employee cost split remains at 80/20. There is a 4.8% rate increase but a change in who is taking single vs. family coverage kept the overall costs the same. The Dental plan was changed adding \$400. Costs for disability coverages were adjusted to reflect current employee census. Police retirement is up by \$9,000 because there are now two full-time officers and the state retirement system rate increased from 20% of salary to 25%. All other employees are outside the state system and those costs increased by \$2,100 with increased participation by those eligible. Worker Compensation was down \$6,700 but only because of a credit from the carrier that will not continue routinely into the future.

Prepared by Bruce Houston and Burton Reynolds