2016 Municipal Budget Process 2015 – Town of Lincoln
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes – January 5, 2016
Lincoln Town Hall, 148 Main Street, Lincoln, NH

Attendance:
Budget Committee Members: Marty Nastasia, Ivan Strickon, Cindy Lloyd, Tamra Ham, Dennis Ducharme, Mike Simons, Herb Gardner, Selectperson Jayne Ludwig, Deanna Huot, Susan Chenard, Lutz Wallem. (Bev Hall excused)
Staff: Town Manager Butch Burbank, Finance Director Helen Jones,
Public: Paul Beaudin, David Beaudin, Cindy Rineer

Call to Order: Mike Simons called the meeting to order at 5:04pm.

Review of Meeting Minutes of December 15, 2015
Motion: "To Accept the Meeting Minutes of December 15, 2015, as Amended"
Motion: Herb Gardner Second: Deanna Huot Motion carries unanimously

Review of Meeting Minutes of December 17, 2015
Motion: "To Accept the Meeting Minutes of December 17, 2015, as Written"
Motion: Herb Gardner Second: Tamra Ham Motion carries unanimously

Discussion regarding Paul Beaudin's Letter of Complaint
Motion: "To Dismiss the Letter of Complaint from Paul Beaudin"
Motion: Herb Gardner Second: Lutz Wallem
Discussion followed, as the Chairman received an email since then that Paul's letter of interest in being a member of the Budget Committee had been found among a Selectman's things at their home. Tamra felt that dismissing the letter was not correct as he had a right to complain, but neither could Paul withdraw it, as the letter was now in the hands of the board. Cindy wondered if we could amend the motion to address, as opposed to dismiss, the letter. There was neither oversight nor bias per Chairman Simons, nor breach of public trust. The process that was used was not incorrect, but there was some confusion, true. Paul's email states that there was a mix-up.

Motion: "To amend the above motion to read To Address the Letter of Complaint by clarifying any confusion on this matter now, and moving forward, and to acknowledge that there was neither bias nor breach of public trust."
Motion: Cindy Lloyd Second: Tamra Ham Unanimous vote to Amend

Motion: "To Address the Letter of Complaint by clarifying any confusion on this matter now, and moving forward, and to acknowledge that there was neither bias nor breach of public trust."
Motion: Cindy Lloyd Second: Tamra Ham Motion carries with one abstention

To Fill Any Vacant Board Seats

Chairman Simons noted that Clark Wrye had submitted a letter of resignation, so there was still one seat open on the Budget Committee. Roy Whitaker had recently purchased another business, so was no longer interested. At this point, Deanna Huot nominated Paul Beaudin to the budget committee.

Motion: "To vote by Voice regarding Paul Beaudin being appointed to the Budget Committee "
Motion: Tamra Ham Second: Jayne Ludwig Motion carries unanimously

Motion: "To Appoint Paul Beaudin to the Budget Committee "
Motion: Deanna Huot Second: Tamra Ham Motion carries with one abstention

As the Committee would like to vote on some of the budgets already discussed, it was requested that the Town Clerk be asked to come and swear Paul Beaudin in. Meanwhile, Selectperson Jayne Ludwig asked again that in the future, when openings to this committee are advertised, it be very clear that the date of the letter of application is important.

Discussion with Public about Procedures at Budget Committee Meetings

Jayne then asked the audience member who had spoken at a recent Select board meeting about the Budget Committee express her concerns here as well. Cindy Rineer explained that she was a past town employee and had recently started attending meetings again. She felt that the first 2 meetings seemed very disorganized and confused to her, and she was happy that the committee is now starting to set procedures. She brought up that one applicant had been asked about last year's town meeting, and asked that we keep in mind that some employees lost their jobs because of the vote made at that town meeting, before allowing new ones to be created. Deanna explained that when she was asking department heads about what they had to remove from their budgets in the previous year was to understand how much of any increase was an attempt to put those items back into this year's budget. Ivan suggested that we find a way for more people to attend the annual town meeting, mentioning the apathy shown by the rest of those voters who didn't attend and don't take their responsibility seriously.

Chairman Simons had read Cindy's comments in the December 21, 2015 draft Board of Selectmen minutes. He didn't feel that he had seen anything that should have embarrassed or disgusted him, as Cindy had stated then. Usually, there haven't been enough people interested in the budget committee to more than fill vacant seats, and he has been on the board for many years. Typically, it has been a loose and relaxed atmosphere, while using NH RSA Chapter 32 as the committee's bylaws. He has tried to maintain a spirit of debate and discussion, but also of collaboration. We can decide, as a committee, how to operate. The committee's meetings are public meetings, not public hearings. The public may speak at the discretion of the committee, but it is certainly good to have their input.

Town Manager Butch Burbank reminded all in attendance that the window to file for positions to be voted on at town meeting is from January 20-29, 2016, for those interested in serving in the future. Town Clerk Johnna Hart swore Paul Beaudin in as a budget committee member at 5:52pm.

Herb Gardner commented that he had worked in schools, other budget committees and boards. He felt that this committee cares more about their subject than many. Sometimes we agree to disagree, but he feels it is one of the best committees he has been on.

Lutz Wallem asked if we would be formulating procedures more clearly. The Town Manager said

that before the committee disbands by the end of the season, he would have some sample policies from other towns, so we can draft one for Lincoln's committee. Chairman Simons agreed that it would be put on the agenda, and suggested that all board members review RSA 32 in the meantime.

Motion: "To Reinstate the Voting Procedure of the Committee, which had been suspended at the previous meeting."
Motion: Tamra Ham Second: Herb Gardener Discussion Follows

Paul Beaudin asked for clarification on that procedure. Typically, the committee would review a budget with the department head, discuss it that evening, vote on that budget at the following meeting after any possible further discussion, then reviewed again during public hearing and voted on again at that time. The committee does not vote on the discussed budget on the same night as the discussion. Paul felt it was good to clarify for the public, so they would know that they could give input again at the public meeting. Several board members have attended training, and the Town Manager noted that there are funds for all members to attend such training and have the town pay for that. Paul would be interested in learning more, but the classes typically take place in the fall, before budget season.
Motion carries unanimously

Paul asked about how unexcused absences were handled. If a member missed consecutive 4 meetings without excuse, they would no longer be a member of the board. Bev Hall was excused from today's meeting.

At 6:04pm, the Board was ready to review budgets.

#2 – Tax Collector/Town Clerk
Tamra Ham wanted to check that the Motor Vehicle Registration Revenue figure was correct. She had heard $323,000 at the Selectmen's meeting the previous night, while the budget shows $280,000. Finance Director Helen Jones explained that we tended to underestimate, though it has been climbing historically. Helen usually updates the figures in September. Paul would rather see it closer to actual figures, as it affects the tax rate. Since last year was $305,000 and 2013 was $296,000, it was agreed to change that figure to $290,000.

Motion: "To Approve the Tax Collector/Town Clerk Budget as Amended, with total expenses of $51,731 and offsetting revenue of $290,000"
Motion: Herb Gardner Second: Deanna Huot Motion carries unanimously

#3 – Elections and Registration

Motion: "To Approve the Elections and Registration Budget, with total expenses of $3,200"
Motion: Tamra Ham Second: Ivan Strickon Motion carries unanimously

#11 – Fire Department

Motion: "To Approve the Fire Department Budget, with total expenses of $114,025"
Motion: Ivan Strickon Second: Tamra Ham Discussion Follows

Deanna Huot felt that the idea of splitting the fire chief's position between this department and public works was a good one, but wondered what would happen if he were to spend more than 24 hours with fire department business. The Town Manager explained that Ron would be on salary for that part of his position. Butch explained that it was still a work in progress to get details approved, but should be all set as long as Ron doesn't spend more than 32 hours there. He would qualify for Group 1 retirement but wouldn't need to go to Group 2. Butch felt that the pay was a bargain as a fire chief and had been told so by others whom he knew from his time in his own fire department background. He felt that the Public Works director was also very comfortable in taking Ron on, as Ron can weld, perform mechanical repairs of all sorts, drive larger equipment, etc. True, we could operate without this position, but feels that this is a good compromise. The Town of Lincoln is in a growth spurt, possibly for the next 8-10 years, and related inspections are necessary. Deanna clarified that her concern was more related to if there was room in the budget. Lutz asked if Nate Hadaway had started right out as Public Works Director, which was affirmed. Chairman Simons asked if we could see a report of everyone's salary. Since it is public information, yes, and Helen will have them for us soon.
Paul asked if there was an income line for the fire department. Butch explained that since the town of Lincoln had not adopted building codes of its own, we did not have an inspector. Ron operates under fire codes, so Butch was not sure if we could charge for inspections. Besides we were charging for water and sewer tap fees already and at some point, people would start asking what their tax dollars do buy. The feeling was that fees were for new items, not general use. The Planning and Select boards would be the ones to set fees and look at enforcement. Butch described a recent visit to a new construction project the other day, where he, Nate and Ron attended – 3 people for 1 hour to confirm certificate of occupancy, Ivan Strickon suggested checking with the town attorney that if the town were to charge for a service, what the legal and liability ramifications could be. Butch said that if the committee were to ask him to do that, he could put it on the Board of Selectmen's agenda.

Motion: "To ask the Board of Selectmen to research fees for fire, public works and planning inspections"
Motion: Paul Beaudin Second: Herb Gardner Motion carries unanimously

Tamra wanted to make a positive comment that, besides wages, the budget only increased by $600. Chairman Simons pointed out that were having multiple conversations happening at a time, but typically, each person should be addressing their questions to the Chairman. Which style did the committee prefer? The Committee agreed that speaking to the chairman would be the best course of action, and would strive to do so in the future.

Motion (to approve budget at $114,025) carries with one abstention

#8 – Cemeteries

Motion: "To Approve the Cemeteries Budget, with total expenses of $20,900 and offsetting revenue of $7,000."
Motion: Herb Gardner *Second: Cindy Lloyd* *Discussion Follows*

Tamra was distressed about the increase in this budget over the past years. There was explanation that some expenses from public works had been moved to this budget, including any weekend work done by public works for the cemetery. In 2013, the cemetery trustees spend $9,000, and then in 2014 and 2015, they spent $18,000. Was that difference visible in public works? Only a part of that would be clear. The trustees have become more active in this department, and there have been some bookkeeping changes to reflect true costs, like the backhoe rental for burials. Paul suggested that part of eth backhoe rental fee should be apportioned into the CIP for public works equipment. A discussion ensued on what could be changed in a cemetery budget – could only the bottom line be adjusted, or could it only be recommended or not recommended. Jayne asked that we check if library and cemetery trustee budgets had to be handled differently.

Motion (to approve budget at $20,900) carries unanimously

#13 – Public Works
It was decided to hold off on discussing/voting on the Public Works, Water and Sewer until the next meeting. However, some questions did come up. Which garage door was being maintained? On the sand and salt budget, the salt cost has gone up. Why isn't there a pre-buy amount? Was there any left over from the previous year? What was the difference between vehicle repairs and other equipment repairs? Other equipment was for repairs that were harder to quantify in advance. As both Nate and Ron are mechanically inclined, we are trying to keep equipment longer and do more repairs in-house. Jayne wondered it was ok for municipal employees to work on municipal vehicles. This was approved as both are state licensed vehicle inspectors.

#6 – Planning and Zoning

Paul asked for a justification of the wage increase by 40% in the past few years. Deanna and Jayne asked if the wages were for more than one person. Butch explained that the planning department is swamped, trying to re-file much information. Butch has been very pleased with Carole Bont's work. She is very thorough, has saved the community a lot of money by doing methodical research and in-depth writings, including planning and zoning intents that are more clearly documented than in the past. Planning assistant Wendy Tanner has been taking minutes and doing research. Her hours are being increased from 16 to 32 hours, so that she can also be cross-trained in finance and assessing, so that we have redundancy for Helen. The increase from the 2013 was an adjustment of Carole's salary to reflect her legal expertise and become comparable to other towns. Last year, the wage request was for about $81,000 and final approval was at $69,754. This year they are asking for $82,719, to reinstate that part-time position.
Herb had to leave at 7:34pm for a medical reason.
Paul had heard on the street that the town pays employees higher wages because they're doing more work, and then hires more people to help them do that additional work. Butch replied that they were being more meticulous and trying to use part-time help where possible. However,

Wendy's new hours would allow her access to health insurance, and the town did have to keep in mind the requirements for the affordable care act. Helen also mentioned that the positions had become more complicated than 10 years ago. For example, the town was now the holder of records for all originals regarding the new bridge. Carole's pay had been increased due to her legal knowledge, but she could not function as the town's attorney, as we would not be able to afford the liability insurance. Jayne noted that she could see how stressful the jobs can be in the employees' faces at town hall, but is happy that it's not her having to dig through boxes to find old records. Paul wondered about any opportunities for revenue generation in this department. The Town manager said that he had instructed his staff to provide good customer service and that sometimes comes at a price of staff time. Paul was looking for something in between, where the forms might be handed to an applicant and they be asked to try their best, then come back for help with those items that they need assistance with. Jayne and Butch replied that they would rather not have unhappy townspeople come to the Selectmen's meetings. They have started charging for copies though. Dennis Ducharme described having just filled out a stack of forms for water and sewer tap fees, etc. and writing a sizable check based on his teams' calculations. Then Carole reviewed those forms and found a $22,000 shortage.

Tamra noticed that the advertising costs had gone down and wondered how that had happened. Butch and Helen explained that they were now able to schedule weekly notices into the Courier and charge applicants who needed last minute notices placed in the Union Leader.
The North Country Council (NCC) dues amount had a large increase as last year only reflected three months, while this year reflected a whole year's membership.
GIS Online Web mapping Maintenance costs had also increased substantially. It is a contracted service, so we don't have much control over that, but public works is also adding more information, such as where all of the pipes are currently located underground. We don't own the systems, but do control who has access to the information. Staff will be able to access this information from fire department and public works trucks in the future.

There was a discussion at around 8:05pm to table the rest of the conversation until the next meeting, when the Public Works and Fire Department heads could be present.

Motion: "To adjourn"
Motion: Mike Simons Second: Tamra Ham Motion carries unanimously

Chairman Mike Simons

1/26/16
Date