

LINCOLN BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S

PUBLIC BOND HEARING

MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 02, 2023 – 5:30PM

LINCOLN TOWN HALL - 148 MAIN STREET, LINCOLN, NH

(THE RECORDING OF THIS MEETING CAN BE FOUND ON YOUTUBE)

APPROVED

Lincoln Board of Selectmen Present: Chairman, OJ Robinson, Vice Chair, Tamra Ham and Selectman Jack Daly

Staff Present: Town Manager, Carina Park, Police Chief, Chad Morris and Executive Assistant, Jane Leslie

Budget Committee Members Present: Cynthia Lloyd, Dennis Ducharme, Brian Gallagher, Wayne Baltzer, Paul Beaudin II, Tracey Brumlik, Chairman, Mike Simon, James Spanos, Brent Hansma, Al Poulin, Herb Gardner

Public Present via Zoom: Budget Committee member, Ray D'Amante, David Tomaso and Ryan Fairbrother

Public Present: Budget Committee members (as citizens), and F. Myles Moran

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Robinson called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm.

II. PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Robinson explained that tonight's public hearing will discuss the two (2) proposed bond articles for March Town Meeting:

ARTICLE I: *"To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **Two Million, Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$2,200,00)** for the engineering and reconstruction of a portion of the Route 3 Water Main, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$2,200,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33), and to authorize the municipal officials to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon."*

The Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee recommend this article. [3/5 ballot vote required]

Robinson summarized the proposed Route 3 Water Main upgrade project. Weston & Sampson (W&S) has provided the Town with a cost estimate for the water main upgrades on Route 3. The total project cost is estimated at \$2.2M - \$2.8M based on the material selected. Three (3) material price estimates were received: (1) using ductile iron piping (cast iron) which had a project cost of \$2,557,000; (2) using HDPE piping (thermoplastic), and, (3) PVCO piping which has a project cost of \$2.1M - \$2.2M dollar range. Robinson explained that this project will begin next year (the engineering and permitting process which involves the State-DOT).

The hearing was opened up for public comment:

Paul Beaudin asked if the Board would consider opening up the Undesignated Fund Balance (often used to offset the general tax rate) in an effort to reduce the bond amount, and to also consider purchasing a second-hand fire truck to replace the Engine 2 Pumper Truck which would reduce this bond amount to \$1.9M. Paul noted that he has had discussions with Fire Chief Ron Beard who stated that he was supportive of purchasing a second-hand fire truck. Robinson commented that the fire truck is on the warrant for \$450k (using the undesignated fund balance and transferring into the Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Account) along with the

funds already in the CIP which will provide the total cash funds necessary to purchase a new pumper truck. Town Manager Park had concerns over why Chief Beard did not have this discussion of purchasing a second-hand truck with herself or the Board (this was her first-time hearing of this discussion). Robinson suggested that they keep this discussion limited to the Route 3 Water Main Replacement bond issue, and when the Budget Committee holds their public hearing on raising money for the Fire Truck replacement, they can then discuss how they will fund the truck.

The public hearing was closed.

MOTION: “To bring this warrant article to Town Meeting as written.”

Motion: OJ Robinson

Second: Tamra Ham

Motion carries.

ARTICLE II: *“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **Eight-Million, Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$8,500,000)** for the engineering and construction of a new Police Facility, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$8,500,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33), and to authorize the municipal officials to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes, and to determine the rate of interest thereon.”*

The Board of Selectmen recommend this article. Budget Committee does not recommend this article. [3/5 ballot vote required]

Selectman Ham commented that the Budget Committee had voted *not* to recommend this article due to the total project cost (15,000 sq. ft. building @ \$600 per sq. ft.). Tammy explained that building a police facility is not the same as building a hotel or home because of the special infrastructure, outfitting/security necessities that the building requires. Tammy clarified that *everyone* is in agreement that the Police Department needs a new facility, however, the cost was the sticking point.

The hearing was opened up for public comment:

Brent Hansma questioned if anyone had conducted special research to find out what the market rate was for a new Police Facility. Carina responded that a Contract Estimator who works on municipal projects was hired by the Architectural firm who compiled this information and derived at the final dollar amount for building construction costs.

Al Poulin commented that he had a similar experience in Barnstead where he is Fire Chief, and the Police Department had to relocate to a new facility, however, the cost was too high and it got voted down at their Town Meeting. Barnstead’s Building Inspector would later come up with plans that would accommodate Barnstead’s 12-Officer Police Department, and told Al that it is possible to build a facility for less than \$1.5M (may/may not be commercial grade) and provide all of the security and amenities required by a Police Department (Al Poulin had a copy of the plans in-hand).

Brian Gallagher shared a building experience he had on a project that he worked on three (3) years ago in another community similar to Lincoln’s project, whereas the Selectboard and the Budget Committee were on opposite sides, and as a result at Town Meeting, they decided not to fund the project and had to start all over again (there was a unified consensus that the police facility was needed). Brian feels that the price is subjective, but for the resident voters, a higher project cost is harder to accept than a lower cost, and he questioned whether or not a warrant article should be placed on the ballot this year. Brian noted that the year following the article failing, the town had regrouped, and the subsequent year it passed by 85%.

Dennis Ducharme commented about the cost-estimator aspect of a construction project which he too utilizes when working on a building plan, and explained that a cost-estimator does just that, *estimates costs*, and once the project goes out to bid, the project may come in at a lower cost than estimated, and he questioned if this would have any effect on the amount approved at Town Meeting. OJ explained that the warrant article gives authorization to the Board to borrow and/or spend \$8.5M, but that does not mean they have to (the Board cannot exceed the \$8.5M without going back to the Town to raise funds elsewhere). Dennis reiterated that everyone is in agreement that the Police Department needs a new facility, so if there is a cap on the amount to be spent for the project, the cost estimator does not necessarily solidify the actual project cost, it is a rough estimate, and bids may come back substantially lower (some may come in higher).

James Spanos commented that he feels that Al Poulin's proposal deserves consideration, and should not be dismissed.

Paul Beaudin feels that an \$8.5M Police Facility is a heavy burden to put on the taxpayers (residential & commercial taxpayers) and agrees with most of what has been said tonight, and he feels that the Board would be better off *not* putting this on the ballot this year and taking a step back and finding a way to down size the project, or to construct the project in multiple phases. Paul also feels that by waiting a year, prices could possibly come down which would affect the cost estimator as well (Carina noted that the cost estimate presented was through 2024 with a 12-15% incremental increase on top of current rates).

Brent Hansma commented that when you put articles like this before the voters and they feel the prices are inflated, they will lose confidence in the judgement of the people presenting the article to them and their ability to responsibly manage their money.

Selectman Ham does not support putting this project off for another year in light of the dire need for a new Police Facility, and the way that the municipal budget process works, if they wait a year, this would put this on the 2024 ballot; then get the building designed and out to bid in 2025 (possibly) with construction beginning in 2026, and actually occupation of the facility in 2027/2028. Tammy explained that the Police Department simply does not have the time to wait years, and this needs to be addressed now. Tammy feels that they hired professionals that deal with cost estimation on a daily basis, and if it does not cost \$8.5M, they won't spend \$8.5M, however, they need to proceed with this project now with the current cost estimates.

Police Chief Morris addressed the Board and explained that the department is bursting at the seams: (a) does not have adequate facilities for males/females, (b) Officers are getting dressed in the hallways, (c) office that used to be a workout room now doubles as an armory and as a bathroom, (d) number of officers is growing in response to the growth of the town. Chief Morris made it clear that he appreciates what he has and the town's support, and his department is trying its best to overcome some of the shortfalls. Chief Morris noted that this cost-estimate was downsized from the original estimate which was based on the Police and Fire Departments being housed in one facility, and there was not adequate time to come up with a revised estimate based on just the Police Department and a smaller footprint. Al Poulin asked if the Dispatch Unit had to move with the department, or if they could remain where they currently are. Chief Morris said that they do not have to move, and understands that this is a costly aspect of the project due to the amount of equipment that will have to be relocated (towers, radios & equipment).

Brent Hansma acknowledges that they recognize the need for a new building, and questioned whether or not the dollar amount could be reduced, as he does not feel that \$8.5M will pass a Town Meeting vote.

Chairman Robinson paused the public hearing at 6:06pm:

OJ commented that once he heard that the Budget Committee had unanimously voted against this article, he understood the sentiment. One of the things he did was reach out to the Town of Tilton who had built a Police Station in 2019/2020 for \$4.68M (Tilton has 12-Officers, 2-3 part-time Officers, a Police Chief, and 3 Dispatch Operators) and he feels that if the town was to build this same police station/footprint at today's prices, they were probably be looking at a price tag of \$6M-\$6.5M. OJ agreed that the \$8.5M article will *not* pass a Town Meeting vote, however, he proposed amending the dollar amount to \$6M, and feels if they can agree on this amount and Town Meeting approves it, they will have a lot more leverage and negotiating power going forward, and the ability to say "we have \$6M, what can you build". After a brief discussion, the following motion was made:

MOTION: "To reduce the Police Department Building bond amount to Six Million Dollars (\$6,000,000)."

Motion: Tamra Ham

Second: Jack Daly

All in favor.

Chairman Robinson reconvened the public hearing at 6:16pm on a revised proposal:

Brian Gallagher commented that this was a wise decision to make, and feels that the public's perception when dealing with large dollar amounts is often difficult for them to align with, and the success of a bond article is often contingent upon how well the Board clearly defines for the public how it is going to be funded (i.e., 20-year bond, declining debt service, undesignated fund balance, etc.). Brian feels it would be helpful if the Board compiled a proposal for the public with multiple funding sources that the public could be comfortable with, and laying out a funding mechanism that supports it with minimal tax impact (the \$6M price tag will not be such a shock factor).

There was a brief discussion about grant funding and possibly hiring an expert(s) that can identify grant availability, and eventually hiring a grant writer to apply for some of the many grants that will be available in 2023. There was also discussion about presenting this idea to the voters, and OJ feels that there is still enough time left (prior to Town Meeting) for the Board to compile a plan that will be ready to present to the voters at Town Meeting (it will not be beneficial to delay this plan for another year).

Chairman Robinson closed the public hearing.

MOTION: "To place the Six Million Dollar bond (\$6,000,000) for the Police Department on the Warrant."

Motion: Tamra Ham

Second: Jack Daly

Motion carries.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to attend to, the Board made the following motion:

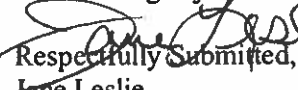
MOTION: "To adjourn."

Motion: OJ Robinson

Second: Tamra Ham

All in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.


Respectfully Submitted,
Jane Leslie

Approval Date: February 13, 2023

Lincoln Board of Selectmen:


Chairman O.J. Robinson

LINCOLN BOARD OF SELECTMEN


Tamra Ham

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Jack Daly

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The signers of this document agree that electronic signatures, faxed signatures, scanned signatures, and/or copied signatures have the same binding effect as original signatures. This document can be signed in multiple parts and be considered a single signed document.

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TOWN OF LINCOLN

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NOTICE **OF PUBLIC BOND HEARING** **AND HEARING ON PROPOSED BUDGET** **& WARRANT ARTICLES**

Town of Lincoln
Town Hall Conference Room
148 Main Street, Lincoln, NH on

Thursday, February 2nd, 2023 at 5:30 PM

*(If canceled due to weather, public hearing will be rescheduled to
Thursday, February 9th, 2023 at 5:30 PM)*

The Board of Selectmen will hold a Public Hearing in accordance with RSA 33:8-a at 5:30PM on Thursday, February 2, 2023 in the Meeting Room located at 148 Main Street, Lincoln, NH for the purpose of discussing the proposed 2023 authorization of a bond(s) or note(s) in excess of \$100,000:

**This bond(s) will be voted on at the annual Town Meeting,
Tuesday, March 14th, 2023.**

The Budget Committee will hold a Public Hearing upon conclusion of the Public Bond Hearing to discuss the proposed 2023 Budget.