

LINCOLN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
PUBLIC BOND HEARING
MEETING MINUTES

APPROVED

FEBRUARY 12, 2019 – 6:00PM

LINCOLN TOWN HALL - 148 MAIN STREET, LINCOLN, NH

(MEETING VIDEO AVAILABLE AT WWW.LINCOLNNH.ORG)

Board of Selectmen Present: Chairman OJ Robinson, Tamra Ham, and Jayne Ludwig
Staff Present: Town Manager Burbank, Chief Ron Beard, and Finance Director Johnna Hart
Public Present: Dave Beaudin, Mary Conn, Ryan Fairbrother, Delia Sullivan, Kevin Sullivan, Clifton Dauphine, Joe Conn, Tracy Brumlik, Cindy Lloyd, Susan Chenard, Jack Daly, Paul Beaudin, Roger Harrington, James Spanos, and Mike Simons.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Robinson opened up the Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m.

II. PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Robinson explained that the sole purpose for this evenings Selectmen's Hearing is for the issuance of the proposed bond in the amount of one million, five-hundred thousand dollars (\$1,500,000) which is to be used for the purchase and installation of water meters. Robinson further explained that upon completion of the Bond Hearing, the Budget Committee will be holding a public hearing to discuss the proposed 2019 budget and warrant articles.

Robinson cited the following proposed Bond Article: *"To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one million, five hundred thousand dollars (\$1,500,000) for the purchase of water meters to be installed in the entire town of Lincoln, and to authorize the issuance of not more than one point five million dollars (\$1.5M) of bonds and notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act; to authorize the Selectmen to issue, negotiate, sell, and deliver such bonds and notes, and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof, to authorize the Selectmen to apply for, obtain, and accept federal, state, or other aid, if any, which may be available for said project, and to comply with all of the laws applicable to said project, and to authorize the Selectmen to take any other action or pass any other vote related thereto. **The Selectmen recommend this appropriation, and the Budget Committee does not recommend this appropriation.***

Robinson explained that because the Budget Committee does *not* recommend this appropriation, there is a New Hampshire law that states that during the actual *Town Meeting*, the budget cannot be amended or increased by more than ten percent (10%) unless the following wording is included:

"Passage of this article shall over-ride the ten percent (10%) limitation imposed on this appropriation due to the non-recommendation of the Budget Committee." This wording will therefore be added to the warrant article.

Robinson provided a brief historical summary and explained that when the town put in the Water Treatment Plant (1993) there was a stipulation as part of the finance package that required the town to install water meters town wide. Robinson explained that to the best of his knowledge, water meters are located within all existing structures in town (approx. 3500) and continue to be a requirement with all present-day new construction. The old meters that were installed are no longer readable, serviceable, or

fixable, and this bond will aid in replacing all the “old” meters with new ones that can be easily exchanged with minimal plumbing work involved. The new meters are part of a satellite technology that will allow for “real-time” readings by residents and the Water Department (online) and will eliminate the need for meter reading equipment, or for anyone to have to go out to individual properties to record meter readings.

Robinson further explained that he was not an original proponent of the technology, however, after additional research he has learned that water meters will help reduce the demand for water and help create mindful water conservation amongst all residents if they must pay for it. Robinson also feels that water meters will help save water and prolong the need for having to find/add new or additional water sources for the town. Consequently, this will help slow-down the sewer plant from reaching full capacity and prolong the life-span of the current sewer system. Once the sewer treatment plant reaches 80% of its capacity, the town will fall under the jurisdiction of the State DES (and EPA) who will mandate and prohibit further development in the town.

Robinson went on to explain that the Selectmen must determine at tonight’s hearing whether to leave the bond article on the warrant (because the Budget Committee voted no) with the 10% over-ride provision, or to just remove it all together because the Budget Committee did not recommend it. Either way, the ultimate decision will be in the hands of the voters on March 12th (Town Meeting) to determine with a 2/3 majority vote by secret ballot whether to pass and fund this article. Robinson noted that the Board has not decided at this point and they were there to listen to what the public had to say.

Robinson opened the hearing up to public participation at this time:

Dave Beaudin asked if the Board was certain exactly how many water meters were currently installed in town, because going by the census or the tax bills does not provide an accurate number due to fractional condo ownership, and if the count is less than 3500, then the amount of money required to replace the old meters could be substantially less. Robinson felt this was a good point and noted if this is the case and they are miscounting, they must get the correct count prior to Town Meeting. Robinson noted for informational purposes that the town is voting to raise and appropriate \$1.5M, and can also borrow up to \$1.5M, and in the event they do not need the full amount and only need \$1M the \$500K would not get spent (whatever the cost = all that is spent).

Jack Daly did not feel the town had enough information at this time to put this article forth on the warrant. Daly explained that he is one of the members of the Budget Committee who voted to *not* recommend this article. The vote was 9-1 (the one vote in support was the Selectmen’s Rep., Jayne Ludwig). Based on conversations he has had with the public, the majority are *not* in favor of water meters. Daly feels that conservation starts in the home with each taxpayer, and we should begin educating our school system and our children about water conservation who in turn will bring this information home to their households. Daly also feels that possibly charging a nominal flat-fee for water usage would help as well as improving our water sources, water treatment facilities, and sewer treatment plant.

Joe Conn feels the only way to raise the revenue needed to upgrade the towns infrastructure is with water meters, and until such time the town should at a minimum charge a flat-rate for water. Conn dealt with this issue thirty (30) years ago when he was a budget committee member and does not feel the town should continue to kick-the-can down the road any longer.

Dave Beaudin stated he was in favor of the water meters because the town has no way of determining exactly how much water is being consumed. Beaudin knows how much water the plant is putting out but

has no way of knowing exactly what is being consumed/lost. Beaudin feels this is vital information and the time has come to start charging for water (Lincoln is one of the few towns in the state that does not charge for water).

Cindy Lloyd stated she was in favor of water meters as she feels they do drive water conservation. Lloyd explained that the only reason she voted no on the bond article was because there was not enough solid information known about charging for water and did not feel they could present a thorough enough picture to the voters at Town Meeting (a little more work needs to be done).

Selectman Ham looked up the current rates for the NH Municipal Bond Bank, and for a 20-year bond the rate is 3.05%, and oftentimes you can get better rates with local banks which is what the town did when the constructed the Pollard Road Sidewalk. A discussion ensued on the costs to improve the water and sewer system. Selectman Ham noted that there are 234 municipalities in the State of New Hampshire, of which 122 towns are on a municipal public drinking water system, and eleven (11) of these systems do not charge for water.

Paul Beaudin commented that residents are paying for their water now (through taxation) and if the town adopts a flat-rate system, residents will use the water up to that threshold. Beaudin does not feel the town should rush in and make decisions to purchase water meters until they have thoroughly looked at this situation.

Upon conclusion of the discussion, Chairman Robinson made the following motion:

MOTION: "To close the public comment."

Motion: OJ Robinson

Second: Jayne Ludwig

Motion Carries.

Robinson stated that at this point the Selectmen must decide whether to put this article on the warrant (without the Budget Committee recommendation) including the verbiage of the 10% over-ride, or to follow the Budget Committee's recommendation to remove it from the warrant. Selectmen Ludwig and Ham feel this article should remain on the ballot for the voters to decide. Robinson feels that water meters are a good thing for the town, however, at this time he does not feel it will have enough public support at Town Meeting and is inclined to remove this article from the ballot.

Ham explained that the town has been discussing water meters for years and has continued to put it off for one reason or another, and now is the time to address this problem once and for all and to stop kicking-the-can down the road. Robinson feels that this is not the time to do it because of the lack of support from the Water Committee and Budget Committee. Selectman Ham made the following motion:

MOTION: "To leave the Water Meter Article on the Warrant this year."

Motion: Tamra Ham

Second: *No Second Motion*

Motion failed.

Upon defeat of the previous motion, Chairman Robinson made the following motion:

MOTION: "To withdraw the Water Meter Article from the Warrant."

Motion: OJ Robinson

Second: Jayne Ludwig

Motion carries 2-1.

Opposed: Tamra Ham

V. ADJOURNMENT

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

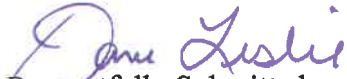
MOTION: "To adjourn."

Motion: Tamra Ham

Second: OJ Robinson

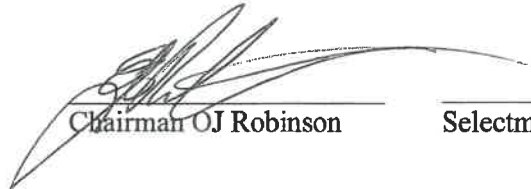
Motion Carries.

The meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m.



Respectfully Submitted,
Jane Leslie

Approval Date 2 /25 / 2019


Chairman OJ Robinson

Selectman Tamra Ham


Selectman Jayne Ludwig

SIGN-IN

BUDGET Hearing 2/12/19

- Ryan Fairbrother
- Ron Beard
- Selia Sullivan
- Kevin Sullivan
- Cleflore Dauphine
- Roger Harrington
- Mary Conn
- David BEAUDIN

