

1 **2017 Municipal Budget Process – Town of Lincoln**
2 **Budget Committee Meeting Minutes – January 2, 2018**
3 **Lincoln Town Hall, Lincoln, NH**
4

5 Attending: Paul Beaudin, Cindy Rineer, Lutz Wallem, Secretary Susan Chenard, Selectperson
6 Jayne Ludwig, Vice Chairman Herbert Gardner, Chairman Mike Simons, Jack Daly, Larry
7 Sweeney

8 Excused: Patricia McTeague, Dennis Ducharme, Cindy Lloyd

9 Unexcused: Beverly Hall

10 Staff: Butch Burbank, Helen Jones, Johnna Hart, Carole Bont

11 Audience: Peter Govoni, Tammy Ham
12

13 **Call to Order:** Chairman Simons called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.
14

15 **Meeting Minutes:** The Chairman opted to hold off on approving meeting minutes, as they were
16 not mentioned on the agenda. Mike sends an agenda to Helen, but she doesn't send these out.
17 She does post them per the RSA in 2 public places and on the website, but currently, had just
18 put the list of meeting dates and departments to be discussed on those days.
19

20 **Cemetery Budget** - Peter Govoni stepped forward to discuss this budget. Paul Beaudin
21 recused himself as he does part time work there, which led to a discussion of when to recuse
22 oneself. Paul felt it was better to err on the side of caution and sat in the audience for this
23 budget. The Cemetery budget was flat budget except that wages showed a COLA increase of
24 3%. Larry wondered why they were asking for the same budget if underspent last year's by
25 27%, according to the 2017 Detailed Statement of Payments as of 12/27/2017 distributed at the
26 start of the meeting. Helen said it was a guesstimate for overtime, as it's hard to guess how
27 many burials there will be each year. Jack suggested a true flat budget, which could be done by
28 reducing the overtime wages by \$291.
29

30 **Tax Collector/Town Clerk** - Johnna Hart came forward. She explained that on the Detailed
31 Statement of Payments mentioned above, \$1417.81 had been posted to Materials and
32 Supplies, but should have been under Contracted Services, so she had not overspent after all.
33 Wages showed COLA increase for her, and extra time for her deputy. She didn't make it to one
34 conference, so there was a savings. There was an increase for credit card processing, which
35 has been in use for property taxes so far, and starting in March, will include motor vehicles,
36 dogs and vitals too. Credit card fees are paid by customers, and this is proving very popular.
37 There is just the maintenance cost to the Town. Off-setting revenue from motor vehicle
38 registration was increased as we collected \$320,000 for the last 2 years. Helen prefers to be
39 more conservative. Johnna's deputy town clerk/tax collector has barely been hired. Paul noted
40 that there's been a \$1590 increase in wages, dues and conferences, \$935 in contracted
41 services, and \$15 in materials/supplies. There are still bills to pay, including toner, the locksmith
42 putting a lock on a drawer, etc. Paul said he was trying to keep the budget from outpacing
43 increased town values.
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Elections - Johnna presented this as well. There are 3 elections this year. It will be the 1st year of maintenance for the tabulator. She organized new lighting for the voting booths, as the old ones are too hot and dangerous. The rest of this budget is based mainly on number of elections. Larry asked why we overspent this year by almost \$560, and Johnna explained that it was due to purchasing a spare, refurbished, tabulator. She also got a deal on new curtains for the old booths, rather than replacing the entire booths.

Planning & Zoning - Carole Bont came forward to present her budget. At this time, Town Manager Burbank explained that Carole is now the official Town Planner, as of January 1, 2018. She'll go to a salaried position, but that stayed within 2.98%. We have hired someone who helps in three departments, so overtime wages cover her, but she may also help take minutes when the contracted services person is not available. Butch said that we will be digitizing all records, and we'll be starting in the Planning Department, which is labor intensive. (We've rented a vault in the Northway Bank to store documents that we need to keep, so paper copies go there while the rest is in the cloud.) All departments will eventually be digitized, with the Board of Selectmen on tablets already to cut down on paper.

Dues for North Country Council (NCC) were paid based on an inaccurate estimate last year. Now they will be correct at \$6,000. NCC had been operating in the red for a long time, then a new COO came in and increased rates. The cost had been around \$3,000 for many years. NCC helps with much regional planning. They do traffic counts and data collection for various projects. Jayne handed out a flyer describing what they do in more detail. The Town is seeing more value from this organization, and it is also a route to federal funding grants, like for solid waste. They do draft language for grants, they have professional planners on staff, etc. The Recording Secretary at \$3600 has worked out well. This takes many office hours otherwise. She is paid \$25/hour and does it as a side gig with her other writing jobs.

Jack asked about overpayments last year under contracted services. This had to do with engineering and environmental assessment for the Riverfront Park. This was a one-shot deal, said Butch, from a prior contract that was more work than anticipated. The Riverfront Park is looking like it will mainly be a parking lot and skate park currently. There's nothing further in the Town coffers for this unless raised elsewhere.

Paul asked how it came to be that Carole became the planner. Butch had asked the Board of Selectmen. They did concur with his request and they did not reduce his pay, as he has ample other duties to manage for the town. The Selectmen and Town Manager found that issues were coming from the planning area, and wanted someone to focus on that area more specifically. Paul asked for the number of cases dealt with per year in her department. Paul felt that the Rapids settlement was due to staff issues in the planning department. Jayne felt that Carole needs more people, as there is customer service as well. Jack had asked Carole a while back if there was a fee for much of the work and time, and was told that there was not such a fee. Jack said we should petition legislators to let us charge a reasonable fee for that 91a compliance time. Butch also responded to Paul's comments, and said that current staff was finding issues that were created in the past, though there was the potential for them to make mistakes too. Herb asked if another department could ask for the contracted minute taker to serve other boards or committees as well. Butch said yes, if she had the time and the funds were available, etc.

At one point during the discussion about Carole becoming the Planner, Mike asked Paul to direct his questions to the Chairman. This led to a discussion on why Mike asked for questions to come to the Chair. Generally that is where questions should be directed, though during discussion, it could start to drift towards asking the presenter directly. But when that drifts away from the budget committee's purview, it was time to rein that in. Paul asked if Carole's promotion included other benefits. The town will pick up 50% of her family plan on the insurance. The family insurance plan is generally about \$2,000/month. Paul asked about the breakdown for legal matters. Paul was trying to see how much was for or from planning, but really, Helen explained, the lawyers can be talking about different cases and departments in the same billable hour. She could show costs per attorney. Code enforcement is under the executive budget. Reimbursements for mailing are under planning, while water and sewer tap fees are in different accounts.

Street Lights – Butch Burbank handled the remaining budgets. This was a level funded department. We were able to take 2 street lights off town dockets last year, at the Penguin Ski Club. These were too bright for neighbors, who wanted them gone.

Long Term Debt – Butch explained that a few bonds that will be paid off in the next few years; 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 each see one. Paul asked about the Pollard Road sidewalk. The construction loan so far is nice, as we don't have to pay it back unless we use it. The levee saw some extra damage from this last storm, which will cost us some. Up until then, we were under budget and time, and would have been done in 10-14 days. But now, we'll be over maybe \$300,000-400,000. Once done though, we will try to get it active, so that the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) will fix it within 11 months of an event. It will now be June/July till the contractor can get back in the river, so we still need to get through spring runoff. We filed a FEMA request for the last rain event, in hopes of getting some extra funding for that repair. So far though, the president hasn't signed a disaster declaration. The Army Corps of Engineers would not commit with a "shall" to taking over the levee once up to the 1960's standard, however.

TAN interest - \$1, as usual.

Health agencies – This budget saw a roughly \$1000 increase, mainly for the Bridge Project right here in Lincoln. Jane refers people to that. Jack and others feel it is a worthwhile cause.

Other Business –

Helen said that for those who miss a meeting, packets of information are in the box in the small desk near the front right corner of the meeting room.

Tammy Ham distributed OJ's Budget Summary.

133 **Motion:** To adjourn at 7:07pm.

134 Motion: Paul Beaudin Second: Larry Sweeney

Motion carries unanimously

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Chairman Mike Simons


Date