

Budget Committee
November 4, 2015
7:00PM
Town Office/Police Station Conference Room

Budget Committee Members: Judy Brotman, Susan J. MacKenzie, Robin Taylor, Richard Jones, Charles Ragan, Wilkes McClave and Elizabeth Glenshaw. Select board members: Patricia G. Jenks and Charles J. Smith. Administrative Assistant: Dina Cutting. Library Trustee: Patty Hudson. Community members: David & Barbara Roby.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM by Chair Brotman.

1. Public Comment: It was noted that the increase in taxes is creating a greater hardship for many residents.
2. Ms. Glenshaw moved to approve the minutes of September 16th, 2015 meeting. Seconded by Mr. McClave. Voted unanimously in favor.
3. Town Budget: Ms. MacKenzie reviewed the Select Board budget. The board recognized the need to keep taxes under control. They worked hard to keep this a tight budget while still acting responsibly to the employees, several of whom were on the bottom of the scale for salary and benefits according to the study the Board performed. These employees will receive an additional increase in salary. For all other employees, the standard increase will be 1 ½ %. The highway department is a big part of the budget. The roads are an issue as far as the amount of work to be done on them. This is an area the board will be spending many hours reviewing in order to formulate the best possible plan to provide adequate roads at a reasonable expense to the Town.
4. Ms. Glenshaw reminded Chair Brotman that Mr. Lange was unable to attend but had some comments/questions for the Board:
 1. What are the priorities for the Select Board, and did how those priorities impact budget decisions?
 2. Last year, Dick had suggested we evaluate the budget increase based on the Social Security increase (rather than NE CPI). It is my understanding that the social security increase for this upcoming year is 0%. Is that correct, and if so, how has the budget committee addressed this in the past?
5. Mr. Smith responded to these questions/comments and additionally reviewed various changes to the Select Board's 2016 proposed budget (see attachment to the minutes)
6. Public Comment: Questions were asked and answered concerning the Library and the Goose Pond Road project. It was also suggested that one way to reduce the cost of road maintenance would be to reduce the travel width of the roads.
7. Budget Committee discussion on proposed budget:
 - Comparison of costs between contracting out the road grading projects vs. in-house grading (personnel, equipment, etc.)
 - Plowing contract for 2015-2016 winter months.
 - The status of the River Road issues were discussed.

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- Many members of the Lyme community are not receiving raises this year. How can the budget be kept at a 0% increase?
 - The impact of any proposed Warrant Articles will need to be reviewed prior to voting on the final operating budget.
 - This year there is an absence of alternative funding opportunities for major road projects, including the challenging River Road repair, which will impact the Town's ability to adequately address all road issues.
 - In order to keep a 0% budget there would need to be \$69,211.15 cut from this budget.
 - Ms. MacKenzie noted the past Select Boards have done such a great job of keeping the budget pared down, there is no place left to cut.
 - It was suggested that the Town could seek private donations and/or do targeted fund raising to help defray costs for specific issues.
 - The Budget Committee and Select Board challenged themselves to come back to the next meeting with selected areas in the budget that could be reduced or eliminated.
8. Upcoming meeting reminders:
- November 18th, 2015-7:00PM.
9. At 8:20PM Ms. Glenshaw moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Jones Voted unanimously in favor.

Sincerely, Dina Cutting