

Approved February 8, 2017

Budget Committee
January 10, 2017
7:00 pm
Town Office/Police Station Conference Room

Present: Budget Committee members: Judith Brotman (Chair), Elizabeth Glenshaw (School Board rep), Cybele Merrick, Erik Colberg, Eric Furstenberg, Greg Lange, Richard Jones, Wilks McClave, and Susan MacKenzie-(Select Board rep). Jeff Valance (Principal), Mike Harris (Superintendent). Sam Levey (School Board member). Departments: Patty Hudson (Library Trustee). C. Jay Smith (Select Board member) and Patty Jenks (Select Board member). Community members: Delores and Richard Drew, Barbara and David Roby, Kevin Sahr, Katie Jenks, Barbara Woodard, Richard Bradley and Peter McGowan.

1. Chair Brotman called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.
2. There were no public comments at this time
3. Ms. Brotman reviewed the procedure for this meeting, the Budget Committee may be taking an advisory vote on the School budget and the Public Hearing is January 18th, 2017 @ 7:00PM.
4. Mr. Jones moved to accept the minutes of the December 12, 2017 meeting as submitted. Seconded by Mr. Ragan. Voted unanimously in favor.
5. School budget discussion:

Mr. Valance reviewed the slide presentation for the proposed school budget.

The controllable and uncontrollable items were reviewed – controllable items are up 1.2%, non-controllable items are up 6.4%. Teacher contracts have been approved through negotiations. Adding an additional .7% to the budget. Total increase proposed is 6.5% over this year's budget.

The board will not be repairing the community room roof in 2017-2018.

All day Kindergarten will be a petitioned warrant article this year. If approved by the voters, this will be an additional \$80,000 to \$90,000.

Mr. Levey gave a brief explanation of the proposed administrative restructuring. Discussion focused on other schools using this model successfully and how the board sees it working in Lyme. Questions were asked and answered on this topic. Mr. Valance noted this restructuring will save the town money, if the Superintendent position were to be filled as is presently it could cost the Town up to \$48,000 more than requested in this proposed budget.

Mr. Valance reviewed Capital Reserve funds and what would be withdrawn from them in 2017. Mr. Valance emphasized that any funding cuts will need to be made to the "controllable" items, which is the K-8 program.

The Budget Committee asked for clarification and/or further information on the following topics:

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- The Academic Director's position and curriculum coordinator, and
- Teacher contracts

Community members were concerned about the interest being earned on the Trust funds, the yearly increases in the school budgets, and wondered if it is possible for the school to develop a 5-year plan. A suggestion was made that the Budget Committee consider a procedure that would give the school board recommended maximum % increases to build proposed budgets for coming years.

Select Board member Ms. MacKenzie reviewed the increases. The Town's budget is proposed to increase at 1.8%, which is a \$.11 increase in the Tax rate. The School's budget is proposed to increase by 6.53 %, which is a \$1.23 increase in the Tax rate. Adding in the petitioned kindergarten, the average homeowner in Lyme will see a \$700.00 increase in the tax bill.

Mr. Valance explained that the board had looked at a number of factors they felt had changed in the Town and make up of school students, including:

- Increase in students coming from rental units
- More families with school age children purchasing property in Lyme
- The pros and cons of the teachers doing the functions of the differentiation and curriculum coordinator's job
- Fewer children in the classrooms due to changes in teaching models
- High school and the possibilities of designating a high school.
- State adequacy funding and state and federal mandates and requirements

The budget Committee discussed the following items further:

- The cost of new programs and the possibility of taking in tuition students as a revenue source
- High school tuition costs, "holding the K-8 programs hostage" - is there another way to fund the high school tuition?
- As is customary, it was noted that the Town has worked hard to keep the Town's increase as low as possible in an effort to offset the increase in the school budget.

6. Mr. Jones moved an advisory vote on the School budget in the amount of \$6,844.327. Mr. Ragan seconded the motion. Ms. Brotman noted this was an advisory vote only. At next week's Public Hearing, if a vote is taken, it would be the final vote on the School budget. The motion was voted unanimously in favor.

7. Meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dina Cutting

Reminder: Public Hearing January 18th, 2017 @ 7:00PM in the Town office conference room