

03/30/2022 12:00am

Lincoln Budget Board

Carl Brunetti, Mike Babbitt, Mike O'Connell, Rhonda Lacombe, Craig Joly, Bruce Whitehead, Ram Maddipudi, Nicholas Rodrigues, Andrew Esposito, Bob Turner

*red denotes absent

Correspondence: Email from Library Board chair, approved the initial FTE, clarification on phone system, instructed to obtain estimates.

School Board to obtain estimates on the media center and other areas of construction in Lincoln schools.

Education Budget: Concerns raised, referencing clocks, windows and heating system that was not included in estimates for the Media Center at Saylesville Elementary as referenced at previous meeting. Proposed self-contained system, or some sort of air exchange system to mitigate any unforeseen issues with renovation.

Inquiry regarding pensions, healthcare, etc... Total cost was included in the budget but no itemization.

Established that less than what is appropriated may be used for such purposes.

Public Comment: None

New Business

Miscellaneous Revenues: Far below past years by substantial margins.

Change of philosophy on part of libraries in terms of fines. Revenue no longer factors in late fees in order to continue to be an attractive option as Cumberland Public Library no longer imposes fines.

Tax Stamps: School renovations play a significant part. Building inspection, larger projects cause revenues to fluctuate for numerous items.

Operating Budget: Explanation of mitigation strategy for potential downturn involving placing tax revenues in reserve for capital expenses.

Fund 50: ARPA money to replace lost revenue

Tax Rate: Once the budget is completed, the finance director will receive a copy and give estimated tax rates based on the current budget. The education budget comprises the largest portion.

Operating Budget for Education:

Follow up from previous meeting regarding school transportation. In terms of number of enrolled students versus costs compared to Johnston, Smithfield, South Kingston, and North Providence. Bus monitor costs details compared to Lincoln where applicable. The Budget Board believes there are inefficiencies regarding bus monitors so it is a desirable goal to cut the number of buses from 24 to 18.

Motion to reduce transportation line budget to \$400k less than current amount: Proposed by Mike Babbitt, seconded by Andrew Esposito. Passed unanimously without further discussion.

Motion to make an adjustment in breakage to minus \$55,351 from current amount Proposed by Mike Babbitt, Seconded by Bob Turner passed unanimously without further discussion. Figure pertains to new hires replacing retirees whose credentials and pay grades would be higher. This included guidance counselors, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists etc... who have advanced degrees in their respective fields. School nurses, reading specialists etc... are not required to have advanced degrees.

Discussed pensions, medicare, dental, family plans, etc... savings.

Motion passed unanimously to reduce salaries by \$225,000. Proposed by Mike O'Connell, seconded by Mike Babbitt. No further discussion.

This results in a total reduction in the School Committee's recommended operating budget of \$680,351 resulting in an increase in the total budget of \$761,984, or 1.28%, over FY22.

The Town Administrator had proposed an increase of \$744,299 or 1.25% over last year's budget.

The School Board had requested an increase of 7.8% for speech, behavioral therapists and interpreters for special education with no justification but did provide an itemized list of where funds would be used.

Discussion regarding ARPA funds for learning loss, especially as it pertains to special education. No justification from the school board regarding increased funds.

Expenses covered by covid aid

Public Comment: None

Motion to adjourn by Bob Turner, seconded by Mike Babbitt. No discussion, passed unanimously.