



TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES MAY 10, 2016

Christopher Brunelle, At Large 2016
Eric Metivier, District 1 2016
Roger Bickford, District 2, 2016
Dale Crafts, At Large 2017
Normand Albert, At Large 2018
Kasie Kolbe, District 1 2018
Allen Ward, District 2 2018

CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE TO THE FLAG. The Chairman, Roger Bickford, called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance to the flag at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL. Members present were Councilors Bickford, Brunelle, Metivier, Crafts, Albert, Kolbe, and Ward. Also present were David Brooks, Police Chief; Sean Galipeau, Fire Chief; Donald Fellows, Planning Board member; Scott Hall, Planning Board; totaling approximately 55 citizens in the audience.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. 2016-2017 SCHOOL BUDGET

At this time the Chairman opened the Public Hearing and the 2016-2017 School Budget was presented by the School Superintendent, Dr. Green. Then the Chairman took public comments.

Superintendent Green said the proposed budget adopted by the School Committee last night (\$31,056 decrease), includes the Adult Ed budget, totals \$15,325,540 with local funding of \$5,994,083.

Superintendent Green indicated the local contribution is \$5,916,728, which is an 8.7% increase (\$482,058) in local funding over last year. The State's contribution is a 4.5% decrease (\$410,616) totaling \$8,647,457. The total above EPS is \$779,992. He mentioned the school will be using \$20,081 from capital reserve funds to offset expenses. The school used the remaining bond proceeds to offset last year's budget. He mentioned \$80,967 from left over project funds available this year helped, but is not available next year for revenue. He pointed out the debt service on the gym (\$429,224) and track (\$58,100) total \$487,324, which is the reason the school is asking for the amount they are asking for, with the mandated \$600,000 cut from last year and the state's subsidy decrease, all pretty significant factors in this budget. He said the budget first presented to the School Committee was a \$1.6 million dollar increase locally.

Superintendent Green said 73% of this budget is for salaries and benefits, which increases around \$220,000 annually. Maine State Retirement contributions are now being pushed onto the taxpayers locally; this year that was close to \$70,000. The school lost \$241,789 in revenue due to the guaranteed performance contract; close to \$80,000 was received in rebates. They received additional subsidy from the state, used the bond proceeds, and the capital reserve account to help offset that, however this year they don't have that revenue in this budget.

Superintendent Green said several staff members have been notified they will not be issued a contract next year. He listed the areas cuts had been made in and indicated over half of these positions were individuals leaving the system that were not being filled. He reported a lot of this had been accomplished through restructuring. He said most positions fell under/within the EPS model, with the exception of nurses. He presented a chart showing the past 10 years worth of budget totals showing a progression upwards until this year. The numbers are based on enrollment. This year the senior class is small, but those numbers will jump to about 100 per class next year so our subsidy should increase over the next few years. However, this year it shows a decrease of around 20 students at \$8,000 plus per student. He said when the budget stays the same or decreases and then the local contribution goes up, the evaluation, the state mil rate, and a lot of other factors bring us to where we are and have been over the last several years.

The Capital Reserve Fund was established in 2012 and was established for the maintenance of plant and remodeling; as of today there is \$60,746 available. He mentioned the school utilized \$20,081 from the Capital Reserve fund for the guaranteed performance contract. He explained the School Committee felt that using those funds to offset a portion of the maintenance being done was a good use of those funds since if you do not have the revenue it would have to be raised locally. He reported the undesignated amount left over at the end of the school year, includes any revenue which comes in after the fact. He indicated Lisbon typically uses around \$118,000 annually to build the budget; however, last year when they received additional state subsidy they increased that amount to \$194,270 and this year they built the budget on the intent that they would have at least \$194,270 left over in this budget. He reported there were a number of variables still out there, but should not impact this budget significantly.

Superintendent Green explained the School Committee's proposal to keep students in town who travel out of district for special needs services. He indicated plans were underway to create a special purpose school (day treatment program) at Central Office in Lisbon to meet these needs by adding a Director, Support Services, a Social Worker, a Psychological Service Provider, and five (5) Ed Techs, which will save the taxpayers in the end \$239,000.

Ross Cunningham thanked the School Committee and Superintendent Green for the work they have done bringing our school back into accreditation status, plus completing the gym and track projects. He reported voters voted as a town to pay for the gym and track showing their support for an increase in taxes to pay for those. He said residents don't want to live in a school district when we are cutting to keep it flat line. Voters knew that those projects came with an increase in taxes.

Dot Fitzgerald agreed with Ross Cunningham. She said she voted yes and that this should be bringing revenue into the town as well. Superintendent Green and Mrs. Austin pointed out that although there is no fee at the gate so that's not revenue to the school, visitors are visiting our restaurants, purchasing gas, and groceries, etc.

Allyssa Brigilo, a senior this year at LHS said that these cuts, although they would not affect her, would affect her two younger brothers. She praised Ms. Fox and Ms. Willette for their hard work teaching theater arts, studio arts, and photography. She said there is not enough time for one teacher to do it all. She explained that this year LHS won first place for the theater award for the first time in 20 years because of Ms. Fox. She expressed her gratitude to Ms. Fox and Ms. Willette for the huge part they have played in her life and said both are great teachers and that Lisbon is where they should stay.

Jeannine Plourde reported she was part of the team that won that award 20 years ago, that it was such a pleasure to see her children participate this year, and that she too was grateful to have had Ms. Fox herself as a teacher. She said our community needs a solid foundation for those students that may not have a strong academic future. She commended the arts program at LHS.

Ross Poulin, Jr. said he used to attend St Doms but now goes to LHS. He said he enjoys going to school because of the art program. It's something, he explained, that he has a passion for; like pottery, which teaches patience and shows students how much time it takes to make something beautiful or how quickly fixing mistakes can turn things around. He explained how those teachers were wonderful honest people who were willing to drag you out of your comfort zone to help you even learn how to talk to people. He explained how Ms. Fox had made the Drama Club his family and asked that cuts not be made in this area. These teachers are very much needed.

Michele Huston, academic support specialist for LHS asked the Council and School Committee to support the children.

Cosette Holmes, LHS graduate, asked the School Committee, Superintendent, and Council to avoid cutting art or things like this, which are absolutely necessary. She said these teachers really make an impact on children's lives.

Amy Poulin, Ross Poulin, Jr.'s mom said it's not just theater arts, pottery, photography, studio arts, or independent costume design, its theater arts family, pottery family, photography family, studio arts family, and independent costume design family. These teachers help this family learn patience, determination, communication, accountability, confidence, kindness, acceptance, and compassion. Core classes like math, English, and sciences are never in danger of cuts, but arts are a fight almost every year. In theater arts they take a full-length play and transform it into a one-act play. The era is researched and history is included in the adaption. The costumes require

math for measuring, cutting, and building sets gets into engineering. She asked the Council, School Committee, and Superintendent to reconsider cutting arts; to talk to these kids first to find out first-hand how critical this program is to LHS. She said this is my family and I hope that you are as committed to this family as I am and to the art program as well.

After a brief recess, Angela Shamberger reported how proud she is of our schools, the art program, and that she would support a tax increase to retain the robust art program we have today. She mentioned how important the program is for developing critical thinkers and better learners. She pointed out that the art teacher at the middle school is the position to be lost and that he is phenomenal. This leaves the rest to cover these classes and there is a lot of interest in this program. She said she was concerned about losing the SRO officer position as well.

Larry Fillmore asked if these cuts were made in the right places. He indicated that cuts should have been made at Central Office or just as deep on the municipal side.

Anna Stritch said she was pursuing an arts degree at the Maine College of Art. She said every single class matters. She reported the reason she is pursuing an arts degree is because of Ms. Fox and that they are more than just teachers.

Laura Campbell explained the art program supports students much like a family as they learn to support each other. She said Ms. Willette is awesome and Ms. Fox does so much with so little.

Mrs. Austin thanked the audience for their comments and reported the Council will vote on the final numbers the School Committee presents on May 17. She reported there were no mandated cuts this year but that they were climbing out of the \$1.6 million dollar hole previously created so this is what is being presented.

Councilor Metivier commended Superintendent Green and the School Committee on the budget being presented. He mentioned that he knew it was not easy to create a budget like this, but they did do it and all on their own. He said the special purpose school is a very good idea. He said he thought that they did a good job this year.

Councilor Bickford commended Mrs. Austin for sitting down with him in the end to break last year's stalemate. He indicated the three new councilors did a fantastic job, although it's not easy to take things away from people. He mentioned how the roads have been neglected for so long and that the town needs more money for roads and the MDOT match. He said he was happy with the school and town budgets this year. He said he was pleased to be leaving his Councilor's seat on a high note. He reported that budget cuts were not over, but that Lisbon is going to spend more money this year, and that's the way it is. He explained that cuts to the bone hurt, staff is multi-tasking, and the hard work going on is unbelievable. Everyone is busy and trying to bring this town forward. He reported the fighting has ended and we are working together.

Councilor Kolbe said last year hurt and it hurt really bad. She mentioned that it would take some time to recuperate from all that. She said she hoped everyone would have patience with the Council because the town needs to get to where it should have been and again it will take time, money, and energy. She said she has children in the school system and that they love art. She commented that she, also, may have to worry that when her children go to school that there may not be an SRO in the school building. She asked how the School Committee planned to make up for the electives the children could potentially be losing so that they graduate with the required credits. Superintendent Green said by adding the academic support specialist they were able to offer a number of different electives because they had the classroom teachers covering study halls for several years. He referred her to Mr. Gannon who could tell her what the credit requirements are, how that would impact the electives, and how they would make that up. He mentioned that it could take a couple of years to get that back, but with the state enrollment going up there will be more state subsidy to rebuild and move forward.

Mrs. Austin said that's the nature of cuts; it comes down to talking with administrators for all the schools, and perhaps there is a glimmer of hope that they can bring back one or two of those transitions.

Councilor Albert thanked everyone for sharing his or her opinions. He said it was impressive to see so many students advocate for our teachers. He said we get it. He mentioned that the School had done a fantastic job, made some tough decisions, and that he looked at cuts with the least impact; however, these may have a huge impact, but

everyone is doing all they can. He indicated that maybe we cannot fix it all but we can take everything said here tonight under advisement when we go back and discuss these final numbers.

Seeing no further comments, Councilor Bickford closed the public hearing.

B. 2016-2017 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Councilor Bickford opened the public hearing at 8:30 PM. Superintendent Green explained that this was the first time they have held a public hearing on their capital plan. The plan has been presented and discussed multiple times. The School Committee adopted this plan in April. One change based on the recommendation from members of the facilities committee and Council was to add the spreadsheet (last page) to the handout given out at tonight's meeting. He explained that their Capital plan includes all of the known priorities with a work plan for each aspect of the School Department's infrastructure. The biggest expense is converting the old LHS gym into a community Performing Arts Center. A few years ago, an estimate to accomplish this came in at just under \$500,000 or \$490,000. He indicated when they did the front entrance at the LHS they combined the lease purchase for the portables and a paving bond that came off the books together to pay for the renovations adding the handicapped entrance and windows in the front of the building, which was completed without asking for additional funds. He recommended the town plug away at this for now and build the needed classroom in there for the music department, but in five or six years when a particular bond expires the town could then go out to referendum (without adding any new money to the budget) and pay for the renovations to the existing gym to put in the stadium seating, acoustics, etc.

This plan includes siding for Central Office, renovations at the Lisbon Community School, removal of classroom carpets, adding security cameras in all of the buildings, windows and heating units at Sugg Middle School, refurbish bathrooms at LHS, creating a life cycle maintenance program for the gym floor, and turning the new gym into a safety shelter along with other miscellaneous items necessary. He pointed out that new items will require maintenance and upkeep every few years.

Councilor Ward said he appreciated this item being on the agenda as a public hearing. He said that Council is looking at Capital Improvements this year town wide; it's all really one basket of goods.

Councilor Bickford said finding the money is the hard part, but well worth the time and funds set aside to accomplish it. He mentioned there is pride here in Lisbon and that we need to maintain these assets.

Seeing no further comments, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

ADJOURNMENT

VOTE (2016-110B) Councilor Albert, seconded by Councilor Kolbe moved to adjourn at 9:10 PM. **Order passed - Vote 7-0.**

Twila D. Lycette, Council Secretary
Town Clerk, Lifetime CCM/MMC
Date Approved July 5, 2016