

Town of Lincoln
Selectboard Regular Meeting
January 21, 2025

{Draft} Meeting Minutes

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/H1o5sQPR3g-VZJADXMdqqCLD5Nws8uwsKMfAejTi28f9C7W-sb-Hsed_hyahfd9P.zKitA5WbLjxjYF2V

Vote format: YES/NO/Vacant, Absent, Abstention, Recusal

Called to order at 6:04 PM by Tim McGowan, Chair

Present: Victor Atkins, Joe Martell, Tim McGowan, Lisa Sargent, Ken Stockman

Other town officials present: Trish Waugh, Town Administrator; Kristyn Brady, Selectboard Assistant

Public present: Bill Finger, Paul Forlenza, Van Talmage (Zoom)

Public Comment

Bill Finger highlighted the Lincoln Cemetery Association's increased appropriations request of \$10,000, with \$5,000 being for the fence replacement. He suggested adding an article to the Town Meeting warning authorizing the Selectboard to take the \$5,000 needed for the fence from the capital fund, which at this point only pays for the Town Office. It would take the fence on as a project without adding to the amount to be raised by taxes. Trish clarified that in the current budget draft, that balance is set at \$55,000 to anticipate repairs to the Town Garage roof. Tim will consider the recommendation during the next section of the agenda.

Agenda

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Joe to approve the agenda as written.

PASSED 5/0/0

Public Information Session: FY26 Budgets

- Sally asked that we double check that the cost of living increase for the assistant clerk matches that of the other staff. She thought it looked lower in the current draft. Trish looked into it, and explained that she'd calculated the 4% increase based on her actual wage at 10 hours per week instead of what she has been budgeted for. Instead, they opted to change her line to a 4% increase over the \$10,000 budget for her position last year.
- There was discussion of Bill Finger's recommendation during public comment. Lisa thought it made sense to absorb any increases, if there is a way. Bill highlighted how the Cemetery Association has already fundraised \$26,000, and if the association were to cease to exist, the responsibility for their work would fall on the Selectboard. Tim thought it was worth considering that the cemetery land is not a town asset – it is deeded to the association, which is a nonprofit [their 501(c)3 status is being renewed.] Bill pointed out that even if no additional funds were added to the reserve fund, and the garage improvements were done, you'd still have enough left over to do this project. Tim would rather allow the voters to pass or decline the \$5,000 increase. Ken asked if we should change the wording of the warning to call out the increase. Paul Forlenza

shared that a \$5,000 increase would only add one-tenth of one percent to the overall taxes to be raised. Bill withdrew his request based on the complications raised in the discussion.

- When the Selectboard left the last meeting, they were at about a proposed 7.8% increase in budget.
- Sally pointed out that there is a budget impact if voters choose to decide future budget articles by Australian ballot. To do an Australian ballot for all articles during COVID years, there was a \$5,000 increase in spending. There are more pages of special ballot paper required and there is a price per question when we program the tabulator. There was an increase in voter turnout during those years, but it was because we mailed the ballots to everyone. She will be prepared to speak to this during the discussion at Town Meeting. Bill shared that some towns have their Australian ballot budget vote broken out by department, so you may pass some and not others, but you don't have to start over on all of it. Ken and Victor asked whether the facts of the expense and increase in participation could be included in the warning. Kristyn felt that someone should be ready to ask about it so a discussion can be had in the room – the warning is an agenda, it is not meant to be persuasive.
- The Board asked all public attendees if there were further questions and, hearing none, ended the public information session.

Current Business and Authorizations

FY26 Budgets

- Tim shared that since the discussion last week, the only change to the General Fund was the update to the assistant clerk salary tonight. The Highway Fund was reduced in the last week in a discussion with Will Mathis, and Tim went over the updates:
 - Raised the overtime budget from \$15K to \$18K so Will wouldn't be short.
 - Dropped chloride from \$30K to \$28K.
 - Fixed a duplicate entry of \$5K.
 - Lowered roadside mowing by \$5K. The power company just did a ton of canopy pruning that will leave less material for the contractor to cut back, so we'll have them do two rounds instead of three rounds.
 - Overall decreased one half of one percent since the last discussion. Largest increases are in our labor – an increase of \$70,176 – when we went from one FT employee with part-timers and outside contractors to two FT employees, one PT employee, and no outside contractors, plus more vehicle maintenance in-house. All our valuable equipment is being used. Victor pointed out that the Board will need to be prepared to defend that. Ken suggested trying to collect data through a public survey on residents' satisfaction with the roads and storm response now compared to this time last year.
- Ken asked whether more attention should be paid to the revenue side. Bill asked about the Current Use program line, and Trish confirmed that the payment has been received in that amount. Sally addressed the proposed decrease in dog license revenue – she said there are not fewer dogs, but there are fewer residents getting licenses and we have not conducted a door-to-door census.
- There was discussion of going back to transfer station stickers, and Bill shared why the sticker system was dropped. Making use of the transfer station exclusive to Lincoln residents via sticker meant there wasn't enough business for the contractor, and there were not enough bids for the business at one point. Meanwhile, there was staff time and paper cost involved in issuing the stickers, which weren't enforced by the contractor. The contractor gets the revenue from the scrap metal, so that doesn't come to the town either.
- Trish asked about the line items for transfers to the reserve funds and why there are separate articles on the Town Meeting warning for funding of some reserves but not others. Bill shared

that the process for the paving fund having a separate article came about because there would be \$60K in the budget every year and then power given to the voters to augment that by \$175K annually, so that more paving can be done more regularly without being reliant on the Class 2 grant that only comes in every 5 years.

- There was discussion of the upcoming bridge repair needs across town and how the bridge fund is nearly gone after repairs to Sugar Bush Hill Bridge this past summer.
- Paul asked whether anyone is concerned about the large surplus showing. It does go toward reducing the tax burden, which is good news, but it may raise questions from the public. It was explained that the surplus for FY26 is formed in FY24.

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Joe to approve a \$1,157,856 budget for the FY26 highway fund.
PASSED 5/0/0

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Joe to approve a \$672,065 budget for the FY26 general fund.
PASSED 5/0/0

Draft Town Meeting Warning

- The latest draft of the town meeting warning was discussed and the following questions were addressed:
 - What language to use for the capital fund article? (It was ultimately determined to be unnecessary based on Bill's previous explanation and removed from the draft.)
 - Are we including the law enforcement spending article and where?
 - Placement of Australian ballot article?
 - Include or remove appropriations requests where petition did not come in (Addison Housing Works) or did not get any signatures (Rural Fire Protection)?
 - Include an article on pursuing an ATV ordinance?

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Lisa to approve the warning for the Town Meeting as drafted and amended in this meeting.
PASSED 5/0/0

Accounts Payable & Payroll Warrants

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Joe to approve **AP-25-30 for \$30,241.57.**

Includes \$7,920.05 for salt; \$3,788.98 for fuel/heating oil; \$1,995 for legal fees; and \$1,433.51 for tires.

PASSED 5/0/0

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Joe to approve **PR 25-28 for \$7,189.95** [pay period ending 1/4/2025] and **PR 25-29 for \$8,810.11** [pay period ending 1/11/2025]

PASSED 5/0/0

Previous Meeting Minutes

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Ken to approve meeting minutes for the 1/7/2025 regular meeting.
PASSED 5/0/0

Liquor and Tobacco License Renewal

- Acting as the local liquor and tobacco control board, the Lincoln General Store's renewal applications were discussed.

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Ken to approve second class liquor license renewal application #50951.

RESULT 5/0/0

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Ken to approve tobacco license renewal application #50952.

RESULT 5/0/0

Appointments and Employment

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Joe to appoint Trish Waugh as the liaison to the State Ethics Commission.

PASSED 5/0/0

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Joe to appoint Trish Waugh in her role as Town Administrator as an authorized signer on the National Bank of Middlebury account.

PASSED 5/0/0

Other Business

Tim read an email from Jeanne Albert regarding a book by Susan Clark that gives information about town meetings and the pros and cons of moving to Australian ballots. Jeanne suggests a meeting with Susan at the Lincoln Library. Susan is available Feb 6th. Tim just wanted everyone to know that it is happening and may be informative.

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Lisa to adjourn at 9:00 PM.

PASSED 5/0/0

Respectfully submitted: Kristyn Brady