



Selectmen's Newsletter

JUNE 2016

With passage of the budget for the 2016-2017 Fiscal Year in May, the Board of Selectmen wishes to alert and advise Lyme residents concerning fiscal and other matters of interest to all of us which will unfold during the year ahead. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took the time to attend the Annual Budget Meeting. The questions were informed and to the point. Hopefully, the answers were as well.

The largest expense (aside from the School District) and project of greatest significance will be the closure of the town's bulky waste landfill on Brush Hill Road and its complete conversion to a transfer station. Effective July 1st, the town will begin charging for the disposal of construction debris, a.k.a. bulky waste. Since this material will no longer be permitted to be buried in the landfill, there will of necessity be a cost to dispose of this material off site. There will be a \$20.00 per cubic yard charge added to the town's Building Permit Application as well as a levy on users disposing of bulky waste at the landfill without building permits. Those charges will be \$40.00 for a level pick up truck load which will be assumed to be 2 cubic yards and \$60.00 for a mason dump truck load which will be estimated to be 3 cubic yards. There will be no change in existing fees charged for disposal of items already taken off site such as tires, propane tanks, appliances with refrigerants, upholstery and some mattresses.

Presently, the total project cost is estimated to be one million (\$1,000,000.00) dollars. It will be offset with a \$650,000.00 closure grant from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection which will be utilized first, with the balance of the funding, if needed, slated to come from Lyme's Capital and Non-Recurring account which has been built up over the past several years in anticipation of closure.

Our road projects budgeted for this fiscal year include pavement repair work on Gungy, Salem and Mt. Archer Roads as well as replacement of a cross drain on Town Woods Road and installation of an improved drainage system on the south side of Joshuatown Road in between Mitchell Hill and Brockway's Ferry Roads.

Other capital expenses of note include the planned purchase of a new town dump truck to replace a 20-plus year old vehicle at a cost of \$176,633.00 and a new pumper truck for the Lyme Fire Company. The town will fund the entire dump truck purchase price and half the fire truck cost (\$192,500.00) from its capital acquisition reserves. The balance of the pumper will be funded via a three year lease/purchase agreement. We will also be replacing the town's last underground storage tank which holds heating oil for the town garage with a one thousand gallon above-ground vaulted tank. The total project cost will be covered by a state capital improvement grant and the funding is secure.

The Boards of Finance and Selectmen have made an assumption concerning the reliability of the state Education Cost Sharing Grant for the upcoming fiscal year. Lyme is slated to receive some \$87,000.00 to supplement our share of the Regional District budget. However, we believe the state budget approved last month by the General Assembly is already in deficit given the 65-million dollar recession authority granted the governor as part of the document. Thus, we have estimated zero dollars for this line item on the income side of our budget in order to protect the town from mid fiscal year revenue shortfalls. If the grant materializes we will all be pleasantly surprised. As for our budget year concluding on June 30th, the selectmen anticipate exceeding our revenue expectations by \$100,000.00 or more and that our operating and capital expenditure projections will come in at a minimum of \$100,000.00 under budget. This allows Lyme to modestly grow its undesignated fund balance which gives us all some measure of mill rate stability. Our operating and capital budget expense total for the present fiscal year is \$10,085,892.00. Our estimated rate of under expenditure indicates that our projections were valid and that hopefully there will be a consensus that taxpayers were not asked to bear an overly heavy burden.

A few other items of interest in closing – Emergency Management Director Lee Watkins and his staff have completed an ambitious program to upgrade the town's Emergency Operations Center at the Hamburg Fire Station. The facility is probably the most technologically advanced one of its kind in the State of Connecticut. It should serve the town's needs for the foreseeable future and was paid for exclusively with state emergency management funding sources.

This summer, a town neighbor on Cove Road is celebrating its 100th anniversary. On behalf of all of us in Lyme, the selectmen would like to wish Camp Claire a happy birthday on its centennial with many happy returns.

We would also like to take this opportunity to recognize Judy Lightfoot who resigned this spring from the Library Board of Directors. She served for thirty years, most of them as Board President and was instrumental in bringing Lyme's new Campus Center Library project to fruition. There can't be much doubt she's still watching despite her retirement.

The Board of Selectmen wishes one and all a safe and happy summer. Please support our 4th of July Parade and the Hamburg Fair, the signature events of the season, as well as a celebratory 40th anniversary picnic and square dance for the Ambulance Association scheduled for July the 8th. Our thanks to all the volunteers who make it possible for us to enjoy all this very special town has to offer.