

Lyme Board of Finance Meeting Minutes

Thursday May 4th, 2018: Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm

Board Members Present: Chairman Matthew Sharp, Kathryn Wayland, Dave Brown, Herbert Ross, Peter Evankow, Dan Hagan, & Lori Caine. Absent: Judith Duran & Jarrod Leonardo

In attendance; Town First Selectman, Steve Mattson & Selectman John Kiker, Selectman Parker Lord & some public in attendance.

Meeting called to order by Matt Sharp with Public Hearing and Comment on Budget:

No comments from public regarding the budget.

Matt Sharp confirmed the mill rate increase from 18.25 to 18.60 is recommendation by the BOF.

Dave Tiffany asked to speak on behalf of town Planning and Zoning Commission. Dave came to the public hearing as he had heard that the BOF did not support open space.

To the contrary, Matt Sharp confirmed that the entire BOF does support open space. This year the board allocated \$50,000 to the specific open space fund. Additionally, for the next two years, \$150,000 is being spent each year to pay off the Johnston property purchase that was finalized this year instead of last as projected. Steve originally requested \$100,000 for the open space fund, but since other change requests in the proposed budget could not be lowered, the BOF requested to lower that recommendation to \$50,000. This also allowed the BOF to only raise the mill rate from 18.25 to 18.60, not 18.75 as was presented by the Selectman.

Dave was relieved and appreciated the support of the BOF. He reiterated the charge or mission of his board is to preserve and protect open space parcels and the ability to purchase and act quickly to prevent further development in town. He also mentioned the 2015 Lyme Plan of Conservation and Development in which the 2014 P&Z Commission's questionnaire results are printed. 91% of respondents supported open space conservation. (Keep in mind that of the 1400 survey's mailed, 300 were returned). Herbert Ross also added that in the survey when asked how much of a tax increase would you be willing to support for purpose of open space, the answer with largest percentage, 42%, would support a 1-3% increase. Copies of this report are available for residents at any time at the Lyme Town Hall.

The BOF reminded the public in attendance that we also need to be mindful of tax control and respectfully hold all boards that present to us to be challenged to same fiscal standards. The BOF also reiterated that putting money into the specific fund of open space or any specific fund limits the funds for use in any other capacity. When funds are directed into the general fund or

capital non-recurring fund, it allows greater flexibility of funds use in the future if unforeseen situations arise. Due to poor financial health of CT the BOF prefers to lean towards this approach.

Parker Lord also spoke about the history of the open space acquisitions in town. In total 78 houses have been prevented from being built and in doing so the town has experienced very little change over time in comparison to neighboring towns. In his ideal world he would love to see 1 million in our open space fund. This would allow the town to act quickly and efficiently to prevent further development.

Paul Armond, a local resident, also supports open space and conservation and encourages residents to read the Plan of Conservation and Development. In 1997 town residents were in favor, 7 to 1, to support raising taxes to purchase open space (the Jewett property acquisition).

Another new town, Mark Munster, spoke of what attracted him to our town: great school, low taxes, rural character. He grew up in neighboring Haddam and was always impressed with how Lyme was able to do more with less, he wants to see that tradition continue going forward.

Linda Winzer also supported open space and encouraged residents to educate themselves on conservation rules and regulations.

Affordable housing was mentioned, Dan Hagan whom is on the BOF is also on affordable housing and is working on more in town. Keep in mind our zoning regulations do NOT allow cluster housing and therefore our affordable housing is different than other towns.

Dave Roberge asked why sanitation went to zero on budget. Steve Mattson explained that it now appears under public health officer line item and is LedgeLight Health District. Steve said the town will be saving \$13,000 annually by moving to LHD. George Calkins, our sanitarian is now paid directly from LedgeLight Health.

Dave Brown who will be absent from May 17th meeting and he nominated Lori Caine, alternate, to replace him for that meeting for town mill rate vote.

Herbert Ross made a motion to adjourn, Peter Evankow seconded, all in favor, meeting adjourned at 7:14pm.

The next meeting will be Thursday May 17th, 6:30pm at the Lyme Town Hall for Town Meeting and approval of mill rate by Board of Finance.

Respectfully submitted, Kathryn Wayland, Clerk of the Board of Finance

