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**Minutes of the
Litchfield Budget Committee Hearing
Held on January 10, 2013**

17 The Litchfield Budget Committee held a budget hearing on Thursday, January 10, 2013
18 at Campbell High School, 1 Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

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PRESENT: J Harte, (Chairman), R. Peeples, (Vice Chair), B Spencer, A Cutter, C Pascucci,
C Couture

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ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Board of Selectmen: J Brunelle, G Lambert, F Byron, Pat Jewett

Town Administrator: J Hoch

School Board: J York, M Prindle, D Barka

SAU: Dr. B Cochran, S Martin, M.E. Flynn

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Mr. Harte opened the hearing at 7:15 p.m. and introduced the members of the Budget Committee, the School Board, the Board of Selectmen, and the Administration. He provided an overview of the format the hearing would take, and informed those in attendance and the viewing public that the presentation would be available on both the Town and District web sites.

Mr. Harte made the following statements: On the town side we are looking at an \$80,000 increase in the operating budget and on the school side we are looking at a \$245,000 increase in the operating budget. If the town and school budgets, as well as all financial warrant articles, are approved taxpayers will see an increase in taxes next year, although there may be some offsetting revenues. If just the operating budgets of the town and school were approved by the voters, a home valued at \$300,000 could see an increase of \$524 and a home valued at \$400,000 could see an increase of \$699.

1. SCHOOL BUDGET PRESENTATION

Mr. Harte went through each slide stressing the major highlights of the 2013 School Budget which included the following areas:

- Reasons for the increases
- Tax rate impact of the Operating budget without warrants with examples based on average Litchfield home
- Details of the School District Warrant Articles.

Mr. Harte commented that the Budget Committee spent much time reviewing and deliberating on the School budget. He explained that the Budget Committee reviewed the budget with administrators and department heads line by line. He noted that the Committee's goal was to look at it from a tax impact perspective, understanding the needs of the community, and to bring a sustainable budget to the voters. Mr. Harte commented that the School Board looks at the budget with a services perspective. He explained that the Budget Committee changed the way they went through the process and held all voting on one night. All members expressed their concerns with the budget and warrant articles. A three year average approach was used on many budget accounts, while others were based on needs. There is some substantial impact in revenues for the school district (approximately \$950,000) and high fixed costs.

- 48 Mr. Harte explained that the goals of the district are:
- 49 • Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which all districts have to implement to improve
 - 50 instruction and that requires new curriculum and testing;
 - 51 • Special Education is moving to a proactive [instead of reactive] approach;
 - 52 • Education Technology: rebuild the capacity to support education and administrative
 - 53 functions;
 - 54 • Buildings & Grounds: move facilities maintenance program to proactive, preventative and
 - 55 asset management approach.

56

57 Mr. Harte explained that all class sizes continue to remain within policy parameters. Salaries &

58 Benefits, with the exception of LEA staff and administrators, were budgeted with a 1% cost of

59 living adjustment, with 3% for Food Service. All district part time staff in positions, with the

60 exception of the Curriculum Director, that are scheduled for 6 hours per day (or 30 hours per

61 week) in 2013 have been reduced to 5.5 hours per day in order to keep these positions from

62 becoming eligible for medical benefits under PPACA in January 2014. Mr. Harte noted that

63 \$20,000 was budgeted to cover potential new taxes as a result of PPACA, as regulations have not

64 yet been issued to determine potential liability.

65

66 District Wide Notables:

- 67 • NH Retirement Rate increases \$229,591
- 68 • Buildings & Grounds Repairs, Maintenance, Equipment \$86,293
- 69 • Six new Special Education Paraprofessionals (required by IEP's) \$79,076
- 70 • District Technology Plan \$71,349
- 71 • Special Education Transportation \$70,743
- 72 • Funding of CCSS \$99,336
- 73 • Salary Increase (1% COLA for non-union/non-administrator staff) \$30,962
- 74 • Partial Funding of 1 Current Special Education Teacher (required by IEP) \$28,396
- 75 • PPACA Tax \$20,000
- 76 • Non-Union Course Reimbursement \$15,000
- 77 • Regular Substitutes Teacher Salaries \$13,000
- 78 • Expanded Special Services Administrative Assistant Hours \$3,060.22
- 79 (increased administration of Medicaid billings)

80

81 Special Services Notables:

- 82 • Expand paraprofessionals in all three schools
- 83 • Special Education teacher
- 84 • Expand Special Services Administrative Assistant hours

85

86 GMS Notables:

- 87 • Maintain current staffing levels
- 88 • 2 additional paraprofessionals at 17 hours per week to replace the .5 hours per day from
- 89 the reduction of current part time staff
- 90 • 2 new 5 day paraprofessionals to meet IEP requirements
- 91 • 1 new 4 day paraprofessional to meet IEP requirements

- 92 • Expand 1 paraprofessional from 4 hours per day to 5.5 hours per day to meet IEP
93 requirements
- 94 • Expand 2 paraprofessionals by adding a total of 1.5 additional days per week to meet IEP
95 requirements
- 96 • Textbook replacements (\$\$33,000) for an increase of \$31,000
- 97 • Building repairs (\$67,000) for an increase of \$26,000
- 98 • Technology leases for 40 new desktops and 30 new laptops \$25,000

99

100 LMS Notables:

- 101 • 1 new paraprofessional to meet IEP requirements \$15,701.15
- 102 • Academic Assistance Program (previously funded by grants)
- 103 • Textbook replacements (\$42,000) for an increase of \$35,000
- 104 • Building repairs (\$46,000) for an increase of \$16,000
- 105 • Technology leases for 10 new desktops and 12 new laptops \$10,000
- 106 • Technology leases for 40 new desktops for library services \$41,000

107

108 CHS Notables:

- 109 • Expand 1 paraprofessional 1.5 hours per day to replace .5 hours per day reduction from
110 current part time staff to meet IEP requirements
- 111 • 60 additional hours for Athletic Administrative Assistant
- 112 • Building repairs (\$62,000) for an increase of \$21,000
- 113 • Additional 5 days for Guidance Counselor
- 114 • Technology leases for 10 new desktops and 12 new laptops for Physics cart \$11,000

115

116 Object Summary

- 117 • Salaries decrease
- 118 • Benefits increase
- 119 • Professional Services increase
- 120 • Property Services increase
- 121 • Other Services decrease
- 122 • Supplies increase
- 123 • Equipment decrease
- 124 • Other Objects decrease

125

126 Revenue Expectations

- 127 • \$953,463 attributed to reductions in Catastrophic Aid, Adequacy Aid, Impact Fees,
128 Disabilities Programs.

129

130 Mr. Harte explained that the District has the ability to use what is left over at the end of the year
131 to offset taxes. He indicated that there is a significant anticipated loss in revenue. Mr. Harte
132 noted that the tax impact of the recommended District budget could increase school tax from
133 \$12.79 to \$14.16.

134

135 *Please refer to the Town web site for details of the presentation.*

136

137 ***Questions / Comments from the Public:***

138 Robin Corbeil, 4 Nesmith Court, thanked both committees for their work during the budget
139 process. She commented that it seemed as if the committees were working together until
140 \$150,000 was reduced in salaries. She asked the Budget Committee to reopen discussion
141 regarding that reduction to avoid reductions in staff. Mrs. Corbeil also asked if there is a number
142 that could be added back into the budget at Deliberative Session the Budget Committee would
143 support.

144

145 Responding to the \$150,000 reduction in salaries, Mr. Harte commented that the Budget
146 Committee makes district wide reductions each year. He explained that this year the reduction
147 was in salaries and benefits because that account has historically been under spent. Mr. Harte
148 indicated that if no changes were made, residents would see taxes on their homes increase by as
149 much as \$1,000, which the Budget Committee believes is too much of a burden. He noted that
150 the salaries account is always under spent either by attrition, retirement or a vacancy factor. The
151 Budget Committee felt that a reduction of \$150,000 was reasonable. Mr. Harte commented that
152 it is the decision of the School Board to reduce staff; however, the Budget Committee had
153 expectations that they would reduce elsewhere.

154

155 Responding to the request of a number the Budget Committee would support, Mr. Harte
156 commented that would be based on the will of the taxpayers. He indicated if the School Board
157 says that they cannot operate with the reduction in salaries, the Budget Committee will listen.
158 Mr. Harte commented that the District was faced with a loss of \$2M two years ago and \$850,000
159 increase in fixed costs. The School Board came to the Budget Committee with a staff reduction
160 to avoid a \$3M increase in the budget. This year there was a \$2M increase and it did not make
161 sense. Mr. Harte indicated if the School Board would like to propose offsetting reductions in
162 other areas, the Budget Committee will listen. He commented that the Budget Committee felt a
163 bottom line reduction would give them the opportunity to re-allocate funds in other areas.

164

165 Mrs. Corbeil expressed concern that a reduction in staff would equate to an increase in class
166 sizes. She indicated that this impacts that town and community. She commented that we do not
167 want our district to reduce staff because we have to. She believes the Budget Committee did
168 much research and that the School Board has much information as well. She asked that the
169 Budget Committee and School Board communicate again and try to bring a budget to the town in
170 unity.

171

172 Mr. York indicated that the School Board had a discussion at their meeting last night and
173 expressed concern. He noted that there will be further discussion at the January 23 meeting. He
174 commented that the Budget Committee and School Board agree to disagree.

175

176 George Lambert, 3 Lydston Lane, commented that he finds it interesting having sat in on the
177 process that people should be aware there is approximately a 10% reduction in income. He
178 noted that this year the default number was lower than the operating budget number and a large
179 increase in the tax base. He indicated that looking at whole picture is important. Mr. Lambert
180 noted that next year there is a different default number. He asked how the public will know what
181 the one time appropriations are and trust that they will be subtracted in the default budget.

182

183 Mr. Harte commented this is a budget hearing and we cannot answer that question.

184

185 Mr. Lambert commented that the Budget Committee presented this budget, which has one time
186 expenditures and the Budget Committee has to be responsible for the presentation.

187

188 Responding to Mr. Lambert's statement, Mr. Harte indicated that the Budget Committee is
189 responsible for the presentation. However, Mr. Lambert is asking about one time appropriations
190 that are not leveraged in the future budget. He commented that question cannot be answered.

191

192 Mr. Spencer explained the rationale for the \$150,000 reduction in the salaries account. He
193 commented in 2012, there was a \$360,000 under spend and the budget was reduced by \$95,000.
194 In 2011, there was a \$328,000 under spend and the budget was reduced by \$100,000. In 2012,
195 there was an under spend of \$100,000 with \$60,000 reduction by the Budget Committee. Mr.
196 Spencer indicated that this year is very different as we are in a default budget. Special Education
197 requirements changed dramatically. He commented that what has transpired over the last three
198 years should be considered as there is no reason to believe that there will not be an under spend
199 next year.

200

201 Mrs. Corbeil commented that this year is why you believe we will not have to spend as much
202 next year. Mr. Spencer responded that next year existing teachers and existing benefits are fully
203 funded.

204

205 Jason Guerrette, 11 Perry Court, commented that when there were discussions about Reductions
206 in Force (RIFs) people came to voice their concerns. He asked how much is included in this
207 budget that will tie the taxpayers in to future spending and what is that future cost. He eluded to
208 the example of Technology as if the proposed budget passes it ties the district into future
209 spending.

210

211 Mr. York commented that the Technology Plan is being reworked, but we do not know how it
212 will look at this time.

213

214 Mr. Guerrette commented if you sign a lease you are tied into that lease for three years, but there
215 is no understanding of what the true cost will be. Mr. Harte indicated that the only part that was
216 approved is the upgrading of some computers. The School Board has committed to the Budget
217 Committee that we will have a plan, but until it is fortified it is a challenge for anyone to answer
218 that question.

219

220 Mr. Guerrette asked what other multi-year leases/contracts are included in the budget with the
221 exception of technology. Mr. York indicated there are no long standing costs except for the
222 leases and the CBA.

223

224 Dr. Cochrane explained there has been no conversation about increasing leases. Mr. Martin
225 indicated there are no other multi-year leases other than technology. The School Board does not
226 have the authority to lease more than what is in their budget.

227

228 Mr. Guerrette asked if the Budget Committee is aware of any unfunded mandates in the budget.

229 Responding to Mr. Guerrette's question, Mr. Harte commented there are retirement costs and
230 adequacy aid.

231
232 Mr. Guerrette commented that if we propose to fund unfunded mandates we forever absolve the
233 state from that funding in this town. He indicated that CCSS is an unfunded mandate with only
234 two ways to fund: by the state or by a vote of the town. He stated it is recommended by the
235 Local Government Center (LGC) that should stand on its own warrant article. Mr. Guerrette
236 commented that it is realized that the state will push the School Board into implementation of
237 CCSS, but including the money to implement it will absolve the state from funding the mandate.
238 He indicated that we accommodate the downshift of costs because we include them in the
239 budget. He commented that he assumes since the Budget Committee voted for the budget they
240 believe the townspeople can afford a tax increase.

241
242 Mr. Harte commented that the Budget Committee feels the budget is fair and reasonable. He
243 indicated that he cannot answer on behalf of the taxpayers. Mr. Harte explained that the Budget
244 Committee recognizes that there are financial challenges and that this budget may not work for
245 everyone. He noted that the Budget Committee tried to put forth a fair budget.

246
247 Robin Corbeil, 4 Nesmith Court, asked for clarification regarding the default budget vs the
248 operating budget. She commented that both the School Board and Budget Committee are in
249 support of technology for the next three years and believe technology is important.

250
251 Mr. Harte indicated that they support the technology budget as presented and that both the
252 Budget Committee and School Board are in support.

253
254 ***Warrant Articles:***

255
256 ***a) Article 1: (School District Operating Budget)***

257 Operating Budget: \$20,990,591; Default Budget \$21,159,012; Tax Impact \$1.36
258 Article 1 is recommended by the Budget Committee and Not Recommended by the School
259 Board.

260
261 ***b) Article 2: (2013-2015 Collective Bargaining Agreement)***

262 Year One: \$110,329; Year Two: \$162,856; Tax Impact \$09.1346
263 Article 2 is Recommended by the Budget Committee and Recommended by the School Board.

264
265 ***c) Article 3: (Retention of Year End Funds)***

266 Retention of year end unassigned general funds in an amount not to exceed 2.5% of the current
267 fiscal year's net assessment, in accordance with RSA 198:4-b, II. These funds can only be used
268 to reduce the tax rate or for emergency expenditures and over-expenditures under RSA 32:11.
269 Article 3 was Recommended by the Budget Committee and Recommended by the School Board.

270
271 ***d) Article 4: (Tax Impact notation on ballot)***

272 Inclusion of a statement of estimated tax impact on all articles.
273 Article 4 was Recommended by the Budget Committee and Recommended by the School Board.

274

275 William Spencer, 9 Cranberry Lane, made the following comments:
276 In regard to Article 2, the CBA health care savings are the result of two new plans. The savings
277 assume a conservative approach that every teacher will opt for the HMO plan. Currently less
278 than 50% are enrolled in the HMO plan. If that ratio were to stay the same on the new insurance
279 plan, the savings would be greater and yield approximately \$50,000 in additional savings. If the
280 article is approved by the voters, it will pass with the numbers currently budgeted. If the article
281 is approved by the voters and there is more savings after teachers chose the plan in which they
282 wish to enroll, we will add more money to the budget, which will offset the reduction in salaries
283 and benefits.

284
285 Jason Guerrette, 11 Perry Court, asked if a reduction in health care is being proposed, what is the
286 cost of the teachers' contract over the next year. He asked if the article is approved, is that the
287 average impact? He asked what the cost to the taxpayer would be without the cost of health care
288 savings.

289
290 Mr. Martin responded that the cost to the taxpayer would be \$0 because there would not be a
291 contract.

292
293 Mr. Guerrette commented that was not the answer to his questions.

294
295 Mr. Harte indicated that it would be fairly reasonable to say the cost would increase by
296 approximately \$0.16.

297
298 Mr. Guerrette commented that the contract could have had a sidebar agreement for health care.

299
300 Mr. York indicated that Mr. Guerrette was incorrect in that assumption.

301
302 There being no further questions on the School District budget or warrant articles, Mr. Harte
303 declared a recess at 8:15 p.m. The hearing reconvened at 8:30 p.m.

304 305 **2. TOWN BUDGET PRESENTATION**

306 Mr. Harte made the following statements: The Budget Committee reviewed the town budget by
307 departments over an eight week period, alternating voting on each budget. The goal of the
308 Committee was to present voters with a reasonable budget.

309
310 Mr. Harte went through each slide stressing the major highlights of the 2013 Town Budget,
311 which included the following areas:

- 312 • Tax rate impact of the Operating budget without warrants with examples based on an
313 average Litchfield home
- 314 • Any changes being proposed
- 315 • Details of proposed warrant articles, which Mr. Harte read for the record.

316
317 Mr. Harte indicated the budget increase is approximately \$81,000. Increases and decreases in
318 the budget include:

- 319 • Public Safety \$122,000 increase (Police, Fire, Code Enforcement, Ambulance,
320 Emergency Management)

- 321 • Solid Waste approximately \$200,000 decrease
- 322 • General Government \$15,706 increase
- 323 • Retirement costs, Cemeteries increased
- 324 • No COLA's
- 325 • Funding for IT
- 326 • Highway and Parks \$33,000 decrease
- 327 • Mosquito Control \$3,200 increase
- 328 • No change in Library or Patriotic Services.

329

330 Public Safety Notables:

331

332 Police:

- 333 • Maintain current staffing levels
- 334 • Special Officers additional hours \$34,000
- 335 • Maintain 2012 overtime and training levels
- 336 • Lease of three new vehicles
- 337 • No adjustments in salary schedules
- 338 • Detail vehicle reimbursement \$20,000

339

340 Fire:

- 341 • Maintain current staffing levels
- 342 • Ambulance Bad Debt Account \$24,000 with offsetting revenues
- 343 • EMT recertification and continuing education
- 344 • 5 new Fire Fighter Level 1 training hours
- 345 • 5 Fire Fighter Level 1 and three Fire Fighter 2 certifications
- 346 • Bottom line reduction of \$20,000

347

348 General Government Notables:

- 349 • Maintain current level of staffing
- 350 • Step increases, no COLA
- 351 • IT increases for maintenance agreements to support current infrastructure and
- 352 upgrades/expansion of existing computer services
- 353 • Retirement costs increase \$35,000
- 354 • Cemeteries additional grounds keeping increase \$2,705

355

356 Highway and Parks Notables:

357

358 Highways and Streets:

- 359 • Maintain current level of normal road maintenance
- 360 • Highway Block Grant Fund allocation as approved by voters in 2011 \$169,833
- 361 • New town front-line truck payment \$10,000

362

363 Culture and Recreation:

- 364 • Maintain current level of service
- 365 • Field supplies to support new fields increase \$3,000

366 Other Notables:

367

368 Sanitation:

- 369 • Part time worker hours to cover additional hours needed increase \$5,591
- 370 • New skid steer increase of \$7,500 along with an \$8,000 trade-in of existing equipment
- 371 and a \$5,000 NH grant

372

373 Mosquito Control:

- 374 • Filing costs and increase cost in materials \$3,200

375

376 Library budget has no significant changes

377

378 Patriotic Purposes budget has no significant changes.

379

380 Town Budget by Object:

- 381 • Salaries increase \$137,080
- 382 • Benefits decrease \$12,103
- 383 • Purchased Services increase 103,045
- 384 • Purchased Property Services decrease \$113,169
- 385 • Other Purchased Services increase \$2,584
- 386 • Supplies increase \$10,171
- 387 • Property increase \$11,263
- 388 • Other Projects decrease \$17,922
- 389 • Other Use of Funds decrease \$40,000

390 Total budget increase \$80,949.

391

392 Revenue Expectations: decrease \$55,484 with estimated revenues of \$2,015,562.

393

394 Tax rate impact of budget increase only: \$79.47 on a home valued at \$300,000 and \$105.96 on a
395 home valued at \$400,000.

396

397 *Please refer to the Town web site for details of the presentation.*

398

399 ***Questions / Comments from the Public:***

400

401 Mr. Guerrette asked for the total increase of the town budget with the salaries budget increasing
402 by 6%, how much did the contract increase.

403

404 Mr. Harte responded that the overall increase to the budget is approximately \$80,000 with a 2%
405 increase in the contract.

406

407 ***a) Article 4: (Operating Budget)***

408 Operating budget of \$5,045,145 with a default budget of \$4,974,847. Tax rate impact: \$0.27.

409 Article 4 was Recommended by the Budget Committee.

410

411 ***b) Article 5: (Defibrillator/Monitor Replacement)***

412 \$70,000 to replace two defibrillator monitors. Tax rate impact of \$.0153.
413 Article 5 was Recommended by the Budget Committee and Recommended by the Board of
414 Selectmen.

415
416 **c) Article 6: Pinecrest Sidewalk**
417 \$12,500 for a study to extend the bike path from Albuquerque Avenue to the middle school. Tax
418 impact \$0 as year end funds will be used.
419 Article 6 was Not Recommended by the Budget Committee and Recommended by the Board of
420 Selectmen.

421
422 **d) Article 7: (Building Systems Trust Fund)**
423 \$20,000 to establish a Building Systems Expendable Trust Fund to be used for unexpected
424 building system failures. Tax impact \$0 as year end funds will be used.
425 Article 7 was Recommended by the Budget Committee and Recommended by the Board of
426 Selectmen.

427
428 **e) Article 8: (Town Hall/Police Station Entrance Repair)**
429 \$10,000 to repair the concrete at the entrance of the Town Hall/Police Station and replace
430 damaged siding on the entrance columns.
431 Article 8 was Recommended by the Budget Committee and Recommended by the Board of
432 Selectmen.

433
434 **f) Article 9: (Repainting Old Town Hall)**
435 \$20,000 for repainting of the Old Town Hall. This price includes legally required abatement of
436 lead paint. Tax Impact \$0.0244.
437 Article 9 was Recommended by the Budget Committee and Recommended by the Board of
438 Selectmen.

439
440 **g) Article 10: (Sewer System Study)**
441 \$10,000 for study to determine possible designs for a wastewater (sewer) system to encourage
442 further commercial and industrial growth. The intent of the Board of Selectmen is to use these
443 funds with an additional \$16,500 previously appropriated for development purposes. Tax impact
444 \$0.0122.
445 Article 10 was Not Recommended by the Budget Committee and Recommended by the Board of
446 Selectmen.

447
448 **h) Article 11: (Cost of Living Wage Adjustment)**
449 \$18,832 which represents salary and benefit costs for a 2% cost of living adjustment for non-
450 union full time and part time regular employees of the town and library, effective April 1, 2013.,
451 Tax impact \$0.023.
452 Article 11 was Not Recommended by the Budget Committee and Recommended by the Board of
453 Selectmen.

454
455 **i) Article 12: (Library Teen/Technical Services Librarian)**

456 \$24,635 (\$18,533/salary; \$6,122/benefits) to hire a Teen/Technical Services Librarian effective
457 April 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013 to provide services to teens and tweens. The annual salary
458 of this position will be \$32,789 (\$24,627/salary; \$8,162/benefits). Tax impact \$0.0301.
459 Article 12 was Not Recommended by the Budget Committee and Not Recommended by the
460 Board of Selectmen.

461
462 **j) Article 13: (Human Services Agencies)**
463 \$4,644 to support the requests of Human Services agencies including Big Brothers, Big Sisters;
464 Home Health & Hospice, St. Joseph's Community Services; and Bridges Community Council of
465 Nashua. Tax impact \$0.006.
466 Article 13 was Recommended by the Budget Committee and Recommended by the Board of
467 Selectmen.

468
469 **k) Article 14: (Ambulance Revolving Fund)**
470 Establish an Ambulance Revolving Fund for the cost of anticipated uncollectible bills. Tax
471 impact \$0.
472 Article 14 is Recommended by the Board of Selectmen.

473
474 **l) Article 15: (Expand Budget Committee Membership)**
475 To increase the membership of the Budget Committee from 6 members to 7. Tax impact \$0.
476 Article 15 Not Recommended by the Budget Committee and Recommended by the Board of
477 Selectmen.

478
479 **m) Article 16: (Solid Waste Disposal Fee Setting)**
480 To establish or amend fees for Solid Waste Disposal. This article does not automatically
481 authorize the Board of Selectmen to adjust those fees as needed, without a public hearing. Tax
482 impact \$0 impact.
483 Article 16 was Recommended by the Board of Selectmen.

484
485 **n) Article 17: (Show Tax Impact of Articles)**
486 Inclusion of a statement of estimated tax impact on all articles.
487 Article 18 was Recommended by the Board of Selectmen.

488
489 **o) Article 18: (Form of Town Meeting)**
490 To revert to the traditional town meeting for conducting its annual meeting rather than the
491 official ballot (SB2) currently used. If the article is approved, the Board of Selectmen would
492 propose an article in 2014 to rescind official ballot form of voting on all questions, with the
493 exception of the election of officers and certain other questions required by state law.
494 Article 18 is an advisory article.

495
496 **r) Article 19: (Deliberative Session Scheduling)**
497 To see if the town would like to hold the first session of Town Meeting (Deliberative Session) on
498 the same day with the Litchfield School District.
499 Article 19 is an advisory article.

500

501 A tax rate schedule was provided that reflects the appropriation amount, tax rate, and tax impact
502 of town warrant articles.

503
504 Mr. Harte indicated if all articles are approved, the overall tax rate impact would result in an
505 increase of \$138 for a home valued at \$300,000 and \$184 for a home valued at \$400,000.

506
507 Jason Guerrette, 11 Perry Court, asked if Article 15, expansion of the Budget Committee
508 membership, was the idea of the Board of Selectmen.

509
510 Mr. Harte indicated the Board of Selectmen brought the article forward and it was discussed at
511 the Budget Committee meeting. He explained that the intention of increasing the membership is
512 to prevent tie votes. The Board of Selectmen felt it would benefit the town. Mr. Harte indicated
513 that the Budget Committee feels the current level of membership is working well.

514
515 Mr. Byron commented that the current population of the Budget Committee is 8 members. He
516 noted that the intention is that the 9th member can provide additional attendance at the meetings.
517 He indicated that the additional member does not increase the number of Budget Committee
518 members needed for a quorum.

519
520 Mr. Guerrette referred to Article 18 (revert to Town Meeting) and asked why we would want to
521 go back to the town meeting style.

522
523 Mr. Byron commented that there are numerous people that have expressed fondness for the town
524 meeting style, as well as providing more education for people in that style of meeting.

525
526 Mr. Guerrette commented that there are on average 1,100 registered voters who come out to vote
527 each year. There are over 5,000 registered voters in the town. He noted that rescinding the
528 ballot takes away their right to vote.

529
530 Mr. Lambert made the following statements:
531 A good point was made regarding changing reservations in our community. A negative impact is
532 reflected on those who do not participated in dialogue. There is an advantage for people who do
533 participate to know what we are talking about. Many people do not like to attend Deliberative
534 Session and there is less participation. Some people spend less than 3 minutes deciding on the
535 ballot and most likely do not know what is discussed in the community.

536
537 Mr. Guerrette commented that the voters will express what they want. He indicated that his
538 point is that every registered voter has the right to vote.

539
540 Mr. Harte announced that Town Deliberative Session will be held on Saturday, February 2, 2013
541 at 10:00 a.m. in the CHS Auditorium. School District Deliberative Session will be held on
542 February 6, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the CHS Auditorium.

543
544 There being no further input from members of the public, Mr. Harte closed the hearing at 9:10
545 p.m. thanking everyone for attending. He confirmed he would update the slides and have them
546 posted to the web sites so that residents have accurate representation of the budget.

547

548 The Budget Committee moved to a meeting after the hearing.

549

550

551 **Minutes by:** *Michele E. Flynn (Recording Secretary)*

552 **Date Approved:**

DRAFT