

# **Minutes of the Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting**

**Held on December 27, 2012**

The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, December 27, 2012 at Campbell High School, 1 Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

**PRESENT:** J Harte (Chairman), R Peoples (Vice Chairman), B Spencer, A Cutter, C Pascucci, D Barka (School Board Representative), G Lambert (Board of Selectmen Representative), J Brunelle (Selectman)

**ABSENT:** C Couture

Mr. Harte called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

## **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

## **2. PUBLIC INPUT**

Michael Houle, Litchfield resident and employee, shared that he met with Mr. Harte recently at his residence regarding the part time detective position requested in the Police budget. He indicated that all the facts were not presented at the time of the presentation. He was asked to provide answers to the Budget Committee. Mr. Houle noted that there was a question regarding how many part time positions were allotted to the Police Department. He indicated that there were 8, but were not all filled because there was no need. Mr. Houle mentioned that he researched part time officer positions presented on the warrant in the past and discovered that there were none.

Mr. Houle commented that the Board of Selectmen understands the need for an additional detective. He provided case load numbers as well as personnel in other departments in the State. He indicated that Litchfield only has a few case loads less than Windham. Mr. Houle asked the Budget Committee to reconsider the additional part time detective. Mr. Houle indicated that when he was hired 72 hours per week was allotted to detective work at \$2,000 per week. He commented that if the Budget Committee allows an additional part time detective, there will be 56 hours per week allotted to detective work at \$1,300 per week – a savings of \$700 per week. Mr. Houle indicated there is a need for the position based on the current case load and he expressed hope that the Budget Committee understands that need. He commented that training would not be necessary with the intended candidate as he is a retired detective. Mr. Houle noted that he is not only speaking as a police officer, but as a taxpayer as well. He commented it is fiscally responsible to have two detectives and that the cost would not greatly impact the town.

Mr. Spencer agreed that there were 8 part time officers, but they were all used for shift coverage. He indicated that was until Mr. Houle was hired. He commented that this position should be a specific position and not be used for shift coverage. He indicated a part time position has been established in this police department for shift coverage.

Mr. Houle asked why his position or the SRO were not brought to warrant. He indicated that it was stated that the positions are there for whatever assignments the Chief deems necessary. He commented that the Chief has authority over the assignments and there is a need for detective work.

Mr. Spencer commented that Mr. House was hired without the knowledge of the Budget Committee. He indicated there is a difference between a \$5,000 Special Officer and a \$35,000 Detective or SRO in terms of what is expected of the position and the people's expectations. Mr. Spencer observed that Mr. Houle's position is not for shift coverage.

Mr. Harte commented that he told Mr. Houle the Budget Committee is approving the financial aspects of the position. We need to have an ongoing agreement between the town and district that all new positions go to warrant. He asked Officer Houle if there are currently positions that are not being allocated. Mr. Harte commented that the hours are "in the bucket" and can be reassigned as needed provided there is money in the budget. He asked Mr. Houle if the additional detective position was a critical need, why was it not included in the warrant. He asked if there are currently part time positions that are not filled with available hours.

Mr. Houle commented that if there is X "in the bucket" for part time funds, it is accurate to say that the Chief can use that money for one position or ten positions. He indicated that it is less expensive to have two part time detectives than one part time and one full time detective. Mr. Houle noted that he not only performs detective work, but covers shifts and is out on patrol for one day per week.

A lengthy discussion followed regarding concerns over the request for reconsideration of an additional part time detective position.

Mr. Spencer asked why Officer Houle is covering shifts when there is much detective work. Mr. Houle commented it is less expensive to pay for him to cover a shift than to pay overtime.

Mr. Brunelle commented that we need hours in the part time budget for an additional assignment.

Mr. Houle commended Chief O'Brion for not asking for the money unless the use was necessary. He indicated that there is a need for an additional officer and it is being requested.

Jason Guerrette, 11 Perry Court, commented that the point is not if we need another officer, but about trust. He indicated that the taxpayers should be given the opportunity to choose. He commented that part time employees always become full time employees.

Mr. Guerrette indicated that he forwarded correspondence to the Budget Committee regarding the school budget. He commented that the State adopted CCSS and in our State Constitution, Article 28-A addresses unfunded mandates. He noted that the State is mandating we move to CCSS, which will put an additional financial burden on the towns. Mr. Guerrette indicated that there are two remedies in the Constitution: either full funding from the State or the local legislative body has to specifically approve the additional expenditure. He asked Committee

members to read the information from the LGC regarding unfunded mandates. Mr. Guerrette commented that the State has passed the funding of CCSS to the towns. He indicated that it is unfair to include any money associated with CCSS in the proposed budget as we will continue to fund it in the future. He commented that it is a state mandate and should go to warrant. He noted that the voters should choose whether or not to fund CCSS. He asked the Budget Committee to remove funding for CCSS from the District budget.

Mr. Brunelle referred to Mr. Guerrette's statement regarding part time positions become full time position. He commented that unless a slot is available, we would have to go to the voters to get approval to create the full time position. Mr. Brunelle indicated that there is no conversion from part time to full time employee without an existing position available or without asking the voters to approve the position.

Mr. Peebles commented that he considers the need. He does not believe there is a need to grow government. He indicated that he considers the school and town budgets and what the taxpayers can afford.

Mr. Brunelle referred to the MRI report that was accepted by the Board of Selectmen. He indicated that we have recently achieved all the milestones contained in that report. Mr. Peebles commented that it is commendable that all milestones were achieved, but noted that the report is six years old. He indicated that he recommended the report needed to be updated.

Mr. Brunelle commented that when reviewing the structure of the police department, in 2012 we had nine full time patrol officers, but there was no need for that number. He indicated that there are currently six, with a need for an additional officer who will not be able to be utilized until next year. Mr. Brunelle noted there are five part time special officers (DARE, SRO, two Sergeants and one Lieutenant). He indicated that structure was approved by previous Boards and implemented. He commented that there is a need for funding for some of those hours.

### **3. PRIOR MEETING MINUTE APPROVAL**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Pascucci

***Move to approve the minutes of the Litchfield Budget Committee meeting on December 18, 2012 as written***

**SECOND:** Mr. Cutter

**VOTE: 6-0-1**

**The motion carried.**

### **4. TOWN BUSINESS**

Mr. Brunelle reported Selectmen are working through the warrant, which have not been approved. He indicated that reprioritization is being considered, although the financial articles will most likely not change.

Mr. Harte asked when the warrant must be finalized. Mr. Brunelle commented that the warrants will be final on January 14 as that is the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Harte commented that the warrant should be finalized prior to the Budget Hearing. Mr. Brunelle indicated the warrant does not have to be approved for the hearing.

Mr. Harte commented that if we present the Town warrant without BOS recommendation, we are sending the wrong message to voters.

Mr. Lambert commented that we have many articles and are trying to simplify the decision process by voters by reprioritizing the warrant. He commented there is a block of articles to restructure. Mr. Lambert indicated we are trying to ensure we deliver the most comprehensive, clear message to the voters so they understand when they cast their votes.

Mr. Harte was concerned that it sends the wrong message to taxpayers if we do not have the final warrant by the time of the hearing. Mr. Brunelle indicated that he will try to reassemble the BOS prior to the hearing to vote on the warrant. He noted that after the hearing the BOS can remove or revise an article.

Mr. Pascucci was concerned about voting on the articles if the task has not been completed. Mr. Harte indicated that the Committee can vote on the articles tonight and any articles that are changed or deferred, can be voted at the next meeting. He noted that the benefit of voting tonight is that Mr. Brunelle can bring our recommendations to the Selectmen.

## **TOWN VOTING**

### **a) Town Budget**

Mr. Harte indicated that there are some revisions in the 2013 Town budget and asked Mr. Brunelle to reopen those budgets and present the revisions for the Budget Committee's vote.

- **4130.10 Executive**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Brunelle

*Move to reopen Account 4130.10, Executive, and approve the revised bottom line of \$112,075 for 2013*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Peeples

**VOTE:** 7-0-0

**The motion carried.**

- **4140.10 Town Clerk**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Brunelle

*Move to reopen Account 4140.10, Town Clerk, and approve the revised bottom line of \$92,310 for 2013*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Cutter

**VOTE:** 7-0-0

**The motion carried.**

- **4150.10 Accounting**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Brunelle

*Move to reopen Account 4150.10, Accounting, and approve the revised bottom line of \$194,452 for 2013*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Cutter

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**The motion carried.**

- **4150.20 Information Technology**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Brunelle

*Move to reopen Account 4150.20, Information Technology, and approve the revised bottom line of \$52,078 for 2013*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Peeples

Mr. Harte asked why the Equipment Purchases line was decreased. Mr. Brunelle indicated that the Board of Selectmen encumbered funds for storage replacement and the Police Department data switch replacement.

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**The motion carried.**

- **4150.40 Tax Collection**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Brunelle

*Move to reopen Account 4150.40, Tax Collection, and approve the revised bottom line of \$91,556 for 2013*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Cutter

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**The motion carried.**

- **4152.10 Assessing**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Brunelle

*Move to reopen Account 4152.10, Assessing, and approve the revised bottom line of \$46,780 for 2013*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Cutter

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**The motion carried.**

- **4155.10 Personnel Administration**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Brunelle

*Move to reopen Account 4155.10, Personnel Administration, and approve the revised bottom line of \$430,741 for 2013*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Cutter

Mr. Spencer asked if the Health Insurance line item for \$4,000 is new. Mr. Brunelle indicated that it is a 2011 refund from LGC to be paid to employees this year. Mr. Lambert explained that employers and employees were overcharged. He noted that the vendor reimburses the total to the town and the town determines the employees' portions.

Mr. Brunelle indicated there is an offset of \$12,874 in revenues.

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**The motion carried.**

- **4191.10 Planning**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Brunelle

*Move to reopen Account 4191.10, Planning, and approve the revised bottom line of \$55,810 for 2013*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Cutter

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**The motion carried.**

- **4194.10 Government Buildings**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Brunelle

*Move to reopen Account 4194.10, Government Buildings, and approve the revised bottom line of \$55,641 for 2013*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Cutter

Mr. Cutter asked why the camera expansion was removed. Mr. Brunelle indicated the Board of Selectmen encumbered end of year funds.

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**The motion carried.**

- **4210.10 Police Administration**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Brunelle

*Move to reopen Account 4210.10, Police Administration, and approve the revised bottom line of \$1,356,134 for 2013*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Barka

Mr. Harte noted that given the comments by Mr. Houle, the reduction by the Budget Committee was accepted. He asked Mr. Brunelle if the Board of Selectmen (BOS) feel the appropriate number hours for officers has been allocated.

Mr. Brunelle commented that the Board of Selectmen is in agreement that the dollar amount is appropriate for the current staff.

Mr. Spencer commented that he expected to hear a motion regarding police cars.

Mr. Brunelle commented that the BOS were given a number by the Budget Committee and reprioritized line items to accommodate the need for the cruisers. He noted that regardless of the amount that is bought or leased, \$54,000 is needed for the cruisers. He explained that there are shortcomings with existing equipment and the BOS believe there is a need to fund the fleet for a year.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Spencer

***Move to amend the revised bottom line for Account 4210.10, Police Administration, of \$1,331,063 for 2013***

Mr. Brunelle commented that Mr. Spencer removed \$27,000 for the cruisers. He indicated that the BOS took the Budget Committee's recommended budget and made changes according to priorities. He indicated that there is a fleet concern and \$10,000 is needed to retrofit car 6 as a patrol car. Mr. Brunelle commented that the BOS would like to manage the fleet appropriately. He noted that removing the cruisers again sends the message that what is needed by the governing body to service the community does not matter. Mr. Brunelle indicated that members of this Committee questioned the scheduling on the duty cycles and the appropriate management of the fleet.

Mr. Spencer commented that the proper way to approach this was to motion to add the \$27,000 back. Mr. Brunelle indicated this item would have been called out at the last meeting, but the town was not able to finish due to the school budget. He commented that the BOS fine tuned all budgets to achieve what was needed.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Harte

***Move to amend Mr. Spencer's motion to amend the bottom line for Account 4210.10 to \$1,334,854***

**SECOND:** by Mr. Barka

Mr. Spencer indicated that Mr. Harte amended a motion to amend the bottom line.

**Mr. Harte withdrew the motion and Mr. Barka withdrew the second.**

A lengthy discussion followed.

Mr. Peebles commented that he was content with the bottom line number the Budget Committee provided. He indicated that, in light of new information raised by Mr. Brunelle regarding the condition of the equipment in existing police cruisers, he suggested the Budget Committee visits the Town and District to observe their requested needs, which should help to alleviate doubts and concerns.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Harte

***Move to amend the bottom line of Account 4210.10, Police Administration, to \$1,342,634***

**SECOND:** by Mr. Barka

Mr. Harte explained that he reduced one vehicle from that budget.

**VOTE: 5-2-0**

**The motion carried.**

**VOTE ON THE AMENDED BOTTOM LINE OF ACCOUNT 4210.10 OF \$1,342,634:  
5-2-0**

**The motion carried.**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Brunelle

*Move to reopen Account 4210.50, Police Support, and approve the revised bottom line of \$139,167 for 2013*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Cutter

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**The motion carried.**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Brunelle

*Move to reopen Account 4220.10, Fire, and approve the revised bottom line of \$504,159 for 2013*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Cutter

Mr. Spencer asked how the training line was reduced. Mr. Harte commented that the Fire budget reflects the Overtime line increased and the Training line decreased.

Mr. Brunelle commented that it is clear that the whole department cannot go to training; however, all mandates for training will be completed. He indicated that the Fire Chief is comfortable with the decrease as he reprioritized his numbers.

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**The motion carried.**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Brunelle

*Move to reopen Account 4241.20, Code Enforcement, and approve the revised bottom line of \$73,174 for 2013*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Cutter

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**The motion carried.**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Brunelle

*Move to reopen Account 4290.10, Emergency Management, and approve the revised bottom line of \$10,036 for 2013*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Cutter

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**The motion carried.**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Brunelle

*Move to reopen Account 4312.10, Road Maintenance, and approve the revised bottom line of \$584,010 for 2013*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Peeples

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**The motion carried.**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Brunelle

*Move to reopen Account 4321.10, Solid Waste, and approve the revised bottom line of \$380,296 for 2013*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Cutter

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**The motion carried.**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Brunelle

*Move to reopen Account 4415, Health Agencies, and approve the revised bottom line of \$1,900 for 2013*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Peeples

Mr. Brunelle explained that the only organization budgeted is the Child Advocacy Center because it is ordered by the courts. He noted that this is the one organization we obligated to support.

Mr. Spencer asked how the account was revised to \$1,900. Mr. Brunelle indicated that this is the amount previously provided.

Mr. Spencer commented that they requested \$2,500. Mr. Brunelle indicated we carried the previous amount forward.

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**The motion carried.**

Mr. Harte indicated that the new bottom line for the 2013 Town of Litchfield budget is \$5,045,145.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Brunelle

*Move to approve a new bottom line of \$5,045,145 for the 2013 Town of Litchfield budget*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Pascucci

**VOTE: 6-1-0**

**The motion carried.**

Mr. Brunelle thanked Committee members for their collaboration and work on the budget.

b) Town Warrant Articles

Article 1: To establish a Building Systems Expendable Trust Fund and transfer of \$20,000 from the unexpended fund balance of December 31, 2012

Mr. Pascucci asked if this would take the place of the town's contingency budget. Mr. Brunelle explained that this is more specific and restrictive and would only be spent for costs associated with unanticipated system failures of key building systems.

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**Article 1 is Recommended**

Article 2: To establish a Library Benefits Expendable Trust Fund and transfer \$8,161 from the unexpended fund balance of December 31, 2012

Mr. Brunelle explained that this fund would make it possible for the Library to provide benefits for existing employees [who are currently on their spouse's insurance], but may become eligible for health benefits.

Mr. Pascucci asked if the article fails and that scenario occurs, how will their benefits be paid. Mr. Brunelle indicated that a special vote will be held to ask for a special appropriation.

Mr. Spencer believes the fund is not necessary.

Mr. Pascucci commented that the Library asked for this in the event an employee needs health insurance. He indicated if that happens the BOS can take it out of the Town Trust Fund. Mr. Brunelle commented that he would have to inquire about Mr. Pascucci's suggestion.

Mr. Harte commented that he was concerned last year when voting for the Town Trust Fund. He indicated that the \$25,000 taken from the unexpended fund balance at that time could have been used to help reduce taxes. He commented that this could be leveraged through the town so another fund would not have to be established just for the Library.

**VOTE: 1-6-0**

**Article 2 was Not Recommended.**

Article 3: To raise and appropriate \$10,000 from the unexpended fund balance for the replacement of the concrete at the entrance to the Town Hall and repair of damaged siding on the entrance columns. He explained this amount represents a portion of the \$28,000 returned to the fund balance from the Town Hall roof repair.

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**Article 3 was Recommended.**

Article 4: To raise and appropriate \$12,500 for the development of engineering and design plans for a sidewalk on Pinecrest Road to connect the bike path on Albuquerque to the Middle School.

Mr. Pascucci mentioned that the project itself will cost approximately \$325,000.

Mr. Cutter commented that this idea originated because some children wrote to the Road Agent. Mr. Brunelle explained that the grant, Safe Passages, was not pursued. He indicated that plans will be needed if we propose the project.

Mr. Cutter asked if there is a need for the path. Mr. Brunelle explained that it will be safer for children to walk to and from the Middle School. He indicated that there are programs where the students (along with the teacher/staff) walk to Darrah Pond from the Middle School. Mr. Brunelle believes the sidewalk is necessary.

Mr. Harte was concerned where the money would come from for the actual project.

Mr. Spencer suggested that the cost of the actual project be included in the article.

**VOTE: 2-5-0**

**Article 4 was Not Recommended.**

Article 5: To raise and appropriate \$25,000 for the implementation of a town wide data network and associated first year service costs

Mr. Harte commented that he does not support this because the more we grow the infrastructure, the more it will cost to run. He indicated that this is not the right time as we just implemented virtualization last year and there is an ongoing expansion.

Mr. Peeples indicated that we completed the backbone and there are islands that need to be connected. He noted that there is no chance of savings unless we connect them.

Mr. Brunelle indicated that departments are not effectively communicating with our existing system and more bandwidth is needed. He noted that this will protect data that has to be backed up as well.

Mr. Cutter asked if this new technology is approved who would be the administrator. Mr. Brunelle indicated that he is the IT Director for the town, although he does not receive a salary.

Mr. Harte commented that he applauds Mr. Brunelle's efforts, but he is only one man. He indicated that the motion to replace the phone system at a BOS meeting failed, and that was put on Mr. Brunelle's shoulders. Mr. Harte observed that the town cannot continue this practice.

Mr. Pascucci commented that one day the town will receive a large IT bill and the more we put into this, the larger the bill. He asked if this is necessary to run the town at a minimum or at the maximum level; or is it necessary because of a requirement from a previous purchase. He asked how the departments that are not connected are working currently.

Mr. Brunelle explained that the phone system is not working efficiently. Mr. Peeples expressed support for the article. He commented that centralizing the service will save the town money.

Mr. Harte asked if there is a less costly way to accomplish this by leveraging services in place today. Mr. Brunelle commented that the challenge is using public access that has no level of quality. He explained that we are taking advantage of VPN service, but there is no guarantee calls will not be impacted. He noted that he met with two different vendors that provide fiber service.

Mr. Harte commented that the town does not have the resources for adding a full time position and we are not sure that all departments want this system. He agreed that this is where the town should be in the long term, but currently it is not the right time. Mr. Harte indicated that we have spent much in the last two years on technology, which has created a pattern. He noted the more

technology you have the more people will use it and more will have to be added.

**VOTE: 3-4-0**

**Article 5 was Not Recommended.**

Article 6: To raise and appropriate \$70,000 for the replacement of two defibrillator/monitors used in Fire Department trucks.

Mr. Pascucci asked why this was not included in the budget if it is a real need. Mr. Brunelle explained that the BOS believed the dollar amount would have been removed from the budget to go to warrant. He noted that the existing equipment is 12-13 years old and more updated units are required. Mr. Brunelle indicated the BOS approved the request and supports the Fire Chief and EMT requests.

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**Article 6 was Recommended.**

Article 7: To raise and appropriate \$10,000 for a planning and engineering study to determine possible designs for a wastewater system in order to encourage further commercial and industrial growth. This will be added to the \$16,500 previously appropriated for economic development purposes.

Mr. Brunelle commented that the BOS will use the funds to undertake such a study to develop an analysis of options. He noted that in order to bring in industry and commercial business we need wastewater control.

Mr. Spencer expressed concern over who would pay to hook up the system. He believes that the developer would be responsible for the cost. Mr. Brunelle commented that we could possibly connect with Manchester or Hudson and develop one of those areas of town. He noted that we have to have access to a system.

Mr. Peeples commented that neither plan has any capacity.

Mr. Pascucci asked if the town has decided we want industry. Mr. Brunelle commented that we came to a decision that some small development is needed in the town as the only revenue is from the taxpayers.

Mr. Pascucci commented that most people do not want industry in the town. Mr. Brunelle commented that we need help without taxes. Mr. Peeples commented that he is going to vote for the article, but will speak against it at Deliberative Session. He commented that every service brought in costs money. He indicated that all studies show the best revenue for growth is no growth. Mr. Peeples noted that the town will have to increase emergency services and once you start that spiral of growth there is no control over the costs.

Mr. Harte indicated that if Mr. Peeples' vote means that he is recommending the article and not just placing the request on the warrant. Mr. Peeples believes the citizens of the town should have the choice.

**VOTE: 1-6-0**

**Article 7 was Not Recommended.**

Mr. Pascucci referred to the defibrillators previously discussed and asked why they cannot be purchased with the unreserved fund balance. Mr. Brunelle indicated that has not yet been addressed.

Article 8: To raise and appropriate \$20,000 to repaint the old Town Hall.

Mr. Cutter asked if there has been an update regarding contributions from the Historical Society. Mr. Brunelle indicated there is no update. He informed the Committee that in the past the County had a program using prisoners to do this type of work, but that program has been discontinued.

Mr. Peeples suggested using permanent paint. Mr. Brunelle commented that he would speak to the BOS regarding permanent paint.

Mr. Cutter asked about the use of the building. Mr. Brunelle indicated that it is used for record storage and the Historical Society.

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**Article 8 was Recommended.**

Mr. Brunelle referred to the article for the development of a wastewater system. He indicated that Mr. Byron sent a message to clarify that the intent of the article is to determine what is going to be need to support a sewer system if there is interest by a commercial developer. He noted that the developer will pay the cost for the hook up of the system. Mr. Brunelle commented that a Planning Board survey reflected the top result was that people wanted some type of commercial development.

Article 9: To raise and appropriate \$18,242 to support requests of Human Service agencies. Mr. Brunelle asked to defer the vote on this article.

Article 10: To raise and appropriate \$24,655 to hire a Teen/Technical Services Librarian for the period of April 1-December 31, 2013. The annual cost of the position will be \$32,789.

**VOTE: 1-6-0**

**Article 10 was Not Recommended.**

Article 11 is a non-monetary account and does not require a vote for recommendation.

Article 12: To increase the membership of the Budget Committee from six to seven members.

**VOTE: 3-3-1**

**The decision is for Article 12 was evenly split.**

Mr. Harte announced that all other articles are non-monetary and do not require a vote for recommendation.

**Advisory Articles:**

Article 2: To see if the Town would like to hold the first session of the Town Meeting on the same day as the School District.

Mr. Spencer commented that he found the meeting was very long and not well attended. He believes it was not successful. Mr. Brunelle indicated this method was used last year and people polled during the meeting indicated they were in favor of having the meetings on the same day.

Mr. Pascucci agreed with Mr. Spencer and commented that last year it was not attended well and the results were not any better.

Mr. Harte agreed. He noted that the intent was to attempt to boost attendance at one session vs the other. He indicated it was a very long day.

**VOTE: 0-6-1**

**Advisory Article 2 was Not Recommended**

**5. SCHOOL BUSINESS**

Mr. Barka informed the Committee that the School District Deliberative Session is scheduled for Wednesday, February 6, 2013 at 7:00 pm. The snow date is February 9, 2013. He reported if the teachers contract is approved, it will be presented at the next meeting.

Mr. Harte asked Committee members how they would like to handle voting on the contract if it is presented at the next meeting.

Mr. Pascucci was not in favor of voting the same night as receiving the contract. Mr. Peoples agreed.

Mr. Spencer suggested if the School Board approves the contract on Wednesday night, an electronic copy can be sent to the Budget Committee on Thursday morning. Mr. Harte indicated that there needs to be a summary of the changes as compared to the old contract.

Mr. Barka commented the Board has not met since Mr. Guerrette emailed information regarding the unfunded mandate for CCSS. He commented that the state already funds education at \$3,500 per student and CCSS is no different. Mr. Barka indicated that the District is moving to CCSS because it is a better set of curriculum. He noted that we have been delaying buying curriculum materials as it was anticipated that CCSS would be implemented.

## **6. MEMBER INPUT**

Mr. Pascucci asked to make a statement regarding an email relative to comments that Mr. Barka made [that reductions on the School District budget were too deep] and Mr. Miller's statement [that the reductions will cripple the District]. He indicated that the Budget Committee received a detailed list of the reductions. Mr. Pascucci commented that we seemed to work as a team and came to a consensus on the budget. He noted that we reduced the budget comparable to this year's budget, which is not a detriment. He indicated that both the Budget Committee and School Board did a good job and the budget was reduced without sacrificing any of the educational advances or goals recommended by Dr. Cochrane.

Mr. Pascucci commented that this budget process went well and he asked that Mr. Barka refrain from using words that blame the Budget Committee for reductions. He suggested that the Budget Committee explain that we preserved what the Superintendent requested and made reasonable reductions. He indicated if there is a disagreement it should be discussed; otherwise we should approach Deliberative Session with the appropriate attitude.

Mr. Peeples commented that in the past the opening slide of the budget presentation by the Board at Deliberative reflects the proposed budget and the reductions made by the Budget Committee. Mr. Spencer clarified that it is unknown if that approach will be used this year.

Mr. Pascucci commented that he heard Mr. York state that the Budget Committee will present their budget at the Budget Hearing and the School Board will have their opportunity at Deliberative Session. He indicated that he disagrees with that tone. He suggested we should present the same budget as a team. Mr. Pascucci expressed hope that it is not the goal to adversely split the community as has been done in the past. He asked Mr. Barka to bring this concern to the School Board.

Mr. Barka agreed that the Budget Committee and School Board should work collaboratively. He expressed belief that the District budget was reduced more than he hoped.

Mr. Pascucci commended Mr. Barka for accurately portraying his point of view throughout the budget process.

Mr. Spencer commented that the tone of the School Board changed dramatically when Mr. Barka shared the Budget Committee's ideas and not their intent. Mr. Harte commented that sharing is appropriate, but it was taken out of context.

Mr. Barka clarified that any communication he received regarding questions or comments about the budget he forwarded to Dr. Cochrane and Mr. Martin in preparation, with a copy to the School Board Chair.

## **7. PUBLIC INPUT**

Jason Guerrette, 11 Perry Court, commented that Mr. Brunelle stated he has never heard any citizen express their request for reduced services in the town. He indicated that the people that want reduced services in the town will not come out and express those statements for fear of public criticism. Mr. Guerrette commented that he consistently expresses his opinions. He

indicated that he would like to know what number it will take for the governing body to listen. He commented that the Board of Selectmen and School Board continuously will ask for more, but will not divulge the number of people it takes to ask for less services and a reduction in taxes.

Mr. Guerrette stated that it is a conflict of interest for a representative of the governing body to advocate for his own IT budget. He indicated that there are people in town that would like the Budget Committee to make deeper reductions. He noted that there are people living on the edge in this town, but still have a right to express their thoughts and concerns on how we spend our budgets. Mr. Guerrette commented that tax money is spent in the form of encumbrances, which are a slight of hand. He indicated that just because the governing body was granted the authority to make these decisions, does not make it right. The government is supposed to find ways to protect the people's liberties.

Mr. Brunelle commented that in the three years he has been on the Board of Selectmen he has not heard anyone express the town should provide less services. He indicated that the Board of Selectmen hold meetings and open forums that no one attends. He noted that we are looking for feedback and are trying to do the best for the community. Mr. Brunelle stated that anyone can call him by phone at 262-3901 and express their concerns, opinions or ideas about reducing spending. He indicated that a statement was made that people are publicly criticized when speaking out. He commented that no member of the Board of Selectmen has done so. Mr. Brunelle indicated that the Board of Selectmen wants to hear community input. He commented that he did not take the position for power, but to help the townspeople.

George Lambert, 3 Lydston Lane, commented that although he is a Selectman, contrary to Mr. Brunelle's statement he is one of those citizens who has expressed a desire for a reduction of services and taxes. He thanked Mr. Brunelle for his measures in reducing the budget. He indicated it is the right thing to do for the citizens who need the money. Mr. Lambert commented that there are times when he believes we should make deeper reductions and people come to Deliberative Session and add the money back into the budget. He indicated that it is our responsibility to know the acceptable level.

Mr. Brunelle referred to Mr. Guerrette's statement that it is a conflict of interest for a member of the governing body to advocate for his own budget. Mr. Brunelle indicated that he abstains from most of those votes. He commented that he presents the budget, ideas, and direction, but typically abstains from voting on those budgets.

Mr. Lambert confirmed that Mr. Brunelle does abstain and that he asked for Mr. Brunelle to address the phone system with a \$15,000 reduction.

- **Upcoming meetings**

The next meeting of the Budget Committee will be held on January 3, 2013.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Lambert

***Move to adjourn.***

**SECOND:** Mr. Cutter

**VOTE:** 7-0-0

**The motion carried unanimously.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

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

**Date approved:** **January 10, 2013**