

Minutes of the Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting

Held on December 20, 2012

The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, December 20, 2012 at Campbell High School, 1 Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

PRESENT: J Harte (Chairman), R Peebles (Vice Chairman), B Spencer, A Cutter, C Pascucci, C Couture, D Barka (School Board Representative), G Lambert (Board of Selectmen Representative), J Brunelle (Selectman), J Hoch (Town Administrator), B Cochrane (Superintendent), S Martin (Business Administrator)

ABSENT:

Mr. Harte called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. PUBLIC INPUT

Patricia Waggoner, 11 Broadview Drive, commented that while listening to the discussion the previous meetings, the Budget Committee seemed supportive of technology in the schools. She explained that she has been involved in the district schools for eight years and currently is employed at LMS. She noted that every day she deals with students who try to use the technology in the school. Mrs. Waggoner indicated that it is frustrating for the students as, for example, the computers in the library are old and very slow. She commented that many of the students have indicated that it is quicker to complete their projects at home. Mrs. Waggoner asked the Committee to consider this. She commented that when she first moved to Litchfield she did not understand the budget process and many times when going to the polls would look at the recommendations on the articles to gauge her vote. Mrs. Waggoner indicated that last year she was disappointed to see that the School Board and Budget Committee disagreed on their recommendations on the ballot and it was confusing. She asked the Budget Committee to consider that voters do take these things into consideration when voting. She thanked the Budget Committee for their work on the budget process and expressed appreciation for their dedication.

3. PRIOR MEETING MINUTE APPROVAL

There were no minutes to approve.

4. TOWN BUSINESS

Mr. Lambert reported that the Selectmen did not meet this week.

Mr. Spencer asked when the default budget will be posted. Mr. Brunelle indicated that it is available on the portal.

5. SCHOOL BUSINESS

Mr. Barka reported that the School Board met last night and discussed proposed reductions to the budget. He commented that the Board members were concerned with the potential reductions.

He noted that the School Board was concerned with being able to cover fixed cost increases. Mr. Barka commented that when considering reductions averages do not work because different things occur each year. He indicated that if the Budget Committee recommends deep reductions there will not be much left for technology. He reported that the School Board believes there is much need for technology and curriculum in the budget. Mr. Barka indicated the Board was not in support of the proposed reductions.

Mr. Harte commented that he appreciates their position; however, the Budget Committee needs to determine how to deal with a \$1.7M increase and a \$900,000 decrease in revenue. He acknowledged that averages may not work where money has been moved around. Mr. Harte indicated that Committee members worked hard to provide recommendations on areas to reduce. He noted that comments were made that the Budget Committee reductions will place the district in a bad situation and they will have to reduce services to students. He commented that the Budget Committee cannot tell taxpayers taxes are increasing. He indicated that we are trying to determine options and make recommendations without forcing a reduction in force.

Mr. Pascucci commented that bottom line reductions total approximately \$500,000 - \$600,000 and Dr. Cochrane agreed with some of those reductions. He noted that the School Board was not happy with some of the reductions suggested by Dr. Cochrane. Mr. Pascucci indicated that these reductions may help the budget to pass, but Mr. Miller made a statement that these reductions will cripple the district. He commented that the Budget Committee's options are to approve the proposed reductions, make some reductions, or make none.

Mr. Barka agreed that the Budget Committee has to be responsible to the taxpayers. He noted that it is the Budget Committee's budget and you have to support it. However, Mr. Barka wanted to know if the Committee can agree that the budget does not include technology. He clarified that Mr. Miller's statement regarding the district being crippled meant that the district will be significantly behind the default budget and will have no reserve funds next year.

Mr. Spencer indicated that many of the reductions do not impact the schools. Others were suggested to be placed on the warrant. He indicated that we are not denying the district what it needs, but that the issue is not correct. He noted that the Budget Committee has no intention to hurt the district.

Dr. Cochrane commented that he recommended no warrant articles. He indicated that it is the Budget Committee's responsibility to set the budget, which will be recommended.

Mrs. Couture commented that her experience is when going through the exercise, we are just discussing reductions. She indicated that at the end of the night, the total reductions may be different.

Mr. Peebles agreed that technology is important. He commented that if the district cuts athletics to support technology and not maintaining assets it is a disservice. He indicated that we have to deliver a budget the people can afford. Mr. Peebles noted that other areas can be reduced without sacrificing technology.

- **SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET VOTING**

- a) Litchfield Middle School

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to approve the FY14 Recommended LMS Salaries & Benefits budget bottom line of \$3,495,097.

SECOND: by Mr. Cutter

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried.

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to approve the FY14 Recommended LMS Operating budget bottom line of \$462,331.

SECOND: by Mr. Cutter

MOTION: by Mr. Pascucci

Move to reduce Account 1021262000-430 by \$9,082

SECOND: by Mr. Lambert

Mr. Pascucci believes that the hallway carpeting replacement can wait one year as it is not a safety hazard.

MOTION: by Mr. Lambert

Move to reduce the FY14 Recommended LMS Operating budget bottom line by \$25,380.04.

Mr. Lambert withdrew his motion.

MOTION: by Mr. Peeples

Move to reduce Account 1021262000-430 by \$18,578 (hallway carpet and water bubblers)

SECOND: by Mr. Pascucci

Mr. Spencer indicated that the total reduction is in error.

Mr. Peeples withdrew the motion. Mr. Pascucci withdrew the second.

MOTION: by Mr. Peeples

Move to reduce Account 1021262000-430 by \$13,830

SECOND: by Mr. Pascucci

VOTE: 3-5-0

The motion failed.

MOTION: by Mr. Cutter

Move to reduce the FY14 Recommended LMS Operating Budget bottom line by \$25,380

SECOND: by Mr. Lambert

Mr. Cutter indicated that he arrived at the total reduction by looking at three accounts: fuel oil, utilities, and building and maintenance. He explained that after using a 3 year average based on usage and actual expenditures, he believes the costs are excessive. Mr. Cutter commented that

the motion is a total reduction from the three areas mentioned.

Dr. Cochrane indicated that this is one area where averages do not work. He explained the cost of oil is \$3.29 per gallon.

Mr. Cutter commented that the number seems over inflated every year. Mr. Spencer agreed. Mr. Martin clarified that last winter was mild and all budgeted costs for utilities and oil are based on three year averages.

Budget Committee members and the Superintendent discussed past use over the last 10 years. Mr. Peeples commented that business news predictions for oil are hinting that oil is headed toward \$50 per barrel. He indicated that the propane and oil are trending down according to a government utilities site.

Mrs. Couture observed that three Committee members suggested reductions in the same areas: utilities, supplies, and maintenance. She noted that some believe there is room there, and some do not. She commented that we should all agree on a number in between to recommend.

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to amend Mr. Cutter's motion to reduce the FY14 Recommended LMS Operating budget by \$20,000

SECOND: by Mrs. Couture

VOTE: 7-1-0, with Mr. Barka opposing

The motion carried.

VOTE ON THE AMENDED FY14 RECOMMENDED LMS OPERATING BUDGET

BOTTOM LINE OF \$442,331: 7-1-0, with Mr. Barka opposing.

The motion carried.

b) Campbell High School

CHS Operating

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to approve the FY14 Recommended CHS Operating budget bottom line of \$1,035,452

SECOND: by Mr. Pascucci

MOTION: by Mr. Cutter

Move to reduce the FY14 Recommended CHS Operating budget bottom line by \$80,000

SECOND: by Mr. Pascucci

Mr. Cutter commented that the reduction is reasonable and expressed appreciation that the Superintendent agrees with the reduction. Dr. Cutter commented that the use of averages makes sense with this reduction.

VOTE: 7-1-0, with Mr. Barka opposing

The motion carried.

**VOTE ON THE AMENDED FY14 RECOMMENDED CHS OPERATING BUDGET
BOTTOM LINE OF \$955,451.93: 7-1-0, with Mr. Barka opposing
The motion carried.**

CHS Salaries/Benefits

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to approve the FY14 Recommended CHS Salaries & Benefits budget bottom line of \$4,137,967

SECOND: by Mr. Cutter

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried.

c) Technology
Operating budget

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to approve the FY14 Recommended Technology Operating budget bottom line of \$388,711

SECOND: by Mr. Cutter

Mr. Cutter commented that he was challenged with this budget as a communicative pass to the Committee. He believes there is a need for new computers, but is struggling with how to accomplish the task. Mr. Cutter expressed concern that approving this budget will cause it to fail, which will result in another default budget. He believes that having something is better than having nothing. Mr. Cutter agreed with Mr. Harte's proposal to reduce the bottom line by \$81,452 and recommending the School Board put \$42,000 on the warrant.

Mr. Harte commented that he heard concerns about testing and asked why this budget should not be reduced.

Dr. Cochrane indicated if we make a reduction of that magnitude we will have to rework the technology plan. In this case, he explained we will have to come back with a proposal. Dr. Cochrane observed if we are going to engage students in terms of research and writing, we need the equipment. He commented that students should be writing at a higher grade level with a keyboard in two years. He was concerned that without the equipment, students will have more access and improve their skills at home.

Mr. Harte expressed appreciation for Dr. Cochrane's concerns. He commented that statements were made at the School Board meeting that the systems in the schools need to be upgraded. He indicated that he was going to recommend half of his original reduction. Mr. Harte asked what will happen if half of the upgrades are reduced.

Mr. Barka indicated that all the computers and mobile carts at GMS are virtually unusable.

Mr. Lambert commented that he has been in this business a long time. He indicated that he heard comments about computers that take a long time to boot. He suggested if the operating system is put on a thumb drive computers are faster and operate better.

Dr. Cochrane commented that we have a 5 year plan from which we budgeted; however, with this type of reduction the plan is not much use. He noted that we will have to rework the plan if the reduction is approved.

Mr. Peeples commented that he has been struggling with the technology budget. He indicated that he volunteered at GMS when there was no technology budget and understands the situation. He noted that was excited about replacing computers at GMS. Mr. Peeples agreed with Mr. Lambert's suggestion about putting the operating system on thumb drives. He agreed with Mr. Harte's recommendation and suggested that \$42,000 be placed on the warrant. He asked the district to give the voters a chance to prove they support technology.

Mr. Barka commented that virtualization is the correct path as there is no room at GMS.

Mrs. Couture indicated if you think virtualization and the need for laptops is important and matches with their goals, we need to support it.

Mr. Cutter expressed concern that the operating budget may fail. Mrs. Couture indicated that is the School Board's risk to take.

Mr. Pascucci commented that it is their risk, but it is the Budget Committee's budget. He agreed with Mr. Lambert's statements and Dr. Cochrane's statements. He noted that we recommended the budget last year, which failed and was \$100,000 more than the default. Mr. Pascucci commented that statements were made that you are doubling up next year because of the default budget this year. He noted that it could be worse if the operating budget fails next year.

Mr. Martin clarified that we are talking about software leases and equipment. He noted that the budget has under \$200,000 in leases and new/replacement equipment. He indicated that in this year's default we are just under \$100,000. Mr. Martin commented if the reduction is deep we will be in another default-like year in terms of maintenance.

Mr. Lambert commented that there is money in this budget. He indicated that there are different ways to resolve the technology problem. Mr. Lambert shared that he taught in server management school and technical college for some time. He commented that he would encourage being innovative rather than losing teachers or getting the default budget. He noted that this requires different thinking and he would support a more compelling plan.

Mr. Barka supported the direction the IT Director is moving. He agreed that there are more innovative methods, but there are 200+ teachers and 40+ end users, which is difficult to keep up and running.

Mr. Peebles expressed support for a virtual environment at GMS. Dr. Cochrane commented that he understands the Budget Committee's position, but a reduction of \$80,000 will push us back to where we were last year and this budget would be a significant gain.

MOTION: by Mr. Cutter

Move to reduce the FY14 Recommended Technology Operating budget bottom line by \$81,452, with a recommendation for the School Board to put \$42,000 on the warrant

SECOND: by Mr. Pascucci

Mr. Cutter commented that he believes something is better than nothing. He indicated he would rather market a reasonable budget to the community.

Mr. Pascucci agreed and indicated that the issue is that the budget failed last year. He indicated the result was that we are that much further behind and have to catch up. He was concerned that the district could get the default budget for the second year and the following year the district may have to "triple up".

Mr. Barka clarified that the district is not playing catch up because they are one year behind. He noted that the School Board considered the age of the computers. He commented that an \$80,000 reduction is not going to fund this year of the technology plan. He disagreed with any reduction to technology.

Mr. Spencer asked Mr. Harte what his reduction represents. Mr. Harte indicated that the reduction reflects removing: the upgrades at all schools, virtualization, a projector and one of two laptops. Mr. Harte noted that the revised reduction would keep the upgrades and reduce \$42,000 for virtualization, which is a longer term plan.

MOTION: by Mr. Harte

Move to amend Mr. Cutter's motion to reduce the FY14 Recommended Technology Operating budget bottom line by \$42,000

SECOND: by Mr. Pascucci

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried.

**VOTE TO APPROVE THE AMENDED FY14 RECOMMENDED TECHNOLOGY OPERATING BUDGET BOTTOM LINE OF \$346,711: 7-1-0, with Mr. Barka opposing.
The motion carried.**

Salaries/Benefits

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to approve the FY14 CHS Salaries & Benefits budget bottom line of \$4,137,967

SECOND: by Mr. Cutter

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried.

d) Curriculum

Salaries & Benefits:

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to approve the FY14 Curriculum Recommended Salaries & Benefits budget bottom line of \$162,646

SECOND: by Mr. Cutter

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried.

Operating budget:

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to approve the FY14 Curriculum Recommended Operating budget bottom line of \$45,850

SECOND: by Mrs. Couture

MOTION: by Mr. Cutter

Move to reduce Account 1000221000-610 by \$250; Account 1011221300-320 by \$500; Account 1021221300-320 by \$900, for a total reduction of \$1,650

SECOND: by Mr. Peeples

Mr. Cutter commented that the reduction was based on the discussion at the previous meeting, during which the response was the accounts were level funded. He indicated that the reduction is justified.

VOTE: 7-1-0, with Mr. Barka opposing

The motion carried.

VOTE ON THE AMENDED FY14 RECOMMENDED CURRICULUM OPERATING BUDGET BOTTOM LINE OF \$44,200: 7-1-0, with Mr. Barka opposing

The motion carried.

e) Function 4000

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to approve the FY14 Function 4000 Recommended Operating budget bottom line of \$103,754

SECOND: by Mr. Cutter

MOTION: by Mr. Cutter

Move to reduce Account 1031460000-720, CHS Building Improvement, by \$14,000

SECOND: by Mr. Pascucci

Mr. Cutter believes the storage building is a want and not a need and it can wait.

VOTE: 5-3-0

The motion carried.

MOTION: by Mrs. Couture

Move to reduce Account 1011420000-450, GMS Site Development, by \$53,500

SECOND: by Mr. Spencer

Mrs. Couture indicated that capital projects can be addressed with the reduction of the CHS bond.

Mr. Pascucci clarified that the reduction in the bond means we are paying off something voted for ten years ago. He commented that there will be some savings, but the reduction of the bond will help offset huge increases we will have. He indicated that the GMS paving project is important because maintenance is a hot topic and many people target the Budget Committee for reductions to maintenance.

Mr. Cutter commented that this is a need and he believes it should be included.

Mr. Spencer indicated that this is something the Superintendent removed from the budget because of his concerns about the budget.

Mr. Barka commented that he spoke with the Facility Manager and the Principal at GMS and they feel this is necessary and will provide more space as well. Mrs. Couture agreed that the parking lot needs repaving, but it can wait one year. She commented that the reduction does not directly affect students and is more of an inconvenience to those who use the lot.

VOTE: 4-3-1

The motion carried.

VOTE ON THE AMENDED FY14 RECOMMENDED FUNCTION 4000 BUDGET BOTTOM LINE OF \$36,254: 5-3-0, with Mr. Barka, Mr. Pascucci, and Mr. Cutter opposing.

The motion carried.

f) Grants Fund

Salaries & Benefits:

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to approve the FY14 Grants Salaries & Benefits budget bottom line of \$387,129

SECOND: by Mr. Cutter

Mr. Lambert expressed concern that we are accepting “free money” and will be including positions and programs funded by the money in the budget. Mr. Martin indicated that most of the grants are funding special education. He commented that we can choose to decline, but will have to take the money out of the general fund. Mr. Martin clarified that the kindergarten grant is not included in this grant budget.

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried.

Operating budget:

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to approve the FY14 Grants Recommended Operating budget bottom line of \$187,871

SECOND: by Mr. Cutter

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried.

g) Food Service
Salaries & Benefits:

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to approve the FY14 Food Service Salaries & Benefits budget bottom line of \$254,595

SECOND: by Mr. Spencer

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried.

Operating budget:

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to approve the FY14 Food Service Recommended Operating budget bottom line of \$343,881

SECOND: by Mr. Cutter

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried.

h) Special Services

Salaries & Benefits:

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to approve the FY14 Special Services Salaries & Benefits budget bottom line of \$2,641,106

SECOND: by Mr. Cutter

MOTION: by Mr. Pascucci

Move to reduce Account 1000120100-110, District Wide Special Education Salaries/Benefits, by \$84,035

SECOND: by Mr. Spencer

Mr. Pascucci commented that a good case was made regarding why the Behavioral Specialist is needed. He indicated that this is a new position and he believes that according to the 2003 and 2004 warrant articles regarding new positions, the voters indicated they do not want new positions included in the budget.

Mr. Barka indicated that this is a new position, but required by students in the system. He expressed concern that we are not servicing them effectively and that there are 25 students on the spectrum that could be serviced by this position.

Mr. Pascucci commented this is not about the money. He indicated that this position falls into the new position category and the voters were clear in their intent. He noted that approving this position is going against the will of the voters. Mr. Barka disagreed with the rationale.

Mr. Spencer commented that this is a good position, but should be on the warrant as the voters have decided.

Mrs. Couture commented that this position does not need to be included in the budget, but the other two positions should be reinstated.

MOTION: by Mrs. Couture

Move to reinstate \$71,000 in the Special Education Salary Account

SECOND: by Mr. Spencer

Mr. Pascucci commented that he has made a motion to remove a position and should be addressed before Mrs. Couture's motion to reinstate another position. Mr. Spencer indicated that the Budget Committee does not have the authority to remove a position.

Mr. Pascucci commented that we are removing the exact dollars funding this position. He indicated that once we vote for the reduction we can agree on Mrs. Couture's motion.

Mr. Harte suggested that the Committee vote on whether to reduce the funds for that position and Mrs. Couture's motion will be to add the funds into out of district tuition. Mr. Spencer commented that Mrs. Couture withdraw her motion and we can table Mr. Pascucci's motion. He indicated we can open the Operating budget and address Mrs. Couture's motion there.

Mrs. Couture withdrew her motion. Mr. Spencer withdrew his second.

The motion made by Mr. Pascucci was tabled.

Operating Budget

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to approve the FY14 Recommended Special Services Operating budget bottom line of \$1,413,662

SECOND: by Mr. Pascucci

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to add \$71,000 to Account 1000120100-569, Handicapped Tuition

SECOND: by Mr. Spencer

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried.

The operating budget motion was tabled.

Salaries & Benefits (continued)

VOTE on Mr. Pascucci's motion to reduce \$84,035 from Account 1000120100-110: 7-0-1, with Mr. Barka abstaining.

Mr. Pascucci commented that this is a new position and the Committee should honor the will of the voters. Mr. Barka indicated this is a required position.

Mr. Martin clarified the position is not IEP required. He explained that Mrs. Bandurski felt the position would help students from being coded.

Mrs. Couture commented that both positions (Behavioral Specialist and Student Support Services Teacher) are needed, but she believes that reorganization is necessary.

MOTION: by Mr. Pascucci

Move to reduce Account 1021120100-110, LMS Special Education Salaries, by 69,378.43

SECOND: by Mr. Spencer

VOTE: 6-2-0, with Mr. Barka and Mr. Cutter opposing

The motion carried.

VOTE ON THE AMENDED FY14 RECOMMENDED SPECIAL SERVICES SALARIES/ BENEFITS BOTTOM LINE OF \$2,487,693: 7-1-0, with Mr. Barka opposing.

The motion carried.

Operating budget:

Mr. Cutter asked what is the total of the School Board recommended Special Services transportation account? Mr. Martin indicated it is \$372,870, which reflects the reduction of a bus.

MOTION: by Mrs. Couture

Move to reduce Account 1000272000-519, District Wide Special Services Transportation, by \$35,174

SECOND: by Mr. Spencer

Mr. Cutter commented that based on the analysis and discussions, he recommended a further reduction to reduce the transportation line to \$277,421.16. He asked for Committee feedback.

Mr. Barka commented that would be \$20,000 below the current budget. Mr. Martin indicated that to date \$292,000 has been spent and/or encumbered for District Wide Special Services Transportation.

Budget Committee members reviewed and discussed the transportation data analysis provided by Mr. Spencer. Mr. Spencer indicated that Mr. Cutter's recommended reduction is excessive.

Mr. Martin indicated that we don't always know exactly how many students we will be transporting or with whom we can bundle transportation. The School Board has committed to return any funds under spent in this account. Mr. Martin indicated that if this account is reduced too deeply and we need the funds, we will have to find the money.

Mr. Cutter believes there is excess in the account, but would like to ensure adequate funding.

MOTION: by Mr. Cutter

Move to amend the motion by Mrs. Couture to reduce Account 1000272000-519 by \$54,022

SECOND: by Mr. Pascucci

VOTE: 7-1-0, with Mr. Barka opposing

The motion carried.

MOTION: by Mr. Cutter

Move to approve Account 1000272000-519 for a bottom line of \$318,848

SECOND: by Mr. Pascucci

VOTE: 7-1-0, with Mr. Barka opposing

The motion carried.

Tabled Operating Budget Approval Vote Re-opened:

VOTE ON THE AMENDED FY14 RECOMMENDED SPECIAL SERVICES

OPERATING BUDGET BOTTOM LINE OF \$1,430,640: 8-0-0

The motion carried.

i) District-Wide

Operating budget:

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to approve the FY14 District-Wide Recommended Operating budget bottom line of \$1,452,564

SECOND: by Mr. Cutter

MOTION: by Mr. Pascucci

Move to reduce Account 1000262000-330 by \$35,000

SECOND: by Mr. Spencer

Mr. Pascucci commented that funds are not well spent for the purpose of a building assessment study.

VOTE: 7-1-0, with Mr. Barka opposing

The motion carried.

Mr. Cutter asked how the fuel cost was determined. Mr. Martin indicated that no adjustment was taken last year.

MOTION: by Mr. Cutter

Move to reduce Account 1000272100-626 by \$3,000

SECOND: by Mrs. Couture

Mr. Cutter commented that based on the average of past usage, the reduction is warranted.

VOTE: 7-1-0, with Mr. Barka opposing

The motion carried.

MOTION: by Mr. Pascucci

Move to reduce Account 100026300-734 by \$4,700

SECOND: by Mr. Cutter

Mr. Pascucci indicated that it is not necessary to purchase the top dresser.

Mr. Cutter asked what a top dresser does. Mr. Pascucci indicated that a top dresser is a large machine that spreads sand or mulch.

Mr. Cutter asked if Mr. Pascucci is recommending the district continue to rent a top dresser. Mr. Pascucci indicated that it is not used often and would create a storage issue and unnecessary fuel and maintenance costs.

VOTE: 7-1-0, with Mr. Barka opposing

The motion carried.

VOTE ON THE AMENDED FY14 DISTRICT WIDE OPERATING BUDGET BOTTOM LINE OF \$1,409,865: 7-1-0, with Mr. Barka opposing

The motion carried.

Salaries & Benefits:

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to approve the FY14 District-Wide Salaries & Benefits budget bottom line of \$405,044

SECOND: by Mr. Cutter

Mrs. Couture mentioned that she requested attrition information for this year over last year, but has not received the information. Dr. Cochrane provided a summary of staff hiring for the last three years.

Mr. Peeples inquired about the expanded seasonal grounds services. Dr. Cochrane explained that the plan is to try to restructure Buildings & Grounds. He reported that Site Facility Managers now report to Mr. Martin. He indicated that Mr. Bennett would better serve that time addressing purchasing and purchasing issues. Dr. Cochrane indicated the expanded seasonal services are to make up for what will be missing in Grounds.

Attrition

With reference to the hiring analysis that was provided to the Committee, Mr. Martin explained that this reflects the number of new hires, but not the total number of what is processed. He noted that rehires and transfers are not included in this number.

Mrs. Couture clarified what she asked for was the increase and decrease to the budget with regard to turnover. Mr. Martin indicated that the spread sheet is not current.

Dr. Cochrane commented that the research on teaching effectiveness and teacher effectiveness is significant. He explained it has been noted that an effective teacher can yield 1 ½ years growth. He noted that teacher excellence is most important. Dr. Cochrane stated that our salary scale is below the state average. He indicated that we turned over three math teachers and 4 science teachers, which could be attributed to several different reasons.

Mr. Lambert was called away from the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

MOTION: by Mr. Cutter

Move to reduce \$175,000 from the FY14 District Wide budget bottom line

SECOND: by Mr. Pascucci

Mr. Cutter commented that he motioned the number to start a discussion. He believes a 1.2% reduction is conservative.

Dr. Cochrane reported that he received a call from the Deputy Commissioner of Education regarding adequacy aid. He noted that the “hold harmless” clause will not be applied this year. He indicated that we do not know the amount of federal funds we will receive and if we do not have an average year we will be significantly impacted.

Mr. Martin indicated that he was just notified that new PPACA fees will cost approximately an additional \$86,000. He commented that we received lower a health insurance rate increase.

Mrs. Couture commented the concern is because of the unusually high turnover we may not see the savings in attrition next year. She believes the reduction is too high.

MOTION: by Mrs. Couture

Move to amend Mr. Cutter’s motion to reduce the FY14 District Wide budget bottom line by \$125,000

SECOND: by Mr. Spencer

MOTION: by Mr. Pascucci

Move to amend Mrs. Couture’s motion to reduce the FY14 District Wide budget bottom line by \$150,000

SECOND: by Mr. Peeples

Mr. Cutter indicated the reduction is fair.

Mr. Spencer commented that there have been years when the School Board included a line for attrition and some years when the Budget Committee put a line for attrition in the budget. He noted that the School Board did not do so in this budget.

VOTE: 6-1-0, with Mr. Barka opposing
The motion carried.

VOTE ON THE AMENDED FY14 RECOMMENDED DISTRICT WIDE OPERATING BUDGET BOTTOM LINE OF \$255,044: 6-1-0, with Mr. Barka opposing
The motion carried.

Mr. Harte indicated that the new bottom line for the FY14 Recommended School Board Budget is \$20,990,591. He commented that reductions total \$582,784.

Mr. Spencer asked when the Budget Committee will receive the district default budget. Mr. Martin indicated he will provide the default budget for the January 3, 2013 meeting.

Mr. Spencer commented that he has worked with many Superintendents and found this year very refreshing. He noted that there was good dialogue and good resolutions. He thanked Dr. Cochrane for working with the Budget Committee.

Mr. Harte expressed appreciation for the cooperation from the school district. He noted that all responses to Committee members' questions were answered within 24 hours.

Mr. Pascucci commented that the information flow was excellent and the discussions were refreshing.

Dr. Cochrane commented that it has been a difficult budget year. He noted that he believes in candor and expects the same in return.

6. MEMBER INPUT

Mr. Cutter expressed appreciation of the work to prepare for tonight's meeting. He thanked Committee members.

Mr. Harte commented that having the information up front was very helpful.

Mr. Spencer asked about the meeting schedule. He noted that the Budget Committee should be voting on warrants at the next meeting on December 27.

7. PUBLIC INPUT

Jason Guerrette, 11 Perry Court, mentioned that there was a comment by Mr. Barka that we have no control over much of the budget. Mr. Guerrette indicated that we control every hire and we have control on every dollar we spend. He commented that it is not appropriate to ask people to spend over a long time. He noted that no one likes cutting staff and soon there will not be anywhere to cut.

Mr. Guerrette mentioned a comment regarding the Behavioral Specialist that “the position could prevent students from being coded”. He indicated that is offensive and dangerous to say. He commented that it speaks to the culture in the district.

Mr. Barka indicated that what was meant by the comment was that the position could provide assistance to students before they fall off the edge.

- **Upcoming meetings**

The next meeting of the Budget Committee will be held on December 27, 2012 at Town Hall.

MOTION: by Mr. Cutter

Move to adjourn.

SECOND: Mrs. Couture

VOTE: 7-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

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

Date approved: **January 10, 2013**