

Minutes of the Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting

Held on December 6, 2012

The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, December 6, 2012 at Campbell High School, 1 Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

PRESENT: R Peeples (Vice Chairman), B Spencer, A Cutter, C Pascucci, D Barka (School Board Representative), G Lambert (Board of Selectmen Representative), B Cochrane (Superintendent), S Martin (Business Administrator), Scott Thompson (Principal, GMS), Kyle Hancock (Director of IT)

ABSENT: J Harte (Chairman), C Couture

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

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

3. PRIOR MEETING MINUTE APPROVAL

Approval for the minutes of December 4, 2012 will be deferred until the December 11, 2012 Budget Committee meeting.

4. TOWN BUSINESS

There was no town business.

5. SCHOOL BUSINESS

Mr. Barka reported the Board met December 4. He noted that they began discussing wasrrant articles.

- **SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET REVIEW**

- a) Griffin Memorial School

Budget Committee members welcomed Mr. Thompson to the meeting and introduced themselves.

GMS Salaries

Regular Education Teacher Salaries

Mr. Cutter queried about the number of teachers going from 20 in 2012 to 19 in 2013 and back to 20 for 2014. Mr. Barka commented that enrollment projections were expected to be lower, but actual enrollments were higher, which required an additional teacher. He noted that it was included in the budget based on enrollment projections.

Dr. Cochrane indicated that if enrollment drops we may have to reduce a teacher. He noted that we reduced the position because enrollments were projected low. He explained that actual

enrollments were higher than projected and we hired a teacher. Dr. Cochrane indicated that it was discussed with the School Board and agreed that a decision to reduce a teacher can be made in the Spring if enrollments are not solid. He explained that if the position is not filled, the funds would stay in the budget in the event an additional teacher is needed or it will be part of the year end funds. He indicated that is a fiscally responsible approach.

Mr. Spencer agreed that holding the money in the budget in the event an additional teacher is needed is an excellent approach. He asked if Dr. Cochrane would actually reduce a teacher. Dr. Cochrane indicated if enrollments are low a teacher may need to be reduced. He noted that was not necessary last year because a teacher retired.

Paraprofessional/Monitor Salaries

Mr. Martin commented that in the Paraprofessionals/Monitor Salaries account the only new item is additional hours for monitor training. Mr. Thompson explained that the first recess monitors follow the students into the cafeteria and the next shift arrives 30 minutes early and covers the second recess.

Reading Education Programs

Mr. Spencer referred to the Summer Reading program and asked if the numbers are the same as those agreed to last year. Mr. Martin indicated that the School Board reduced the item by \$1,000 and it was decided that one of the teachers will coordinate the program.

Co-Curricular Salaries

Mr. Spencer queried about what was budgeted for Co-Curricular salaries. Mr. Martin explained that we budget per contract per year. He indicated that in May/June the Principals and Superintendent will review the co-curricular and athletics budgets and determine what will be allotted to each school.

Mr. Lambert asked if the money in the CBA is a placeholder and is allocated to the three schools. Mr. Martin explained that we are required to budget all the positions; however, we only fund positions based on the budget amount that is approved.

Nurse Salaries

Mr. Pascucci asked if the nurse's additional days are per contract or warrant article. Mr. Martin indicated that the additional days are included in the contract. He noted that this year, we budgeted separate lines for the base contracted salaries and the additional days contracted salaries.

School Administration

Mr. Spencer queried about the amount of administrative assistants at each school. Mr. Martin indicated there are 3 full time administrative assistants at GMS. LMS and CHS each have two administrative assistants and a part time receptionist.

Mr. Spencer indicated that he asked about the positions because as the population of students decreases, we look at areas we can reduce. Mr. Thompson commented that the administrative assistant positions are important because the Assistant Principal is a three day per week, school

year position and many administrative tasks are done by administrative assistants.

Mr. Pascucci asked if there is a student population number that determines the number of staff required in the building(s). Dr. Cochrane indicated that the RSAs that relate to education are greater. He noted that NCLB and its requirements make education more and more involved. He commented that the administrative burden is growing faster than enrollment is decreasing. Mr. Pascucci commented that we should stop accepting the free money from the government.

MOTION: by Mr. Lambert

Move to stop accepting free money

The motion failed for lack of a second.

Custodial Salaries

Mr. Cutter asked for clarification of the overtime account details that state “community use for overtime”. Mr. Thompson explained there community organizations to whom we do not charge fees request to use the building when it is not open. We need someone in the building to open, be in the building, and close the building.

GMS Budget

Rental/Lease Equipment

Mr. Cutter asked if there were new copiers leased in the last two years and why there is an increase. Mr. Martin indicated that last year we moved a network copier from LMS to GMS and some costs were incurred. He noted that as the copier ages the service charge is higher. Mr. Thompson commented that much of our materials are reproducible for supporting math and reading. He added that the PTO uses the copier, but supplies their own paper.

Mr. Spencer commented that the rationale does not make sense. Dr. Cochrane indicated that GMS makes more copies than the other schools. Mr. Martin commented that the vendor provides an annual budget based on the number of copies, which is reflected in our budget. He noted that a new copier was leased after the 2013 budget was prepared, which could also be contributing to the increase.

Regular Education Supplies

Mr. Spencer commented that the numbers for the students do not match the projections. Mr. Thompson indicated that the student numbers are the actual numbers we had at the time we prepared the budget.

Mr. Spencer commented that the calculations are expected to be based on next year’s projections. Mr. Lambert commented that there are some fixed costs per school, some variable costs per student, and some costs specific to special education. He indicated that we have to understand the difference. He asked for the range of cost per student and the fixed costs. Mr. Martin explained that those numbers can be found in the function summary. He indicated that anything in regular education is based on the cost per student and the number of teachers. Other costs, such as technology, are not based on cost per student. Regular education costs are 98% based per student.

Textbooks-New

Mr. Cutter commented that the books budgeted in this line item are a CCSS requirement. Dr. Cochrane indicated these particular books are not required by CCSS, but are reading and math resources.

Mr. Pascucci commented that CCSS means a group of states want to be aligned with each other in what is being taught. He asked if we are changing how we are teaching it, when, and what level. Dr. Cochrane indicated that in some cases we are changing when a student learns some things (i.e. fractions, multiplicative reasoning). He noted that we need to be sure that (for example) multiplicative reasoning is learned by the end of grade 3. Dr. Cochrane explained we are looking at a grade level higher in performance in math, reading and writing across all grades.

Mr. Pascucci commented that the texts are written to match these standards. Dr. Cochrane commented that is why there is a two year gap. He indicated that they shuffled the curriculum in the books to align with CCSS. Dr. Cochrane noted that we stopped buying textbooks until we can acquire the correct material and instructional approach.

Furniture –Replacement

Mr. Cutter asked why the line item was reduced and then increased. Mr. Barka commented that the Superintendent reduced the line (chairs/desks) and the School Board wanted to replace the chairs that needed to be replaced.

Mr. Thompson indicated that there are chairs in every classroom that are compromised. He noted that the newer desks and chairs are adjustable and can be used in any grade. Dr. Cochrane indicated that there is a reserve of ten chairs. He explained that he removed it from the budget because he was trying to postpone purchases as the costs we are spending on CCSS are higher this year. He commented that the School Board did not agree.

Math Supplies

Mr. Cutter asked why there were math textbooks listed in this line item. Mr. Martin indicated that account 610 are supplies and what Mr. Cutter is referring to are consumables and much subject matter, such as workbooks, have to be replaced each year.

Mr. Cutter commented that he researched one of the books listed and found it online for less than what is budgeted. Mr. Thompson indicated that the administrative assistant gets the price from the distributor online.

Mr. Cutter indicated that the book is less costly on Amazon.com. Mr. Thompson noted that he will take the information under advisement.

Music Supplies

Mr. Cutter asked why there is an increase. Mr. Thompson commented that the costs of our chorus has increased. He indicated that these supplies cannot be reproduced.

Guidance Services

Mr. Cutter asked why the line has increased by more than \$4,000 over the last three years. He commented that the costs and number of students are not in line.

Mr. Martin indicated that these are 504 identified students that have different needs and services. He noted that currently there is one student and the increase is due to two potential incoming students. He added that they are regular education students that require accommodations.

Dr. Cochrane commented that 504 students usually have some sort of impairment, but can be successful with certain accommodations. He indicated that providing resources for these students is as legally binding as special education.

Mr. Lambert commented that it is not constitutional according to the NH State Constitution. Mr. Martin indicated that districts have to follow federal law.

Repairs/Maintenance – Audio/Visual

Budget Committee members asked about the increase in the 430 account. Mr. Thompson indicated he was instructed to budget a 1.5% increase. Mr. Martin indicated that is the CPI for Nashua, which we use to estimate the increase in that account.

Custodial Supplies

Mr. Martin commented that he spoke to Aramark (outsource vendor for Hudson) to gather data for the cost of supplies per square foot.

Mr. Peeples asked why we do not use Aramark for custodial services and if there would be any savings. Mr. Martin explained that the School Board has not made that request. He indicated that in speaking to Business Administrator's in other small districts, he learned that smaller districts will not realize savings by vendor outsourcing. Mr. Martin noted that the School Board did request similar data for Food Service, but the result reflected there would be no savings for the district.

Utilities

Mr. Spencer asked about the 3% increase from Pennichuck. Mr. Martin indicated that he looked at the average over the last three years. Mr. Spencer indicated that there is a rate case next year and there will be an increase.

Building Services Repairs & Maintenance

Mr. Pascucci asked about:

- Bathroom partitions – Mr. Martin noted that were removed the last few years and Mr. Ross continues to fix them.
- Windows being replaced – Mr. Martin noted the School Board direction is to replace windows in five rooms per year. He indicated that those windows are not in this year's budget as we used 2012 end of year funds to replace them last year.
- Roof flashing – Mr. Martin indicated that a roof report reflected that some areas need to be repaired.
- Carpet in the main office – Mr. Thompson indicated it is torn, old and in poor condition.
- General repairs – Mr. Martin indicated they include broken windows, replacing ceiling tiles, water bubbler repairs, leaks, light ballasts.

Mr. Pascucci commented that maintenance needs to be prioritized. He noted that we have many maintenance issues and indicated that there is a maintenance plan being developed. Mr. Martin indicated that in April/May he meets with the Facility Managers and they assess and prioritize all repairs. He noted that decisions are made on a district-wide basis.

Mr. Pascucci asked about the PODs. Mr. Thompson noted that there is limited storage at GMS. He indicated that the POD is where we store the extra desks and some furniture.

Mr. Pascucci asked if the 1930's building could be used for storage. Mr. Martin indicated that the second floor was assessed by a structural engineer and is not safe. He was not sure if the first floor could be used for limited storage.

Mr. Peebles asked about the structural engineer's assessment of the 1930's building. Mr. Martin indicated that the concrete between the ceiling of the first floor and floor of the second is crumbling. He noted that there is a written report.

Mr. Spencer commented that the Propane line item is budgeted too high. Mr. Martin indicated he guesstimated the savings from the loss of the portables.

Mr. Pascucci commented that the parking lot sweeping cost is high. Mr. Martin indicated he would ask Mr. Bennett to re-examine the cost.

Mr. Pascucci commented that the cost to clean the catch basins is high. Mr. Martin commented that Mr. Bennett coordinates well with the town. Dr. Cochrane indicated that there is no question if we have someone to coordinate repairs we could save money and do a better job of maintaining the buildings.

Mr. Pascucci asked why the amount budgeted for the basketball hoops was reduced. Mr. Martin noted that the School Board requested a less expensive plan. He indicated that he is concerned with the quality of cheaper hoops. He commented that the hoops will most likely be taken down this year.

Mr. Spencer asked about the GMS parking lot. Mr. Cutter indicated that the line item is missing from the budget. Mr. Martin reviewed the file and discovered that the 4000 account was overlooked in the budget files that were provided to the Budget Committee budget. He apologized for any inconvenience and confusion and indicated he would send the files to the Budget Committee in the morning. He explained that the Superintendent removed the amount that was budgeted for the GMS parking lot. The School Board voted to repair/repave the main parking lot and delay the remainder of the project.

Mr. Spencer asked if this could be a warrant article. Mr. Barka commented if the article fails, we will not be able to repair the parking lot.

Mr. Lambert commented it should be the people's choice.

Mr. Spencer commented that if you go to a default budget this will not be included. Mr. Cutter commented that it is in our best interest not to let that happen.

Mr. Peeples indicated that it is not in the interest of the town to let the schools go to default year after year.

Mr. Passucci expressed concerns that types of items are removed from the budget each year and the budget keeps increasing. He commented if we remove this item, we have to agree that the parking lot is not important.

Mr. Lambert commented that two years ago he was under the impression that the School Board was presenting consistent and reasonable numbers that we can trust. He indicated that the former Superintendent state we can live with a negative budget. Mr. Lambert stated that there is an element of mistrust in the presentation.

Mr. Martin repeated his previous statement explaining that the 4000 function was inadvertently not included in the file. Mr. Peeples commented that it is just in the detail and does not affect the bottom line. Mr. Martin concurred and reported that the GMS parking lot total is \$53,500.

Mr. Spencer asked how the part time Assistant Principal situation is working. Mr. Thompson commented that it is challenging and there is a noticeable difference on the days when she is not present.

Dr. Cochrane commented when looking at the learning results of GMS they are one of the best values we have. He noted that the percentage of students with proficiency on NECAP is the same as Bedford and is higher than all others in this tier of the state. Dr. Cochrane indicated that the students we produce from GMS are prepared for that next level, which reflects the quality of teaching and consistency of the program. He stated that the key is having an assistant principal focused on instructional quality and a principal that focuses on the same goal.

Mr. Spencer asked about the use of the Student Resource Officer at GMS. Mr. Thompson commented that we have called on him when safety issues need to be reported.

The Budget Committee thanked Mr. Thompson for his time and attendance.

b) Technology

Salaries

Mr. Cutter asked about conferences/workshops relative to additional conference attendance. Mr. Hancock commented that the increase reflects one training class for each IT employee (Director and Technician). He explained that the class spans over several days and are industry type classes.

Mr. Passucci asked about the summer intern. Mr. Hancock indicated it is a new position, which would assist in setting up much equipment that is being budgeted. He commented that the intern could be a latter year college student who can also assist with imaging, cloning and PC set up.

Technology Budget

Mr. Spencer asked about the leasing of computers at GMS and if they will be included in the default budget. Mr. Martin indicated that they will not be part of the default. He noted that in the current budget the School Board has \$110,000 of technology plan equipment. He explained a new lease cannot be included in the default budget because a multi-year lease has to be approved by the voters.

Mr. Peeples commented that there are many new PC's and monitors that are budgeted, and that thin clients are mentioned. He indicated that the cost of a thin client is approximately \$300-\$400. Mr. Hancock commented that VM Viewer is preferred for thin clients. He explained in this line item desktops are needed for classrooms and to connect peripheral devices for teaching. The manufacturers recommend against using thin clients for that use. Mr. Hancock indicated the laptops are for the mobile lab, which is the only way to address a 1:1 student ratio.

Mr. Cutter commented that the amounts for each LMS 440 account are different. Mr. Hancock commented that half that amount is for monitors.

Mr. Cutter asked why there are 75 laptops budgeted. Mr. Hancock indicated that the majority are 7 or 8 years old. Dr. Cochrane commented that mobile 1:1 computing has excellent instructional benefit. He explained that schools are requesting more laptops and we are trying to increase computing capacity through thin client to get longer life and decrease costs. Dr. Cochrane indicated that we do not currently have 1:1 capacity. He added that CCSS will require more computing, for which we currently do not have the capacity.

Mr. Pascucci asked if we are replacing all the computers or a portion. Mr. Hancock indicated that we are replacing a substantial portion that are 7 or 8 years old.

Mr. Pascucci commented if this is approved, it will be in the budget for three years because it is a lease. He asked if next year there will be a request to replace others that are old. Mr. Barka indicated that we are currently two years behind in our replacement cycle.

Mr. Martin indicated that year three of the CHS lease is included in the budget. The goal is a predictable annual cycle for technology. Mr. Martin noted that the School Board suggested we lease rather than purchase and because we are in a default budget, we had to request double next year. He commented that the reason laptops are needed at GMS is because a few years ago GMS received a donation of computers from the IRS that were already three years old.

Mr. Peeples commented that the cost is not unreasonable.

Dr. Cochrane asked if Committee members were familiar with thin client technology. Mr. Peeples explained that it is similar to mainframe computing. A high capacity server is used and virtual machines are built for individuals or a group of people. He noted if deployed properly, it will yield a substantial savings. Mr. Barka commented that thin client does not work well with peripherals.

Mr. Peeples commented that VM Ware View Client allows access with any device when using thin client.

Dr. Cochrane commented that anywhere that server-based computing can work and perform the function is the best option. He noted that the downside is you lose all machines if the server goes down. Dr. Cochrane indicated the questions that need to be answered are: where does that function work in the three school buildings; where do we need site specific, stand alone desktops and specific pieces of software. He mentioned that when the five year technology plan was developed, it was not able to be implemented. He indicated that we are reworking the plan.

Mr. Peeples commented that the largest benefit is the extension of life in PC's. He noted that this approach could be a substantial savings for the district and offer less work load for the tech staff.

Mr. Lambert commented that this is a good conversation to have with the public.

Mr. Cutter asked about the student management system. Mr. Pascucci indicated that Edline is the student management system.

Mr. Hancock indicated that the district is in need of a new student management system. Currently the district uses Admin Plus and the company has halted the product. The end result is there are three individual products with three data silos and no live flow of data between them. We cannot get the data when it is needed. The program has not been updated for 10 years and has no added functionality built in.

Mr. Peeples noted what is budgeted is just for the consultant. Mr. Hancock indicated that this will help with the upfront cost when are ready to convert. Dr. Cochrane commented that we need to start the work one or two years prior to conversion/implementation.

Mr. Cutter asked why cell phone service is listed under technology. Mr. Martin indicated that all data communications and phone are budgeted under technology. He noted that only critical employees have cell phones.

Mr. Peeples asked about the Data Communications 532 account. Mr. Hancock indicated that this contract will save a substantial amount of money going forward. He noted that we are waiting for a decision from E-Rate. Mr. Hancock explained that we will be able to transfer to a fiber-based internet and will have 15Mbs connection in each building.

Mr. Lambert commented that a FairPoint lobbyist informed him that they do not charge for this. He added that Comcast Business Service costs approximately \$200/month. Mr. Hancock indicated that this is a dedicated fiber network for all buildings. He indicated he cannot comment further due to the parameters of the E-Rate grant process.

Mr. Pascucci asked what was being added in the Software line item. Mr. Martin indicated that the Athletic Director's Administrative Assistant needs a database to pay game officials.

Mr. Pascucci commented that this is done through the CHS main office. Mr. Martin explained that the main office does not pay these bills. The only way to allow one person to work on those

accounts is to purchase another database. He noted that the software is web-based and allows the setting of permissions.

Mr. Pascucci asked what is different with the current method. Dr. Cochrane indicated we were up to two months behind in paying game officials. He noted it is a matter of work flow. Mr. Martin commented that this is a small piece of the administrative assistant's responsibility.

Mr. Spencer asked if the payment process is being transferred from the main office to athletics. Dr. Cochrane indicated that it is only for athletics. He noted that this solution will offset the reduction in a part time (main office) employee's hours next year.

Mr. Peeples asked why these payments cannot be run through the district payment system. Mr. Martin indicated that student activity funds are fiduciary funds and not under control of the treasurer. He noted that student activity funds are managed by the school building administration.

Mr. Lambert commented that it was mentioned that Mr. Hancock cannot comment on the fiber network process because of a grant process. He expressed concern about how the E-Rate monies are handled. Mr. Martin noted that E-Rate reaches out globally and has 30 days to reply to our needs. He indicated if we choose someone outside the E-Rate network, we lose all E-Rate monies.

Mr. Lambert asked for the total in the E-Rate grant. Mr. Hancock indicated that the amount is \$20,000 this year. He explained that it is a percentage of the total cost of a contract we may enter. Mr. Lambert expressed support for receiving money to offset the expenditure.

Mr. Peeples asked about management of the growth of I-Pads in the district. Mr. Hancock indicated we are trying to limit the growth to special education where they are a good fit. He noted there is no need for a management plan.

The Budget Committee thanked Mr. Hancock, Mr. Martin, and Dr. Cochrane for their time and attendance.

6. MEMBER INPUT

Mr. Peeples informed Committee members that the tax rate collection is at 92%.

Mr. Spencer commented that voting on the special education budget could be contentious. Mr. Cutter indicated that Mr. Harte delayed voting on the special education budget until December 27.

7. PUBLIC INPUT

Jason Guerrette, 11 Perry Court, commented that he is a former Aramark employee. He noted they never openly provide their costs and the costs quoted to Mr. Martin regarding facilities contains an extra margin. Mr. Guerrette commented that CCSS is a curriculum issue where they tell you what a student should know and how we should get there. He noted that we use differentiated instruction and are teaching individual students based on their needs. Various

methods and resources are currently used in the classroom. He indicated they rarely use textbooks at the high school. Mr. Guerrette commented that CCSS will reorganize resources in a logical manner. He commented that Edline was previously presented as the best student management software and they are now recommending a new six figure system. Mr. Guerrette indicated that he has talked to teachers who say there are many free tools online.

Mr. Barka rebutted Mr. Guerrette's comments about the student management system and noted that Edline is not a student information system. He indicated it is just one part of the system. He commented that Admin Plus is the student information system and is not currently in existence. He explained that the goal was to buy one system that supports all three functions.

- **Upcoming meetings**

The next meeting of the Budget Committee will be held on December 11, 2012.

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to adjourn.

SECOND: Mr. Cutter

VOTE: 7-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

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

Date approved: **December 11, 2012**