

1 **Minutes of the**

2
3 **Litchfield Budget Committee**
4 **Meeting**

5
6 **Held on November 29, 2011**

7
8 The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, November 29, 2011 at
9 Campbell High School, 1 Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

10
11 **PRESENT:** B Spencer (Acting Chairman), C Pascucci, T Finnegan, J York (School
12 Board Representative), J Brunelle (Board of Selectmen Representative)

13
14 **ALSO PRESENT:** S Martin (School Business Administrator), Dr. E Cutler
15 (Superintendent of Schools), R Gregg (Special Education Director)

16
17 **ABSENT with excuse:** B Lemire, M Falzone (Vice Chairman)

18
19 **ALSO ABSENT:** R Peebles

20
21 Mr. Spencer called the meeting to order at 6:50 p.m.

22
23 **1. PUBLIC INPUT**

- 24 • Mr. Spencer recognized an e-mail which was sent to the Budget Committee from
25 Ron and Faye O’Blenis, 15 Riverview Circle and dated November 29, 2011
26 (attached to minutes), relative to the proposed Math Specialist which had been
27 discussed at the Committee’s November 22nd meeting.

28
29 **2. MINUTES**

30 **MOTION:** by Mr. Pascucci

31 ***Move to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2011 Litchfield Budget***
32 ***Committee meeting as written***

33 **SECOND:** Mr. York

34 ***Discussion:***

35 Mr. Finnegan requested changes to the following:

- 36 • Page 8, line 3 – vote amended
37 • Page 11, line 13 – motion outcome amended.

38 **VOTE:** 4-0-1 (Selectman Brunelle abstained)

39 **The motion carried.**

40
41 Mr. Spencer suggested deferring approval of the minutes of November 17th and 22nd
42 until the next meeting.

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1 **3. TOWN BUSINESS**

2 Selectman Brunelle referred to the e-mail he sent to the Committee in response to his
3 action points from the last meeting, and confirmed everyone had received it. He
4 provided a status report on outstanding Town budget items requiring Board of
5 Selectmen action.
6

7 **4. SCHOOL BUSINESS**

8 **a) 2013 Budget Presentation**

9 **i) Special Education – General**

10 *Line 330 (Professional Services):* Mr. Spencer pointed out historically the full
11 budgeted amount is never spent. Mr. Martin stated on occasions more cost
12 beneficial to hire someone which would be expensed to salaries but paid out
13 of this budget.
14

15 ***Discussion:***

16 Mr. Martin and Dr. Cutler provided some background and explanatory
17 information for the benefit of the new Budget Committee members with
18 respect to discussion of Special Education students and budget. Mr. Martin
19 reported he is projecting to spend the entire Special Education Capital
20 Reserve.
21

22 Mr. Spencer commented the Budget Committee has an obligation to get the
23 budget number down as low as possible and pointed out there was a risk of
24 bringing in the default budget if the operating budget does not have a
25 reasonable number. In response Mr. York stated the budget is very lean
26 coming out of the current year.
27

28 Mr. Finnegan requested information on which items are mandated and which
29 are helpful but not mandated. Ms. Gregg responded that everything is
30 mandated, as once a service for a student has been identified the District is
31 obligated to provide it.
32

33 *Line 539 (Handicapped Tuition):* There was discussion with respect to the
34 number of students as queried by Mr. Spencer and reference was made to
35 information which had been provided to the Committee. Ms. Gregg explained
36 some students may move during the year to a different location as explanation
37 for some of the information.
38

39 The following were confirmed for Mr. Spencer for clarification:

- 40 • The tuition costs shown for the COOL school are for one student.
- 41 • Eckerd is closed as of December 1, 2011 and students have to be moved to
42 Summit in Amherst. There was discussion about the cost of the new
43 school for clarification and a discussion about the difficulties of coming
44 up with tuition costs in advance.
- 45 • Austine (school for the deaf) is new to the budget.

- Explanation of the types of schools, number of students from the District who attend, whether the programs are day or residential and location of the schools was provided.

Page 5: Mr. Finnegan clarified the \$312,000 increase is due primarily to tuition and professional services (90% approximately).

Page 7: Ms. Gregg provided an explanation of testing ‘protocols’ for Mr. Finnegan, stating the testing is used by speech pathologists and the District needs to purchase them as they are copyrighted. Ms. Gregg also provided explanation of the regulations pertaining to IEP’s.

Page 9: Responding to a query from Mr. Finnegan, Ms. Gregg explained the Professional Services shown on this page refers to physical therapy.

Page 10: Responding to a query from Mr. Finnegan, Mr. Martin explained in order to receive federal funding reimbursement (Catastrophic Aid) the District must raise and appropriate the money to spend and will then get it back the following year. He also provided an explanation of the grants fund. Dr. Cutler explained how Catastrophic Aid is calculated, reporting there have been reductions in aid from the state. Ms. Gregg provided an explanation of Medicaid funding and the necessary tracking done by the schools in order to receive some money back to the District.

Page 11: Mr. Spencer commented historically the District spends approximately 85% of what is budgeted.

Responding to Mr. Pascucci, Mr. Martin reported tuition, transportation and services are in the default budget.

Responding to Mr. Spencer, Dr. Cutler reported the mid-day bus is for preschool and is not a new expenditure. There followed a brief discussion with respect to transportation and who provides it.

In response to questions from members of the Committee, information was provided on the following:

- Students in transition who are transported to work and the legislation pertaining to this
- The Homeless Act
- How the transportation cost is for Jolicoeur was calculated (two students who will travel home.
- General information about students who will attend Lighthouse and it was agreed that Ms. Gregg would check why the transportation cost is double for two students before the next meeting, and Mr. Martin agreed to respond via e-mail.

Action Ms. Gregg / Mr. Martin

- Number of students and number of round trips to RSEC. The School District representatives explained logistics and time are issues and these were discussed.
- The delta between the last year and next year with respect to transportation costs.

There was a discussion with respect to the amount which they will be under budget and Mr. Spencer estimated they appear to be \$40,000 under based on the figures he has.

Dr. Cutler explained transitioning of students, stating the transportation service is required by the federal government and there followed a brief discussion on ways to save the District money with respect to this service.

ii) Special Education - Salaries & Benefits

Page 1: In response to a query from Mr. Finnegan, Ms. Gregg explained the summer program is additional education for students dependent upon their IEP.

Line 114 (Paraprofessional Salaries): It was reported that IEP's mid year determined the additional cost of paraprofessionals and was unanticipated last year.

Responding to Mr. Spencer, Ms. Gregg explained some scenarios which would cause paraprofessional salaries to under run. Mr. Spencer provided the percentage of the budgeted amounts over the last three years which the District actually spent for paraprofessional salaries, stating there was one account he would like to look further at.

Mr. York explained for Mr. Finnegan paraprofessionals for the individual grade levels are not included in the Special Education budget

Page 2: Responding to Mr. Spencer, Mr. Martin reported the vacancies have now been filled.

Page 5 (Speech Services): Mr. Martin clarified they had to hire a speech pathologist, stating that due to current needs versus what is anticipated, half the position will be in the default and half will not. There was a brief discussion relative to speech pathologists and the cost of a consultant versus hiring in house. Mr. Martin reported the operating cost of the position can be found in the 330 account of the general section of the Special Education budget. Mr. Spencer clarified the position has not been double funded. There was a discussion relative to how the software restrictions affect how the item is being shown in the budget.

1 *Page 6:* Responding to Mr. Finnegan, Mr. Martin reported on the increase in
2 social security.

3
4 There was a discussion about the total amount of the Special Education budget
5 and Mr. Martin explained about the MS27, and how the state requires the
6 School District report on Special Education (four groupings).

7
8 Ms. Gregg agreed to send the Budget Committee the total number of students
9 being serviced by the total Special Education budget

10 *Action Ms. Gregg*

11
12 There was also a discussion about when the Committee will vote on Special
13 Education, and it was noted it does not appear on the latest Budget Committee
14 schedule as posted by Mr. Harte. Mr. Spencer commented on making a bottom line
15 cut, and there was a brief discussion with Mr. Martin regarding this.

16
17 **b) VOTING**

18 **i) School Board**

19 **MOTION:** by Mr. York

20 *Move that the Budget Committee hereby approves \$62,551 for the School*
21 *Board in the 2013 School District operating budget*

22 **SECOND:** Mr. Pascucci

23 **VOTE:** 5-0-0

24 **The motion carried unanimously.**

25
26 **MOTION:** by Mr. York

27 *Move that the Budget Committee hereby approves \$42,715.28 for the School*
28 *Board Salaries & Benefits in the 2013 School District operating budget*

29 **SECOND:** Mr. Finnegan

30 **VOTE:** 5-0-0

31 **The motion carried unanimously.**

32
33 **ii) SAU**

34 **MOTION:** by Mr. York

35 *Move that the Budget Committee hereby approves \$100,448 for the SAU in*
36 *the 2013 School District operating budget*

37 **SECOND:** Selectman Brunelle

38 **The motion carried unanimously.**

39
40 In response to Mr. Spencer, Mr. Martin reported that the increase in postage is
41 due to returning to sending out mailings to the public.

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43 **VOTE:** 5-0-0

44 **The motion carried unanimously.**

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1 **MOTION:** by Mr. York

2 *Move that the Budget Committee hereby approves \$580,970.51 for the SAU,*
 3 *Salaries & Benefits in the 2013 School District operating budget*

4 **SECOND:** Mr. Finnegan

5 **VOTE:** 5-0-0

6 **The motion carried unanimously.**

7
 8 **5. MEMBER INPUT**

9 **MOTION:** by Mr. York

10 *Move that the Budget Committee move future meetings to discuss the School*
 11 *District budget to 6:00 p.m. instead of 6:30 p.m.*

12
 13 In response to a request from Mr. Pascucci, it was agreed to defer voting on this until
 14 other members were in attendance.

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 16 **6. PUBLIC INPUT**

17 There was none.

18
 19 • **Upcoming meetings**

20 ○ December 1, 2011

21 ○ December 6, 2011

22 ○ December 8, 2011

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 24 **MOTION:** by Mr. Finnegan

25 *Move to adjourn.*

26 **SECOND:** Mr. Pascucci

27 **VOTE:** 5-0-0

28 **The motion carried unanimously.**

29
 30 There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

31
 32
 33 **Minutes by:** *Sandra Maxwell (Recording Secretary)*

34 **Date approved:** *December 8, 2011*

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