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3 **Minutes of the**
4 **Litchfield Budget Committee**
5 **Meeting**

6 **Held on November 22, 2011**

7
8 The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, November 22, 2011 at
9 Campbell High School, 1 Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

10
11 **PRESENT:** J Harte (Chairman), M Falzone (Vice Chairman), B Spencer, R Peeples,
12 C Pascucci, T Finnegan, D Miller (School Board Representative), J Brunelle (Board of
13 Selectmen Representative)

14
15 **ALSO PRESENT:** S Martin (School Business Administrator), E Cutler (Superintendent
16 of Schools)

17
18 **ABSENT with excuse:** J York, B Lemire

19
20 Mr. Harte called the meeting to order at 6:50 p.m.

21
22 **1. PUBLIC INPUT**

23 There was none.

24
25 **2. MINUTES**

26 Voting on the November 10, 2011 minutes was deferred.

27
28 **3. TOWN BUSINESS**

29 Mr. Brunelle stated he had nothing new to report for the Town.

30
31 **4. SCHOOL BUSINESS**

32 **a) School Budget Presentation**

33
34 **i) Executive Summary**

35 Mr. Martin walked the Committee through the Executive summary
36 highlighting key information, including the following:

- 37 • There are significant increases in technology, portables and building
38 repairs.
- 39 • A new exhibit (Exhibit 3) has been included which provides history in
40 four year spending for comparison.
- 41 • Good rates came in for health insurance.
- 42 • The largest increase is in unemployment compensation. Mr. Martin
43 clarified for Mr. Spencer that they use Primex for unemployment benefits
44 and the large increase is due to the number of people the District laid off.

- Staff changes were highlighted including: 6 SPED Paraprofessionals (required to meet IEP requirements) as well as a speech pathologist which is budgeted as full time for next year. One teaching position will be transferred from the middle to the high school due to a large class moving up. One reduction in teaching staff is due to reduced student populations.

Mr. Finnegan requested a further level of detail and Mr. Martin stated he cannot respond to that at this time.

- A math coordinator has been added (to be covered in detail later).
- There will be a \$2.81 increase in the tax rate and the estimated assessed value used to calculate this was \$812,600,000.

Mr. Spencer reported the overall tax increase including the Town part works out at approximately \$1,000 per household and he stated he thought it would be very difficult to get the Operating budget through at this level.

- Exhibit 12: Mr. Martin explained all of the print outs do not include any numbers from the special meeting. He reported this exhibit gives complete details of every account increased for information.

ii) *District Wide - Salaries & Benefits*

Mr. Martin reported the following:

There will be three retirements next year and the increase of \$75,000 in the line is almost entirely based upon severance payments.

Mr. Spencer asked for clarification on the figures and there followed a discussion with Mr. Martin and Dr. Cutler.

Line 113 (Tutor Salary): Mr. Spencer queried this item and Dr. Cutler explained this refers to student specific tutors.

Line 120 (Substitute Salaries): This is budgeted as a district wide expense but is now charged to the same budget unit as the employee). Mr. Martin reported this line is usually overspent and he asked the Board to support an increase which they accepted. Mr. Martin clarified for Mr. Spencer which substitutes would still be seen in the budget detail.

Mr. Spencer queried the LEA prescription reimbursement account and explained for clarification the benefit rate adjustment.

Account 1410: There is no reduction to co-curricular salaries therefore this has increased. There followed a discussion with Mr. Spencer.

1 Mr. Spencer queried adult education which should eventually be self
2 sufficient, and Mr. Miller explained the Board had cut some money and will
3 have the first set of figures for the deliberative, after the first set of classes has
4 run through.

5
6 *Page 3*

7 The District Curriculum Director, Dr. Julie Heon was introduced by Mr.
8 Martin and she went on to explain why there is a need for a District Wide
9 Math Coordinator. She also explained the role of this position would be for
10 professional development and coaching of math teachers. She provided
11 information on the benefits of having such a position, stating it will improve
12 the state results for the schools as there is now a greater concentration of skills
13 required due to new math standards.

14
15 Mr. Finnegan initiated a discussion with respect to the high school students
16 not being proficient in math. Dr. Heon talked about the data which the School
17 District has on the proficiency of students and where proficiency is lacking.
18 She also talked about testing other than those for the state and assessments
19 used to establish and determine what student readiness is for the next math
20 level.

21
22 Mr. Spencer clarified with Mr. Martin that this position will not be in the
23 default budget, questioning why it is not being presented to the voters as a
24 separate warrant article as it would be more likely to be voted through. Mr.
25 Miller responded that if the Budget Committee cut the position it may come
26 forward as a warrant article. Mr. Spencer stressed he thought it would be wise
27 to have it as a separate warrant.

28
29 Mr. Pascucci quoted from prior petitioned warrant articles with respect to the
30 criteria of the position for including it in the budget or putting it on the
31 warrant, and agreed with Mr. Spencer on the basis of what he read.

32
33 Dr Heon explained two schools are not meeting NECAP standards in math,
34 and they are not meeting AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress), and Dr. Cutler
35 explained the complexities involved.

36
37 It was reported the total cost of the position would be approximately \$68,000.

38
39 Mr. Spencer questioned why they would not want to move the position
40 forward as a warrant.

41
42
43
44 *Page 5*

1 There is an increase of \$144,000 in DW Admin Salaries which is due to
2 contractual separation payments, and an explanation was given of what this
3 includes (part of unused sick and vacation time).
4

5 Dr. Cutler agreed to obtain information on the percentage, and more specific
6 information from the contract for the next meeting.

7 **Action: Dr. Cutler**

8
9 *Page 8*

10 DW Benefits: Mr. Martin explained they have budgeted for the Budget
11 Committee's previous reduction this year.
12

13 ***District Wide - General***

14 *Page 2*

15 Non-bargaining course reimbursement: Mr. Martin reported individuals have
16 reported they are planning to take courses next year.
17

18 *Page 3*

19 *Line 320:* In response to a query from Mr. Spencer, Mr. Martin reported
20 money has been deleted as there were two positions which did not make it
21 through the Board's final cut.
22

23 *Page 4*

24 Property Liability has decreased.
25

26 *Page 5*

27 Mr. Spencer queried whether buying salt from the Town is something new
28 and Mr. Martin provided background information, stating they will save
29 approximately \$500 as they will obtain a reduced rate.
30

31 Mr. Spencer queried the amount of individual repair and maintenance costs.
32 Mr. Martin explained that a cut of \$48,000 was made to grounds and services
33 which did not include repair and maintenance. He explained for Mr. Pascucci
34 about the different levels of reductions made (by the School Board and Admin
35 team etc.).
36

37 Messrs. Spencer and Martin had a discussion on salaries for seasonal help.
38

39 *Page 7*

40 Regular transportation was budgeted at current usage but there is an increase
41 of almost \$14,000. There was a discussion with respect to the reduction in
42 one bus this year, and it was reported that has caused problems but not in the
43 regular transportation area.
44

45 Mr. Spencer queried 504 Transportation and what the \$5,000 is used for, and
46 Dr. Cutler offered to find out if anyone is using this.

1 **Action: Dr. Cutler**

2
3 *Line 830 (Debt Services):* Responding to Mr. Spencer, Mr. Miller reported the
4 CHS bond will be paid off in January 2015 which will be a partial payment.

5
6 Mr. Spencer asked whether they would consider using the Capital Reserve to
7 cover part of the maintenance budget, and there was a discussion with respect
8 to replacement of the fire alarm system at GMS.

9
10 **iii) School Board - Salaries and Benefits**

11 There are no changes in this area of the budget.

12
13 **School Board - General**

14 *Page 2*

15 Audit Services is the only major increase and is based upon an estimate from
16 the auditors.

17
18 *Line 330 (Legal Services):* This is an hourly rate and Mr. Martin reported they
19 use multiple legal experts for a variety of reasons.

20
21 **iv) School Administration Unit (SAU) – Salaries & Benefits**

22 There are no major changes in this area of the budget.

23
24 **School Administration Unit – General**

25 Administrative Travel: it was explained this is for the principals' conference.
26 Dr. Cutler explained the advantages of purchasing NHSAA season passes.

27
28 *Line 534:* There was a discussion with respect to this and why it has increased
29 for 2012.

30
31 *Page 3*

32 It was reported they need to purchase replacement computers. It was pointed
33 out that technology is charged to the Business department for non educational
34 items.

35
36 **5. MEMBER INPUT**

37 Mr. Pascucci asked whether the School Board was concerned that the budget might
38 fail and the default be brought in. Mr. Miller reported there has been no specific
39 discussion about the level of the default budget compared to the operating budget.
40 There followed some discussion, and Mr. Spencer commented the School budget is
41 inherently over budgeted. Mr. Falzone commented he was not sure the average voter
42 fully understands the default budget.

43
44 Mr. Finnegan suggested projecting figures on the wall for everyone to see and to
45 make it easier to follow at future meetings. He also suggested a page number and
46 line number should preface any explanation or discussion for ease of reference.

1 ***Action: Budget Committee members/School District representatives***

2
3 Mr. Miller announced residents can find the School budget on the School Board web
4 site.

5
6 Mr. Finnegan stated it would be helpful to him if the Committee had a list or time
7 line to identify the impact of pushing items out or delaying them (possibly through
8 the CIP).

9
10 Mr. Finnegan stated he intended making an inspection of the tennis courts at 7:30
11 a.m. on Wednesday November 23rd and invited members to join him.

12
13 Mr. Spencer clarified the DRA will require separate deliberative sessions for Town
14 and School District, but stated these can be on the same day. He pointed out
15 announcements will have to be made with respect to start times of each session for
16 the benefit of the public.

17
18 **6. PUBLIC INPUT**

19 There was none.

20
21 • **Upcoming meetings**

22 ○ November 29, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.

23 ○ December 1, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.

24 *Please note the earlier start for meetings.*

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

27 ***Move to adjourn.***

28 **SECOND:** Mr. Pascucci

29 **VOTE:** 7-0-0

30 **The motion carried unanimously.**

31
32 There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

33
34
35 **Minutes by:** ***Sandra Maxwell (Recording Secretary)***

36 **Date approved:** **December 1, 2011**

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