

Minutes of the Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting

Held on February 6, 2013

The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Wednesday, February 6, 2013 at Campbell High School, 1 Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

PRESENT: J Harte (Chairman), B Spencer, A Cutter, C Pascucci, C Couture, D Barka (School Board Representative).

Absent: R Peeples (Vice Chairman) (*teleconferenced*), G Lambert (Selectmen's Representative) (*teleconferenced*)

Mr. Harte called the meeting to order at 9:12 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

3. MEMBER INPUT

Mr. Harte asked if there was any member input.

MOTION: by Mr. Barka

Move to re-open School District Article 1

SECOND: by Mr. Spencer

Mr. Harte announced that he was informed by School District legal counsel that according to law, only amended articles can be re-voted.

Mr. Barka commented that he wanted to change his vote to recommend the article.

Mrs. Couture cautioned that according to the RSA, we do not have the ability to re-vote.

Mr. Harte indicated that if articles are not amended at the 1st session, we are not afforded the ability to re-vote; however, we can do so at our own peril.

Mr. Lambert commented that he does not believe that the legal position is the only position.

VOTE TO RE-OPEN ARTICLE 1: 5-3-0

The motion carried.

Mr. Harte indicated that there have been no changes to Article 1.

VOTE TO REVOTE THE RECOMMENDATION OF WARRANT ARTICLE 1 AS WRITTEN: 8-0-0

The motion carried.

MOTION: by Mr. Lambert

Move to reconsider School District Article 3

SECOND: by Mr. Peeples

VOTE: 4-4-0

The motion failed.

Mr. Spencer indicated that the issue is that half of the Budget Committee does not agree with the Article and it is reflected on the ballot. It is not fair to the public not to re-open the article to determine if any members want to change their votes.

Mrs. Couture commented that she is opposed to re-opening the article because it appears we should not. She expressed concerns regarding the caucusing that has been occurring.

Mr. Peeples commented that the article was presented on the same night and there was no time to research information. He indicated that when looking at it for some time, it does not make sense. He noted that he is not comfortable with the language of the article.

Mr. Pascucci commented that the article was presented to us and we were asked to vote that night. He noted that there has not been much research on the article.

Mrs. Couture disagreed with statements that the article was presented and voted on in the same night. She indicated that the article was presented in one meeting and voted on in another. She noted there was time to research the article.

Mr. Lambert commented that there is additional information regarding this law. He indicated that the way the default is structured has caused problems in another community. Mr. Lambert noted that the Legislature has opened a bill to allow that community can deal with those consequences. He indicated while the article was not amended at Deliberative Session, there are changes at the State level causing a level of reconsideration.

Mr. Cutter commented that he is opposed to reopening the article, but believes it is important for the voter to understand the Budget Committee's position.

MOTION: by Mr. Lambert

Move to reopen School District Article 3

SECOND: by Mr. Cutter

VOTE: 6-2-0

The motion carried.

Mr. Lambert commented that he spent much time and research on SB2 and problematic concerns have been brought forth to the State. He noted that concerns can be deepened by the lack of information or procedures for SB2 regarding this law. He indicated that the Senate will bring legislation to the voters next year. Mr. Lambert commented that the Budget Committee should revote.

Mr. Peeples commented this is one of those laws with unintended consequences and does not believe we should wait one more year.

Mrs. Couture commented that the actions of the Legislature are unknown and Committee members should not base their decision on speculation. She expressed support for the article because it will allow tighter budgeting.

Mr. Spencer commented that he had the same thought when he voted to recommend the article, but reconsidered capital reserve accounts and potential resistance.

Mrs. Couture commented that at the time there was concern that this was a tool to reduce the budget. She was concerned that this would be a revolving account budgeting tool.

Mr. Cutter agreed with Mrs. Couture that budgeting would be tighter. He commented that he does not agree with the percentage, but he is in favor of the article.

VOTE: 4-4-0

The motion failed and Article 3 is Not Recommended because of a tie vote.

Mr. Harte asked if there was further input.

Mr. Peeples thanked Committee members for their service.

Mr. Harte thanked the Committee for their support over the years that he has been on the Budget Committee and for his Chairmanship.

4. PUBLIC INPUT

Mr. Spencer referred to the Town Warrant Article to increase membership of the Budget Committee. He commented that Mr. Byron's statistics (47% of the time one member was absent; 32% of the time two members were absent) were interesting.

- **Upcoming meetings**

The next meeting of the Budget Committee is to be determined.

MOTION: by Mr. Harte

Move to adjourn.

SECOND: Mr. Lambert

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:37 p.m.

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

Date approved: