

1 **Minutes of the Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting**

2
3 **Held on September 26, 2013**

4
5 The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, September 26, 2013 at Campbell
6 High School, 1 Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

7
8 **PRESENT:** A Cutter (Chair), R Peeples (Vice Chair), W Spencer, C Pascucci, C Couture, B
9 Bourque (School Board Representative), J Brunelle (Selectmen’s Representative), J Hoch (Town
10 Administrator)

11
12 **Absent:** D Vaillancourt

13
14 Mr. Cutter called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

15
16 **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

17
18 **2. REVIEW/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA**

19 There were no additions to the agenda.

20
21 **3. PUBLIC INPUT**

22 There was no public input.

23
24 **4. PRIOR MEETING MINUTE APPROVAL**

25
26 **MOTION:** by Mrs. Couture

27 *Move to approve the minutes of August 22, 2013 as written*

28 **SECOND:** by Mr. Pascucci

29 **VOTE: 6-0-1, with Mr. Peeples abstaining.**

30 **The motion carried.**

31
32 **5. TOWN BUSINESS**

- 33 • Review of Accounts

34 Mr. Brunelle and Mr. Hoch presented the following FY15 Town of Litchfield budgets:

35
36 **Town Clerk 4140.10**

37 Mr. Hoch reported that the total requested Town Clerk budget for 2014 bottom line is \$92,864,
38 which is an increase of \$554 over 2013. Mr. Hoch noted major notables:

- 39 • Line 625, Postage: potential increase of \$500 as there is a new vendor that prints the
40 renewal notices and tax bills. He noted that the former vendor no longer services New
41 Hampshire.

42
43 Mr. Cutter asked if Selectmen have challenged all departments to propose a 5% reduction. Mr.
44 Brunelle indicated that department heads worked with Mr. Hoch to project those reductions. He
45 noted that reductions were applied so as not to impact employees or reduce service levels.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46

Tax Collection 4150.40

Mr. Hoch reported that the total requested Tax Collection budget for 2014 bottom line is \$91,895, which is a \$339 increase over 2013. Mr. Hoch noted major notables:

- Line 625, Postage: increase of \$500. Rationale stated under Town Clerk.

Mr. Cutter commented that Line 321, Property Title Research has decreased. Mr. Hoch indicated that tax delinquencies drives that line; however, tax delinquencies have gone down.

Solid Waste 4321.10

Mr. Hoch reported that the total requested Solid Waste budget for 2014 bottom line is \$365,235, which is a decrease of \$4,225 over 2013. Mr Hoch noted major notables:

- Line 120, Wages: increase of \$3,471 (Mr. Hoch mentioned the town is not adding new employees.)
- Line 630, Equipment Repair/Maintenance: decrease of \$1,500
- Line 693, Demolition Material Disposal: increase of \$1,321 (tonnage costs have increased)
- Line 694, Solid Waste Disposal: increase of \$150 (tonnage costs have increased)
- Line 761, Equipment Lease: decrease of \$7,500.

Mr. Hoch reported, with regard to material and waste disposal, there is much better data on what volumes are seen since we are not running the incinerator.

Mr. Cutter inquired about the year to date expenditures and projections on what may be spent for the remainder of the year. Mr. Hoch indicated that total expenditures to date are for 8 months of coverage.

Mr. Brunelle indicated that the number of hauls to date can be provided.

Mr. Cutter asked what is driving the decrease in the Equipment Lease line. Mr. Hoch indicated that we are only paying on the lease for the backhoe.

Mr. Bourque queried about Line 636, Diesel Fuel. He asked if the town expects to use less fuel in the upcoming year.

It was noted that the compactor is shut off in between cycles to save on fuel.

Executive 4130.10

Mr. Hoch reported that the total requested Executive budget for 2014 bottom line is \$107,816, which is a decrease of \$972 over 2013. Mr. Hoch noted major notables:

- Line 344, Clerical Support: decrease of \$2,000. Mr. Hoch noted that the numbers were carried over from last year.

Mr. Cutter indicated that Selectmen's salaries were discussed last year. He noted that the Budget Committee debated if what the Selectmen are paid is salary or stipend.

1 Mr. Brunelle indicated that it is a stipend.

2

3 Mr. Cutter recognized the service the Board of Selectmen give to the town. He noted that
4 removing the stipends should be explored.

5

6 Mr. Brunelle indicated that his gesture regarding the stipend was to recognize employees by
7 giving bonuses instead of removing the stipend.

8

9

Town Meeting 4130.30

10 Mr. Hoch reported that the total requested Town Meeting budget for 2014 bottom line is \$8,508,
11 which is a \$999 decrease over 2013. Mr. Hoch noted major notables:

- 12 • Line 692, Election Provisions: increase of \$160 as there are three elections for 2014
- 13 • Line 551, Annual Town Report: decrease of \$3,076 as it is intended to eliminate the
14 printing of the hard cover book.

15

16 Mr. Hoch indicated that paper copies of the annual report can be printed as requested. He
17 commented that a small number can be pre-printed; however, it is planned to distribute the town
18 report electronically and on cd. Mr. Hoch noted that different forms were offered in 2013 to
19 incentivize residents to choose a less expensive option.

20

21 Mrs. Couture commented that many people look forward to the printed copy.

22

23 Mr. Spencer suggested considering a warrant article to pay for the printing of the town report.

24

25 Mr. Hoch indicated that it costs \$7 per book to print. He noted that the number of printed copies
26 was dropped to 750.

27

28 Mr. Spencer agreed with Mrs. Couture and commented that although he understands the
29 rationale he believes the voters should decide.

30

31 Mr. Brunelle offered to mention drafting a warrant for the printing of the town report at the next
32 Board of Selectmen meeting.

33

34 Mr. Pascucci commented that most people do not like change; however, he believes that people
35 will get used to the change in the second year.

36

37

Accounting 4150.10

38 Mr. Hoch reported that the total requested Accounting budget for 2014 bottom line is \$198,308,
39 which is a \$4,857 increase over 2013. Mr. Hoch noted major notables:

- 40 • Line 110, Wages Finance Staff: increase of \$4,986, which reflects movement of existing
41 employees through the wage schedule.

42

43 Mr. Cutter asked about the justification for office supplies. Mr. Hoch indicated the intention is
44 to put money toward a better record management system.

45

46

Information Tech 4150.20

1
2 Mr. Hoch reported that the total requested Information Technology budget for 2014 bottom line
3 is \$83,844, which is a \$34,265 increase over 2013.
4

5 Mr. Brunelle indicated that major changes include:

- 6 • Line 740, Equipment Purchase: \$31,150 increase, which consists of three computers
7 and monitors, check validators, Police Department phone recording/interview room
8 systems replacement, wireless upgrades for the Town Hall, Police Department and Fire
9 Department, Network Switch replacement for the Fire Department.
- 10 • Line 341, Telephone and Data: increase of \$3,120, which consists of a change in carrier
11 services to FairPoint, copper lines town-wide, internet services from Comcast.
- 12 • Line 630, Equipment Maintenance: decrease of \$1,531, which reflects a reduction due to
13 new contract fixed cost.
14

15 Mr. Cutter queried the cost of contracts. Mr. Brunelle offered to provide a breakdown of costs.
16

17 Mr. Cutter inquired about the Police Department phone recording and interview room systems
18 replacement. Mr. Brunelle indicated that the systems are not reliable and reliability is necessary
19 for interrogations.
20

21 Mr. Spencer asked about replacement of the Police Station. Mr. Brunelle commented that the
22 Board of Selectmen conducted a needs assessment regarding public safety; however, no
23 decisions have been made. He noted if approved, the building would not be built for two years
24 and all systems would be moved over to the new building.
25

26 Mr. Spencer queried about current budget expenditures. Mr. Hoch indicated that it is anticipated
27 that this year's budget with little surplus.
28

Legal 4153.10

29
30 Mr. Hoch reported that the total requested Legal budget for 2014 bottom line is \$30,600, which
31 reflects a decrease of \$10,200 over 2013. Mr. Hoch noted that the new attorneys require no
32 retainer and are paid on an hourly basis.
33

Advertising 4197.10

34
35 Mr. Hoch reported that the total requested Advertising budget for 2014 bottom line is \$13,375,
36 which is an increase of \$15 over 2013. He noted that the dues rate for NHMA is unknown at this
37 time and that line will be revisited.
38

Street Lighting 4316.30

39
40 Mr. Hoch reported that the total requested Street Lighting budget for 2014 bottom line is
41 \$10,925, which is a decrease of \$575 over 2013. Mr. Hoch indicated that a 5% reduction was
42 directly applied to this account. He noted it is anticipated that some street lights will be taken
43 out of service next year.
44
45

1 Mr. Peeples was concerned with the removal of street lights with respect to public safety. Mr.
2 Brunelle indicated that public safety will be maintained.

3
4 **Welfare 4445.20**

5 Mr. Hoch reported that the total requested Welfare budget for 2014 bottom line is \$20,000,
6 which reflects no change to the bottom line.

7
8 **Patriotic Purposes 4583.10**

9 Mr. Hoch reported that the total requested Patriotic Purposes budget for 2014 bottom line is
10 \$902, which is a decrease of \$47 over 2013. He noted that a 5% reduction was applied to this
11 account.

12
13 **Debt Service 7723.10**

14 Mr. Hoch reported that the total requested Debt Services budget for 2014 bottom line is
15 unchanged.

16
17 Mr. Cutter indicated that the Budget Committee will vote next week on the budgets presented
18 this evening.

19
20 Mr. Spencer requested information and raw data relative to the Hydrant budget regarding the
21 new tariff changes to the cost per foot. Mr. Hoch noted that the information will be provided for
22 Mr. Spencer.

23
24 • **RSA 32:22 – Review of Expenditures**

25 Mr. Cutter asked about a charge for \$4,050 relative to the town hall entrance project and if the
26 town hall entrance project was completed. Mr. Hoch indicated that the charge was for concrete,
27 but the project is not yet complete.

28
29 Mr. Cutter asked about the actual cost of police cruisers. Mr. Hoch indicated the actual number
30 will be approximately \$38,000.

31
32 Mr. Cutter commented that number should be used as a benchmark when discussing police
33 cruisers this year. Mr. Hoch indicated that cost will most likely be lower because cameras do not
34 need to be replaced in those cruisers.

35
36 **6. SCHOOL BUSINESS**

37
38 • **Confirmation of Meeting Calendar/Plan for School Budget Review Cycle**

39 Mr. Bourque shared the revised FY15 budget schedule with the Budget Committee. He noted
40 that the Superintendent will bring the recommended budget to the School Board on October 30.
41 The School Board final review will be November 13, with delivery of the FY15 budget to the
42 Budget Committee on November 14.

43
44 Mr. Cutter indicated that the Budget Committee will begin reviewing the School Board budget
45 on November 21.

46

- LSB Planning and Building Advisory Committee

Mr. Bourque reported that the first meeting of the LSB Planning and Building Advisory Committee will be October 8 at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Spencer asked if the Committee has a new charter. Mr. Cutter noted that the School Board overruled the Budget Committee's decision regarding the Budget Committee representative's authority to vote. He asked how the Budget Committee would like to proceed on the matter.

Mrs. Couture commented that she would abstain from voting.

Mr. Bourque indicated that the vote is not monetary, but only on recommendations. Mr. Spencer noted that it would be a monetary recommendation. He commented that the Budget Committee has no business making monetary recommendations.

Mr. Pascucci indicated that the Budget Committee has already expressed their decision; however, a motion can be made to authorize the representative to abstain on all votes.

MOTION: by Mr. Pascucci

Move to direct the Budget Committee representative to the LSB Planning and Building Advisory Committee to abstain on all votes on that committee.

SECOND: by Mr. Spencer

VOTE: 5-0-2, with Mr. Brunelle and Mr. Bourque abstaining.

The motion carried.

Mr. Spencer asked Mr. Bourque for official enrollment numbers for October 1. Mr. Bourque offered to provide the October 1 enrollment when it becomes available.

7. MEMBER INPUT/NEW BUSINESS

There was no member input.

8. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

- **Upcoming meetings**

The next meeting of the Budget Committee will be held on October 3, 2013.

MOTION: by Mr. Pascucci

Move to adjourn.

SECOND: Mr. Peoples

VOTE: 7-0-0.

The motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

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

1 **Date approved:**

DRAFT