

1 **Minutes of the Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting**
2 **Held on December 3, 2013**

3
4 The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, December 3, 2013 at Campbell
5 High School, 1 Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

6
7 **PRESENT:** W Spencer, C Couture, D Vaillancourt, J York (School Board Representative), J
8 Brunelle (Selectmen’s Representative)

9
10 **Absent:** A Cutter (Chair), R Peeples (Vice Chair), C Pascucci

11
12 Mrs. Couture called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She noted that Mr. Cutter and Mr. Peeples
13 were not in attendance as they are out on business, and Mr. Pascucci may join the meeting later.

14
15 **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

16
17 **2. PUBLIC INPUT**

18 There was no public input.

19
20 **3. REVIEW/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA**

21 Mrs. Couture noted that the Budget Committee will review the CHS budget this evening and
22 move the GMS budget review to December 5.

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

25 Mr. York clarified that when Budget Committee members should refer to the FY15 budget at the
26 School Board Recommended Budget and not as the Superintendent’s Budget as has been done in
27 past meetings.

28
29 **MOTION:** by Mr. Vaillancourt
30 *Move to approve the minutes of November 21, 2013*

31 **SECOND:** by Mr. Spencer

32 **VOTE: 4-0-1, with Mrs. Couture abstaining**

33 **The motion carried.**

34
35 **5. SCHOOL BUSINESS**

36
37 • **General Updates**

38 Mr. York reported that LEA negotiations is continuing and that mediation is scheduled for next
39 week.

40
41 • **Review of Accounts**

42
43 **LMS**

44 Mr. York presented the FY15 Recommended LMS budget to the Budget Committee.

45

1 In reference to the supplies accounts, Mrs. Couture asked if NHSBA enrollment projections,
2 specifically the 3 year weighted average, is used in calculations throughout the budget.

3
4 Dr. Cochrane indicated that the three year average is not used in budget calculations.

5
6 Mrs. Couture commented that the 3 year weighted average is traditionally used for budget
7 calculations.

8
9 Mr. York indicated that the School Board moved away from that methodology. He noted that
10 more actual numbers are being used in the budget calculations to get a bottom line closer to level
11 funding.

12
13 Dr. Cochrane commented that an average of the 1 year, 3 year and 5 year weighted averages is
14 being used in budgeting.

15
16 Mrs. Couture explained that the district and the Budget Committee have historically used the 3
17 year weighted averages in budgeting as those projections are used as a budgeting tool.

18
19 There was some confusion regarding the weighted average projections and a discussion
20 followed.

21
22 Following the discussion, Dr. Cochrane clarified that actual enrollment projections (following
23 the number of students moving from grade to grade) are being used in budget calculations, with
24 the exception of Grade 1. He noted that the NHSBA average projections are used to budget for
25 Grade 1.

26
27 Mrs. Couture asked about budgeting for xylophones in the 734, Equipment Additional, account
28 for Music education. She acknowledged the district is slowly trying to build up the number of
29 instruments for the music program. She asked if it is something that can be delayed or that the
30 Friends of Music can support.

31
32 Dr. Cochrane indicated this has been a request for a long time. He commented that he observed
33 the LMS band and noticed that there is a shortage of percussion instruments for students who are
34 interested in participating in the band. He noted that more instruments will allow better sound
35 and more students to participate.

36
37 Mr. York mentioned that the School Board believes it is necessary to support the Arts program.

38
39 Mr. Spencer asked about the increase for Game Officials.

40
41 Dr. Cochrane indicated that there has been a 10% increase in rates and that an increase was
42 anticipated.

43
44 Mr. Spencer commented that he did not disagree with the increase; however, the officials cost
45 appears overstated. He asked what was spent on that line last year. He indicated that last year

1 \$4,800 was spent. He asked why \$5,600 has been budgeted for next year with the same number
2 of sports.

3
4 Mr. Lecklider indicated that the number of games is the same, but the number of playoffs and
5 tournaments is unknown.

6
7 Mrs. Couture asked about the amount budgeted for supplies for Project Safeguard. She noted
8 that money was raised by fundraising in the past. She commented that the Budget Committee
9 proposed funding half of the program so that fundraising would continue, but noted that it was
10 reduced to zero. She asked if it occurred or if it was fully funded by fundraising.

11
12 Mr. Lecklider indicated that the PTO donates some funds and students fundraise, but it is
13 difficult to fundraise annually. He commented that it is important to be included in the budget as
14 it is more sustainable with budgeted funds. Mr. Lecklider noted that there is positive feedback
15 from parents and the community regarding this program.

16
17 Dr. Cochrane indicated that he was impressed with the program when he attended. He noted that
18 the parent component is very powerful.

19
20 Mrs. Couture commented that it is a wonderful program and the goal of the Budget Committee
21 was to help fund the program last year. She noted that the line item was reduced to zero last
22 year, but it was not through Budget Committee actions.

23
24 Referring to the water utilities, Mr. Spencer mentioned that a rate increase of 7% to 14% is
25 anticipated.

26
27 Referring to the grounds budget, Mrs. Couture commented that there is a request for a new
28 snowblower and \$1,000 budgeted for snowblower repair/service.

29
30 Mr. Markiewicz indicated that one snowblower needs to be replaced and the other needs repair
31 and service.

32
33 Dr. Cochrane mentioned that Mr. Pascucci raised concerns regarding over budgeting for power
34 sweeping and catch basin cleaning.

35
36 Mrs. Couture asked about the \$800 increase in these lines.

37
38 Mr. Markiewicz indicated that the concerns of the Budget Committee member were researched.
39 He noted that the cost budgeted for power sweeping consists of sweeping done twice per year
40 with a clean up at the end of the summer. He commented that is being reduced to once per year.

41
42 Mrs. Couture noted there is a significant increase in Non-Instructional Equipment supplies.

43
44 Mr. York indicated that is due to maintaining the fields at GMS that are used by LMS.

45
46

1 Mr. Spencer asked why there is an increase in athletic transportation.

2

3 Mr. York noted more information will be provided after the School Board meets tomorrow
4 evening.

5

6 Mr. Markiewicz indicated that the existing transportation contract expires at the end of this
7 school year. He noted the district has the option of two one-year extensions. He commented that
8 in anticipation of an increase, an estimate 3% increase was budgeted. Mr. Markiewicz noted
9 there are more components that will be addressed by the School Board.

10

11 Mr. Spencer asked why one bus was budgeted for seven away meets and two buses were
12 budgeted for two other away meets.

13

14 Mr. Lecklider indicated that the latter are State and Tri-County meets and involve more students.

15

16 Mr. Spencer commented that he is concerned in the significant increase in co-curricular
17 transportation. He asked if anything different is impacting the cost.

18

19 Mr. Lecklider indicated that there has been a change in transportation for Natures Classroom as
20 we are now using district transportation instead of private coach buses. He noted that a separate
21 carrier is budgeted for luggage. Mr. Lecklider indicated that travel for band concerts has an
22 impact on the cost dependent on the location of the music festivals. He noted that we have to
23 anticipate every festival even if they do not attend them all. Mr. Lecklider explained that
24 destinations change from year to year.

25

26 Mr. Spencer commented that he asked for an update on utilities information. Mr. Markiewicz
27 indicated that work is being performed. Mr. Spencer commented that he would like the
28 information provided prior to voting on the school budgets.

29

30 **Action Item: Provide update on utilities information – SAU.**

31

32 **Salaries and Benefits**

33 Mr. York presented the FY15 Recommended LMS Salaries and Benefits budget to the Budget
34 Committee.

35

36 Budget Committee members had no questions regarding salaries and benefits.

37

38 **CHS**

39 Mr. York presented the FY15 Recommended LMS budget to the Budget Committee.

40

41 Mr. Spencer asked for an explanation of contracted services and tutoring services for students.

42

43 Mrs. Rothhaus indicated that line item is budgeted for regular education students who require a
44 tutor due to medical or other situations that result in a significant loss of time in school.

45

46 Mr. Spencer asked if the funds have ever been spent.

1
2 Mr. Markiewicz indicated the expenditures appear in the District Wide budget.
3 Mr. York commented that the School Board has requested that expenses that were budgeted
4 under District Wide accounts be budgeted in the appropriate places. He noted this is one of those
5 expenses.
6
7 Dr. Cochrane commented that there have been conversations regarding how expenditures are
8 budgeted. He indicated that we are working on a better tracking process for budgeted expenses.
9
10 Mr. Markiewicz pointed out that it is a transition. He noted if we start making that shift and
11 drilling down to the school level it becomes confusing. He indicated that it is a process that
12 needs to be managed and that building administrators, Board members and Committee members
13 need to be able to understand.
14
15 Mr. Vaillancourt asked if Rental/Lease Equipment (copiers) go out to bid.
16
17 Mr. Markiewicz explained there are three major vendors in the state. He noted that we reach out
18 to each and consider where the equipment will be placed, usage and overages.
19
20 Mr. Vaillancourt commented there is a significant increase in general education supplies.
21
22 Mr. Markiewicz indicated that many times the supply line will be under spent and money from
23 that line will be transferred to other accounts for an unexpected, unanticipated occurrence. He
24 noted it is not uncommon to see that supply line monies are used for other accounts if needed.
25
26 Mr. Spencer asked how the \$18,000 spent in 2012 was used. Mr. Markiewicz indicated that the
27 majority of the use was for printer cartridges (toner) and paper. He noted that all schools use a
28 significant amount of both items.
29
30 Mrs. Rothhaus pointed out that there is a significant increase in math education as we are
31 purchasing Algebra 1 books for next year.
32
33 Dr. Cochrane commented that he would have like to have offered AP Statistics next year, but
34 decided to purchase the Algebra 1 texts instead. He noted that the account is level funded with
35 the exception of the Algebra 1 text purchase.
36
37 Mr. Spencer was concerned about the potential increase in transportation and the impact it will
38 have on the budget.
39
40 Mrs. Rothhaus noted that there is a slight increase in the Science education budget because there
41 is a real need for equipment. She indicated that much of the equipment is very old and needs to
42 be replaced.
43
44 Dr. Cochrane commented that Mrs. Rothhaus is working on a multi-year plan for equipment
45 replacement. He commended her for preparing a budget that is very close to being level funded.
46

1 Mr. Vaillancourt asked for an explanation of information access fees. Dr. Cochrane indicated
2 that in certain subjects we opted for the online subscription service in lieu of purchasing
3 textbooks annually. He noted that the subscription service decreased costs.
4

5 Mr. Spencer was concerned about the cost of vocational education tuition. He commented that
6 for the last two years the cost was \$1,000 per student. He asked how the budgeted cost for FY15
7 was determined.
8

9 Mrs. Rothhaus indicated that we are estimating for 25 students and we base our tuition on what
10 they will pay with a two year commitment. She noted that it is unknown how many students will
11 be tuitioned each year and we are working with other schools to split transportation costs.
12

13 Mr. Spencer believes the account is over budgeted.
14

15 Mr. Spencer asked if the \$1,000 for impact testing software is a one time cost.
16

17 Coach Patterson indicated it is an annual cost. He explained that we have to purchase a certain
18 number of assessments on the front end and a certain amount of post assessments on the back
19 end. He indicated that every athlete has to be pre-tested annually.
20

21 Mr. Spencer asked what was spent for Equipment Rental.
22

23 Mr. Markiewicz indicated \$730 has been spent to date. Coach Patterson commented that some
24 funds were spent on portable restrooms for the field and trailer rentals.
25

26 Mrs. Couture commented that there was a significant increase in the Repairs/Maintenance line
27 relative to scoreboards.
28

29 Coach Patterson explained that the scoreboard on the field was not working regardless of the
30 attempts that were made to repair it. He indicated that Coca Cola donated a new scoreboard to
31 CHS. He noted that some of the other scoreboards are not working (i.e. track). Coach Patterson
32 indicated that costs for repairs have been researched.
33

34 Mr. Spencer asked where the actual expenditures for self-funded game officials are posted in the
35 budget.
36

37 Mr. Markiewicz indicated any expenditures paid through the budget for self-funded programs
38 would most likely be posted under District Wide.
39

40 A discussion followed regarding the difference between self-funded programs and student
41 activity accounts.
42

43 Mr. Spencer was concerned that expenditures for self-funded programs are not able to be tracked
44 appropriately with the current system.
45

1 Mr. York indicated that the School Board has asked that issues such as this be resolved
2 throughout the budget process in order to provide the Budget Committee with accurate
3 information during the process.

4
5 Mr. Spencer asked about the number for self-funded transportation. Mr. York indicated that last
6 year or the prior year, the School Board elected to zero this line and if a specific team elected to
7 participate in a pre-season game, they were responsible for raising the funds. He noted that is
8 why it was placed in the self-funded programs budget.

9
10 Mr. Spencer suggested removing it from the budget. Mr. Markiewicz commented that we need a
11 definition of a self-funded account. He indicated that it should be examined more closely as it
12 appears to more closely resemble an activity fund.

13
14 Mr. Spencer pointed out that self-funded activities and transportation seems to be listed in two
15 places in the budget. Mr. Markiewicz indicated that duplicate postings will be amended.

16
17 **Action: Resolve budgeting issues – SAU.**

18
19 Mr. Spencer asked why the shredding services cost has doubled. Mr. York indicated that CHS
20 will be purging a large amount of documents.

21
22 Mr. Spencer asked about the auditorium lighting. Mrs. Rothhaus indicated that when the
23 building was originally built, a plan was approved to purchase 10 lights per year to get the
24 lighting in the auditorium (including the stage) to 100%.

25
26 Mr. Spencer commented that he is struggling with rationalizing vocational education
27 transportation as the number of students budgeted remains the same.

28
29 Mrs. Rothhaus commented that it is difficult to balance the bus runs. She explained that some
30 students attend during first block and some attend during another block. She indicated that we
31 have done a remarkable job at trying to transport students at the same time; however, there are
32 courses that are only offered at a specific time.

33
34 Mr. Spencer was concerned about the increase in that account. Mr. Markiewicz indicated that
35 the issue is being addressed.

36
37 Mr. Spencer asked if there was a revised budget total for athletic transportation. Dr. Cochrane
38 indicated that the revised total is \$60,734, resulting in a smaller increase of \$3,822.

39
40 Mr. Spencer commented that there are no additional sports and disagreed with the provided cost.

41
42 Coach Patterson commented that the cost of transportation depends on the location and number
43 of football conferences. Mr. York clarified that aside from football there are other sports (i.e.
44 soccer) that play more games and travel great distances.

45
46 Mr. Spencer commented historically that budget is under spent.

1 **Salaries and Benefits**

2 The FY15 CHS Salaries and Benefits budget was presented to the Budget Committee.

3
4 Mr. Spencer asked about tutors' salaries. He commented that this line has not been spent in prior
5 years.

6
7 Dr. Cochrane indicated that tutors' salaries were previously paid with Title I funds. He
8 explained that those funds have been removed for next year.

9
10 Mr. York indicated that this change is a result of the disagreement between the School Board and
11 the NH DOE regarding the classification of CHS. He noted that tutors will no longer be funded
12 through the grant program.

13
14 Mr. Spencer asked for information on the cost of that line item.

15
16 **Action: Provide cost information regarding regular education tutors – SAU.**

17 • **LSB Planning and Building Advisory Committee Update**

18 Dr. Cochrane reported that the decision has been made for the Committee to focus on GMS. He
19 noted that information gathering was delayed because of work on the budget. He indicated that a
20 partial summary exists at this time, but other summaries are being completed. Dr. Cochrane
21 commented that he hopes to schedule a meeting before the Christmas holiday.
22

23
24 Mrs. Couture commented on the cleaning of the swale at GMS. She indicated that the problem
25 at GMS is that the groundwater is within a few feet of the slab. She noted that the swales off
26 flow surface water, but will not solve the problem of the groundwater being close to the slab.
27

28 Dr. Cochrane commented that there is a problem with surface water. He noted that surface water
29 becomes ground water.

30
31 Mrs. Couture commented that draining away surface water will not help the water table. She
32 believes that spending money on the swale would be in vain.
33

34 Dr. Cochrane commented that the swale in question is within 20 feet of the building and several
35 feet below the building. Mrs. Couture indicated that there is much documentation on this issue
36 and that draining off the surface water will not impact the ground water because it is flowing
37 under to the river and Route 3A is blocking it.
38

39 Dr. Cochrane commented that it is evident the site has a problem as from May through October
40 there is enough moisture coming into the building that results in close to 100 gallons of water
41 being extracted from every dehumidifier in the building. He indicated that the building needs
42 better windows, but that cost would be approximately \$100,000. He noted that it is less
43 expensive to clean/clear the swale.
44

45 **6. TOWN BUSINESS**

46

1 • **General Updates**

2 Mr. Brunelle reported that Board of Selectmen will not meet until December 9 and will be
3 working on budget adjustments at the meeting. He noted that he forwarded to the Chair the
4 police union contract language and will provide a summary for the Budget Committee on
5 December 5.

6
7 **7. MEMBER INPUT/NEW BUSINESS**

8 Mrs. Couture commented on a discussion from the previous Budget Committee meeting
9 regarding the SAU Payroll Coordinator position. She indicated that that position began as a full
10 time position and was full time for many years. She commented that we lost someone, the
11 position became part time and those tasks shifted to another person.

12
13 Mr. York indicated that the decision to change the position back to full time was made in the fall
14 of 2012.

15
16 Mr. Spencer asked what was budgeted for the salary of that position for FY13 and what is
17 budgeted for FY14. He commented that if the budgeted salary was for part time when the
18 Budget Committee reviewed it and the full time salary was not budgeted, then it becomes a new
19 position.

20
21 Mr. York indicated that the work was budgeted across two different positions.

22
23 Mr. Spencer asked for the information regarding what was budgeted for that position for the last
24 two years and commented that there should be a discussion.

25
26 Mrs. Couture indicated that she raised the issue to provide historical information.

27
28 **8. PUBLIC INPUT**

29 There was no public input.

30
31 • **Upcoming meetings**

32 The next meeting of the Budget Committee will be held on December 5, 2013.

33
34 **MOTION:** by Mr. Spencer

35 *Move to adjourn.*

36 **SECOND:** Mr. Vaillancourt

37 **VOTE: 5-0-0.**

38 **The motion carried unanimously.**

39
40 There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

41
42 **Minutes by:** *Michele E. Flynn (Recording Secretary)*

43
44 **Date approved:** **December 10, 2013**