

DRAFT

Minutes of the Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting Held on June 25, 2015

The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, June 25, 2015 at Campbell High School, 1 Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

PRESENT: C Couture (Chair), K Douglas (Vice Chair), W Spencer, C Pascucci, K Douglas, D Vaillancourt, J York (School Board Representative), F Byron (Selectmen's Representative)

Absent: R Keating

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Couture called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

4. REVIEW/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

Mrs. Couture announced that the following items are added to the agenda: the resignation of the Town Administrator and the effect on the budget process; school district technology information.

5. PRIOR MEETING MINUTE APPROVAL

• May 28, 2015

MOTION: by Mr. Peeples

Move to approve the minutes of May 28, 2015

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

VOTE: 5-0-2, with Mrs. Couture and Mr. York abstaining

The motion passed.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

Mrs. Couture reported the following correspondence was received: district financials, and district enrollment.

7. REPORTS

• Town Business

o General Updates

Mr. Byron reported nothing significant has changed. He indicated the town is still waiting for FEMA to reimburse the town for the snow events. He noted that FEMA is requiring raw materials before the reimbursement is made and the town expects to receive between \$20,000 - \$30,000 for reimbursement.

Mr. Byron reported the Town Administrator is leaving effective August 20. The Board of Selectmen has begun a search for a town administrator and intends to post the search on the

NHMA site and the listserv. It is expected that approximately 20 days after the posting the Board of Selectmen will begin evaluating resumes. No decision has been made on whether employees or public officials will interview candidates. Mr. Byron indicated in terms of how this will affect the budget process, Mr. Hoch was asked to begin working on the 2016 budget. He noted the numbers for insurance and health care are unknown at this time and salaries can change as well. He expects the budget will not be presented on August 27, but will be presented at the meeting just after the Labor Day holiday.

Mrs. Couture indicated the Budget Committee is slated to begin the town budget review on October 1.

Mr. Byron reported the Board of Selectmen began implementing the first phase of the wage plan that was approved by the voters. He commented that changes to the plan have been reviewed. He indicated that this is a contract year for the police department and negotiations will begin over the next few weeks. He noted that information will be brought forward when an agreement is in place.

Mr. Byron reported that the Library trustees requested a \$915 encumbrance for an employee who may need insurance. He indicated that the Board of Selectmen have not made a decision at this time. He commented that the encumbrance is less than 1% of the Library's total budget and they expect it can be covered in their budget.

Mr. Byron referred to Deeding of Property and explained when a taxpayer does not pay their property tax bill for a period of three years the property is deeded to the town and taken for owed taxes. He reported there were three properties that were deeded to the town this year. Mr. Byron indicated that as of today the town intends to collect \$8.5M in taxes. He reported that \$3.5M has been collected as of noon today. Mr. Byron mentioned that the delegation voted to raise County taxes on the town by approximately 6%.

Mrs. Couture asked what that translates into for taxpayers. Mr. Byron indicated the total tax bill for the town was \$480,000. He noted it is approximately \$0.50 increase. He commented that three negotiation contracts had to be approved and the county makes 17 payments in the fiscal year. Mr. Byron indicated that it is anticipated that once 2015 ends, we will have \$6M in the unexpended fund balance. He noted we use \$1M to offset taxes. He commented there is not much that can be done to defer or defray the county tax increase.

- RSA 32:22; Review of Expenditures

Expenditures were addressed during Mr. Byron's report.

- **School Business**

- General Updates

Mr. York reported that the Business Administrator's report was forwarded to the Budget Committee.

Mrs. Couture commented there is healthy balance unexpended for special education. She noted this is an observation as it is always a point of contention when the Committee makes budget decisions on special education. She observed that substitute salaries was under spent as well.

Mr. York commented that the special education under spend is because the district was doing what the Budget Committee asked. He noted that the School Board asks for latitude in that budget, but it is an expense that comes back to the voters when it is under spent. He indicated that there are various things that sway that process. He noted while the under spend was 25% of the special education budget, it was 1.9% of the entire budget.

Mrs. Couture commented that the Budget Committee looks at historical spending. She noted that members try to be aware of the needs and potential fluctuation and it is always difficult to make reductions in that area. She expressed that she is aware that 24.9% of the special education budget was under spent.

Mr. Spencer noted that the district was operating under a default budget, but the numbers included for special education were not what was recommended by the Budget Committee.

Mr. York reported that the adjusted under spend of the entire budget is approximately \$97,000, which is the result of two encumbrances: \$35,000 for LMS oil tank repair and \$10,000 to remove tiles in the GMS cafeteria.

Mr. Spencer indicated his comment was that we were able to absorb additional transportation costs and still come in under budget. He commented that the assumption is the district will have a good handle on it next year.

Mr. York reported that the Business Administrator locked in a propane contract with a savings and the savings will be moved to the vocational education transportation budget.

Mr. Spencer asked if the vocational program has been changed. Mr. York indicated that it has, but the School Board has not yet approved the change. He noted that there are seniors who will be staying in Nashua for a year and that process needs to be addressed.

Mr. Spencer commented the expectation is that the students going to Pinkerton will result in a lower transportation cost.

Mr. York commented that driving to Nashua takes 45 minutes to 1 hour and the trip to Pinkerton takes approximately 30 minutes. He indicated it is expected to be quicker. He noted the feeling of the School Board is that we would like to see more students transporting themselves, but the process and criteria must be addressed with all agencies.

Mr. York reported that some maintenance contracts were signed: DLB Paving was awarded the bid for the GMS playground area paving project; Jolt Electric was awarded the bid for electrical services; AE Mechanical was awarded the bid for HVAC services.

Mrs. Couture observed that the IT report reflects much work will be done over the summer.

Mr. York announced that the School Board accepted a donation of 50 laptops from NetScout. The IT Director confirmed that the district can use them. He reported the CHS wireless infrastructure will be upgraded; access points from CHS will be used at LMS; 20 interactive projectors were ordered (15 for GMS; 5 for LMS) for classes that do not have smart boards. Mr. York indicated that the cost of the interactive projectors was less expensive than for six smart boards. He reported the phone system will be replaced at GMS this summer, at LMS next summer and CHS the year after. He indicated that Samsung II Chromebooks were recommended for the CHS 1:1 pilot; security upgrades will be installed this summer.

Mr. Peebles asked why the district decided to use Chromebooks and Google Docs rather than a Microsoft based platforms.

Mr. York indicated the 1:1 Committee spent much time on that and it was their recommendation to the School Board. He noted the Superintendent would be better able to answer that question. He commented that the Superintendent went with Committee members on a tour of a high school in Massachusetts that had implanted a 1:1 program. Mr. York indicated Chromebooks seems to be an easier process for everyone and Microsoft products will be installed on the computers.

Mrs. Couture commented that it appears the district is on target with the technology plan.

Mr. York commented they have much work ahead of them. He explained that when the former IT Director was hired he tried to slow down the process by moving to more software management. He indicated that was rejected by the School Board and the district was able to hire someone more qualified in a short period of time. Mr. York commented that Mr. Pelletier has managed these types of systems and has come on board part time until July 1. Mr. York reported the database administrator has been hired and will start at the beginning of July.

Mr. Spencer asked if there are any comments on the work in the parking lot at CHS. Mr. York indicated that speed bumps are being installed. He explained that parents believe students are driving too fast in the lot and that speed bumps will slow them down. He noted that traffic is being redirected in the morning. Starting in the fall cars will be directed to go around the back of the parking lot and drop off students. He noted the school has been frustrated with the speed of the parents dropping off students.

Mrs. Couture commented that the enrollment reports indicate an increase of 14 students at LMS since the beginning of the year. She indicated that it would not be a surprise if enrollment increases as people are selling their houses in Litchfield.

Mr. York believes that people moving into Litchfield will drive the increase of students in the district.

Mr. Byron commented that the state budget was approved and the education stabilization grants will remain at 96% so that schools will not see a large reduction.

Mr. York commented that the district will have a reduction of \$300,000. Mr. Byron commented that there is a continuing resolution and the funding will continue at the same level as 2015.

8. **MEMBER INPUT/NEW BUSINESS**

Mrs. Couture commented the Budget Committee will reconvene at the end of August.

9. **PUBLIC INPUT**

There was no public input.

10. **ADJOURN**

MOTION: by Mrs. Douglas

Move to adjourn

SECOND: by Mr. Pascucci

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion passed.

- **Upcoming meetings**

The next meeting of the Budget Committee will be August 27, 2015.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

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