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**Minutes of the  
Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting  
Held on November 5, 2015**

The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, November 5, 2015 at Campbell High School, One Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

**PRESENT:** C Couture (Chair), K Douglas (Vice Chair), C Pascucci, B Spencer, R Peeples, R Keating, D Vaillancourt, B Bourque (School Board Representative), K Bourque (Selectmen's Representative), T Brown (Town Administrator)

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mrs. Couture called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

**• PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mrs. Couture mentioned that the meeting started a few minutes late because members of the Budget Committee had a tour of GMS and LMS prior to the meeting.

**2. PUBLIC INPUT**

There was no public input.

**3. REVIEW/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA**

There were no revisions or additions to the agenda. Mrs. Couture announced there is a tour of CHS scheduled for 6:00 p.m. November 12.

**4. REVIEW/ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

**• October 29, 2015**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Pascucci

*Motion to approve the minutes of October 29, 2015*

**SECOND:** by Mrs. Douglas

**VOTE: 8-0-1 with Mr. Kevin Bourque abstaining**

**The motion carried.**

**5. CORRESPONDENCE**

Mrs. Couture reported the Budget Committee received gas price information from Mr. Peeples and Mr. Byron; MS-4 information; the School Board budget review schedule; email regarding tonight's budgets; the Library budget.

**6. SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET REVIEW**

**• Overview**

Mr. O'Neill and Mr. Markiewicz presented an overview of the FY17 School Board recommended budget.

Mr. O'Neill explained the budget process was modified from the previous year as three year trends of actual expenditures were used to prepare the budget. He indicated he asked budget

47 managers to work off actual expenditures and to justify their requests based on those trends. He  
48 commented there is a break out of new components in the budget. Mr. O'Neill announced the  
49 recommended budget for FY17 is \$20,831,616 reflecting a change of \$732,958 or 3.6%. He  
50 noted there are costs that the district cannot control included in the budget and the purpose is to  
51 maintain the current level of services to the students.

52  
53 Mr. O'Neill reported that health insurance costs have a projected increase of 9.8% and the  
54 budget contains LEA increases according to the CBA and non-LEA increases. He explained  
55 they tried to look at the demographics and cohort migration from year to year as well as making  
56 changes to reflect where we have capacity for FTE. He recommended one reduction in force at  
57 GMS. Mr. O'Neill indicated that enrollment projections for Kindergarten numbers are  
58 questionable and more investigation is being done to determine how many students will enroll in  
59 grade 1.

60  
61 Mr. O'Neill commented the general fund yields a 1.6% increase over the last five years. He  
62 indicated that he works off of trends and recommended working off a 3-5 year actual trend,  
63 which reflect the district-wide expenses increasing over five years. He noted that salaries and  
64 benefits make up 77% of the total budget.

65  
66 Mr. Markiewicz commented that the operational budgets exclude salaries and benefits and the  
67 chart on the presentation shows where the budget dollars are going. He indicated that the chart  
68 shows salaries and benefits as a percentage of the total budget and the trend is increasing.

69  
70 Mr. O'Neill commented that we cannot continue the trend line with salaries and benefits. He  
71 indicated we are aware of the fact as we look at salaries and benefits that we will have to control  
72 that trend line.

73  
74 Mr. Spencer asked how the 2017 salary numbers were developed.

75  
76 Mr. Markiewicz indicated that we take position control and bring the teacher salaries in moving  
77 them to the next step or higher degree level attained in personnel budgeting. He noted there are  
78 13 new hires this year.

79  
80 Mr. Spencer asked if the district's assumption regarding salaries and benefits is based more upon  
81 teachers. Mr. Markiewicz responded in the affirmative.

82  
83 Mr. Spencer commented there will be attrition. He indicated that the fact is the district will have  
84 turnover. He asked what the assumption is regarding benefits.

85  
86 Mr. Markiewicz indicated that the GMR received is approximately 10% increase.

87  
88 Mr. O'Neill commented as open enrollment commences employees have the option to select  
89 different elections.

90  
91 Mr. Spencer commented historically we look at the numbers and both salaries and benefits come  
92 in lower. He noted the Budget Committee usually makes reductions.

93 Referring to the presentation, Mr. Markiewicz commented that the 2016 bar on the chart is based  
94 on projected expenditures. He indicated we tried to steer our budget managers away from  
95 increasing 3% in those areas. He noted we had them look at the trends and justify any  
96 substantial change in the budget notes.

97  
98 Referring to the statement Mr. Markiewicz made regarding the 13 new hires, Mr. O'Neill  
99 clarified that these are not new positions, but replacements.

100

101 Mr. Markiewicz reported the overall budget from 2015 increased 2.5% in salaries.

102

103 Mr. O'Neill referred to the presentation and indicated that teacher the teacher retirement  
104 contribution rate increased 1.5% in 2015 and there was a 3-year CBA in 2014. He reported the  
105 FY17 budget includes:

- 106 • Mandatory salary contractual obligations \$192,484
- 107 • Non-LEA affiliated staff and administrators \$111,894
- 108 • Reduction of one 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher \$82,500
- 109 • Overtime was reduced from \$17,603 to \$12,500 for custodial staff.

110

111 Mr. Markiewicz commented we are looking to eliminate overtime with the exception of  
112 emergency overtime for snow storms. He indicated we would like to propose to take the  
113 overtime amount along with some summer custodial funds and add a part time custodian for  
114 weekends, which would eliminate custodial overtime for building use. He noted the buildings  
115 are active on evenings and weekends. Mr. Markiewicz offered to provide more information  
116 regarding this proposal.

117

118 Mr. Spencer commented that we will have a discussion regarding grade 1. He indicated the  
119 Budget Committee had a discussion last week about pre-registration.

120

121 Mr. O'Neill indicated that the district is compiling information from non-public schools  
122 regarding Kindergarten numbers this year. He commented we are looking at historical numbers  
123 to see what percentage of the population enters first grade. He noted we are looking at non-  
124 attendees of Kindergarten in public schools and natality numbers from 2010.

125

126 Mr. Spencer advised not to take the birth numbers. He indicated the NHSBA report contains a  
127 valid number.

128

129 Mr. O'Neill commented he is concerned because Grade 1 is always significantly larger than the  
130 Kindergarten numbers because of the children that attend private Kindergarten. He noted we are  
131 trying to get more information.

132

133 Mr. Spencer asked when the district will hold pre-registration for Grade 1. Mr. O'Neill indicated  
134 the date has not yet been defined. He noted he asked the School Board to make the decision, but  
135 he is uncertain if it will yield an accurate number.

136

137 Mr. Spencer commented that when Grade 1 registration is held in January it is a good number.

138

139 Mr. Bourque commented that Mr. Thompson identified 7 students in private Kindergarten and 22  
140 others that will enroll in Grade 1.

141

142 Mr. O'Neill indicated the district will schedule a pre-registration and try to obtain accurate  
143 numbers.

144

145 Mr. O'Neill continued the presentation:

- 146 • Health insurance increase projected at 10%
- 147 • There were 13 eligible new hires to start this year
- 148 • No increase in dental insurance
- 149 • No change in the teacher retirement rate.

150

151 Mrs. Couture asked for the difference in salary for the 13 new hires. Mr. Markiewicz indicated  
152 HR is working on providing that information.

153

154 Mr. Markiewicz referred to a linear graph regarding the trends in health insurance. He indicated  
155 that since the district switched to School Care, health insurance has increased over the last two  
156 years.

157

158 Mr. Peebles commented that we were promised savings in the CBA with health insurance.

159

160 Mrs. Couture commented that it is typical to see savings the first year and major increases in  
161 subsequent years.

162

163 Mr. Markiewicz commented we are looking into different companies and plans.

164

165 Mr. Markiewicz reported other major areas of the budget that reflect changes include:

- 166 • Building repairs and maintenance
- 167 • Transportation
- 168 • Technology
- 169 • Utilities
- 170 • Textbooks.

171

172 He noted that approximately \$2,657,479 is left for discretionary spending and 11% for needs  
173 based appropriation. He indicated last year's snow storms resulted in inordinate snow removal at  
174 all buildings. He commented the district applied to FEMA and will receive reimbursement.

175

176 Mr. O'Neill reported that strategic appropriations include:

- 177 • District-wide legal fees \$50,000
- 178 • School building assessment and Capital Plan \$40,000 (professional services)

179 He indicated that we would like to come forward with a five year plan for capital expenditures,  
180 which would require a needs assessment of facility assets by a professional. He noted there is  
181 not a lot of money in the Capital Reserve Fund for all three buildings. He commented that he is  
182 used to having a Capital Reserve Fund that is well funded and that the district uses prudently.

183

184 Mr. Spencer commented that reserve fund has existed for many years and has only been used  
185 once.

186

187 Mr. O'Neill commented it is a testament to the professionals in the district. He indicated that  
188 \$100,000 is not a lot of money if an emergency arises. He noted he will stand at the direction of  
189 the Budget Committee.

190

191 Mr. Spencer asked if it has been considered to place the needs assessment on a warrant article.  
192 Mr. O'Neill was concerned with the ramifications of the no means no law if the article fails. He  
193 indicated the assessment would provide value for projections when budgeting in the future.

194

195 Mr. Spencer commented if the operating budget were to fail, the assessment would not be done  
196 as it would not be included in the default budget. He indicated that this Committee tries to get  
197 the operating budget lowered so it will be approved by the voters.

198

199 Mr. O'Neill commented he will discuss with the School Board and Budget Committee the best  
200 devices to get the budget approved. He indicated that infrastructure has been overlooked for  
201 years and the needs are evident. He noted it needs to be addressed.

202

- 203 • Special Education psychological services \$43,282 (more efficient to outsource than to  
204 hire a full time provider; need for a professional with certifications for specialization)
- 205 • Curriculum adoption \$119,598
- 206 • Network storage \$25,000 (with 1:1 computing will need additional storage appliance)
- 207 • Computer servers \$16,500
- 208 • Replace Wi-Fi at GMS, LMS \$54,000
- 209 • Upgrade LMS telephone system \$34,000 (commitment made to replace one system per  
210 year for 3 years).

211

212 Mr. O'Neill commented that he is looking forward to answering Budget Committee questions  
213 and building a better educational environment.

214

215 Mr. Spencer asked if the Committee will receive object and function summaries as well as  
216 revenues. Mr. Markiewicz indicated that he will provide object and function summaries to the  
217 Chair for distribution, but revenues will be provide within the next two weeks as they have not  
218 yet been presented to the School Board.

219

220 Mr. Peebles asked about the status of the student information system.

221

222 Mr. O'Neill indicated the parent portal was opened for demographics two weeks ago. He  
223 reported that 33% of parents who have logged in are using the portal and we have not had any  
224 reports of glitches. He commented the next step will be to put grading data on the portal. Mr.  
225 O'Neill noted we are trying to do this one step at a time because it is critical to have accurate  
226 information. Mr. O'Neill indicated the system crossover and the way data was stored in the last  
227 system was by student and this system stores the data by address. He commented the data is  
228 clean and accurate. He noted the target for releasing the gradebook on the portal is December 1.

229 He commended Andrea Stern, District Database Coordinator for her work getting the system up  
230 and running.

- **Presentations:**

- **GMS**

231  
232  
233 Mr. Bourque presented the FY17 GMS Superintendent's Recommended Budget with a bottom  
234 line of \$125,646.

235  
236 The Budget Committee reviewed the budget by page.

237  
238 Mrs. Couture asked if leases are increasing on copiers. Mr. Bourque responded in the  
239 affirmative.

240  
241 Referring to educational programs, Mr. Bourque reported the Math enVisions textbooks will not  
242 be in next year's budget, which reflects a decrease in the Math program budget; the Science  
243 program budget is increased due to Project Lead the Way supplies; textbooks for the Reading  
244 program will be included in the Curriculum budget.

245  
246 Mrs. Couture asked about the reduction in Kindergarten supplies. Mr. Bourque indicated the  
247 information will be provided.

248  
249 Mr. Markiewicz indicated Mr. Thompson will provide more information at the next meeting.

- **LMS**

250  
251  
252 Mr. Bourque presented the FY17 LMS Superintendent's Recommended Budget. He noted the  
253 largest reductions will be reflected in curriculum.

254  
255 Mrs. Douglas asked why Science supplies increased from \$3,750 to \$9,750. Mr. Bourque  
256 indicated that Project Lead the Way will be rolled out for LMS and GMS and kits will be  
257 purchased for the classrooms.

258  
259 Mrs. Couture asked what is driving the increase in Professional Services. She commented it  
260 appears that tutoring and consulting needs were approved by the Special Services Director.

261  
262 Mr. Markiewicz indicated the services are for students who are going to be out of the attendance  
263 of the school due to health related issues or out of school suspension. He commented it is an  
264 unknown, but trends around three students. He noted Guidance coordinates those services and  
265 more information will be provided.

266  
267 Mrs. Couture asked if enrollment projections from October 1 are being used to predict student  
268 costs.

269  
270 Mr. Bourque indicated that he could not find anything in the budget that reflected per student  
271 costs.

272  
273 Mr. Markiewicz indicated there has been a cultural change with budgeting this year and we have  
274 found that collaborative purchasing has helped.

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Mr. Bourque indicated that enrollment numbers will be used more with curriculum.

- **SAU/School Board**

Mr. Bourque presented the FY17 SAU/School Board Superintendent’s Recommended Budget to the Budget Committee. He note that NHSBA dues contributed to the increase in the School Board budget.

Mrs. Couture commented the NHSBA is valuable in terms of training and advice.

Mr. O’Neill indicated the policy and training services are valuable and it makes sense to be involved in the NHSBA.

Mr. Bourque reported there are increases in Legal Fees due to LEA negotiations.

Mrs. Couture pointed out that there was a discussion last year regarding travel. Mr. Markiewicz indicated he will be providing information regarding workshops and travel.

## 7. BUDGET REVIEW – TOWN

- **Presentations**

- **4550.2 Library**

Ms. Varrick presented the 2016 Library budget to the Budget Committee with a bottom line of \$207,017. She noted the only increase is in salaries: step increases and the position that was moved from 24 hours to 32 hours will be full year. She noted there were some challenges with spending this year. Ms. Varrick reported a staff member took a medical leave so we needed to under spend other line items to make up for that cost. She indicated some expenses were deferred to put money into the heating line that was reduced last year.

Mrs. Couture asked if the heating line will be over expended this year. Ms. Varrick commented we used more than normal this year because of the extremely cold winter. She note she considered this year as an anomaly to reduce the cost for next year.

Mr. Vaillancourt asked about the cost for the staff member’s leave. Ms. Varrick indicated the cost was approximately \$1,900.

- **4155 Personnel Administration**

Mr. Brown presented 2016 Personnel Administration budget with a bottom line of \$560,704. He noted most of the increase in the budget is salary driven; retirement contributions have been reworked; federal wages taxes increased due to wage increases; and Workers Compensation Insurance has increased.

Mrs. Couture commented that the first phase of the wage plan was successful last year as a warrant article. She asked why the town is not including the second phase in the warrant for next year.

321 Mr. Brown commented the first phase was approved by the voters and the Board of Selectmen  
322 decided to include the second phase in the budget. He noted we are treating like a contract.

323

324 Mr. Pascucci commented that after discussion last year regarding whether the wage plan should  
325 be included in the budget, the Budget Committee felt the wage plan should be a warrant article  
326 and the voters should decide. He indicated that the understanding was subsequent phases were  
327 going to be included on the warrant. He believes the voters should decide if the second phase  
328 should be implemented.

329

330 Mrs. Douglas commented she supported the first phase of the wage plan with the understanding  
331 that the subsequent phases would be included on the warrant. She noted that the school district  
332 has included non-union wage increases on the warrant and believes the same should be done for  
333 the town.

334

335 Mr. Pascucci indicated that union and non-union raises are separate and need to be treated as  
336 such.

337

338 Mr. Keating agreed with the statements made by Committee members and commented that the  
339 wage plan should go to the voters.

340

341 Mr. Peebles commented that he heard the Superintendent say earlier that we cannot keep adding  
342 to the salary line items because there will be nothing left to educate the students. He agreed that  
343 the voters should decide.

344

345 Mrs. Douglas asked if longevity payments are also a part of the wage plan. Mr. Brown indicated  
346 those are existing longevity payments.

347

348 ○ **4520.1 Parks and Recreation**

349 Mr. Brown presented the 2016 Parks & Recreation budget to the Budget Committee with a  
350 bottom line of \$83,029.

351

352 Mr. Bryant indicated that electricity usage has increased this year because of all the  
353 organizations that are using Talent Hall. He noted that the Recreation Commission does not  
354 charge for the use.

355

356 Mrs. Couture asked about the admission for Comedy Nights. Mr. Bryant commented that we  
357 only take money out of the organizations to pay for the electricity.

358

359 Mrs. Couture asked how heating fared at Talent Hall this winter.

360

361 Mr. Bryant commented that there is access to the hall from the back. He indicated that using the  
362 back door to enter and exit, instead of the two main doors, is the reason the propane has not  
363 increased. He noted there was a heating issue with the unit, but we fixed it a few times and  
364 managed to keep it running.

365

366 Mrs. Couture asked about the exterior painting included in the budget. Mr. Bryant indicated the  
367 county prison program will be painting the building next year.

368

369 Mrs. Couture asked about portable toilet rentals. Mr. Bryant indicated the Recreation  
370 Commission has taken over the rental programs, which were paid by the organizations in the  
371 past.

372

373 Mrs. Couture asked about the increase in equipment repair and maintenance. Mr. Bryant  
374 indicated there are pump issues on the fields.

375

376 Mr. Pascucci asked if the Recreation Commission has noticed if the graffiti activity has  
377 increased. Mr. Bryant indicated it comes in waves.

378

379 • **Budget Committee Actions**

380

381 ○ **4220.1 Fire Department**

382 Mrs. Douglas commented that Line 191 and Line 680 both seem to have a uniform allowance for  
383 the Fire Chief.

384

385 Mr. Brown commented that the Chief has an allowance for uniforms per his contract. He  
386 believes Line 680 is budgeted for the Chief to make decision to replace worn out uniforms.

387

388 **MOTION:** by Mrs. Douglas

389 *Move to reduce Line 680, Uniforms and Accessories, by \$400*

390 **SECOND:** by Mr. Peeples

391

392 Captain Nichols suggested it may be the Chief's allowance that he gives certain individuals to  
393 replace worn uniforms.

394

395 *Mrs. Douglas withdrew the motion. Mr. Pascucci withdrew the second.*

396

397 **MOTION:** by Mr. Pascucci

398 *Move to add \$50,000 to Line 740, Equipment Purchase, for the exhaust removal system*

399 **SECOND:** Mrs. Douglas

400

401 Mr. Pascucci commented that he watched the Board of Selectmen meeting on Monday and heard  
402 the Fire Chief say his biggest concern is the build-up of carcinogens that remain in the building  
403 when the fire trucks are started. Mr. Pascucci indicated if this is a true safety issue it needs to be  
404 in the budget and not on a warrant article. He noted it is for consistency.

405

406 Mrs. Douglas commented that she has been thinking about this and hesitated to add the cost to  
407 the budget because we have not seen a proposal for the cost. She indicated when you request a  
408 quote from an engineer you should receive three different quotes at different cost levels.

409

410 Mr. Pascucci commented that the Chief got a proposal.

411

412 Captain Nichols indicated it is a tube that is attached as the truck pulls into the building, and  
413 when the truck leaves the station the pipe follows the truck and retracts at a certain point.  
414

415 Mrs. Douglas asked about ventilation in the past. Captain Nichols indicated we have used fans,  
416 but they do not exhaust all the carbon out of the building.  
417

418 Mrs. Douglas suggested cutting louvers with fans in the walls. She commented there are other  
419 options. She wanted to know what exploration was done and consideration was given to any  
420 other options. She indicated she is not comfortable with \$50,000.  
421

422 Mr. Peeples commented there are other options that could cost less.  
423

424 Mrs. Couture indicated last week the Board of Selectmen made the decision to place this on the  
425 warrant. She commented if they bring more information forward we can determine a decision at  
426 that time to either include it in the budget or support it on the warrant. She believes there is  
427 argument for both: lowering the budget so it is approved; if the item is included in the budget and  
428 you get the default because the budget is too high.  
429

430 Mr. Pascucci commented he is more interested in consistency and the fact that he heard the Chief  
431 state this is his biggest concern.  
432

433 Captain Nichols commented most fire stations have exhaust systems on the inside because they  
434 have higher ceilings. He noted Litchfield's fire station has neither.  
435

436 **VOTE: 1-6-0**

437 **The motion failed.**  
438

439 Mr. Bourque agreed that more information is needed.  
440

441 Mrs. Couture indicated there will likely be more information when the warrant articles are  
442 presented.  
443

444 Mr. Brown commented he does not believe it is from a sole source.  
445

446 Mrs. Douglas asked if 6 sets of protective gear are being replaced in Line 682. She indicated that  
447 the notes reflect 6 sets are being replaced at \$3,000 per set and the total budgeted does not match  
448 that calculation.  
449

450 Mr. Brown indicated that the number of sets should be five.  
451

452 Mrs. Douglas asked why Litchfield is replacing the radio in Hudson (Line 630). Mr. Peeples  
453 indicated that we have to pay for the equipment that is being used to service Litchfield.  
454

455 ○ **4290.1 Emergency Management**

456 There were no motions.  
457

458 ○ **4215.1 Ambulance**

459 Mrs. Couture commented the Committee was waiting for information from Hudson regarding  
460 Litchfield costs.

461  
462 Mr. Brown reported that we have not yet received the outstanding bad debt from Hudson. He  
463 commented it is not unusual to have medical bills lag behind for months. He indicated by the  
464 time Comstar gets the information it could be four or five months old and by the time we receive  
465 it the information could be a year old. He noted we will address these issues when we discuss  
466 the new contract.

467  
468 Mrs. Couture commented that it was discussed last week that the town has \$23,000 in reserve for  
469 the ambulance fund and only \$856 has been spent to date. She asked if \$11,500 is the right  
470 number to keep budgeting or can we budget a lower number.

471  
472 Mr. Pascucci commented at a minimum the number budgeted can be reduced by half.

473  
474 **MOTION:** by Mrs. Couture  
475 *Move to reduce Line 800, Ambulance Bad Debt, by \$5,000*

476 **SECOND:** by Mr. Pascucci

477  
478 Mrs. Couture commented she hopes the Committee has more information by February  
479 (Deliberative Session).

480  
481 Mr. Pascucci commented that is a revolving fund and more can be added if needed.

482  
483 **VOTE: 6-1-0**  
484 **The motion carried.**

485  
486 ○ **4196.9 Town Insurance**

487 Mrs. Couture indicated this budget was voted last week.

488  
489 ○ **4411.2 Mosquito District**

490 There were no motions.

491  
492 **8. COMMITTEE COMMENTS/OLD BUSINESS**

493 Mrs. Couture indicated that the total of the Committee's actions is \$45,721.

494  
495 Mrs. Douglas commented that we spoke last week about propane and tabled the discussion to  
496 this week. She noted that Mr. Brown completed a heating audit in comparison with the proposed  
497 budget and revised the lines in question.

498  
499 Mr. Brown mentioned that he is providing a list of adjustments to the Board of Selectmen's  
500 budget. He noted some of the changes were very small. He commented that he went through all  
501 budgets and highlighted in red the Board of Selectmen budget that differs with what was  
502 discussed by the Budget Committee.

503

504 Mrs. Couture believes that line should reflect the literal changes being made by the Budget  
505 Committee. She commented next week provide a listing of all the changes so we can adjust  
506 them. She indicated it will be listed on the agenda for November 12.

507

508 Mr. Brown provided draft warrant articles for the Budget Committee. He noted that it is not an  
509 inclusive draft, but wanted the Budget Committee to have them for review.

510

## 511 **9. PUBLIC INPUT**

512 There was no public input.

513

## 514 **10. ADJOURN**

515 **MOTION:** by Mrs. Douglas

516 *Move to adjourn*

517 **SECOND:** by Mr. Vaillancourt

518 **VOTE: 7-0-0**

519 **The motion carried.**

520

521 The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

522

523 **Next Meeting:** Thursday, November 12, 2015

524

525 **Recorded by: Michele E. Flynn, Recording Secretary**

526

527

528

529