

**TOWN OF LITCHFIELD
2016 VOTER GUIDE AND SAMPLE BALLOT
VOTE – MARCH 8, 2016**

Article 18 – Public Works Expendable Trust Fund Appropriation

This article raises \$25,000 for the previously established Public Works Expendable Trust Fund to cover additional costs associated with the Highway equipment capital items that are being included through the proposed changes detailed in warrant article 17.

Article 19 – Recycling Revolving Fund

This article will create a Recycling Revolving Fund as authorized under RSA 31:95-h. This fund will collect annual revenues from the sale of recyclable materials and allow their use for offsetting costs, purchasing goods, equipment, etc. associated with the town's recycling program. This fund is limited to the town's recycling program and may not be utilized for other purposes under state law. This warrant does not appropriate any money and will not raise taxes.

Article 20 – Northeast Energy Direct (gas pipeline)

This article is asking the consensus of the citizens of Litchfield to register their support or opposition to the Northeast Energy Gas Pipeline by voting in favor of or against the legal funds required to participate in the Pipeline Coalition. The pipeline will run 2.68 miles through the Town of Litchfield and impact approximately 100 homes within 500 feet of the proposed location. Should this warrant article pass or fail, the Board of Selectmen will consider this as a direct indication of the desires of the town's citizens concerning this project.

Article 21 – Conservation Commission

This article requires the Conservation Commission to have a professional appraisal conducted on property they wish to purchase. This requirement ensures that the Conservation Commission and the Board of Selectmen have accurate information to make decisions concerning the appropriateness of the purchase price negotiated.

Article 22 – Tax Cap

This article establishes a tax cap that will regulate the maximum growth of the town (not the school) budget as authorized under RSA 32:5-c. This will require that the Town's Budget Committee propose a budget that grows no more than \$175,000 over the prior year's tax effort. This restriction can be overruled by the citizens at the town's deliberative session and may be amended through a warrant article at the annual meeting. This warrant will require 3/5th majority vote to be adopted.

Article 23 – Citizen Petition

This article seeks to open the Cable Production Studio for use of the public in generating local programming. As the Board of Selectmen are responsible for the management of these facilities through the Cable Committee this warrant is an advisory article.

Polls open at Campbell High School at 7:00 AM and close at 7:00 PM
Photo ID now required to vote - You may register to vote at the polls

For the 2015 Annual Report and 2016 Budget Information visit:

www.litchfieldnh.gov

EXPLANATION OF WARRANT ARTICLES

Article 2 – Sign Ordinance

The 2015 Reed v Town of Gilbert, AZ Supreme Court Case ruled that content based sign ordinances were a violation of free speech. As a result towns across the country need to amend their Sign Ordinances to make sure there are no content-based provisions (where you must read the sign to know what requirements apply). The proposed amendment deletes any provisions that might be considered content based, including real estate and development, agricultural u-pick, and home occupation signs. The Town's existing sign provisions for the Commercial, Industrial and Transitional Districts remain unchanged. The home occupation sign provisions are proposed to become a general Residential District provision allowing a sign for all property owners in the district. Temporary signs are also proposed to be allowed by right, with no permit, and displayed for 30 days.

Article 3 – Setbacks of Sheds and Structures on Albuquerque

Setbacks in the Residential District are proposed to be reduced to allow sheds that are less than or equal to 192 square feet to be setback a minimum of 10 feet from the side and rear lot lines (currently require 20 feet). Additionally, the amendment proposes to reduce the building or structure set back from Albuquerque Avenue from 75 feet to 50 feet, consistent with the setback required from all other public rights of way.

Article 4 – Table of Dimensional Standards

The Planning Board has proposed a relocation of the dimensional standards (frontage, setbacks, and lot size) found throughout the Zoning Ordinance into a new a single table of dimensional requirements. There are no proposed changes to the requirements currently in effect with the exception of those within the Residential District. The same proposed setback amendments noted above for sheds and structures on Albuquerque Ave are included in the table of dimensional standards. Also within the Residential District, uses other than single family residential and two-family residential are proposed to have a minimum of 150 feet of frontage and 1 minimum contiguous acre of dry land to be consistent with the requirements for single family residential in the same district.

Article 5 – Definitions and Aquifer Protection District

The definitions section is proposed to be amended to remove site features such as fences and retaining walls from the definition of "structure" and add a definition of "public right of way." Additionally, the amendments propose to correct the source citation for the original Aquifer Delineation Study listed in the Aquifer Protection District.

2016 Budget Information is available on the Town's website at:

www.litchfieldnh.gov

For further information please contact Troy Brown, Town Administrator

by email: tbrown@Litchfieldnh.gov

by phone: 603-424-4046 ext 1250

Article 6 – Operating Budget Article

The operating budget proposed by the Budget Committee and as amended at town deliberative session is \$5,425,953 an increase of \$193,475 over the 2015 approved budget. If approved, this represents a tax rate increase of \$0.17 per thousand dollars of assessed value. The default budget, should the proposed budget fail, is \$5,359,717 a reduction of \$66,236 from the proposed budget.

Article 7 – Police Union Contract

This three-year contract provides a salary increase for the officers and dispatchers of ½% on April 1, 2016 and another ½% on July 1, 2016. Thereafter, a 2% wage adjustment will be issued on April 1st in 2017 and 2018. Employee health insurance premium contributions will increase for the Point of Service (POS) health plan over the contract period and a provision to work cooperatively to address any cost associated with the so-called “Cadillac Tax” is included. Additionally, officers are offered the opportunity to invest an additional \$1,000, if funds are available, above the current \$1,000 existing investment in the town’s 457-b plan. These funds will be collected through the Police Department Special Detail Revolving Fund and not through taxation.

Article 8 – Firefighter Paramedic Training

Due to the recent loss of the town’s full time Paramedic in January 2016, the Fire Department is seeking to replace this position with an individual with the same experience, certifications and skills. However, it is anticipated that it will be difficult to hire a new employee with Paramedic Certification. This article will provide funding to cover approximately \$12,000 in tuition and program costs and \$26,600 for department coverage during training. This warrant will be funded from the town’s unreserved fund balance and will not raise taxes.

Article 9 – Second Year of Town Non Union Wage Plan Implementation

In 2013, the Selectmen approved a revised wage plan for non-bargaining unit employees funded in 2015 through a warrant article approved by the voters. This warrant seeks an advisory opinion of the voters for the continuation of this program. This warrant raises no appropriation and will not raise taxes.

Article 10 – 1st Year of Library Union Wage Plan Implementation

According to New Hampshire State Statute, Library employees are employed by the Library Board of Trustees and not the Town. Because of this, Library employees were not included in the Town’s 2015 revised wage plan implementation warrant. The Library Board of Trustees adopted the Town’s revised wage plan for non-bargaining employees in 2015, and this warrant funds the year-one implementation of that plan ensuring all non-bargaining employees of Litchfield are on equal footing.

Article 11 – Town Earned Time Accrual Expendable Trust Fund

The town’s earned time expendable trust fund covers costs for unused earned time of town employees upon separation of employment, retirement or through the buy-back program as provided for in the town’s employee policy. The balance of this fund on 12/31/15 was \$682. The average annual expenses are approximately \$30,000 and there are currently about four employees that could retire in 2016. The total unfunded town liability, according to the 2014 financial statements, is \$163,560. This warrant will be funded from the town’s unreserved fund balance and will not raise taxes.

Article 12 – Library Earned Time Accrual Expendable Trust Fund

The “Library Vacation Accrual Trust Fund” will be closed and converted into the “Library Earned Time Accrual Expendable Trust Fund” to reflect the updated language of library employee policy. The renamed trust fund will cover the costs for unused earned time of Library employees upon separation of employment or for the buy-back program as provided for in the Library’s updated employee policy. The balance of the “Library Vacation Accrual Trust Fund” will be carried over to the “Library Earned Time Accrual Expendable Trust Fund.” The balance of the Vacation Accrual Trust Fund to be carried over to the Earned Time Accrual Expendable Trust Fund was \$7,374 on 12/31/15. This warrant raises no appropriation and will not raise taxes.

Article 13 – Human Services and Health Agencies

This article provides financial assistance to Human Service agencies that provide services to Litchfield residents that have requested supporting funding from the Town.

Article 14 – Building Systems Trust Fund

This article will add additional money into the previously established trust fund for use when a town building system such as HVAC, roof, septic, etc. may fail and require immediate replacement. The money associated with this warrant will be taken from the town’s unreserved fund balance and will not raise taxes.

Article 15 – Fire Station Exhaust Removal System

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recognizes that the exposure of firefighters to the carcinogens contained in diesel exhaust is a significant health hazard. This system will fully capture the exhaust of the trucks and vent it to the outside of the building during a call. The system is capable of handling all trucks at the station and is able to be moved should it be required in the future.

Article 16 – 2016 Road Improvement Projects

Continues road repair program supported by voters last year. The town maintains approximately 77 miles of roads and approximately 26% are considered to be in poor condition. The five-year priority road repair plan estimated repair cost at approximately \$2.2 million. Like in 2015, these funds will be combined with state Highway Block Grant funds in the operating budget for road improvements and any emergency repairs that may take precedence over planned repairs. Proposed projects for 2016 include, but are not limited to, portion of Cutler Road from Page to Candleridge, portion of Pinecrest Road from Albuquerque to Moose Hollow and approximately 2,655 linear feet of Pilgrim Drive starting from Page Road.

Article 17 – Change Purpose of Public Works Expendable Trust Fund

This warrant changes the purpose of the Public Works Expendable Trust Fund. The existing fund covers overages in snow plowing costs as well as capital equipment purchases necessary at the Town’s Recycling Center. The Fund is being modified to include the repair and replacement of vehicles and equipment for the Highway Department. This warrant does not appropriate money and will not raise taxes. It requires a 2/3rd majority vote for implementation.