

## Minutes of

### Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting

Held on January 11, 2008

**Present:** Chairman B Lemire, B Spencer (Vice Chairman), R Peeples (Selectman's Rep.), J Harte, P Parker, D Miller, M Falzone, B McCue

**Also Present:** Selectman Raccio, Selectman Jewett, Fire Chief T Schofield

Chairman Lemire opened the meeting at 8:20 p.m., stating the purpose of the meeting would be to discuss any outstanding issues or input from the public. He then invited Selectman Peeples to speak.

#### TOWN BUSINESS

##### 1. Mosquito Control

Selectman Peeples stated the Board of Selectmen would like the Budget Committee to reconsider putting the figures for Mosquito Control back into the budget.

**MOTION:** by B Spencer

*Move that the Litchfield Budget Committee should include account 4411.20.371, Mosquito District, in the 2008 Budget*

**SECOND:** J Harte

Selectman Peeples explained the Board of Selectmen felt strongly about getting something in the budget for mosquito control, but felt that a warrant would have been extremely difficult.

**VOTE:** 3-4-1 (Selectman Peeples abstained as he is not an advocate of mosquito control)

The motion failed.

##### *Discussion:*

Mr. Spencer stated he thought much of the discussion was around the fact that the Board of Selectmen was afraid that if the warrant failed, the Town could not spend the money. He stated that the basic reason the Budget Committee had taken it out of the budget is still there.

Mr. Harte stated he agreed with the original intent. There followed a discussion with Mr. Harte commenting that it could be argued that the treatment for an outbreak is different than spraying to prevent an outbreak, and the State would presumably become involved in the former instance. Selectman Peeples stated he did not know what the role of the State would be.

Selectman Raccio spoke about the level of detail the Board were involved at, and spraying versus larvaciding. He stated they did not put money forward for spraying and explained why. He also spoke about State licenses and the time it takes to obtain these (up to 8 months), and that the Board had instructed the vendor to apply for the licenses so that they were in place should they be required. Selectman Raccio also stated that no money at the budget level would go to spraying, explaining that the mosquitoes had already hatched if it were necessary to spray. He stated he could not believe those who voted for mosquito control last year would think they would not have to pay for it. Selectman Raccio also spoke about the process involved in mosquito control (setting up of test sites etc); pointing out that only after testing would larvaciding be applied as proof positive is required of infected mosquitoes. He further explained for Chairman Lemire that both the mosquitoes and the chemicals have a cycle and when the chemicals can be applied.

Mr. Spencer stated if the Board of Selectmen representatives present at the meeting wished to put together a warrant article, the Budget Committee would vote on it.

Further discussion took place, with Mr. Falzone obtaining clarification that licenses are required for both larvaciding and spraying. It was pointed out that only a few varieties of mosquitoes are involved in spreading the West Nile virus.

Mr. Miller spoke about the voters not hearing the rationale behind the decision to include money for this purpose and who come to vote uninformed as there is no-one they can ask about it. He asked if the Board of Selectmen is ready to accept defeat of their Budget.

**MOTION:** by Selectman Peeples

***To re-instate \$29,965 for the Mosquito District within the Health Department account 4411, for inclusion at the Town deliberations***

**SECOND:** D Miller

Selectman Raccio clarified for Selectman Jewett that the Board of Selectmen had decided to ask the Budget Committee for reconsideration rather than put together a warrant article.

**VOTE:** 2-6-0 (Mr. Miller and Selectman Peeples voted for the motion)

The motion failed.

Chairman Lemire recessed the meeting at 8:45 for a caucus of the Board of Selectmen to discuss how they wanted to move forward regarding Mosquito Control.

When the meeting was called to order again, Selectman Peeples stated the Board of Selectmen does not have a warrant to move forward, pointing out they had already closed their public meeting.

It was clarified that a warrant could not be brought forward at the Deliberative session; however an amendment to the Budget could be moved.

## **2. Town Warrant Articles**

### ***a) Article: Fire Station at 2 Liberty Way (Ten Year Bond)***

**MOTION:** by Selectman Peeples

***“To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$1.9 million for the design, construction, and fit-up of a new fire station on Town owned land at Two Liberty Way, and authorize the issuance of not more than \$2,403,394.44 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA Chapter 33), and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to issue and sell such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon; and further, to raise and appropriate the sum of \$52,144.44 for the purpose of paying the first year’s bond issuance costs and interest on said bonds or notes. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (3/5 Ballot Vote Required).”***

***Move with recommendation by the Budget Committee***

**SECOND:** B Spencer

#### ***Discussion:***

Selectman Peeples stated he had handed out copies of the site construction drawings for perusal of the Committee. Members of the Committee asked questions of Selectman Peeples and Chief Schofield, obtaining the following clarifications:

- The building would be just under 10,000 sq ft (at \$1.93 per sq ft)
- \$1.9 million takes into account a metal roof
- There are no anticipated water problems
- This would be a 100 year solution
- The pricing has been obtained through the engineering firm used by the Town
- All equipment will be moved to the new station
- There will be a new phone and computer system
- The timeline for construction, if approved, has not yet been discussed, but the intent is to start as soon as is feasible

- Test pits for the septic have been scheduled, but no problems are anticipated as there was a lot of analysis done when the Town Hall was being developed
- There are no wetlands in the area, and the soil maps indicate sand

Selectman Peeples stated he would go on record as saying there will be no problem with the proposed site.

Selectman Raccio stated he would go on record as confirming that what was presented at the hearings. He confirmed the Board of Selectmen does not have the level of technical data ready to present that the school representatives have provided at this point.

There was further discussion in which Mr. Miller spoke about the process and consistency, stating he did not see the Town following the same process for \$1.9million expenditure as the School District had been required to do. Chairman Lemire pointed out that scope of the two projects is entirely different, asking if Mr. Miller was proposing the Committee vote against the warrant due to the process, regardless of the need.

Mr. Spencer stated he had enough information to make a decision. Further discussion took place about the cost; preparation and presentation of the project and the scale of the project as compared to the school proposal.

Chairman Lemire stated he would prefer to vote on the need.

**VOTE:** 7-1-0 Mr. Miller opposed the motion)  
The motion carried.

**b) Article : Corning Road Drainage Project**

**MOTION:** by Selectman Peeples

*To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$428,300.00 to engineer and construct a road drainage system on Corning Road; and to authorize the use of \$428,300.00 from the Highway Block Grant Fund. This appropriation shall be non-lapsing per RSA § 32:7, VI, and will not lapse until the work is completed or December 31, 2012. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen*

*Move with recommendation by the Budget Committee*

**SECOND:** M Falzone

It was confirmed that Highway Block Grant money would be used to pay for this project.

**VOTE:** 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Spencer suggested that the Board of Selectmen instruct Town counsel to include in the wording of the warrant article that there would be no tax impact as a result of this project.

**c) Article : Town Operating Budget**

**MOTION:** by Selectman Peeples

*Shall the Town of Litchfield raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$\$4,213,487 Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$ 4,278,400, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of Litchfield or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen*

*Move with recommendation by the Budget Committee*

**SECOND:** B McCue

It was confirmed that these figures represent inclusion of the salary raises and all the other changes.

**VOTE:** 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

Both Selectman Peeples and Chairman Lemire thanked the members of the Committee for their work.

### **SCHOOL BUSINESS**

There was discussion regarding the School Administrator salaries had been tabled at the last meeting.

**1. Object Account 110 (SAU Administrator Salaries)**

**MOTION:** by B Spencer

***Move to add \$7,077 to account 110 (SAU Administrator Salaries)***

**SECOND:** J Harte

Mr. Spencer stated this would give a 3% increase based upon the current Board approved salaries, providing an explanation of why the numbers had been different before.

**MOTION:** by D Miller

***Move to amend the figure for account 110 (SAU Administrator Salaries) by a net increase of \$21,000***

**SECOND:** B McCue

Mr. Miller went back to the process, stating he had used same one the Committee had used to vote on call fire fighters. Selectman Peeples pointed out that the call fire fighters salaries had been adjusted to the market minimum, as opposed to the average. Mr. Miller reiterated the point that the District had difficulty keeping staff at the administrative level due to low salaries.

**VOTE:** 3-5-0 (Mr. Falzone Mr. Miller and Mr. McCue voted for the motion)

The motion failed.

**VOTE (on Mr. Spencer's motion):** 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

**2. Object Account 112 (School Administrator Salary)**

**MOTION:** by B Spencer

***Move to add \$1,585 to account 112 (SAU Administrator Salaries)***

**SECOND:** Selectman Peeples

Mr. Spencer explained he had recalculated the figures on the same basis as account 110, and he had missed a Guidance Counselor

**MOTION:** by D Miller

***Move to amend the figure for account 112 (SAU Administrator Salaries) by a net increase of \$22,858***

**SECOND:** B McCue

Mr. Miller stated he had used the same rationale for this amendment as he had for the previous one and this increase would bring the salaries to the original level put forward by the Board.

There was a discussion regarding the number of staff in this account that had over two years service with the Town.

**VOTE:** 6-2-0 (Mr. Spencer, Selectman Peeples and voted against the motion)

The motion carried.

Mr. Parker asked if line 220 (Benefits) needed to be recalculated as a result of the changes, and Mr. Miller stated he felt they could leave it as it stands..

**3. Account 700 (Resurfacing of Track at CHS)**

**MOTION:** by J Harte

***Move to re-open account 700 (Resurfacing of Track at CHS)***

**SECOND:** Selectman Peeples

**VOTE:** 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

***Discussion:***

Mr. Spencer explained he had investigated school tracks around the State and the information he found on the length of time schools waited until they resurfaced their outdoor tracks confirmed his view that the CHS track does not require resurfacing at this time.

Mr. Miller confirmed that the track is now 8 years old and the installer checks it every year and had recommended it be resurfaced.

**MOTION:** by B Spencer

***Move to reduce account 700 by \$28,423***

**SECOND:** Selectman Peeples

***Discussion:***

There followed discussion on the need to ensure the schools are maintained, and Mr. Parker enquired what the cost would be if the track deteriorates, with Mr. Spencer stating it would be the cost quoted for the budget (\$28,428)

**VOTE:** 2-6-0 (Selectman Peeples and Mr. Spencer voted for the motion)

The motion failed.

Chairman Lemire stated the Committee needed to re-vote the bottom line for the School Budget.

**MOTION:** by D Miller

***Move that the Budget Committee approve a bottom line of \$19,969,921 for the 2008 Litchfield School District Budget.***

**SECOND:** B McCue

**VOTE:** 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

**MOTION:** by D Miller

***Move to adjourn the meeting***

**SECOND:** M Falzone

**VOTE:** 8-0-0

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

**Minutes by:**

***Sandra Maxwell (Recording Secretary)***