

**Minutes of  
Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting**

**Held on April 24, 2008**

**Present:** J Harte (Vice Chairman), P Parker, D Miller, M Falzone, B McCue,  
G Lambert (Selectmen's representative)

**Absent:** Chairman B Lemire, R Peeples

Mr. Harte called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

**1. PUBLIC INPUT**

There was no public input.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** by Mr. McCue

*Move to approve the minutes of January 8, 2008 as written*

**SECOND:** Mr. Falzone

**VOTE:** 5-0-1 (Mr. Lambert abstained as he had not been a member of the committee at the time of the meeting)

Approval of the minutes of the January 11 meeting, the January 11 Budget Hearing and the minutes of the March 27 meeting were postponed until the meeting in May.

**3. TOWN BUSINESS**

Mr. Harte explained for the benefit of Mr. Lambert that the purpose of the questions from the Budget Committee to the Selectmen is to educate the Budget Committee. He handed out a copy of RSA 32: 32; 16 and other information relating to the purview of the Budget Committee to Mr. Lambert for informational purposes.

**Review of 2008 budget**

Mr. Harte handed out the current Town actual expended budgets, turning over to Mr. Lambert for his responses to the questions the Budget Committee had submitted to the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Lambert clarified that he had also sent the information he was about to share to the Budget Committee in an e-mail.

***Highway Administration***

*Road Maintenance (a/c 4312)*

He explained the breakdown of where the Engineering money had been used as follows:

1. \$20,000 for pedestrian/bikeway path – this will be paid for by a grant but the funds are required to complete the grant work until the grant money is received.

2. \$22,421 is required for engineering services in order to complete the work required to make sure Brickyard is structurally sound. He explained the Board of Selectmen has an agreement in principal from the contractor that there will reimbursement for those funds but the procedure is in question and Mr. Lambert stated he is following this up. He stated he is awaiting a copy of the paperwork to back up what was agreed in the meeting with the contractor and explained why the Board of Selectmen had handled things in this manner.

*Road Maintenance & Improvement (line 20-575)* – In response to Mr. Falzone’s query as to what \$206,103 had been spent on over the winter, Mr. Lambert stated the Road Agent does not believe there should have been anything spent in this line item. There followed a brief discussion in which it was debated what this money could have been spent on, with Mr. Lambert stating it could possibly have been used for Brickyard.

**Action:** Mr. Harte asked Mr. Lambert to confirm with Mr. Dilworth what had been posted and report back to the Committee at the next meeting.

*Line item 635 (Vehicle Fuel)* – in response to Mr. Falzone’s query about only having \$446 left in this line for the remainder of the year, Mr. Lambert confirmed there had been more money than usual spent due to the cost of plowing.

In response to Mr. Falzone’s query as to whether there would be sufficient salt and sand for November/December, Mr. Lambert confirmed the salt and sand sheds are full at present.

Mr. Lambert stated for information that there is a plan for road maintenance and the paving of Talent Road this year, however there is a question as to whether the paving of Albuquerque Road is more urgent.

Mr. Lambert stated that street sweeping is scheduled to begin in the next few weeks. He also stated that it had not been made clear to residents that the Town will lose the block grant money for Corning Road if it is not spent and there was a discussion regarding block grant monies in general.

Mr. Harte clarified what his question had been relating to the Corning Road project as Mr. Lambert stated he had not understood the question.

**Action:** Mr. Lambert stated he would obtain an answer to this for the next meeting.

In response to Mr. Harte’s question about the Corning Road project and the engineering bills, Mr. Lambert stated it appears there were a number of hours spent on planning for the Corning Road drainage.

There was discussion on who is paying for the Fire Department parking lot repairs and where the payments for the storage trailers show up. Mr. Lambert also stated he believed the generator has been installed, or will be installed shortly.

In response to Mr. Harte's question of whether the Brickyard culvert construction is still within budget, Mr. Lambert confirmed they are within budget.

In response to Mr. Harte's query relating to the MRI recommendations, Mr. Lambert stated the Board of Selectmen still have not put initiatives in place and therefore they do not know what the impact will be fiscally for the Town at this time.

In response to Mr. Harte's request for an update on the Police union negotiations, Mr. Lambert stated there is no update available at this time, but the financial impact and status should be available for the Budget Committee meeting in May. There followed a discussion on the funds required for the collective bargaining, with Mr. Lambert confirming monies for legal fees has been set aside, but he was unsure whether all of this has been expended.

In response to Mr. Harte's request for an update on the status of the 2007 budget, Mr. Lambert informed him that the auditor's report was not yet complete and some questions still had to be received from the Attorney General.

#### **4. SCHOOL BUSINESS**

Mr. Miller reported that the Business Administrator had been given authorization the previous evening to enter into an energy buying group to obtain better rates for utilities, and he explained more about the group and the companies involved. He stated the school district is looking to improve fuel oil, propane and electricity rates, explaining the process involved. He pointed out that a contract must be signed by May 1, 2008 and the Town was asked if it wanted to join the group. To date there has been no commitment from the Town.

Mr. Miller informed the Committee that the district has purchased a used truck through Grappone, providing some background information and details on the truck and what it will be used for. He stated the truck is capable of plowing and sanding but the district has no accessories and there are no plans currently to use it for this purpose.

There were no new financials available for the Committee at present.

In response to a query from Mr. Harte, Mr. Miller provided a status report on the education bill currently being discussed in Concord. He stated there could potentially be a new bill to allow school districts to pay for Kindergarten and a discussion on this ensued.

Mr. Miller pointed out the district wants to do the curriculum for K-12 and could control costs better if the district supplied this. There followed a discussion regarding the Evergreen Clause which has passed in the House without amendment.

There was also a brief discussion on the financial impact to the Town of the retirement bill currently in the House.

In response to Mr. Harte's enquiry regarding first grade enrolment figures, Mr. Miller provided an update, stating they are currently thirteen over the projected figures. There followed a discussion regarding the potential for more children in the district in the future.

In response to a query from Mr. Falzone regarding the direction the district is taking in relation to GMS, Mr. Miller stated the Building Committee has agreed to stay on and he provided an update on their current remit. There was a discussion on the impact to the school district of any reduction in State funding. In response to Mr. Harte's query as to whether the district looks at renegotiating existing bonds to take advantage of low interest rates, Mr. Miller stated that bonds do not work that way and he proceeded to clarify the bond process. He spoke about options currently being discussed on how taxpayers could pay for school, and a discussion on this followed.

There was a discussion on clarity of wording of warrant articles and the need for educating voters on the impact of what is being proposed in warrant articles.

#### **5. MEMBER INPUT**

There was no member input.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Falzone

***To adjourn the meeting***

**SECOND:** Mr. Miller

**VOTE:** 6-0-0

The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

**Minutes compiled by:**            ***Mrs. Sandra Maxwell (Recording Secretary)***