

**Minutes of  
Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting**

**Held on August 28, 2008**

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

**Absent:** M Falzone, R Peebles

Chairman Lemire called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

**1. PUBLIC INPUT**

There was no public input.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Miller

*Move to approve the minutes of June 26, 2008 as written*

**SECOND:** Mr. Harte

**VOTE:** 5-0-1 (Mr. McCue abstained)

The motion carried.

**3. CHAIRMAN COMMENTS**

Chairman Lemire welcomed the members of the Committee back after the summer break. He stated they will be presented with challenges this budget season due to the tough economy, and went on to talk about being troubled by certain items he had observed regarding the Board of Selectmen activities. Also regarding comments made by the Board regarding the Budget Committee, which he stated were inaccurate and unfair.

Referring to comments by the Board pertaining to the budget schedule, he clarified the schedule is almost exactly what has been presented to the Budget Committee in previous years. He asked Selectman Lambert to explain to the Board that, due to time constraints, the Budget Committee needs to have completed the Town side of the budget by November 18. He stated the Budget Committee will work with the Board of Selectmen and assist in any way possible; however the School District needs the appropriate amount of time allocated to them, due to time constraints mandated by the State.

***Action:***

Selectman Lambert responded he would communicate Chairman Lemire's concerns to the Board of Selectmen. There followed a discussion regarding the importance of maintaining the schedule.

Mr. Miller confirmed the School District budget will be delivered on November 21.

Selectman Lambert provided some information about how the Board of Selectmen intends to set up the information online for their process, maintaining an open government. There followed a discussion, in which Mr. Harte stressed the importance of ensuring no changes were made after the information is disseminated. .

There followed a discussion relating to the parameters handed down to department heads by the Board for this budget season.

***Action:***

Selectman Lambert agreed to carry Chairman Lemire's request to maintain level funding aside from fuel, utilities, salaries and benefits back to the Board. There was further discussion and the consensus of the Committee was that everyone involved in the process should look at opportunities to cut costs. Chairman Lemire stated he would entertain a motion to this effect.

**MOTION:** by Mr. McCue

**SECOND:** Mr. Harte

***Move to ask consideration from the Litchfield School Board and the Litchfield Board of Selectmen, that budgets submitted to the Budget Committee for 2009 should be level funded with the exception of Salaries and Benefits, Fuel, Utilities and other items which may require special consideration***

**VOTE:** 5-0-1 (Mr. Miller abstained)

**4. TOWN BUSINESS**

***a) Review 2008 Budget Actuals***

In response to a query from Mr. Harte, Selectman Lambert explained that the \$2,300 spent under an ORV grant came from the State for operating patrols with an off road vehicle and the money had been used for training on this. It was further clarified the grant came from the Department of Fish and Game and the money had to be spent first and then reimbursed, and this went back into the General Fund. There was further discussion on the process involved in this and other police grants. It was explained the police could only start their patrols once the grant money was received.

In response to a query from Mr. Harte it was confirmed that the Code Enforcement Officer was full time and started August 12, 2008.

In response to Mr. Harte's query on telephone costs, Selectman Lambert explained that a change in supplier to cut costs had caused a difference in billing which is currently being addressed. There followed a discussion in which Mr. Dilworth Jr. provided an explanation of how telephone costs are charged back.

There was a discussion regarding Road Maintenance encumbrances and clarification provided regarding engineering work which has been done, and also work outstanding. Mr. Dilworth Jr. clarified that a contract had been awarded on

Monday, August 25 which will not lapse, as per RSA 37:7. Selectman Lambert could not however confirm the time table for the work as yet.

**b) *Additional questions submitted by the Budget Committee***

Chairman Lemire read out the additional questions submitted by the Budget Committee and obtained clarification on some of the issues. Selectman Lambert explained about some difficulties which have arisen as a result of a changeover in staff and how the Board of Selectmen intends to resolve these.

Mr. Dilworth Jr. confirmed the 2008 figures will change due to items expensed in 2007 not being billed until 2008. There was a discussion on the generator with Mr. Dilworth Jr. providing clarification that the correct amount was encumbered.

***Action:***

In response to a request from Chairman Lemire, Messrs Lambert and Dilworth Jr. stated they would request a breakdown of road maintenance fees and engineering fees by project. Chairman Lemire asked that it be made available to the Budget Committee when these are being discussed during the budget process.

Mr. Dilworth Jr. explained he is currently working on FEMA Grants. In response to Mr. Harte's query about who owns these, Selectman Lambert explained there is no comprehensive list at present and the Board of Selectmen recognize this is an issue to be addressed.

**c) *Schedule***

Chairman Lemire asked if there were any comments about the proposed schedule, and confirmed the dates. He stated he would forward an updated schedule to members of the Committee.

In response to a query from Mr. Harte, Selectman Lambert confirmed there would be warrant articles.

**5. SCHOOL DISTRICT BUSINESS**

**a) *Review of FY 2008 Actuals***

Mr. Miller reported he had no budget actuals to distribute as none are prepared for July or August. He stated the School District has finished the year with \$467,000 of unexpended revenue, explaining where the surplus came from. In response to a query from Chairman Lemire regarding the new school fences, Mr. Miller provided an explanation of why the fences were necessary, and where the money to pay for them had come from (Salaries and Special Education).

**a) *Griffin School Update***

Mr. Miller reported the upgraded Fire system was in and operational, and will be tested this week. He then provided details of the work which had been performed, as well as work outstanding. He confirmed \$350,000 has been expended so far, with some additional expenses still to come.

**b) *Miscellaneous***

Mr. Miller reported that the parking lot for CHS is complete, but the Board of Selectmen still has to approve the changes to Highlander Court.

***Action:***

Selectman Lambert offered to check the status of this.

Mr. Miller stated the fencing is almost complete, and the emergency gate at Talent Road is being installed before the start of school.

On a non budgetary item, Mr. Miller reported that CHS has gone over to quarterly grades to assist seniors going to college with their transcripts.

He also reported that teacher negotiations will open on September 5, 2008, confirming the contract is for three years. Mr. Miller stated the audit is complete but they are expecting the MS25 will be approximately three days late as they have not yet received the auditors' report. He went on to explain why the auditing process now takes longer.

In response to a query from Mr. Harte, Mr. Miller stated the enrolment figures are 113, versus the 95 they were projecting and this will require an extra classroom of 1<sup>st</sup> graders.

In response to Mr. Harte's query about Utilities figures, Mr. Miller provided an update.

Chairman Lemire asked Selectman Lambert whether the Town had thought of entering into a regional agreement regarding salt purchase and transportation, and a discussion followed, with Mr. Dilworth Jr. reporting that Mr. Da Costa was researching this and talking to Derry. There was also a discussion regarding the energy buying group which the School District participates in.

**6. MEMBER INPUT**

Chairman Lemire confirmed the next meeting is scheduled for September 18, and Police and Animal Control will be the first accounts discussed.

There was a discussion regarding the Budget Committee's expectations during the budget process, and Chairman Lemire asked the Board of Selectmen to ensure department heads come prepared when presenting their budgets.

Mr. Miller clarified that the Deliberative Session for the School District falls on January 31, 2009. Chairman Lemire stated he would contact Mr. Miller and Mr. Dilworth Jr. to discuss the potential date for the Budget Hearing.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Miller

***Move to adjourn the meeting***

**SECOND:** Mr. Harte

**VOTE:** 6-0-0

The motion carried unanimously and the meeting ended at 8:50 p.m.

**Minutes compiled by:**        *Sandra Maxwell, Recording Secretary*