

**Minutes of
Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting**

Held on September 25, 2008

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

Absent: B McCue

Chairman Lemire called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. Selectman Lambert joined the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

1. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes of the September 18th meeting was deferred until the next meeting.

3. TOWN BUSINESS – 2009 BUDGET REVIEW

Conservation Commission (a/c 4611)

Ms. Joan McKibben presented the budget, pointing out the following:

Line item 330 (Property Management): An additional repair is required for which quotes have been received requiring an additional \$1,000.

They would like to retain the amount in this line for Moores Falls.

Line item 399 (Storm Water Management): Selectman Lambert reported there may be some additional costs which have not been considered to make necessary changes required by the EPA. He stated he is looking at what needs to be implemented from the EPA report to ensure everything has been budgeted for.

Line item 448 (Wildlife Sanctuary Lease): It was explained that the Town leases a parcel of property from the Goff family which costs \$1 per year.

Line item 550 (Publications): It was noted that new handbooks etc are required for new members.

Line item 560 (Dues and Publications): It was explained that the Commission gets a break on seminars as they are a member of NH NRS (NH Association of Natural Resource Scientists)

Line item 624 (Film and Photo Supplies): It was pointed out that the Conservation Commission shares a camera with the Planning Board.

Line item 631 (Equipment Repair and Maintenance): Ms. McKibben explained they maintain their mower and have purchased a chain saw

Line item 693 (Minor Tools and Supplies): This line is for equipment for maintaining trails.

Line item 810 (Mileage & Tolls): This is for when they cannot use the Town car

Line item 680 (Copier Charges): In response to Mr. Harte's query, Ms. McKibben explained they have not been charged by the Town Hall for copying

Line item 740 (New Equipment): Ms. McKibben explained the funds in this line are in case they need any tools etc for additional equipment to maintain trails. In response to a query regarding a brush trimmer budgeted for last year, Ms. McKibben agreed to check whether this had been purchased.

There was a discussion regarding the Town assessing charges for the cost of copies, with Chairman Lemire suggesting this line be removed from other departmental budgets and permit them to use the copier at the Town Hall as a shared resource. Mr. Dilworth Jr. spoke about replacement of the existing copier at the Town Hall with one which could have departmental codes entered.

Chairman Lemire explained the Budget Committee process for Ms. McKibben.

Zoning Board of Adjustment (a/c 4191)

Mr. Richard Riley presented this budget. Selectman Lambert provided the Selectmen's recommendation figures.

Line item 740 (Equipment Purchases): It was explained that a printer and audio recorder are required as they have no printing capabilities at meetings. Mr. Riley explained the Board of Selectmen suggested using another printer in the Town Hall and they therefore reduced the budget to remove the cost of the printer. He explained they will need to be added to the network at the Town Hall and work out access to the printer.

Line item 810 (Mileage & Tolls): Mr. Riley explained they have not budgeted for this historically, but decided to do so for 2009 to cover training events or site walks considering current economic conditions.

Mr. Riley explained they are expecting to close the year with expenditure being 50% of what was budgeted for 2008 as they have had a light case load this year.

In response to a query about revenue from Chairman Lemire, Mr. Riley to explain the fees associated with each case. Chairman Lemire asked whether the 2009 budget might be too aggressive, and Mr. Riley stated he had estimated the budget based on expenditure in prior years.

In a discussion led by Selectman Lambert there was a discussion regarding fees for consulting engineers and a change to Zoning Board Bylaws which allows the ZBA to appoint their own consultant. There was further discussion regarding what the options were for handling this, with Mr. Peeples providing input regarding a revolving fund. Chairman Lemire offered to delay voting until the matter was resolved.

Line item 620 (Office Supplies): Mr. Riley stated this includes print supplies and audio tapes for the recorder, offering to reduce this by \$50. Chairman Lemire clarified that changes need to go through the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Harte queried whether supplies would be needed if it were a digital audio recorder.

Action: Chairman Lemire asked Selectman Lambert to obtain an answer to this for the next meeting.

In response to a query from Mr. Miller regarding revenue from case fees, Mr. Dilworth Jr. confirmed these must go into the General Fund.

Line item 125 (Secretary-Clerk Wages): It was clarified that this line was for the services Mr. Dilworth Jr. provided for the Zoning Board of Adjustment in addition to his other responsibilities and amounted to approximately two hours per month. There followed a discussion regarding work performed by salaried staff for other departments and where and how this should be charged. The Committee also discussed the possible implications for benefits.

Line item 344 (Secretarial Services): It was confirmed that notes and minutes amount to approximately four hours per month, and there

followed a discussion regarding other recording secretaries and their pay. Mr. Dilworth Jr. confirmed he regularly works 70 hours per week for the Board of Selectmen.

Revenue case fees: Mr. Riley confirmed for Mr. Harte how he arrived at the number of cases and revenue for 2009.

Administration (a/c 4130.20)

Action: Mr. Dilworth Jr. agreed he would add the 2008 expended figure as of September 30, 2008 to all the budget sheets.

Line item 390 (Consulting Services): In response to a query from Chairman Lemire, Selectman Lambert explained there are gaps in the knowledge of current employees, and outside consulting services are proving useful. He further stated that most of the money is for IT services for improving efficiency within departments. He also confirmed that Ms. Durocher's consulting services were paid out of Salaries. There followed a discussion of where IT services can be charged to within the Town. Selectman Lambert reported that the Board of Selectmen had identified areas requiring the development of policies and procedures and they are attempting to address and improve these. Mr. Miller pointed out that the LGC offers a service for policies and procedures.

Selectmen (a/c 4130.10)

Selectman Lambert provided information about the decision by the Board of Selectmen to zero line item 130, Selectmen's Salaries.

Line item 390 (Consulting Services): In response to a query from Mr. Falzone regarding why this line had nothing in it for 2009, Selectman Lambert stated that a Board of Selectmen motion to put a figure in this line had not passed. There followed a discussion regarding where staff within the Board of Selectmen department are paid from, as well as the fact that a computer consulting company is being paid from account 4150.10 (Auditing and Accounting)

Line item 341 (Cell Phone Charges): It was pointed out that this has increased due to an increase in fees and that the Town are looking at moving to another carrier.

Line item 692 (Provisions): Mr. Dilworth Jr. explained this is a new line item which was added to allocate food for meetings to.

Patriotic Purposes (a/c 4583.10)

Selectman Lambert explained that the Board of Selectmen will be revisiting this account as the 275th anniversary celebration costs are to be added to this account.

Line item 675 (Flags & Holders): Selectman Lambert stated this line has been reduced for 2009 as items had been purchased last year.

There followed a discussion between Chairman Lemire and Selectman Lambert regarding when the Committee might see the changes for this account, and a discussion between Mr. Harte and Selectman Lambert regarding line item 678 (Flowers and Plants).

Police Department – additional information

Chief O'Brien handed out the backup information requested at the previous meeting, explaining the information relating to a prosecutor. In response to a query from Chairman Lemire about pay for prosecutorial services for other towns, the Chief stated these are between \$60 and \$150 per hour.

Action: Chairman Lemire requested the Chief provide further information on the rates paid by surrounding town for prosecutorial services next week.

There followed a discussion relating to the statistics provided by the Chief, and the Committee asked for a breakdown showing time spent prosecutions. The Committee agreed to wait and vote on this account next week, after reviewing the additional information they have requested.

Mr. Peeples raised the issue of contract renewal for prosecutorial services, asking about how the process of transitioning between different individuals when changes occur, and noting this could have an impact on cost if there is an overlap of services. Chairman Lemire asked Selectman Lambert to check whether the Board of Selectmen would share this information with the Budget Committee when the decision has been made.

There was a discussion on police cruisers, with Chief O'Brien clarifying the number required. The Chief also confirmed for Mr. Peeples that workers' compensation, health insurance etc are included in the charge for police details.

The Chief explained for Mr. Harte that he has budgeted for one set plus one extra tire for each vehicle, and a discussion on light bars followed.

There was also a discussion on the difference between six and eight cylinder vehicles and Chief O'Brion stated he would have to look at the cost of re-outfitting different vehicles. He also confirmed a new cruiser is required for 2009 and there was a discussion on the mileage obtained from existing cruisers.

The Chief supplied additional backup information as requested on overtime for training.

Action: The Committee requested the Chief provide more information on the cost of overtime for court.

There was a discussion regarding the use of Admin. Vehicles, and the Chief explained the officers use their own vehicles for court, but that there is a detail car which they have the option of using.

4. VOTING ON TOWN BUDGETS

a) Pest Control (a/c 4414)

MOTION: by Selectman Lambert

Move to accept a bottom line of \$17,738 for account 4414, Pest Control for the 2009 Operating Budget

SECOND: Mr. Harte

MOTION: by Mr. Peebles

Move to amend line item 125, Officer Wages by reducing it to \$10,505 in account 4414, Pest Control

SECOND: Selectman Lambert

VOTE: 6-0-1 (Mr. Miller abstained)

The motion carried.

MOTION: by Selectman Lambert

Move to accept a new bottom line of \$17,423 for account 4414, Pest Control for the 2009 Operating Budget

SECOND: Mr. Harte

VOTE: 6-0-1 (Mr. Miller abstained)

The motion carried.

5. SCHOOL DISTRICT BUSINESS

Mr. Miller confirmed the MS forms have now been sent out. He also confirmed the next financial summary from Mr. Martin will be at the end

of September, stating that once the auditor's report has been received; the closing figure for 2008 would be included.

Action: Mr. Miller stated he would obtain copies of the MS report for the Budget Committee, and he confirmed the School District would include summary, as well as detailed sheets, in Excel for the Budget Committee.

6. MEMBER INPUT

Chairman Lemire provided information about a Budgeting session provided by the LGC (Local Government Center) which he had attended with other Town employees.

Mr. Dilworth Jr. stated that he would have copies of the final figures for the Budget Committee next week. It was confirmed for Chairman Lemire that the Fire Department budget would be presented at next week's meeting. There followed a discussion regarding backup information, with the Budget Committee confirming that they would like to see backup information prior to discussing the budget at the meeting.

MOTION: by Mr. Harte

Move to adjourn the meeting

SECOND: Mr. Falzone

Messrs. Harte and Falzone agreed to permit Selectman Lambert to add something under member input before adjourning the meeting and Selectman Lambert provided additional information to the Committee.

VOTE: 7-0-0

The motion carried unanimously and the meeting ended at 9:17 p.m.

Minutes compiled by: *Sandra Maxwell, Recording Secretary*