

Minutes of
Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting

Held on November 20, 2008

The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday November 20, 2008 in the Media Room at Campbell High School, 1 Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

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

Chairman Lemire called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

1. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

MOTION: by Mr. Harte

Move to approve the minutes of the Litchfield Budget Committee meeting on November 6, 2008

SECOND: Mr. McCue

VOTE: 7-0-1 (Mr. Miller abstained)

The motion carried.

3. TOWN BUDGET REVIEW

Voter Registration (a/c 4140.20)

Selectman Lambert presented the information on this account.

Line item 344 (Clerical Support): Selectman Lambert explained that Mr. Redding was requesting an additional \$100 to cover additional clerical work required by the Supervisors.

The bottom line approved by the Board of Selectmen is \$1,770 which is unchanged from last year.

Discussion:

There followed a discussion regarding the number of elections for 2009. Mr. McCue clarified that Mr. Redding required \$400 for line item 344 which constituted a \$50 increase. There was a discussion regarding whether money had been removed from this account as previously discussed, as the money for election provisions has been included in the Town Clerk's budget. Chairman Lemire asked about the Board's intention regarding line item 625 Postage & Envelopes for this account. Selectman Lambert stated the Board also intended to use the postage meter for this account and wished to set line item 625 at zero.

MOTION: Selectman Lambert

Move to accept a new bottom line of \$1,690 for account 4140.20, Voter Registration in the 2009 Operating Budget

SECOND: Mr. Miller

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion:

A discussion took place to clarify what departments will do regarding use of the postage meter. It was clarified that the machine keeps records of separate accounts.

Legal Expenses (a/c 4153)

Selectman Lambert presented the budget for this account.

Line item 320 Retainer Fees): Selectman Lambert explained these do not reflect what is actually spent, and that \$36,520 had been spent by September but that they anticipate they will have spent close to \$48,000 by the end of the year.

Discussion:

There was a discussion regarding the reasons for the increase, and Selectman Lambert explained the contract has changed and the figure is based on actual usage over the last three years. There was a discussion regarding overage charges during which it was explained that legal counsel is no longer willing to waive these based on their long standing relationship with the Town due to the amount involved. Mr. McCue queried whether the Town could go to bid for legal counsel and there was a discussion regarding current legal suits against the Town and whether they are likely to be settled for next year. There was also a discussion regarding overage usage. Chairman Lemire asked if the line were to be level funded what the ramifications would be, and Selectman Lambert explained the new rates are locked in for three years.

MOTION: Selectman Lambert

Move to accept a bottom line of \$81,000 for account 4153, Legal Expenses in the 2009 Operating Budget

SECOND: Mr. Falzone

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

Personnel Administration (a/c 4155)

Selectman Lambert confirmed that all Board of Selectmen queries have been answered on this budget and that the FICA information was attached to the budget sheet. He went on to explain the new benefits costs, information on which was included in the backup material. Mr. Harte asked for clarification on the salaries shown on the backup. Mr. Dilworth Jr. confirmed the figures included a 4% COLA increase as approved by the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Harte clarified that those receiving step increases would receive the COLA and their step increase. There followed a discussion on salary increases. Chairman Lemire stated he was

concerned that 4% is too lucrative an increase in the current economic situation and questioned whether it is in the best interest of the Town to go that high. Mr. Miller commented this moves the entire schedule up, and further discussion took place. Mr. Miller stated the School District is doing a 1% cost of living increase this year and there was a discussion regarding the history of salaries and increases in the School District. Mr. Harte asked whether it would be acceptable for the Budget Committee to discuss what they would be comfortable with as far as the COLA increase, and to have Selectman Lambert take the figure back to the Board of Selectmen. Selectman Lambert confirmed he would do that.

MOTION: by Mr. Harte

Move to present to the Board of Selectmen that the Budget Committee would like them to recalculate the increase in account 4155, Personnel. Administration to 2% for the 2009 Operating Budget

Second: Mr. Miller

MOTION: by Mr. McCue

Move to amend the motion on the floor to request a recalculation of account 4155 at 1, 2 and 3%

SECOND: Mr. Peeples

There followed a discussion regarding the motions and Selectman Lambert offered to send the Budget Committee a spreadsheet of the requested information electronically. It was confirmed that the Police department negotiations have not yet been overlaid onto the figures.

VOTE (on the amendment): 7-1-0 (Selectman Lambert opposed the amendment)

The motion carried.

Chairman Lemire stated they would defer voting on the bottom line for this account until they had reviewed the figures. Mr. McCue asked for clarification on the Board of Selectmen decision to defer taking their stipends and Selectman Lambert provided some clarification.

VOTE (on the amended motion): 7-1-0 (Selectman Lambert opposed the motion).

The motion carried.

4. RECEIVE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON TOWN BUDGETS

There was no additional information available regarding Town budgets.

5. VOTING

Board of Selectmen (a/c 4130.10)

MOTION: by Selectman Lambert

Move to approve a bottom line of \$8,420 for account 4130.10, Board of Selectmen in the 2009 Operating Budget.

SECOND: Mr. Harte

MOTION: by Mr. Miller

Move to amend the bottom line to \$8,580 for account 4130.10, Board of Selectmen in the 2009 Operating Budget.

SECOND: Mr. McCue

Mr. Miller explained he wished to restore the Board of Selectmen salary line from zero to ensure future members of the Board are provided with the option of the stipend. Mr. Harte clarified the motion only puts money in the account, and the Selectmen are not required to accept the stipend unless they want to, and a discussion ensued.

VOTE on amendment: 6-2-0 (Mr. Peeples and Selectman Lambert opposed the motion)

The motion carried.

Chairman Lemire confirmed a new bottom line of \$17,000 for the account.

MOTION: by Mr. Harte

Move to amend line item 560, Dues and Subscriptions from \$5,900 to \$5,816

SECOND: Mr. Peeples

Mr. Harte explained the justification for his amendment is based on what has been spent this year to date.

VOTE on amendment: 6-2-0 (Mr. Falzone and Selectman Lambert opposed the motion)

The motion carried.

VOTE on the new bottom line of \$16,918: 7-1-0 (Selectman Lambert opposed motion)

The motion carried.

Town Clerk (a/c 4140.10)

MOTION: by Selectman Lambert

Move to approve a bottom line of \$93,569 for account 4140.10, Town Clerk in the 2009 Operating Budget

SECOND: Mr. Falzone

It was confirmed this has changed due to adding \$80 for postage. Selectman Lambert clarified for Mr. Harte that the overtime is split between the Tax Collection account and the Town Clerk account. There followed a discussion regarding a discrepancy in the figures between the budget sheet and the spreadsheet, and Mr. Dilworth Jr. confirmed he needed to adjust the Deputy Clerk overtime on the budget sheets. He confirmed an increase in clerk overtime to 32 hours week.

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

Accounting & Auditing (a/c 4150.10)

MOTION: by Selectman Lambert

Move to approve a bottom line of \$232,672 for account 4150, Accounting & Auditing in the 2009 Operating Budget

SECOND: Mr. Harte

MOTION: by Mr. Harte

Move to reduce line item 10.341, Telephone from \$11,000 to \$9,000 in account 4150, Accounting & Auditing

SECOND: Mr. Peeples

Mr. Harte justified his amendment, stating he made the reduction based on his calculation of the contract. Selectman Lambert explained taxes and fees on the bills were not included and are in addition to the contracted amount.

VOTE: 0-8-0

The motion failed.

VOTE on the bottom line of \$232,672: 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

Tax Collection (a/c 4150.40)

MOTION: by Selectman Lambert

Move to approve a bottom line of \$90,421 for account 4150.40, Tax Collection in the 2009 Operating Budget

SECOND: Mr. Miller

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

Treasury (a/c 4150.50)

MOTION: by Selectman Lambert

Move to approve a bottom line of \$12,878 for account 4150.50, Treasury in the 2009 Operating Budget

SECOND: Mr. Miller

Line item 625 (Postage & Envelopes): Selectman Lambert confirmed for Mr. Peeples the Board of Selectmen had not moved the money out of this line item.

Line item 740 (New Equipment): Mr. Harte queried the money from the Mosquito Control 2008 budget which was supposed to purchase a laptop for Treasury. Mr. Raccio was available and confirmed there was sufficient to augment this. He explained the Mosquito Control laptop is being shared by the new treasurer. He pointed out the Board of Selectmen at this time has not authorized Mosquito Control to expend the money.

MOTION: by Mr. Harte

Move to reduce line item 740, New Equipment from \$1,500 to zero

SECOND: Mr. Falzone

VOTE: 7-1-0 (Selectman Lambert opposed the motion)

The motion carried.

Chairman Lemire confirmed a new bottom line of \$11,078. Mr. Miller held a discussion with Chairman Lemire regarding funding of the Deputy Treasurer's salary.

MOTION: by Selectman Lambert

Move to request Budget Committee support for \$2,600 for a stipend for the Deputy Treasurer

Selectman Lambert clarified that the position itself has existed for some period of time, and his motion was merely to fund the position.

SECOND: Mr. Falzone

Selectman Lambert confirmed for Mr. Harte that the Deputy will be assisting the Treasurer and the policies, procedures and financial controls are being updated.

VOTE: 1-7-0 (Selectman Lambert voted for the motion)

The motion carried.

MOTION: by Mr. Falzone

Move to reduce line item 130, Treasurers' Salaries to \$7,385

SECOND: Mr. Peeples

Mr. Falzone provided justification for his motion and there followed a discussion between Mr. Miller and Selectman Lambert regarding the legality of asking the Deputy to take on the work required by the Board.

Chairman Lemire asked whether Mr. Falzone and Mr. Peeples would agree to amend the figure in their motion to \$6,785 and both agreed

VOTE: 7-1-0 (Selectman Lambert opposed the motion)

The motion carried.

VOTE on a new bottom line of \$8,978: 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

Planning (a/c 4191.10)

Selectman Lambert explained that line item 392; NRPC Planner had been zeroed by the Board of Selectmen

MOTION: by Selectmen Lambert

Move to approve a bottom line of \$63,147 for account 4191.10, Planning in the 2009 Operating Budget

SECOND: Mr. Harte

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Mr. Falzone

Move to re-open account 4191.10, Planning

SECOND: Mr. Miller

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Mr. Falzone

Move to reduce line item 680, Copier Charges to zero

SECOND: Selectman Lambert

It was explained this was a clerical move as copier charges were being centralized.

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

General Government Buildings (a/c 4194)

Mr. Dilworth Jr. explained the backup reflects what had been requested.

MOTION: by Selectman Lambert

Move to approve a bottom line of \$62,680 for account 4194, General Government Buildings in the 2009 Operating Budget

SECOND: Mr. Miller

Line item 410 (Town Hall/PD Electricity): Mr. Harte confirmed with Mr. Dilworth Jr. what information he had received from PSNH regarding possible increases.

MOTION: by Mr. Harte

Move to reduce line item 410, Town Hall/PD Electricity from \$14,316 to \$13,500

SECOND: Mr. McCue

Mr. Harte explained this amount was in line with the projections.

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Mr. Harte

Move to reduce line item 642, Roof Snow Removal to \$100

SECOND: Mr. McCue

Mr. Harte stated he would rather see \$100 in the account and have them use Contingency if required.

VOTE: 7-1-0 (Selectman Lambert opposed)

The motion carried.

MOTION: by Mr. Harte

Move to reduce line item 740, New Equipment to \$1,350

SECOND: Mr. Miller

Discussion:

Mr. Harte suggested purchasing only two computers for the Town Hall due to the current economic situation and to continue utilizing existing equipment. Chairman Lemire invited Mr. Raccio to comment, and Mr. Raccio clarified that all the new workstations are required; stating the maintenance on the old machines exceeds the cost of the new ones. In response to a query from Mr. Peeples regarding the current software, Selectman Lambert stated all the machines need more memory to be more efficient. In response to Chairman Lemire's question as to whether the computer maintenance line item would be reduced if the new equipment was funded, Selectman Lambert stated he thought this had already been considered.

Line item 437 (Generator Maintenance Contract): Mr. Raccio provided more detail on what this line covered, stating the Board budgeted for 100 hours of service in the contract. There followed a discussion on what is required and necessary, as well as on computer maintenance funding.

Mr. Miller suggested there could be some savings made in the cost.

VOTE (on line item 740): 2-6-0 (Mr. Peeples and Mr. Harte voted for the motion)

The motion failed.

Mr. Miller encouraged the Board of Selectmen to contact the School District Technology Director to look at what might be available through the school. There followed a discussion about government pricing (GSA).

Mr. Harte asked whether they would still require \$4,800 for line item 20.436 (Computer System Maintenance) if they obtained the new equipment. Selectman Lambert explained this had been taken into account when the figures had been calculated, and there followed a lengthy discussion regarding the costs of new equipment as well as system maintenance costs. It was confirmed they will go out to bid on the system maintenance contract.

Mr. Harte called the question, for a new bottom line of \$60,964 for General Government Buildings.

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

Mosquito District (a/c 4411.20)

MOTION: by Selectman Lambert

Move to approve \$30,000 for account 4411.20, Mosquito District in the 2009 Operating Budget

SECOND: Mr. Harte

Discussion:

Mr. Harte asked Mr. Raccio for clarification on how the \$21,000 for larvaciding was computed, and Mr. Raccio provided a detailed explanation and clarified that last year had not been a full season, and also this year a significant portion will be refunded from the State. Following further discussion regarding the figures over the last two years, Selectman Lambert explained there has been a redistribution of the monies between the line items.

Line item 433 (Internet/Computer): In response to a query from Mr. Harte, Mr. Raccio explained the web site is being updated as well as the other services involved for this line. Chairman Lemire asked whether they could forego the money in this line and have the work done by volunteers.

MOTION: by: Mr. Harte

Move to reduce line item 433, Internet/Computer to \$500

SECOND: Mr. Falzone

VOTE: 7-1-0 (Selectman Lambert opposed the motion)

The motion carried.

MOTION: by Mr. McCue

Move to increase line item 328, Public Notices to \$280

SECOND: Mr. Harte

VOTE: 3-5-0 (Mr. Harte, Mr. McCue and Mr. Peeples voted for the motion)

The motion failed.

Line item 624 (Film and Photo Supplies): In response to a query from Mr. Harte, Mr. Raccio explained the necessity of obtaining a camera and special lens. There was a discussion about expending the money this year from what is left in the budget for this account.

MOTION: by Selectman Lambert
Move to modify line item 624 to zero
SECOND: Mr. Harte
VOTE: 8-0-0
The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE on a new bottom line of \$28,575: 8-0-0
The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Lemire suggested suspending deliberations at this point due to the time, and there followed a discussion about the possibility of an additional meeting. It was agreed the next meeting on Thursday December 4 should begin at 6:00 p.m.

Fire Department (a/c 4220)

MOTION: by Selectman Lambert
Move to approve a bottom line of \$582,941 for account 4220, Fire Department
SECOND: Mr. Peeples
Chairman Lemire stated this amount includes the error from 2007, and Mr. Harte pointed out that salaries would be increased due to the COLA increases.
VOTE: 8-0-0
The motion carried unanimously.

Highways & Streets (a/c 4312)

Selectman Lambert reported the Board of Selectmen wished to change line item 20.575, Road Maintenance Improvements to \$20,000 and will be putting a warrant article together to bond the projects as this would be the cheapest opportunity to fund road work while costs are down. He stated the bond would be for \$1.5million over five years Mr. Peeples asked whether there would be a cost included for some sort of project management to ensure everything comes in on budget and there followed a discussion regarding CIP and the wording of the warrant article.

6. SCHOOL DISTRICT BUSINESS

Mr. Miller handed out the Kindergarten Plan. He reported on the School District Budget status.

7. MEMBER INPUT

Mr. Harte spoke about the Board of Selectmen decision regarding delaying consideration of a Town Manager or Administrator position for the Town, stating he would like to ask the Board of Selectmen to reconsider, providing justification for his request.

MOTION: by Mr. Harte

Move that the Budget Committee write a letter to the Board of Selectmen in support of consideration of a Town Manager or Administrator position for the Town

SECOND: Mr. McCue

There followed a discussion regarding the powers of each position. Mr. Harte agreed he would write up a statement to the Board on behalf of the Committee.

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Miller

Move to adjourn the meeting.

SECOND: Mr. Falzone

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Minutes prepared by:

Sandra Maxwell, Recording Secretary