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**Minutes of**  
**Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting**  
**Held on October 1, 2009**

The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, October 1, 2009, at Litchfield Town Hall, Two Liberty Way, Litchfield, NH 03052.

**PRESENT:** B Lemire (Chair), M Falzone, B Spencer, R Peeples, P Parker, J Guerrette (School Board Representative), G Lambert (Board of Selectmen Representative)

Mr. Lemire called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. He announced that the location of the meeting changed due to an Open House event at CHS.

**1. PUBLIC INPUT**

There was no public input.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of September 24, 2009 were not available.

**3. TOWN BUDGET PRESENTATIONS**

**a. 4150.50 - Town Treasurer/Trustees**

Sharon Reed presented the Treasurer/Trustees budget.

Mr. Spencer queried how the salary numbers were derived. Mrs. Reed indicated the salary is set at \$6285. Mr. Lambert indicated that the proposed salary increases only contained step increases.

Mrs. Reed commented that she proposed a \$600 salary for the Deputy Treasurer. Mr. Lambert noted that the Board of Selectmen voted against the proposed salary. He indicated that a Deputy Treasurer is required, but there is no monetary amount attached to the position.

Mr. Lemire noted that the Town Treasurer budget is a level funded budget.

Mr. Spencer queried about the base for postage. Mrs. Reed indicated that all accounts payable and Selectmen's office mailings require postage. Mr. Lambert noted that there have been different mechanisms by which the checks have been mailed from Town Hall. One of the suggestions from the town auditor is to control checks not leaving town hall with the exception of the mail.

Mr. Lemire indicated that electronic funds transfer can save money for a municipality and queried if the Board of Selectmen has considered it. Mr. Lambert commented that the

1 Board of Selectmen has explored other options to reduce costs for printing checks, but  
2 was not sure if EFT has been considered.

3  
4 Mrs. Reed also reviewed the following budget items:

- 5 • Office supplies: budgeted \$40

6 Mrs. Reed indicated that she estimated that she would need at least \$100 for supplies.

7 Mr. Lemire suggested that the Board of Selectmen have an opportunity to amend the  
8 budget line item.

- 9 • Mileage

10 Mrs. Reed was concerned about the mileage line item. Mr. Lambert added that mileage  
11 has been a recurring topic of discussion. The Board of Selectmen has been discussing  
12 options to reduce the cost of mileage.

13  
14 **b. 4191.30 - Zoning Board**

15 Mr. Riley presented the zoning board budget. He indicated that the recommended budget  
16 for 2010 is \$2648. He included a breakdown of how the budget was derived.

17  
18 Mr. Spencer queried about the secretarial wages account. Mr. Riley explained that the  
19 secretary's wages and the wages of the person actually taking the minutes were coming  
20 out of separate accounts. These items were moved into one account.

21  
22 Mr. Spencer queried how the wages were derived. Mr. Riley reviewed the method by  
23 which the wages were calculated. He indicated the labor rate is applied to 18 hours  
24 would be spent on average meetings (1.5 hours x 12), plus the time to transcribe each set  
25 of meeting minutes. Mr. Riley also noted that he is forecasting six hearings for 2010 and  
26 roughly three hours to produce the meeting minutes.

27  
28 Mr. Spencer asked why the amount was higher than in previous years. Mr. Riley  
29 explained that they are spending more time accumulating better minutes. The minutes  
30 are more timely to produce because the hearings are longer and the minutes must be  
31 accurate. Mr. Lambert indicated that it would create a higher cost in legal services in the  
32 event the lawyer has to spend time dealing with bad minutes.

33  
34 Mr. Riley also mentioned that miscellaneous mailings associated with hearings have been  
35 reduced due to a change in the way certified mailings are done. He reviewed workshops,  
36 training, and travel associated with those accounts.

37  
38 Mr. Lambert thanked Mr. Riley and expressed the appreciation of the Board of Selectmen  
39 for efforts to keep the budget amounts down.

40  
41 **c. 4445.00 – Welfare**

42 Mr. Lambert presented welfare budget with a total of \$35,000. He indicated that the  
43 budget includes line items for prescription and medical services, electricity, oil, groceries,  
44 and household items. He added that many communities have spent less on their welfare  
45 budgets in the previous year because they feel there will be an influx this year.

1 Mr. Lambert explained that lien able properties is a line item that was broken out from  
2 the rental properties line item to be able to track the funds.

3  
4 Mr. Spencer queried what is included in each line item. Mr. Lambert indicated that  
5 \$8000 for lien able properties (if the property is own and a lien is feasible), \$11,000 in  
6 the non-lien able properties (rentals). Mr. Spencer wanted clarification on the reason for  
7 which the lien able properties line item would be used. Mr. Lambert indicated that the  
8 lien able properties line item would be funds to assist those who own a home and apply  
9 for assistance. The rental properties line item would assist people who do not have a  
10 place to live. Mr. Lambert indicated that the Selectmen are discussing the hiring of a  
11 welfare director on a part-time basis as the position is very demanding. The Selectperson  
12 who is performing these tasks does so on a volunteer basis.

13  
14 Mr. Spencer gave a brief account history of what has been spent in the welfare account in  
15 previous years and was concerned with the proposed amount. Mr. Lambert commented  
16 that there may be more requests for fuel assistance next year. He commended the welfare  
17 department on a fantastic job.

18  
19 **d. 4520.00 - Recreation**

20 Anthony Schaffer presented the recreation budget. Mr. Lambert mentioned that the  
21 recreation budget is lower than was targeted.

22  
23 Mr. Schaffer reviewed major expenses in the recreation budget. He reported that a new  
24 line item was added for secretarial services. This would allow for meeting minutes to be  
25 taken and notices to be posted. Mr. Lambert indicated that RSA 91:A requires meeting  
26 minutes to be recorded, and have requested a budget of \$2000. Mr. Schaffer indicated  
27 that the amount is based on 20 meetings that run between 2-3 hours each.

28  
29 Mr. Spencer queried about the mileage/tolls line item. Mr. Schaffer noted that this was a  
30 new line item. He explained that the Recreation Commission hired a  
31 custodian/groundskeeper who uses his own vehicle to travel to various parks around the  
32 town, as well as to purchase and transport supplies. The Recreation Commission felt  
33 mileage reimbursement would be appropriate and used the Town Hall as a base location  
34 to calculate the mileage.

35  
36 Mr. Guerrette queried about the copier charges line item. Mr. Schaffer indicated that  
37 amount is for projects that are not able to be done using the Town's copier.

38  
39 Mr. Spencer queried about the increase in electricity relative to the sprinkler system. Mr.  
40 Schaffer indicated that due to the expansion of Talent field, there is a larger sprinkler  
41 system and larger capacity pump that may result in a higher cost to operate, in addition to  
42 the operation of sprinklers for the other fields in town.

43  
44 Mr. Spencer queried about the field mowing line item. Mr. Schaffer indicated that a total  
45 of \$15,400 has been budgeted for the maintenance of several fields and the expanded  
46 Talent field.

1 Mr. Falzone queried about the field maintenance budget. Mr. Schaffer indicated that  
2 some projects that were included in this year's budget will not be included next year.

3  
4 Mr. Spencer queried about the field improvement plans and capital outlay. Mr. Schaffer  
5 reported that included in that line item are purchases for additional picnic tables and an  
6 engineering survey at Brickyard Park. Selectmen cut the replacement of a swing set at  
7 Corning Road.

8  
9 Mr. Lemire indicated that \$2500 was budgeted for this year and none has been spent.  
10 Mr. Schaffer noted that the Recreation Commission returned the money to the town.

11  
12 Mr. Lemire queried about equipment purchases. Mr. Schaffer indicated that a pressure  
13 washer was recently purchased.

14  
15 Mr. Schaffer commented on electricity services. The amount budgeted for Talent Hall  
16 has been projected based on weather temperature in the winter and anticipated use of the  
17 building. Committee members discussed the energy efficiency at Talent Hall. Mr.  
18 Lambert indicated that in a building such as Talent Hall it is normal to expect seasonal  
19 drops and gains. Mr. Schaffer noted that although the budgeted amount can be straight  
20 lined, the Recreation Commission does not want to be in the position of not having  
21 enough funds and closing the hall for the season.

22  
23 Mr. Spencer queried about the security monitoring system, which has always been  
24 budgeted, but has never had money charged to the account. Mr. Schaffer indicated that  
25 the system was active last year, but never invoiced. Currently, there is one phone line,  
26 which is also tied into the alarm system. The Fire Chief recommended that a second line  
27 be installed dedicated exclusively to the alarm system. Mr. Schaffer added that cable  
28 internet supports the security monitoring system with a DVR technology, which allows  
29 the police to connect remotely.

30  
31 Mr. Spencer queried about repairs and maintenance plans. Mr. Schaffer provided a  
32 breakdown of repairs for the Budget Committee. He highlighted a major equipment  
33 purchase of \$9000 for a voice notification fire alarm system recommended by the Fire  
34 Chief.

35  
36 Mr. Guerrette commented that this type of system is not necessary and is not required by  
37 code. Mr. Lambert indicated that the Board of Selectmen recommended the purchase  
38 based on strong support by the Fire Chief.

39  
40 Mr. Guerrette queried about the challenge course line item. Mr. Lambert indicated that  
41 the course is located on town property and is primarily for school district use. The line  
42 item is for inspection of the course. Mr. Schaffer noted that the challenge course was  
43 provided with a grant through the school district.

1 Mr. Spencer commented that if the school district has sole use of the course, then the cost  
2 for inspection should be the district's responsibility. Mr. Peeples mentioned that the  
3 town has responsibility to make sure it is inspected because it is on town property.  
4

5 **e. 4550.00 – Library**

6 Vicky Varrick presented library budget. Marilyn Soraghan (?spelling) also attended.  
7 Ms. Varrick indicated that the library budget bottom line is \$176,146. She clarified the  
8 following line item changes that were approved by the Board of Selectmen: line 630,  
9 \$2546; line 631, \$1063; line 640 \$346. Mr. Lambert concurred that the line changes  
10 were accurate and approved by the Selectmen.  
11

12 Mr. Lemire queried an increase in wages. Ms. Varrick indicated that several employees  
13 are receiving step increases and a new custodian was hired.  
14

15 Ms. Varrick also reviewed the following line items: insurance which is based on current  
16 rates, tuition reimbursement for state library courses; increases electricity, maintenance  
17 contracts, and reference media for the replacement of an encyclopedia set that is five  
18 years old.  
19

20 Mr. Guerrette queried if the town and school district can share pest control expenses. Mr.  
21 Lemire indicated that would be a decision between the Selectmen and District.  
22

23 Mr. Lemire queried an increase in mileage and tolls. Ms. Varrick indicated that account  
24 is a restoration request as last year workshops, seminars and travel were sacrificed.  
25

26 Mr. Guerrette queried about the technology replacement. Mr. Spencer queried about a  
27 technology plan. Ms. Varrick indicated that a plan exists, but acquiring funds for  
28 additional technology was unsuccessful. Mr. Lemire suggested the Trustees consult with  
29 some of the members of the Budget Committee who are knowledgeable in technology.  
30 Mr. Lambert commented that one reason the line item was removed was because of a  
31 lack of clarity over the right solution. Mr. Spencer commented that a better technology  
32 plan is needed.  
33

34 Mr. Lemire thanked Ms. Varrick for presenting the library budget.  
35

36 **f. 4583.00 - Patriotic Purposes**

37 Mr. Lambert spoke to the patriotic purposes budget. He commented that when the budget  
38 was sent to the Selectmen, the party responsible for budget was not present. A  
39 clarification on the cost for flags was discussed.  
40

41 **4. VOTING ON TOWN BUDGETS (IF APPLICABLE)**

42 Committee members agreed to vote next week on the budgets presented this evening.  
43

44 **5. SCHOOL DISTRICT BUSINESS (MR. GUERRETTE)**

45 Mr. Guerrette reported that Dr. Cutler shared her intent to retire in June 2010. He also  
46 reported the School Board discussed kindergarten construction and using 75% state aid

1 and elementary impact fees. Mr. Guerrette also reported that he discussed with the  
2 School Board reporting information at the Board level that is contained in electronic  
3 communications among a quorum of Budget Committee members. He commented that  
4 he was informed by the Board Chair that unless such communications were made public  
5 at a Budget Committee meeting, such communications would not be discussed at the  
6 Board level. Mr. Guerrette asked Chairman Lemire for clarification on discussing  
7 Budget Committee electronic communications with the School Board.

8  
9 Mr. Lemire indicated he would not comment on a discussion he may have had with the  
10 School Board Chair. In reference to Mr. Guerrette's question, Mr. Lemire commented, in  
11 his opinion, if he is communicating electronically with a quorum of Budget Committee  
12 members it is public record. Mr. Lemire clarified that he stated he would prefer  
13 Committee members discuss school business during that specific section of the meeting.

14  
15 Mr. Spencer queried about enrollment projections. Mrs. Flynn informed Committee  
16 members that the District October 1 Report would be available next week and that  
17 NHSBA enrollment projections would most likely be available by the beginning of  
18 November. Mr. Spencer requested copies of the enrollment projections be made  
19 available to the Budget Committee.

## 20 21 **6. MEMBER INPUT**

22 Mr. Lambert commented that he appreciates the energy the Superintendent has expended  
23 to give the community input in the budget process. He was concerned that the Budget  
24 Committee members would lose their window to participate in the budget process if they  
25 wait for the School Board to deliver their budget in late November. Mr. Lambert  
26 indicated that Mr. Guerrette suggested the School Board invited Budget Committee  
27 members to attend and participate in their budget meetings. Mr. Lambert commented  
28 that he attended the meeting last evening and felt no part of the participation. He  
29 indicated that the Board was told that they would not answer questions at this time.

30  
31 Mr. Lambert indicated that he was confused when listening to information presented at  
32 the Board meeting relative to renewing contracts.

33  
34 Mr. Lemire asked for clarification from Mr. Lambert regarding his participation at the  
35 Board meeting. Mr. Lambert indicated that he attended the meeting in an official  
36 capacity.

37  
38 Mr. Lemire asked for clarification from Mr. Guerrette regarding an official invitation  
39 from the School Board to participate in School Board budget meetings. Mr. Guerrette  
40 indicated that at a meeting several weeks earlier, he conveyed the Budget Committee's  
41 request to have the principals present their budgets to the Budget Committee at a Budget  
42 Committee meeting. He commented that the Board extended an invitation for Budget  
43 Committee members to attend those meetings at the School Board level.

1 Mr. Lemire clarified that the Budget Committee does not usually get involved with the  
2 School Board budget preparation. The Budget Committee gets involved when the school  
3 budget is presented to the Committee.

4  
5 Mr. Peeples commented that Committee members requested the principals present their  
6 budgets at a Budget Committee meeting to allow members to ask questions and obtain  
7 direct answers.

8  
9 Mr. Lambert indicated that the invitation extended by Mr. Guerrette on behalf of the  
10 Board was to participate in the budget process. He felt that he was not allowed to  
11 participate. Mrs. Flynn offered clarification regarding School Board community input.  
12 She indicated that Mr. Lambert did not designate during community input that he was  
13 speaking in an official capacity.

14  
15 Mr. Guerrette expressed that he understood that it was an open invitation to Committee  
16 members rather than have the principals present their budgets at a Budget Committee  
17 meeting. Mr. Lemire clarified that his procedure would be to ask the Superintendent if  
18 the principals can present at a Committee meeting because she is their employer. It is  
19 professional protocol. Mr. Lemire indicated that there is a mutual respect between the  
20 School Board and the Budget Committee that allows everyone to have a dialect.

21  
22 Committee members discussed the issue further. Mr. Lemire noted that if it is the will of  
23 the Committee, he will ask the Superintendent if the principals can attend the Budget  
24 Committee meeting to present their budgets. He concluded that this topic can be  
25 discussed further at the next meeting.

26  
27 Mr. Lambert commented that he wanted the Committee to know that he was trying to  
28 give feedback at the Board meeting and felt that he could not participate. Mr. Guerrette  
29 suggested Committee members attend the Board meetings and generate more questions.  
30 Mr. Lemire indicated that in order to have participation at that level a meeting would  
31 have to be posted. Mr. Peeples concurred noting that meeting notice is required for the  
32 constituency to be heard during community input. Mr. Spencer agreed that the Budget  
33 Committee's responsibility does not include participating in the Board's budget  
34 preparation. Committee members discussed the topic further.

35  
36 Mr. Lambert commented that he was unsure of an elected official's or community  
37 member's capacity to participate in the School Board budget process. Mr. Lemire  
38 indicated that the Budget Committee's input is from the time the Committee receives the  
39 budget to when Deliberative Session ends.

40  
41 Mr. Lambert commented that he had several questions that were not answered at the  
42 Board meeting. Mr. Guerrette indicated that he was directed to submit his questions to  
43 Mr. Martin by email. Mr. Lemire offered to submit Mr. Lambert's questions to Mr.  
44 Martin and follow up with the response. Committee members discussed the topic further.

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46 Mr. Lemire indicated that the Committee can discuss the topic at the next meeting.

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- **Upcoming meetings**  
October 8, 15, 22, 29, 2009

**MOTION:** by Mr. Spencer  
*Move to adjourn the meeting at 9:34 p.m.*

**SECOND:** Mr. Falzone

**VOTE:** 7 -0-0

**The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 9:34 p.m.**

**Minutes by:** *Mrs. Michele E. Flynn (Recording Secretary)*  
**Approved:** *October 8, 2009*