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3 **Minutes of the**
4 **Litchfield Budget Committee**

5 **Held on October 22, 2009**
6

7 The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, October 22, 2009, at
8 Campbell High School, 1 Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

9
10 **PRESENT:** B Lemire (Chairman), J Harte (Vice Chairman), B Spencer, P Parker, G
11 Lambert (Board of Selectmen Representative), D Miller (School Board Representative)

12
13 **ABSENT:** M Falzone, R Peeples, J Guerrette
14

15 Mr. Lemire called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.
16

17 **1. PUBLIC INPUT**

18 There was no public input.
19

20 **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

21 **MOTION:** by Mr. Harte

22 *Move to approve the minutes of the Budget Committee meeting on September 24,*
23 *2009*

24 **SECOND:** Mr. Lambert

25 **VOTE:** 5-0-1 (Mr. Miller abstained)
26

27 **MOTION:** by Mr. Harte

28 *Move to approve the minutes of the Budget Committee meeting on October 8, 2009*

29 **SECOND:** Mr. Lambert

30 **VOTE:** 5-0-1 (Mr. Miller abstained)
31

32 **3. TOWN BUDGET PRESENTATIONS**

33 **a) Insurance (a/c 4196)**

34 Mr. Lambert reported the budget sheet for this account is not yet available.
35

36 **b) General Government Buildings (a/c 4194)**

37 Mr. Kevin Lynch presented the budget for this account.

38 *Line item 120 (Custodian Wages):* these remain unchanged from last year.
39

40 *Line item 341 (Pay Phones):* these have been removed by the Board of Selectmen
41

42 *Line item 411 (Propane Gas):* Mr. Lynch reported an increase in usage at the
43 Town Hall for propane, and he used a six year average to calculate the figure this
44 year based on consumption and current price. There followed a discussion with
45 Mr. Spencer regarding the highest figure and the highest prices, and Mr. Lynch
46 reviewed the figures with the Committee.

1 *Line item 410 (Electricity):* Mr. Lynch confirmed this was calculated in the same
2 way as propane.

3
4 *Line item 436 (Alarm System):* Mr. Lynch confirmed this is the fire alarm system
5 which is a hard wired system for the town and is a real cost figure

6
7 *Line item 341 (Fire Alarm Phone):* This is for the meeting house and costs
8 \$58/month

9
10 *Line item 436 (Fire Detectors Test/Inspection):* This is for someone to come in to
11 the town buildings to test the fire alarm system and there is no current figure
12 available, therefore it was left unchanged from last year.

13
14 *Line item 438 (Telephone Maintenance Contract):* this has increased due to the
15 number of lines

16
17 *Line item 440 (Equipment Rental):* Mr. Lynch reported the Board of Selectmen
18 moved this to their account and left \$100

19
20 *Line item 442 (Trash Container Services):* it was reported there is now a bi-
21 monthly collection instead of a weekly one

22
23 *Line 630 (Building Repairs & Maintenance):* Mr. Spencer asked how Mr. Lynch
24 had calculated this figure and Mr. Lynch reported it was based on a quote for
25 rectifying a mold problem in the old Town Hall in the basement, explaining they
26 needed to gut the basement, remove the walls and get the police records off the
27 floor onto shelving to help circulate the air. In response to a query from Mr.
28 Spencer, Mr. Lynch stated the storage area in the building used by the Cable
29 Committee is full.

30
31 *Line item 642 (Roof Snow Removal):* Mr. Harte asked what the requested amount
32 will cover, and Mr. Lynch stated he will be coming back for a new roof as the
33 shingles are in poor condition and he is taking the matter up with the
34 manufacturer. He explained how they intend to get snow off the roof, stating they
35 will need to hire someone.

36
37 *Line item (Lawn Maintenance):* Mr. Lemire asked whether the Board intends to
38 use the mower purchased last year, and Mr. Lynch reported they may need to go
39 out to bid to maintain the cemetery behind the church as the mower is too large to
40 get around the stones. There followed a discussion on maintenance of the
41 cemeteries. Mr. Lemire confirmed it is the intent of the Board of Selectmen to
42 use the Highway Department to maintain them. Information was provided that
43 the town has received a request from the state to bring the organization of the
44 town cemeteries into compliance with state law. Mr. Spencer stated he thought
45 the amount requested was too high.

1 *Line item 750 (Furniture & Fixtures):* In response to an enquiry from Mr.
2 Lemire, Mr. Lynch explained the money was for flag poles, furniture purchases
3 like replacing chairs at the Town Hall etc.
4

5 *Line item 342 (Computer System):* Mr. Lambert explained for Mr. Harte about a
6 new contract for maintenance of the town computer system based on a contracted
7 amount which he explained is why the Board had decided to hire a company to
8 maintain this. He clarified for Mr. Harte that the amount last year was for repairs
9 using an hourly rate, and they previously had no money for computer
10 maintenance. Mr. John Brunelle explained about the need for maintenance of the
11 computer environment. There followed a discussion with Mr. Harte, and Mr.
12 Lambert provided a brief history and pointed out the contract does not include the
13 hardware. Mr. Brunelle explained they are currently doing an inventory of the
14 Town Hall and a lot of equipment is about to come off warranty, therefore the
15 maintenance contract will in the long term save money. Mr. Lynch explained Ms.
16 Langille has been tidying up and ensuring things are charged to the correct
17 accounts.
18

19 **c) Solid Waste Disposal Administration (a/c 4321)**

20 Messrs. Brunelle (member of Solid Waste Committee) and Dave Mellon
21 presented the budget for this department. Mr. Mellon reported there are some
22 costs in the budget for next which relate to the current system at the Incinerator,
23 as well as costs relating to turning the incinerator into a transfer station.
24

25 *Line item (Health Insurance):* It was pointed out the figures currently in the line
26 are last year's
27

28 *Line item ()::* In response to a query from Mr. Spencer, Mr. Mellon explained the
29 operations license fee is based on weight of ash and the amount of fuel used. He
30 reported they estimate this will no longer be a cost when the incinerator shuts
31 down.
32

33 *Line item (Seminars/workshops):* In response to a request from Mr. Lemire, Mr.
34 Mellon explained this line will be used for licensing and recertification of the
35 workers.
36

37 **d) Solid Waste Disposal Operations (a/c 4324)**

38 Messrs. Brunelle and Mellon presented the budget for this department.
39

40 ***Waste Disposal (a/c 4324.10)***

41 *Line item 650 (Bulldozing, Gravel & Fill)::*Mr. Mellon explained they turn the
42 compost down in the back of the area and add gravel to the area There followed a
43 discussion regarding how often this has been done and what the cost is.
44
45
46

1 ***Incineration (a/c 4324.30)***

2 *Line item 630 (Building Repairs and Maintenance):* Mr. Mellon confirmed all of
3 this is done in house, and the spending this year was for the cost of a fire
4 extinguisher inspection. In response to an enquiry from Mr. Lemire as to what
5 they are planning to do next year, Mr. Mellon explained they have moved money
6 from another account and will use most of it for paint and small repairs to the
7 garage doors.

8
9 *Line item 120(Wages):* Mr. Harte asked why labor and wages so is low for 2009
10 to date. Mr. Brunelle explained they will need extra labor hours with the change
11 over in services and will be re-filling a vacant position. Mr. Lemire asked if this
12 would reduce overtime, and Mr. Mellon explained they usually use overtime
13 around Christmas and in an emergency if there is an equipment problem. Mr.
14 Lemire asked whether the additional person will mitigate overtime and Mr.
15 Lambert responded there is lot of extra work coming up to do existing trash
16 burning and also manage and execute the new services on time.

17
18 *Line item 356(Ash Testing):* In response to a query from Mr. Harte about the
19 increase in ash testing, Mr. Mellon explained it is usually carried out twice per
20 year but they are expecting to have to test it an additional time next year when the
21 incinerator shuts down.

22
23 *Line item 637(Incinerator Fuel):* for Mr. Spencer – john b explained

24
25 *Line item 641 (Septic Cleaning):* Mr. Mellon explained this should have been
26 done last year but it will definitely need to be done in 2010.

27
28 *Line item 662(Tire Purchases):* Mr. Mellon explained they are lasting an
29 additional year but they do cost more.

30
31 *Line item 693(Minor Tools & Supplies):* It was clarified this is a merger of all
32 maintenance supplies.

33
34 ***Recycling (a/c 4324.40)***

35 *Line item 684 (Electronics Recycling):* This is already over budget this year, and
36 is done by volume.

37
38 ***Conversion costs***

39 Mr. Brunelle presented this part of the budget. Responding to a request from Mr.
40 Lemire, Mr. Lambert explained for the benefit of viewers and the Committee that
41 the conversion of the incinerator to a transfer station will save the taxpayers a
42 seven figure bill. He explained it is a very costly process to continue with the
43 incinerator, and there is no cost offsetting opportunity. Mr. Lemire clarified that
44 the entire cost to convert is included within the budget and Mr. Brunelle offered
45 to provide backup information at the request of Mr. Spencer.

46

1 Mr. Brunelle reported the Solid Waste Committee had explored curb side and
2 other options, and explained the costs involved in each. He reported that
3 compacting is the best option going forward for the town. He then provided an
4 explanation each line item and that the transitional period would be for
5 changeover in service. He also explained a new safety and detection panel for the
6 whole of the highway and transfer station complex is included in the budget and
7 they will be improving fire safety. In response to a request from Mr. Spencer, Mr.
8 Brunelle went over the time line for the changeover. He also provided
9 information about the training period and what this will achieve, stating it will
10 give a sense of what they will need to budget for following year. Mr. Mellon
11 provided Mr. Spencer with information on the savings.
12

13 There followed a discussion about the need for being prepared to answer
14 questions at the Town Meeting to ensure the Operating Budget passes, and a
15 discussion regarding where residents can find information on the conversion.
16

17 Mr. Lemire recessed the meeting at 8:30 p.m., calling the meeting to order again
18 at 8:33 p.m.
19

20 **e) Animal Control (a/c 4414)**

21 Officer Gerry Pilon presented the budget for this department.
22

23 *Line item 560 (Dues & Licenses):* Officer Pilon explained he was requesting
24 money for next year to send out letters by certified mail to those residents who
25 fail to pay their dog licenses. He reported there are around 150 residents involved
26 and the statutes state that if letters are sent by certified mail the town can charge a
27 \$5 service fee which will show in revenue. He further explained this provides the
28 town with additional recourse, holds the residents more accountable and it will be
29 less costly in the long run than having to chase them and hand deliver letters.
30

31 *Line item 630 (Building Repairs):* It was reported that the fencing at the kennel is
32 in need of replacement as it has sustained a lot of damage. Officer Pilon reported
33 he has obtained an estimate of \$2,000 but will go out to bid to see if he can obtain
34 a lower price.
35

36 He explained the fees charges for picking up dogs and kennel fees, stating these
37 go into the General Fund. He confirmed the fees have been reviewed, but that
38 they were not increased.
39

40 *Line item 410 (Electricity):* Mr. Spencer requested an update on expenditure to
41 date and there was a discussion about heating costs for the kennel.
42

43 *Line item 631 (Equipment Repair & Maintenance):* Officer Pilon explained they
44 have budgeted for two new 2-way radios, and there was a discussion with Chief
45 O'Brien regarding whether the Police Department had a spare radio which could
46 be used by the Animal Control Officer.

1 **f) Police Department (a/c 4210)**

2 Mr. Lambert explained the Board of Selectmen had included a full time police
3 officer in the budget as there is one being deployed and the position must remain
4 open. He explained this would leave the department short and they would like to
5 add the position in order that they can reduce overtime costs. There followed a
6 discussion about using the salary of the deployed officer for the replacement and
7 about trying to obtain a certified officer. Messrs. Lemire and Spencer pointed out
8 that any new position should be on a warrant article. Mr. Lambert spoke in
9 support of the Board's decision and there was further discussion. Chief O'Brien
10 went on to present the budget for his department.

11
12 ***Administration (a/c 4210.10)***

13 *Line item 111 (Lieutenant Wages):* There was discussion regarding the wages and
14 hours for this position, and it was confirmed that there is shift coverage by this
15 position.

16 *Line item 141 (Lieutenant Overtime):* In response to a query from Mr. Spencer
17 regarding the increase in overtime for this position, the Chief explained the
18 position covers approximately 2 hours/week, and he explained the process for
19 covering shifts. In response to a query from Mr. Spencer regarding the breakout
20 for this position, Mr. Lambert explained they wanted the Lieutenant's overtime
21 hours to reflect what he actually does and there was a discussion about how the
22 police hours are tracked and reported.

23
24 *Line item 390 (Prosecutor Contracted Services):* There was a discussion with
25 Mr. Lemire regarding the amount for the prosecutorial services. There was also a
26 discussion about the Sergeants and what their job responsibilities entail. Mr.
27 Lemire pointed out the Budget Committee had been led to believe that getting the
28 prosecutor would free up staff to do in house police work and the Chief explained
29 why this was not the case. There followed a discussion regarding the cost of the
30 prosecutor and it was confirmed that it is a flat annual fee.

31
32 *Line item 614 (Recruitment):* The Chief explained the amount in this line would
33 cover pre-employment costs for two officers and Mr. Spencer clarified this line
34 would be zeroed if the Committee moved to remove the new hires from the
35 budget.

36
37 ***Crime Control & Investigation (a/c 4210.20)***

38 In response to a query from Mr. Lemire as to why health insurance and other
39 benefits have been included for next year when they were not in the lines in
40 previous years, the Chief explained these were moved from Patrol at the request
41 of the Budget Committee

42
43 *Line item 140 (Sergeant Overtime):* It was noted that this line has increased and
44 there was a discussion with Mr. Lemire as to why Litchfield usually employs new
45 officers.

1 *Line item 143 (Sergeant Training):* In response to a query from Mr. Spencer,
2 there was a discussion regarding the training courses, cost and hours involved.
3 Mr. Lemire asked whether there were options for doing the training in house and
4 the Chief explained why this was not possible. Mr. Harte clarified this cost
5 includes shift cover while the person is on training

6 *Line item 740 (Equipment Purchases):* The Chief explained the department
7 wishes to update two computers and purchase a GPS and a Nikon camera. He
8 also explained what the Board of Selectmen had removed from this line. Mr.
9 Lambert explained what was included in the computer costs. There followed a
10 discussion regarding the number of computers within the Police Department and
11 where they were located. The Chief stated they would be replacing the ones in
12 the patrol and jail rooms.

13
14 The Chief confirmed, in response to a query, that he would be willing to send
15 only one person for the command training this year and another next year. He
16 also stated he would choose coverage and another officer over training if he had
17 to.

18
19 ***Traffic Control (a/c 4210.30)***

20 Mr. Spencer obtained clarification of the figures for the Patrolmen and Mr. Harte
21 obtained clarification that two Patrolmen had taken the certification for Master
22 Patrolman. The Chief explained more responsibilities are given to the officers
23 when they become Master Patrolmen. Mr. Lemire clarified there is a new
24 Patrolman in line item 111 and the related lines.

25
26 In response to a query from Mr. Spencer about the rate paid to special officers, the
27 Chief reported the rate depends on the contract and years of service. The Chief
28 also confirmed the School Resource Officer's rate is based on the labor contract.
29 There followed a discussion about the part-time Detective Sergeant. Mr. Spencer
30 requested the rate of pay for both the Resource Officer and the Detective. The
31 Chief explained the department has 8 part-time officers allotted to them and the
32 currently only have six, and he explained how the part-time detective has helped
33 the department.

34
35 *Line item 210 (Health Insurance):* The Chief explained the increase in this line is
36 due to the special, the Resource Officer and two new hires, and there was a
37 discussion as to why the Resource Officer is not on a separate line as he works 32
38 hours/week. Mr. Spencer stated this distorts the specials line item as there are
39 other things in the line.

40
41 *Line item 635 (Vehicle Fuel):* There was a discussion regarding fuel consumption
42 and cost and Mr. Harte requested that the Chief obtain an actual rate for fuel.

43
44 *Line item 660 (Vehicle Repairs & Maintenance):* The Chief stated that two cars
45 had failed inspection. He handed out information on the cars in the fleet and how
46 they are used. There was a substantial discussion regarding the amount of cars

1 required. Mr. Lambert stated the Board of Selectmen had discussed how to
2 reduce the operating costs of the vehicles. There was a discussion regarding why
3 vehicles are needed at details.
4

5 Mr. Lemire pointed out the Budget Committee does not have the revenue
6 numbers for the town as yet and it was difficult dealing with the increases in this
7 budget.
8

9 Mr. Harte discussed which cars had maintenance done on them. He talked about
10 the amount of revenue from detail cars and whether the Chief is tracking
11 maintenance of those cars. Mr. Lambert stated the Board of Selectmen has asked
12 Ms. Langille to ascertain out how much revenue there is from detail cars.
13

14 ***Line item 662 (Tire Purchases): The Chief stated they need the full amount of***
15 ***tires requested.***
16

17 *Line item 760 (Cruiser Purchase):* It was confirmed the amount in this line is for
18 two cruisers.
19

20 *Line item 811 (Seminars):* The Chief explained the amount requested provides
21 one seminar per officer at \$1,500 each. He explained he had moved this from
22 Grants as the Budget Committee had declared last year that it was an
23 inappropriate use of grant money. He confirmed it is not mandated training.
24

25 *Line item 691 (Ammunition Purchases):* The Chief confirmed the cost of training
26 ammunition has increased.
27

28 ***Support Services (a/c 4210.50)***

29 *Line item 110 (Secretary/Dispatcher):* Mr. Spencer queried the \$5/hour increase.
30 Chief O'Brien confirmed it was a non-union job and he had set it at the same rate
31 as a full time dispatcher and as the secretary for the Fire Department. Mr. Lemire
32 asked whether the Board of Selectmen had authorized this and there followed a
33 discussion. Mr. Lambert offered to obtain clarification on the increase for this
34 staff member from the Board.
35

36 ***Action: Mr. Lambert***

37 ***Police Station (a/c 4210.70)***

38 *Line item 750 (Furniture/Fixture Purchases):* The Chief clarified the amount in
39 this line was for purchasing office chairs.
40

41 *Line item 50-345 (Dispatch Service Contract):* It was confirmed there will be no
42 increase next year in this.
43

44 ***Police Grants (a/c 4210.80)***

45 There was a discussion as to whether the town should be appropriating money
46 when it is not being spent as the line has not been spent for a number of years.

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4. VOTING ON TOWN BUDGETS

The Committee agreed to defer voting on Town budgets until next week.

5. MEMBER INPUT

Mr. Miller stated that Mr. P. Kaplow had been presented with the Educator of the Year Award today by the Commissioner for the Department of Education. He also announced the figures for Healthcare for the School District.

• Upcoming meetings

- October 29, 2009
- November 5, 2009
- November 12, 2009
- November 19, 2009

MOTION: by Mr. Miller

Move to adjourn

SECOND: Mr. Harte

VOTE: 6-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 10:50 p.m.

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

Date approved: *November 12, 2009*