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3 **Minutes of the**
4
5 **Litchfield Budget Committee**
6
7 **Held on October 29, 2009**

8 The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, October 29, 2009, at
9 Campbell High School, 1 Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

10 **PRESENT:** B Lemire (Chairman), J Harte (Vice Chairman), B Spencer, P Parker, F
11 Byron (Board of Selectmen Representative), J Guerrette (School Board Representative),
12 M Falzone, R Peeples

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14 **ABSENT:** Mr. Lambert

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16 Mr. Lemire opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

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18 **1. PUBLIC INPUT**

19 There was no public input.

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21 **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

22 Approval of the minutes was deferred until the next meeting.

23
24 **3. PRESENTATION OF TOWN BUDGETS**

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

26 Mr. Byron stated that in response to the proposed increase of 23% by the current
27 health insurance carrier for the town, the Board of Selectmen has invited Ms.
28 Dana Conran from the LGC to present some options for insurance. He extended
29 invitations to the Budget Committee and the School Board to attend this meeting
30 at 7:00 p.m. on Monday November 2, 2009 at the town hall. Mr. Harte asked
31 whether the proposed increases are being seen across the state and Mr. Byron
32 responded in the affirmative. Mr. Guerrette clarified that the Police Department is
33 the only department with a collective bargaining agreement on the town side.

34
35 **b) Ambulance (a/c 4215)**

36 Mr. Byron deferred to Chief Schofield to present the budget for this account. The
37 Chief handed out a packet of information to the Committee, recommending the
38 same amount as 2009. In response to a query from Mr. Lemire, the Chief
39 explained how Hudson arrives at a figure for Litchfield's quarterly billing. He
40 pointed out he had not yet received new numbers from Hudson for next year.

41
42 **c) Fire Department (a/c 4220)**

43 *Line item 10-130 (Salary – Fire Chief):* Mr. Byron stated the Board of Selectmen
44 has adjusted the Chief's stipend for 2010 based on Fire Chief salaries in
45 surrounding communities of equivalent size, and he provided figures for these
46 communities. He explained the Board had voted to raise the stipend to \$3,000.

1 Mr. Byron explained this is in line with the job responsibilities and the amount of
2 time the Chief has to put in to manage the department. He then handed over to
3 Chief Schofield to present the rest of his budget.
4

5 The Chief stressed the department's budget has decreased overall between 2007
6 and 2010.
7

8 ***Administration (a/c 4220.10)***

9 *Line item 302 (Contracted Secretarial Services):* The Chief pointed out the
10 amount of hours had been halved from 8 hours/week and he has asked the Board
11 to raise this to six hours for next year. The hourly rate is \$20/hour.
12

13 The Chief explained that for the majority of lines he had set them at the 2008
14 levels, prior to the default budget, stating he had provided backup for everything.
15

16 *Line item 341 (Telephone):* In response to a query from Mr. Falzone, the Chief
17 explained the increase over last year is due to the run rate for the monthly bills.
18

19 *Line item 342 (Computer Software):* The Chief explained for Mr. Spencer this
20 line funds licenses for the Motorola radios town wide and departmental software.
21 He confirmed the line has been spent this year apart from \$330, and there was a
22 discussion on the latest actual figure.
23

24 *Line item 740 (Computer Equipment):* The Chief offered to bring along a member
25 of staff next week to answer questions the Committee has on this line.

26 *Line item 560 (Dues & Subscriptions):* The Chief informed Mr. Spencer this line
27 was overspent this year and he had re-established it to last year's figure. There
28 was a discussion with Mr. Spencer regarding actual historical expenditure and the
29 Chief offered to bring the 2007 backup material next week.
30

31 *Line item 680 (Copier Charges):* The amount in this line is for the copier machine
32 contract cost.
33

34 Mr. Guerrette asked where the Chief's compensation ranks with other
35 communities and what he makes in total compensation and Mr. Byron responded
36 he would have to get back to him with the total. The Chief pointed out he did not
37 intend to accept the proposed increase.
38

39 *Line item 811(Seminars/Conventions):* Responding to Mr. Harte, the Chief
40 explained the training was for himself and his team, and as requested by the
41 Budget Committee last year he had transferred the money for this to account
42 4220.40, Training.
43

44 Mr. Lemire requested the Chief e-mail him the answers to his computer
45 equipment questions if possible prior to the next meeting.
46

Action: Chief Schofield

1 ***Fire Fighting (a/c 4220.20)***

2 *Line item 127 (Coverage Paramedic Training):* The Chief explained this is a new
3 item this year, and he provided an explanation of how the figures were worked
4 out.

5
6 *Line item 125 (Wages – Call Firefighters):* Responding to Mr. Spencer, the Chief
7 stated only wages for calls are paid from this account. Mr. Spencer asked
8 whether, based on up-to-date actual expenditure, this line this is projected to
9 decrease for next year. There followed a discussion about FEMA revenue, and
10 the Chief explained he charged this to the OEM (Office of Emergency
11 Management) account so that they could track this for FEMA. There was a
12 discussion regarding whether the figures are ‘true’. The Chief explained he has
13 better control of weekends now.

14
15 *Line item 128 (Saturday/Sunday):* The Chief explained there are 44 Saturday and
16 44 Sunday shifts and explained the staffing levels he had used to calculate the
17 figure for Mr. Harte’s benefit.

18
19 *Line 430 (Fire Pump Service & Certification):* Responding to Mr. Harte, the
20 Chief clarified he was not adding any more pumps but that it is becoming more
21 difficult to get them to pass certification. He explained the figure for next year is
22 based on the actual cost for this year. Responding to Mr. Lemire’s query as to
23 why this cost did not come out of the vehicle repairs and maintenance line, the
24 Chief talked about UAL testing. He clarified the backup information states that
25 the average truck is 12.5 years old.

26
27 *Line 431 (Ground Ladder Testing):* Responding to Mr. Spencer, the Chief
28 reported these should be tested annually, but they have been unable to find an
29 affordable person to perform the testing. He stated he intended sharing the cost
30 with Londonderry and spoke about the department’s 35 foot ladder which is in
31 need of repair.

32
33 *Line item 636 (Diesel Fuel):* There was a discussion on this line, with the Chief
34 explaining he had pre-bought some fuel last year and is trying to save wherever he
35 can. There was further discussion and the Chief referred the Committee to the
36 backup information. There was also a discussion regarding when they might get
37 the new truck and whether it would impact this line.

38
39 *Line item 839 (Property Damage Claims):* Mr. Spencer queried this and the Chief
40 explained how he has been using the money in this line, reporting he tries to use it
41 to prevent insurance claims by performing repairs ‘in house’ to avoid having to go
42 through the insurance company, thereby saving the town money.

43
44 *Line item 760 (Fire Tanker/Truck):* Responding to Mr. Harte, the Chief explained
45 there are no lease payments at present. He then reported he intended acquiring a
46 truck from Londonderry which would realize savings for the town, and he

1 explained what this truck would do for the department. He further explained
2 Londonderry would get to use the truck through the mutual aid agreement when
3 required. He stated it could be stored outside if necessary as it has no water on
4 board, and that they could use impact fees to build a sheltered area for the truck.
5

6 ***Fire Prevention (a/c 4220.30)***

7 The Chief confirmed the year to date spending for this line is \$85 and that they
8 are currently in the schools doing programs which have not yet been billed.
9

10 ***Communications (a/c 4220.50)***

11 *Line item 632 (Portable Radio Repairs):* The Chief reported the department no
12 longer has radios under warranty and the amount in this line is to cover repair to
13 four radios. He clarified this is a flat rate he negotiated and it is a line he added to
14 the account for ease of tracking.
15

16 *Line item 663 (Radio Installation & Repair):* In a discussion with Mr. Lemire the
17 Chief explained the difference between mobile phones in this line and the walkie-
18 talkies in line 632.
19

20 *Line item 345 (Dispatch Service Contract):* Responding to Mr. Guerrette, the
21 Chief reported this is the final year of a three year contract.
22

23 ***Repair Services (a/c 4220.60)***

24 *Line 631 (Equipment Repair & Maintenance):* Responding to Mr. Harte, the
25 Chief explained he had not put the pump service in this line as having them
26 separate helps him to track and manage his budget better.
27

28 *Line 660 (Vehicle Repair & Maintenance):* The Chief explained the increase in
29 this line is because he has a repair over \$10,000 which needs to be done. There
30 was a discussion about current expenditure.
31

32 *Line item 110 (Equipment Repair Wages):* Responding to Mr. Lemire, the Chief
33 explained he uses this line for in house repairs and this prevents the department
34 losing a truck for a period of time and having to pay staff to take the truck to a
35 garage and back, which is more cost effective for the town.
36

37 Responding to Mr. Guerrette the Chief reported there are 30 part-time staff and
38 two full-time. He clarified there will be five staff who are not qualified EMT's
39 after the next lot of exams.
40

41 ***Medical Services (a/c 4220.70)***

42 The Chief reported the increases in this account are due to consumption and
43 supplies.
44

45 ***Fire Station (a/c 4220.80)***

46 There were no questions on this account from the Committee.

1 ***Incident & Fire Investigations (a/c 4220.85)***

2 *Line item 740 (Equipment Purchases):* Responding to Mr. Harte the Chief talked
3 about inspection backlogs and the assistance the department receives from
4 Hudson and Londonderry with investigations and inspections. Responding to Mr.
5 Spencer, the Chief reported he was unsure at present which line(s) wages will be
6 allocated to, but stated he would track this for reporting purposes.
7

8 *Line item 20-740 (Equipment Purchases):* Responding to Mr. Spencer's request
9 for background information on the boat replacement, the Chief explained there
10 had been some expensive repairs on the current boat which is now out of service,
11 and spoke about activity along the river within the town and the need for a
12 replacement. He stated a replacement flat bottom boat will cost approximately
13 \$18,300.
14

15 **d) Emergency Management (a/c 4290)**

16 Chief Schofield reported that Internet charges and the Haz. Mat District are
17 allocated to this account, as well as masks for swine flu this year. He stated he is
18 projecting an \$800 overspending in this account.
19

20 The Chief explained the consultant puts an emergency plan together based upon
21 government guidelines. Mr. Guerrette confirmed there is no federal or state
22 money given out for emergency planning. Mr. Lemire provided an explanation of
23 how government funding for this is allocated, pointing out towns need to apply
24 and often it is not cost effective. There was further discussion on this.
25 Responding to Mr. Spencer, Mr. Byron stated EOM is federally mandated and the
26 town's current plan dates back to 1991. He talked about there being no current
27 effective plan in place and no fully trained Board of Selectmen to assist with a
28 plan. Mr. Spencer stated if he were to support funding this he would want a
29 guarantee that a plan would be put in place. There was further discussion about
30 what will be necessary to implement a plan and about the expense and the number
31 of town departments who would be involved. Mr. Lemire confirmed that it would
32 cost \$9,100 - \$12,000 for drafting a plan.
33

34 Responding to Mr. Lemire, the Chief stated he was unsure how they will use line
35 item 740, Equipment, but that it was his assumption there would be requirements
36 from the plan. Mr. Lemire asked whether they could cut back on the equipment
37 for next year until there is a plan ready to implement. The Chief explained there
38 are only five lines to allocate items to and he talked about the fact it may take a
39 year to implement a plan. There was further discussion regarding
40 implementation. Mr. Parker asked whether the Board has considered
41 encumbering funds for this and Mr. Byron reported it has asked the Chief for a
42 prepared contract so that they could encumber funds if needed.
43

44 The Chief pointed out they need something to transport the generator and for
45 generator maintenance. Mr. Harte asked for backup on what supplies for the

1 generator would cost, and the Chief explained he could only obtain an hourly rate
2 and an estimate for what it would cost to wire the generator to a vehicle.

3
4 **4. VOTING ON TOWN BUDGETS**

5 **a) Town meeting (a/c 4130.30)**

6 **MOTION:** by Mr. Byron

7 ***Move to set a bottom line of \$18,058 for account 4130.30, Town Meeting in the***
8 ***2010 Operating Budget***

9 **SECOND:** Mr. Harte

10 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

11 **The motion carried unanimously.**

12
13 **b) Street Lighting (a/c 4316)**

14 **MOTION:** by Mr. Byron

15 ***Move to set a bottom line of \$16,000 for account 4316, Street Lighting in the***
16 ***2010 Operating Budget***

17 **SECOND:** Mr. Falzone

18 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

19 **The motion carried unanimously.**

20
21 Mr. Byron stated he would like to amend the bottom line in this account based on
22 current spending.

23
24 **MOTION:** by Mr. Byron

25 ***Move to set a new bottom line of \$18,949 for account 4316, Street Lighting in***
26 ***the 2010 Operating Budget***

27 **SECOND:** Mr. Peeples

28 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

29 **The motion carried unanimously.**

30
31 ***Discussion:***

32 Mr. Byron referred to a report he had given to Mr. Lemire, reporting there had
33 been 19 street lights installed in 2006. He stated the Board is looking at changing
34 to a new rate but there will be a conversion cost for the town. There was
35 discussion about savings over the long term if they change. He also reported they
36 are looking at reducing the number of lights within the town and at the billing as
37 they think there may be a problem with this. He reported the Board of Selectmen
38 is considering doing budgeted conversion and also looking at other vendors and
39 he talked of the potential savings of these options. Mr. Byron stated he would
40 like to get this sorted out by November and would e-mail the report to the
41 Committee.

42
43 **c) Mosquito Control District (a/c 4411.20)**

44 **MOTION:** by Mr. Byron

45 ***Move to set a bottom line of \$28,285 for account 4411.20, Mosquito Control***
46 ***District in the 2010 Operating Budget***

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SECOND: Mr. Harte

MOTION: by Mr. Harte
Move to reduce line item 550, Printing to \$100 in account 4411.20, Mosquito Control District

SECOND: Mr. Peeples

Discussion:

Mr. Harte provided the rationale behind the reduction, stating Mr. Raccio had reported he intended using some signs from this year. Mr. Byron stressed he was concerned that there has been an increase in issues with EEE and they may not have sufficient money available should there be a need to go to ‘category 4’.

VOTE: 5-3-0 (Messrs. Spencer, Guerrette and Byron voted against the motion)

The motion carried.

Mr. Lemire confirmed the new bottom line for the account was \$28,185.

In response to a query from Mr. Harte, Mr. Byron explained what the Board of Selectmen had done regarding software and secretarial support, reporting the Board had removed the software.

MOTION: by Mr. Harte

Move to reduce line item 433, Internet/Computer Charges to \$50

SECOND: Mr. Falzone

Discussion:

Mr. Harte provided the rationale behind his reduction, stating he was unsure the plan for hooking up to cable services was fully thought out.

Mr. Byron stated it was his recollection that the line was for photography. There followed a discussion in which Mr. Harte stated he was concerned the software had not been fully vetted and thought the money would be better in the Cable Committee’s account to improve what they are currently doing.

VOTE: 5-3-0 (Messrs Guerrette, Peeples and Byron voted against the motion)

The motion carried.

Mr. Lemire confirmed the new bottom line for the account was \$27,985.

MOTION: by Mr. Spencer

Move to set line item 680 Copier Charges to zero

SECOND: Mr. Harte

Mr. Spencer explained this reduction was based on Mr. Raccio’s comments last week.

VOTE: 7-1-0 (Mr. Byron opposed the motion)

The motion carried.

VOTE on a new bottom line of \$27,935: 7-1-0 (Mr. Byron opposed the motion)

The motion carried.

1 **d) General Government Buildings (a/c 4194)**

2 **MOTION:** by Mr. Byron

3 ***Move to set a bottom line of \$76,500 for account 4194, General Government***
4 ***Buildings in the 2010 Operating Budget***

5 **SECOND:** Mr. Harte

6 ***Discussion:***

7 *Line 342 (Computer System):* Responding to Mr. Lemire, Mr. Byron spoke about
8 the Board of Selectmen's concern relative to the computer system, stating and it
9 had felt it needed to add some computer support and hardware, and he provided
10 details of this. Mr. Harte requested information on 'drops' and the wireless hub,
11 and Mr. Peeples provided an explanation about 'segregation'. Mr. Byron stated
12 the Board wants to link up the photocopier to the network.

13
14 *Line item 346 (Fire Detectors Test/Inspection):* Responding to Mr. Guerrette's
15 question about the inspection of the fire panel for town hall, Mr. Byron reported it
16 covers all fire detection locations around town. and is included in this account.

17
18 *Line item 341 (Fire Alarm Phone):* Mr. Guerrette questioned the need for a new
19 phone line for the fire alarm panel, and Mr. Lemire stated he was comfortable that
20 the Fire Chief would not have requested this unless it was necessary and there
21 followed further discussion.

22
23 **MOTION:** by Mr. Harte

24 ***Move to set line item 642, Roof Snow Removal at zero***

25 **SECOND:** Mr. Parker

26 ***Discussion:***

27 Mr. Harte's rationale for suggesting this cut was that they will continue not to
28 spend this line and if there is a requirement for this it should come out of
29 Contingency. He also voiced his concern that someone on the roof can do more
30 damage than good. Mr. Byron talked about the occurrence of ice dams on the
31 roof, stating it has also had leaks, and there was a discussion regarding the
32 problem of keeping the town hall roof clear of snow and ice in winter.

33 **VOTE:** 4-4-0 (Messrs. Byron, Peeples, Spencer and Falzone voted against the
34 motion)

35 **The motion failed.**

36
37 *Line item 650 (Lawn Maintenance):* Responding to Mr. Harte, Mr. Byron
38 explained the grass at the church cemetery needs to be done by hand. There
39 followed a discussion about the town needing to comply with statute by setting up
40 cemetery trustees, and Mr. Harte stated he thought the money should be moved
41 but he also felt the amount was too high.

42
43 **MOTION:** by Mr. Harte

44 ***Move to set line item 650, Lawn Maintenance at zero***

45 **SECOND:** Mr. Peeples

1 Mr. Harte stated his intention to re-open the Cemetery budget to add money there
2 for maintenance of the church cemetery.

3
4 **MOTION:** by Mr. Spencer

5 *Move to set line item 650, Lawn Maintenance at \$800*

6 **SECOND:** Mr. Falzone

7 **Discussion:**

8 Mr. Spencer provided the rationale behind his amendment, stating he ultimately
9 agreed with the transfer, but thought it could be performed internally by the Board
10 of Selectmen and there was therefore no need to re-open another account.

11 **VOTE:** 7-1-0 (Mr. Byron opposed the motion)

12 **The motion carried.**

13
14 **VOTE on a new bottom line of \$76,300:** 7-0-1 (Mr. Byron abstained)

15 **The motion carried.**

16
17 **e) Sanitation Administration (a/c 4321.10)**

18 **MOTION:** by Mr. Byron

19 *Move to set a bottom line of \$75,901 for account 4321.10, Sanitation*
20 *Administration in the 2010 Operating Budget*

21 **SECOND:** Mr. Harte

22 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

23 **The motion carried unanimously.**

24
25 **f) Solid Waste Disposal (a/c 4324)**

26 **MOTION:** by Mr. Byron

27 *Move to set a bottom line of \$467,984 for account 4324, Solid Waste Disposal in*
28 *the 2010 Operating Budget*

29 **SECOND:** Mr. Harte

30 **Discussion:**

31 *Line item 30.636 (Diesel Fuel, Incinerator):* Mr. Harte queried why the year-to-
32 date spending was so low and requested backup information.

33 **Action:** Mr. Byron

34 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

35 **The motion carried unanimously.**

36
37 **5. MEMBER INPUT**

38 Responding to Mr. Spencer, Mr. Byron announced the new total tax rate for the town
39 would be \$15.72, and confirmed the tax bills had been printed and the Committee
40 was currently awaiting warrant article information. Responding to Mr. Spencer's
41 point that the overlay has come down to \$22,719, Mr. Byron confirmed the Board is
42 comfortable with that and explained for the benefit of the Committee that overlay is
43 the amount of money the town needs to set aside for abatements. There was further
44 discussion on the total town valuation and the MS4. Mr. Lemire stated he had
45 requested revenue sheets for the Committee from Ms. Langille. Mr. Byron talked

1 about a new fund which has been set up for use of credit cards by residents to pay
2 town bills. There followed a discussion on what has affected the new tax rate.

3

4 Mr. Guerrette handed out enrolment projections for the schools.

5

6 • **Upcoming meetings**

7 November 5, 2009

8 November 12, 2009

9 November 19, 2009

10

11 **MOTION:** by Mr. Falzone

12 **SECOND:** Mr. Harte

13 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

14 **The motion carried unanimously.**

15

16 There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

17

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19

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

21 **Date approved:** *November 12, 2009*

22