

1 **Minutes of the**
2
3 **Litchfield Budget Committee**
4
5 **Held on November 5, 2009**
6

7 The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, November 5 2009, at
8 Campbell High School, 1 Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.
9

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

13 **ABSENT:** Mr. Lambert
14

15 Mr. Lemire called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and called for a moment's silence for
16 those killed and injured at Fort Hood, Texas.
17

18 **1. PUBLIC INPUT**

19 There was no public input.
20

21 **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

22 Approval of the minutes was deferred until the next meeting.
23
24

25 **3. TOWN BUDGET PRESENTATIONS**

26 Mr. Lemire welcomed Ms. Linda Langille, Office Manager to the meeting.
27

28 **a) Insurance**

29 Mr. Byron reported that the town's insurance carrier, Primex, has not provided
30 actual figures as yet but they should have these within two weeks. He stated the
31 budget sheet was prepared by inflating last year's figures by 2%, as indicated by
32 Primex. There was consensus to defer voting until firm figures have been
33 received.
34

35 **b) Patriotic Purposes (a/c 4583.10)**

36 Mr. Byron explained the Historical Society organized the recent celebrations
37 within the town and the cost of flowers had been more than anticipated, but there
38 had been no need for additional flag poles. He stated there were a couple of
39 increases and he would therefore like to re-open this account.

40 **MOTION:** by Mr. Byron

41 ***Move that the Litchfield Budget Committee re-open account 4583.10, Patriotic***
42 ***Purposes***

43 **SECOND:** Mr. Falzone

44 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

45 **The motion carried unanimously.**
46

1 **MOTION:** by Mr. Byron

2 ***Move to increase the bottom line for account 4583.10, Patriotic Purposes to***
3 ***\$510 in the 2010 Operating Budget***

4 **SECOND:** Mr. Harte

5 Mr. Byron explained this would allow adjustment of various line items associated
6 with the Memorial Day activities in town. He provided details of the changes for
7 each line.

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

9 **The motion carried unanimously.**

10
11 **c) Ethics Committee (a/c 4199)**

12 Mr. Byron explained there has been an effort put forth by citizens to re-write the
13 town's Ethics ordinances and the Board of Selectmen had voted for this. He
14 stated they are now in their final draft and town counsel had advised placing an
15 account for an Ethics Committee within the budget as this committee will be
16 formed at the March 2010 election. He introduced Ms. Jan Raccio (Chair of the
17 Ethics Formation Committee) to present the budget for this. Ms. Raccio
18 explained the Formation Committee had been in existence for 14 months.

19
20 *Line item 344 (Secretarial Services):* Ms. Raccio explained they had divided the
21 meetings into two categories and they would take their own minutes to save
22 money. She explained the money requested in the budget was for a secretary
23 when issues arose, and pointed out the Board of Selectmen had cut the hours to
24 three per month.

25
26 *Line item 620 (Supplies):* It was explained they would need supplies as this was a
27 new committee.

28
29 *Line item 680 (Copies/Pamphlets):* It was explained that each volunteer and
30 member of the committee would require a set of documentation. Responding to
31 Mr. Harte, Ms. Raccio reported the committee expected to obtain the copies
32 through an external print company, but would prefer to obtain them 'in house' if
33 that were possible. She also clarified for Mr. Harte what the documentation
34 would include.

35
36 Responding to Mr. Spencer's query about the advice from town counsel when the
37 town had yet to vote on setting up this new committee, there followed a
38 discussion in which Mr. Byron clarified this did not have to be part of a warrant
39 article, and could be anything the Budget Committee recommends. Mr. Spencer
40 stated he would prefer to know what the costs would be before putting it in the
41 budget, and whether the voters would vote for it. There followed more discussion
42 between members of the Committee regarding the process and the principle
43 involved. Mr. Harte pointed out that the town would be setting a precedent if they
44 were to accept this into the budget regardless of the cost. There followed
45 additional discussion in which Mr. Lemire stressed the Committee did not
46 question the veracity of the request or the importance of the committee, but

1 reiterated Mr. Harte's concern about setting precedence. Mr. Lemire decided to
2 defer voting until next week. Mr. Spencer stated he would like to obtain a sense
3 from the Budget Committee members whether they felt this should go in the
4 Operating budget and Mr. Lemire polled the Committee as follows:

5 Mr. Spencer – no

6 Mr. Peebles - yes

7 Mr. Falzone - no

8 Mr. Harte - no

9 Mr. Parker - no

10 Mr. Lemire - no

11 Mr. Guerrette – no

12
13 **d) Board of Selectmen (a/c 4130.10)**

14 Mr. Byron presented the budget for this account.

15 *Line item 328 (Public Notices & Ads):* Mr. Byron confirmed this was a large
16 amount and it will continue to be, referring to the cost of advertisements in the
17 local newspapers.

18
19 *Line item 341 (Cell Phone Charges):* Current spending was confirmed at \$339

20
21 *Line item 560 (Dues & Subscriptions):* Mr. Byron pointed out the dues for LGC
22 would be increasing next year.

23
24 Mr. Guerrette asked how many of the public notices are due to recent legal
25 troubles, and Mr. Byron explained this line is used for the cost of advertising
26 public hearings in the local newspaper as required by statute. He stated he did not
27 anticipate any changes to this account.

28
29 **MOTION:** by Mr. Byron

30 ***Move a bottom line of \$17,400 for account 4130.10, Board of Selectmen in the***
31 ***2010 Operating Budget***

32 **SECOND:** Mr. Falzone

33 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

34 **The motion carried unanimously.**

35
36 **e) Administration (a/c 4130.20)**

37 Mr. Byron reported this account deals mainly with costs associated with the
38 Office Manager and handed over to Ms. Langille to present the budget.

39
40 *Line item 110 (Salary - Office Manager):* Ms. Langille explained there were two
41 step increases included in the 2010 figures.

42
43 *Line item 210 (Health Insurance):* Responding to a query from Mr. Spencer, Mr.
44 Byron explained the increase here is roughly 7%. He pointed out the Board had
45 considered several plans and had selected two plans which provided the same
46 coverage but with a decrease in cost to the town. He then went over the quotes

1 from the LGC. Mr. Guerrette asked whether there were other options which
2 might have been better for the town and Mr. Byron stated all the options
3 considered were included in his hand out to the Committee. Mr. Spencer
4 commended the Board of Selectmen for their decision. Mr. Byron provided an
5 explanation of what was driving the 23% increase by the existing insurance
6 provider.

7
8 *Line item 390 (Consulting Services):* Ms. Langille reported this was for the
9 accountants to provide a status report, stating in 2009 the cost for this would come
10 out of Contingency, and there was a discussion regarding why it would be
11 charged to Contingency.

12
13 Mr. Guerrette obtained clarification that there would only be one step increase per
14 year in future.

15
16 There was a discussion about the accounting services and Mr. Lemire obtained
17 clarification that this was not for auditing, but to ensure the town's finances are on
18 track.

19
20 There was a discussion regarding whether to insert the new health
21 insurance/benefits figures and vote on some of them this evening. The
22 Committee agreed to wait and do this at the end of their budget deliberations as
23 they did normally.

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

26 ***Move a bottom line of \$72,599 for account 4130.20, Administration in the 2010***
27 ***Operating Budget***

28 **SECOND:** Mr. Falzone

29 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

30 **The motion carried unanimously.**

31
32 **f) Financial Administration (a/c 4150.10)**

33 Ms. Langille presented the budget for this account.

34
35 *Line item 110 (Wages – Secretarial/Bookkeeping):* Ms. Langille reported this
36 would cover step increases for the regular staff and part-time help from the Town
37 Clerk's department. She further clarified that the two departments will share a
38 part-time staff member and there followed a discussion on how this would work.
39 Ms. Langille confirmed there would be no other cost implications to the town and
40 Ms. Langille and Mr. Byron reported this was not a new position but it was meant
41 to help Ms. Langille reduce her overtime and at the same time get through
42 outstanding work with a maximum of 10 hours per week from the employee in the
43 Town Clerk's department. It was also confirmed that they would always use the
44 same person as there is some training required.

1 *Line item 310 (Tax Map Update):* Ms. Langille stated she will recommend
2 zeroing this line for 2010 as an update had been done at no cost in 2009.

3
4 *Line item 341 (Telephone):* It was confirmed this figure is based on actual usage,
5 and is for the entire town hall with the exception of the Police Department.

6
7 *Line item 342 (Software Support Services):* Ms. Langille reported this is for asset
8 software and Avitar for enhancement and maintenance of software.

9
10 *Line item 396 (Payroll Services):* Ms. Langille reported this has been reduced as
11 they are purchasing software to do payroll in house and that will be a one time
12 cost.

13 *Line item 397 (Software):* The amount in this line is to purchase two additional
14 pieces of software, one for purchase orders and the other is a check reconciliation
15 program

16
17 *Line item 430 (Equipment Maintenance Contract):* This is the copier contract and
18 Ms. Langille reported the machine is being used more.

19
20 *Line item 550 (Printing):* This is for printing A/P and payroll checks.

21
22 *Line item 625 (Postage):* Ms. Langille reported they will purchase stamps in
23 future when required and will use the Tax Collector's meter.

24
25 *Line item 631 (Equipment Repair & Maintenance):* This amount is used in cases
26 of equipment breakdown

27
28 *Line item 740 (Equipment Purchases):* The amount in this line is to purchase a
29 laptop and docking station for Ms. Langille. She explained her current computer
30 will be put in the open area for public use.

31
32 *Line item 811 (Seminars):* Ms. Langille reported she would like staff in the
33 department to attend a couple of seminars.

34
35 *Line item 812 (Auditing Services):* Mr. Byron reported the town had decided to
36 obtain another auditing company due to problems they have been having with the
37 existing company, and had obtained two quotes. He reported their choice was
38 Molansen & Heath.

39
40 *Line item 813 (Assessing Services):* Ms. Langille explained this is the contracted
41 amount with Avitar, and she explained that this will increase for next year as the
42 town had not previously been budgeting for this correctly as they should have
43 been set up an expendable trust fund for the money, but the unused money went
44 into the Fund Balance instead of being encumbered. Mr. Byron confirmed the
45 town will be reassessed in 2010. The Committee agreed to defer voting on this
46 account until next week.

1 **4. VOTING ON TOWN BUDGETS**

2 **a) Ambulance (a/c 4215)**

3 **MOTION:** by Mr. Byron

4 ***Move to set the bottom line at \$35,000 for account 4215, Ambulance in the 2010***
5 ***Operating Budget***

6 **SECOND:** Mr. Peeples

7 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

8 The motion carried unanimously.

9
10 **b) Fire Department (a/c 4220)**

11 **MOTION:** by Mr. Byron

12 ***Move to set a bottom line of \$527,876 for account 4220, Fire Department for***
13 ***the 2010 Operating Budget***

14 **SECOND:** Mr. Harte

15
16 *Line item 341 (Telephone):* Mr. Harte stated \$9,000 seemed high and the Chief
17 confirmed the figure was based on the current spend rate x 12 using the July 2009
18 bill. Mr. Byron reported expenditure at November 2 is \$6,507.

19
20 **MOTION:** by Mr. Harte

21 ***Move to reduce line item 341, Telephone to \$7,800***

22 **SECOND:** Mr. Falzone

23 Mr. Harte provided his rationale for making the reduction and Mr. Byron reported
24 \$9,300 had been spent in 2008. There followed discussion regarding details of
25 the phone plan and individual phone capabilities.

26 **VOTE:** 7-1-0 (Mr. Byron voted against the motion)

27 **The motion carried.**

28
29 *Line item 740 (Computer Equipment):* Responding to Mr. Spencer, the Chief
30 listed the equipment they wished to purchase (router, new PC for Captain's office,
31 6 UPS's), stating he had reduced the request as he had felt they could not afford
32 the original amount of \$5,700). There followed a discussion in which the Chief
33 explained the equipment was necessary for stability and security. Mr. Peeples
34 commented he felt the power supplies were a little larger than necessary.

35
36 *Line item 20-430 (Fire Pump Service & Certification):* Responding to Mr. Harte,
37 the Chief confirmed there is another service due and they will spend the same
38 amount as they previously had.

39
40 *Line item 20-636 (Diesel Fuel):* Responding to Mr. Harte, the Chief reported he
41 charges a lot of fuel off to FEMA when he can. Mr. Harte stated he thought the
42 budgeted amount seemed high compared to the current expenditure of \$7,807, and
43 there followed a discussion in which the Chief explained he budgets for 14
44 gallons of diesel per day. He pointed out the difficulty in budgeting this line
45 stressing they really do not know how much they will use.

1 **MOTION:** by Mr. Harte
2 *Move to reduce line item 20-636, Diesel Fuel to \$11,000*
3 **SECOND:** Mr. Spencer
4 Mr. Harte provided the rationale behind his suggested cut.
5 **VOTE:** 4-4-0 (Messrs Guerrette, Byron, Lemire and Peoples opposed the motion)
6 **The motion failed.**

7
8 **MOTION:** by Mr. Spencer
9 *Move to reduce line item 125, Wages – Call Firefighters to \$90,000*
10 **SECOND:** Mr. Falzone
11 Mr. Spencer stated the rationale he used was based on previous expenditure.
12 **VOTE:** 7-1-0 (Mr. Byron opposed the motion)
13 **The motion carried.**

14
15 **MOTION:** by Mr. Spencer
16 *Move to reduce line item 839, Property Damage Claims to \$1,000*
17 **SECOND:** Mr. Harte
18 Mr. Spencer provided the rationale he used when he made his reduction.
19 **VOTE:** 6-2-0 (Messrs. Byron and Peoples opposed the motion)
20 **The motion carried.**

21
22 *Line item 40-127 (Training Wages):* Responding to Mr. Harte, the Chief
23 confirmed the amount requested provides 6 hours per month for 30 firefighters,
24 and he stated there had been no training in either September or October but they
25 have used \$30,000 in nine months this year. He also confirmed the department
26 does not currently meet ISO requirements and gave details of what training
27 usually takes place and when. He also stated he would like to go to the
28 Deliberative Session to request more training and Mr. Lemire suggested he
29 approach the Board of Selectmen in the first instance. Chief Schofield requested
30 that the Budget Committee support his bottom line as moved by the Board of
31 Selectmen, stressing the overall decrease in his budget.
32 Mr. Lemire stated he would re-open this budget if the Board of Selectmen
33 supports an increase.

34
35 **VOTE on a new bottom line of \$521,389:** 7-1-0 (Mr. Byron opposed the motion)
36 **The motion carried.**

37
38 **c) Emergency Management (a/c 4290)**

39 **MOTION:** by Mr. Byron
40 *Move to set a bottom line of \$23,000 for account 4290, Emergency Management*
41 *in the 2010 Operating Budget*
42 **SECOND:** Mr. Spencer
43 **VOTE:** 8-0-0
44 **The motion carried unanimously.**

1 **5. MEMBER INPUT**

2 Mr. Lemire stated he would like to discuss the Committee’s plan for meetings to hear
3 the school budget, suggesting the Committee plan to meet on Tuesday and Thursday
4 evenings. He stated he would request they begin deliberating the school budget on
5 the first Tuesday in December (1st). He also stated they should compile a schedule
6 of what they will discuss at each meeting. There followed a discussion with Mr.
7 Guerrette regarding when the Committee would be able to obtain the school budget.
8 Mr. Guerrette pointed out the Executive Summary and the budget as it was presented
9 to the Board could be previewed on the school web site. Mr. Lemire confirmed he
10 had requested the school budget prior to Thanksgiving.

11
12 Mr. Guerrette stated Superintendent Cutler’s proposed budget comes in at 8.3%
13 below last year’s.

14
15 Responding to a query from Mr. Spencer, Mr. Byron estimated there would be
16 between six and eight warrant articles, one of which would have no financial impact.
17 Mr. Spencer confirmed with Mr. Lemire the Budget Committee would hear and vote
18 on warrants on the same night, but suggested they take time to review the Police
19 Department collective bargaining agreement before they vote on it. Mr. Byron
20 confirmed the Committee would receive the warrant articles the third week in
21 November and that the Board of Selectmen are still in negotiations with the union
22 regarding the Police contract. He stated the Committee could probably expect to
23 receive it close to December 1st. Mr. Byron extended an invitation to Budget
24 Committee members to attend on November 16th when the Board of Selectmen
25 interviews the potential new auditors.

26
27 Mr. Lemire stated he would inform the Committee what they will be voting on next
28 week. Mr. Harte stated they had received an update on the Sanitation budget and
29 queried some items with Mr. Byron.

30
31 *Line item 637 (Incinerator Fuel Oil):* Responding to Mr. Harte’s query regarding
32 spending to date, Mr. Byron stated they had based the requested amount for next
33 year upon a three year average. He stated he would forward an e-mail he had
34 received from Mr. Brunelle to the Committee which would explain the rationale
35 behind the budgeted amount.

36
37 • **Upcoming meetings**

38 November 12, 2009

39 November 19, 2009

40
41 **MOTION:** by Mr. Guerrette

42 ***Move to adjourn***

43 **SECOND:** Mr. Falzone

44 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

45 **The motion carried unanimously.**

46

1 There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

2

3

4

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

6 **Date approved:** *December 3, 2009*