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3 **Minutes of the**  
4  
5 **Litchfield Budget Committee**  
6  
7 **Held on November 12, 2009**

8 The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, November 12, 2009, at  
9 Campbell High School, 1 Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

10 **PRESENT:** J Harte (Vice Chairman), B Spencer, P Parker, G Lambert (Board of  
11 Selectmen Representative), M Falzone, R Peeples, Mr. Guerrette (School Board  
12 Representative)

13  
14 **ABSENT:** B Lemire (Chairman)

15  
16 Mr. Harte called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

17  
18 **1. PUBLIC INPUT**

19 There was no public input.

20  
21 **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

22 **MOTION:** by Mr. Spencer

23 *Move to approve the minutes of the Budget Committee meetings on October 15, 22*  
24 *(as amended) and 29, 2009*

25 **SECOND:** Mr. Guerrette

26 Mr. Harte requested an amendment under the Fire Department of the October 22<sup>nd</sup>  
27 minutes (page 8, line 14).

28 **VOTE:** 7-0-0

29 **The motion carried unanimously.**

30  
31 **3. TOWN BUDGET PRESENTATIONS**

32  
33 **a) Personnel Administration (a/c 4155)**

34 Mr. Lambert presented the budget for this account. He reported it included costs  
35 associated with personnel related expenses (including step increases and  
36 retirement). Mr. Spencer pointed out this is usually the last account the Budget  
37 Committee deals with and pointed out the figures may need to be altered if the  
38 Police Department budget numbers are reduced. He asked for the percentages  
39 used to calculate these figures so that the Committee can make the appropriate  
40 reductions in Social Security, Medicare, Police and Fire Department retirement  
41 and possibly Unemployment and Workers' Compensation figures. Mr. Lambert  
42 clarified he would ascertain how the numbers are affected by changes in salaries  
43 for the next meeting.

44 **Action: Mr. Lambert**  
45

1 Mr. Harte pointed out they need to be concerned with COLA as the current  
2 numbers in the Operating Budget do not reflect this unless it comes in as a  
3 separate warrant article. Mr. Lambert confirmed the Board of Selectmen has  
4 voted on COLA but it will not be reflected in the figures until the Budget  
5 Committee has voted. There followed a discussion on COLA and whether this  
6 should be in the Operating Budget. Mr. Harte confirmed next week will be the  
7 last for the town to present to the Budget Committee. He also questioned why the  
8 Police Department retirement increased by 40% as this is more than what the state  
9 said it would not pay, and Mr. Spencer suggested the Committee be provided with  
10 a breakdown of the calculations as this would enable them to calculate the correct  
11 figures when they vote.

12 **Action: Mr. Lambert**

13  
14 Mr. Harte confirmed the Committee would vote on this account next week. Mr.  
15 Lambert agreed to ask the Board of Selectmen what their position is with regard  
16 to putting COLA on a separate warrant article.

17 **Action: Mr. Lambert**

18  
19 There was a discussion of how the Committee had dealt with COLA last year for  
20 both the town and the school. In response to a suggestion by Mr. Spencer, Mr.  
21 Harte polled the Committee for consensus as to whether they would prefer to see  
22 a separate warrant article for COLA, and they unanimously agreed this would be  
23 their preference. Mr. Lambert clarified Budget Committee will be approaching  
24 the School budget in the same way with respect to COLA, and there was a  
25 discussion on salary increases requested for 2009.

26  
27 **b) Available Warrant Articles**

28 Mr. Lambert apologized as he was unable to provide the Committee with details  
29 of the warrant articles, but gave as much information as he could recall. The  
30 following are amongst the warrant articles to be presented next week along with  
31 the Board's rationale:

- 32 ○ Town Administrator – based on size of the town, the Board feels it can better  
33 sell this position to the voters, rather than a Town Manager.
- 34  
35 ○ Welfare Coordinator – based on the amount of traffic this year and the  
36 statutory requirements, the Board is looking for funding \$6,000 to ensure  
37 they comply with the statute. Mr. Lambert confirmed for the Committee that  
38 the person in this position would need to be sworn, but did not think the  
39 Board intended to hire someone, but rather to delegate the authority for  
40 welfare issues to an existing employee. There was discussion about what the  
41 statutes say regarding this. There was also a discussion regarding the amount  
42 of time required in performing this function. The Committee concurred with  
43 the Board of Selectmen that this should be on a separate warrant article.
- 44
- 45

- 1           ○ Request to spend money, currently set aside for the town's 300<sup>th</sup> year  
2            celebrations, on something which would be meaningful for the town and  
3            beneficial to the residents. He explained Town Counsel thought this would  
4            be a better use of the money than leaving it in an account for 25 years.
- 5
- 6           ○ One police officer
- 7

#### 8   **4. VOTING ON TOWN BUDGETS**

9

##### 10   **a) Insurance (a/c 4196)**

11   **MOTION:** by Mr. Lambert

12   *Move to set a bottom line of \$52,560 for account 4196, Insurance in the 2010*  
13   *Operating Budget*

14   **SECOND:** Mr. Guerrette

15   Mr. Harte pointed out the Committee may re-open this account when the Primex  
16   figures are plugged in. Mr. Lambert clarified this is liability insurance and not  
17   per employee.

18   **VOTE:** 7-0-0

19   **The motion carried unanimously.**

20

##### 21   **b) Ethics Committee (a/c 4199.20)**

22   Mr. Lambert talked about the options available to the Board of Selectmen with  
23   regard to setting up and funding an Ethics Committee, as discussed by Mr. Byron  
24   at the last Budget Committee meeting. In response to his request for the Budget  
25   Committee's opinion, Mr. Spencer pointed out it had been the consensus of the  
26   Committee last week that they did not support putting funding in the Operating  
27   Budget for something which had not yet been put before the voters. Mr. Guerrette  
28   stated he thought the voters should know what they would be paying for. Mr.  
29   Spencer stated he thought it likely that a resident would request at the  
30   Deliberative Session to put money with the warrant article for the Committee if  
31   the Board were to separate the two items.

32

33   **MOTION:** by Mr. Lambert

34   *Move to set a bottom line for account 4199.20, Ethics Committee at \$1,395 in*  
35   *the 2010 Operating Budget*

36   **SECOND:** Mr. Peeples

37

38   **MOTION:** by Mr. Harte

39   *Move to the bottom line for account 4199.20, Ethics Committee at zero in the*  
40   *2010 Operating Budget*

41   **SECOND:** Mr. Spencer

42   Mr. Harte provided the rationale for his amendment, stating the voters had not  
43   approved setting up the Committee, and Messrs. Guerrette and Falzone agreed.  
44   There was discussion regarding the fact that if money was added to a warrant for  
45   this at the Deliberative Session then the Board of Selectmen and Budget  
46   Committee were required to vote on it afterwards.

1 **VOTE:** 5-2-0 (Messrs. Peeples and Lambert opposed the motion)  
2 **The motion carried.**

3  
4 **VOTE on the new bottom line of zero:** 5-2-0 (Messrs. Peeples and Lambert  
5 opposed the motion)  
6 **The motion carried.**

7  
8 **c) Highway Administration (a/c 4311)**

9 **MOTION:** by Mr. Lambert

10 *Move to the bottom line of \$18,214 for account 4311, Highway Administration*  
11 *in the 2010 Operating Budget*

12 **SECOND:** Mr. Spencer

13 **Discussion:**

14 Mr. Lambert confirmed for Mr. Harte that the leased telephone line is still in place  
15 and Mr. Pinciario confirmed it is his intent to get the line up and running for next  
16 year.

17 **VOTE:** 7-0-0

18 **The motion carried unanimously.**

19  
20 **d) Highway & Streets (a/c 4312)**

21 **MOTION:** by Mr. Lambert

22 *Move to the bottom line of \$527,459 for account 4312, Highways & Streets in*  
23 *the 2010 Operating Budget*

24 **SECOND:** Mr. Falzone

25  
26 **MOTION:** by Mr. Spencer

27 *Move to reduce line item 575, Road Maintenance/Improvements to \$25,000*

28 **SECOND:** Mr. Guerrette (for discussion)

29 **Discussion:**

30 Mr. Spencer clarified this line represents money for emergencies and his  
31 reduction represented removal of the cost for Roberts Road. He then talked about  
32 what the Board of Selectmen intends to do with the Highway Block Grant money,  
33 stating there was close to \$700,000 in grant money which would be available. He  
34 stated it was his opinion this road project should be paid for with those funds. Mr.  
35 Lambert spoke in support of the Board's decision and about the cost of some  
36 other projects which are critical and behind schedule, and for which the Board  
37 wished to use Highway Block Grant money. He provided an explanation of the  
38 rationale behind the Board's proposal, and asked the Budget Committee to  
39 reconsider this reduction. Messrs. Harte and Peeples agreed with Mr. Spencer's  
40 rationale. Mr. Pinciario stressed the Board of Selectmen wants to retain \$300,000  
41 in the Highway Block Fund in case of an emergency like a culvert failure, stating  
42 the town would not have all the money until 2011 as it comes to the town in two  
43 payments. There was further discussion about keeping this money aside.

44 **VOTE:** 6-1-0 (Mr. Lambert opposed the motion)

45

1 Mr. Spencer suggested the Board could go to the voters to request an increase in  
2 the Fund balance or increase the overlay amount as an alternative to ensure  
3 money was available for emergencies.  
4

5 **VOTE on a new bottom line of \$440,209:** 6-1-0 (Mr. Lambert opposed the  
6 motion)  
7  
8

9 **5. MEMBER INPUT**

10 There was a discussion regarding the items scheduled for the Committee's agenda  
11 next week which included Accounting & Auditing and Police.  
12

13 Mr. Harte made a recommendation for the School budget schedule, and there was a  
14 discussion of schedule conflicts. Mr. Harte confirmed the final meeting on the  
15 School would be December 17. The following conflicts with the schedule were  
16 noted:

17 December 3 - Mr. Harte

18 December 10 - Mr. Peeples

19 Mr. Harte stated he would distribute the schedule and confirmed the Committee  
20 would meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays during December.  
21

22 Mr. Guerrette provided an update on School District matters and read e-mail  
23 correspondence to the Committee regarding the date for delivery of the school budget  
24 book. He agreed to forward a copy of Board approved cuts to Mr. Harte for  
25 dissemination to the members and proceeded to run through some of these for  
26 information. He also informed the Committee the District has had to add \$160,000  
27 for a new SPED student which was unanticipated and that the District was to receive  
28 donation of a portable unit from Hudson which would cost \$13,000 to move and  
29 install at the high school. He clarified that all of the information he had given was  
30 available within the Executive Summary of the budget which is available on the  
31 school web site.

32 ***Action: Mr. Guerrette***  
33

34 Responding to Mr. Harte's query as to whether the School Board had discussed health  
35 benefits, Mr. Guerrette stated he would be taking this matter up at the next Board  
36 meeting. Mr. Spencer explained for the benefit of the Committee the difference  
37 between the town and school fiscal years and their health insurance plans. There  
38 followed a discussion about various school budget items.  
39

40 Mr. Lambert announced the Board of Selectmen has initiated a spending freeze,  
41 defining this as no discretionary spending without Board approval. He then provided  
42 further clarification at Mr. Harte's request, stating the only spending permissible  
43 should be regular and recurring payments and payroll items. He stated the Board of  
44 Selectmen is currently reviewing the town's cash flow. Mr. Spencer confirmed the  
45 Board was talking about overrunning the appropriation and that they are watching  
46 closely large departments such as Highway, Police and Fire. Mr. Harte provided the

1 percentage of remaining budget within each of these departments. Mr. Lambert  
2 confirmed the Board of Selectmen voted to reduce health care costs and they reduced  
3 prescription coverage.

- 4
- 5 • **Upcoming meetings**  
6 November 19, 2009

7

8 **MOTION:** by Mr. Falzone

9 *Move to adjourn*

10 **SECOND:** Mr. Lambert

11 **VOTE:** 7-0-0

12 **The motion carried unanimously.**

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14 There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:04p.m.

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18 **Minutes by:**

*Mrs. Sandra Maxwell (Recording Secretary)*

19 **Date approved:**

*November 19, 2009*

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