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3 **Minutes of the**
4 **Litchfield Budget Committee**
5 **Held on December 3, 2009**
6

7 The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday December 3, 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), M Falzone, R Peeples, J Guerrette (School
12 Board Representative)

13
14 **ALSO PRESENT:** Mr. Schlichter (Principal GMS), and Dr. E Cutler (Superintendent)

15
16 Mr. Lemire called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.
17

18 **1. PUBLIC INPUT**

19 Mrs. C Couture, representing the School Board provided some history on the District
20 class size policy, reporting the District aims to have 20 students in grades K-2 and 25
21 students in grades 3 and above. She reported the District chose to institute a tiered
22 policy in line with the state and she stated she thought increasing class size would be
23 premature at this time.
24

25 Mr. K Franck spoke about the current teacher to student ratio which he stated has
26 benefited his son and he thought it should remain unchanged.
27

28 **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

29 **MOTION:** by Mr. Guerrette

30 *Move to approve the minutes of the Budget Committee meeting on November 5,*
31 *2009 as written*

32 **SECOND:** Mr. Falzone

33 **VOTE:** 6-0-1 (Mr. Peeples abstained)

34 **The motion carried.**
35

36 **3. SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET - GMS**

37 Mr. Lemire welcomed the Principal of GMS, Mr. Schlichter.
38

39 Mr. Spencer responded to Mrs. Couture's comments on state aid, and Dr. Cutler
40 confirmed the District receives approximately \$6 million and they are concerned
41 about losing \$2 million as this will probably involve making huge cuts to services.
42 Mr. Spencer wanted to ensure people understood they may receive some or all of the
43 \$2 million and based upon current projections there will be approximately 130
44 students less which amounts to between \$4 – 500,000. He stressed the current
45 economic situation of residents, stating the only way to deal with this is to reduce
46 costs. There followed a discussion with input from Messrs. Peeples and Lambert,

1 and Mr. Schlichter stressed this is the leanest budget he has ever presented. Mr.
2 Schlichter stated he currently has to run some accounts in the red. He stressed the
3 reading scores in GMS are sixth best in the state and this is due in part to reasonable
4 class sizes. He also pointed out the small class sizes enable the existing building to
5 work. Mr. Spencer pointed out he was only proposing a change to the Litchfield
6 standard of a 20:1 ratio. There followed a discussion about the class sizes in
7 Kindergarten and first grade compared to the state standard and surrounding
8 communities.

9
10 Mr. Guerrette deferred to Mr. Schlichter to present the budget.

11 **1100 Series a/c's – Regular Education Programs**

12 ***Page 1 & 2 (Salaries)***

13 Responding to a query from Mr. Spencer regarding salaries for paraprofessionals and
14 monitors, Mr. Schlichter explained monitors do recess and lunch duties which
15 amount to 2 – 3 hours/day generally. Responding to Mr. Spencer's query as to why
16 salaries for these positions usually come in less than budgeted, Mr. Schlichter
17 explained this is due to a number of factors including a large turnover and it takes a
18 while to fill the positions as they are low paying.

19
20
21 Responding to a query from Mr. Lambert on teacher retirement, Mr. Schlichter
22 explained the District contribution has increased.

23
24 Responding to a query from Mr. Spencer regarding why the spending total for
25 regular education does not tally with the budget, Dr. Cutler explained they may have
26 substitutes for sickness and/or maternity and they need to budget for this. Mr.
27 Guerrette attempted to further clarify this.

28 ***Page 5 (Math)***

29 Mr. Schlichter provided an example of an area where they have tried to save money,
30 stating they do not use math homework workbooks.

31
32
33 J Harte joined the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

34
35 There was a discussion about how other communities save in the area of supplies.

36 ***Page 8 (Reading)***

37 Mr. Schlichter reported they do not use spelling workbooks, citing this as another
38 example of an area where they have tried to save money.

39 ***Page 9 (Kindergarten)***

40
41 Responding to a query from Mr. Spencer regarding how state funding relates to what
42 is shown in the budget, Dr. Cutler explained the state provides \$1,500/student
43 approximately, and this funding will continue. Dr. Cutler agreed to obtain the
44 specific information on this and e-mail it to Mr. Lemire for distribution.

45
46 ***Action: Dr. Cutler***

1 Mr. Schlichter confirmed the state money pays for everything including teachers.
2 Mr. Spencer had further queries regarding state funding which it was agreed should
3 be addressed to Mr. Martin on his return on Tuesday.
4

5 **1200 Series – Special Education Programs**

6 ***Page 11***

7 Mr. Spencer stated he would want to understand how the numbers are developed for
8 salaries when they sit down with the Director of Special Education.
9

10 **1400 Series – Co-curricular Activities**

11 ***Page 13***

12 Responding to a query from Mr. Lambert, Dr. Cutler explained the co-curricular
13 activities are a negotiated list between the teacher’s union and the teachers, and she
14 explained the process.
15

16 **Self-Funded Programs**

17 ***Page 14***

18 Responding to a query from Mr. Harte regarding the summer reading program, Mr.
19 Schlichter explained this is funded through a grant and must be gross appropriated.
20

21 **2120 – Guidance Services**

22 ***Page 15***

23 Responding to Mr. Spencer’s query as to what professional services are Mr.
24 Schlichter explained this is the contract for services under the 504 law which also
25 covers children with hearing difficulties.
26

27 **2410 School Administration**

28 ***Page 21***

29 Responding to Mr. Spencer’s query about clock repair, Mr. Guerrette explained this
30 was an annual charge for a synchronized clock system.
31

32 **2610 Custodial Services**

33 ***Page 24***

34 Responding to a query from Mr. Lambert regarding overtime, Mr. Schlichter
35 explained overtime is used for sickness/vacation coverage.
36

37 Mr. Parker queried whether batteries have been budgeted for the hand sanitizers and
38 Dr. Cutler said she would look into this.

39 ***Action: Dr. Cutler***
40

41 **2620 Building Services**

42 ***Page 25***

43 As a result of a query from Mr. Harte regarding the area of the roof requiring
44 replacement, Mr. Schlichter stated the vendor’s bid for the roof report amounted to
45 \$1,700. Mr. Harte also expressed surprise that only \$15,000 had been budgeted for
46 anticipated repairs to GMS and Mr. Schlichter clarified they have already carried out

1 some major repairs. There was a discussion on repairs required by the state which
2 was a 3 to 4 year plan.

4 **2840 Technology Services**

5 ***Page 28***

6 Mr. Spencer queried the difference between the budgeted amount for the aging
7 phone system and the amount spent historically and Mr. Schlichter deferred this
8 question for Mr. Martin on his return. Mr. Lemire requested that responses be e-
9 mailed to him.

10 ***Action: Dr. Cutler for Mr. Martin***

11
12 Mr. Lambert also asked how they spent money on software, data communications
13 and telephone. Mr. Guerrette explained some costs are annual regular license fees
14 and some are for software maintenance/support.

15
16 Responding to a query from Mr. Harte, Mr. Schlichter estimated the number of cell
17 phones to be between 15 & 20, stating he would also refer this to Mr. Martin for a
18 more accurate number.

19 ***Action: Dr. Cutler for Mr. Martin***

20
21 Dr. Cutler stated she would also ask Mr. Martin to let the Committee know how
22 much Kindergarten cost to implement last year, as the Committee queried how much
23 had been paid for by the state.

24 ***Action: Dr. Cutler for Mr. Martin***

25 26 **GMS Site Improvements**

27 ***Page 29***

28 Mr. Spencer was informed next year would be the last year for the lease of the
29 portables. He was also informed by Dr. Cutler that a teacher reduction will enable
30 the Music teacher to have a classroom, as she currently floats.

31
32 Mr. Lambert requested information on which costs are fixed and which are variable
33 so that they can plan for next year

34 35 ***Page 25***

36 Referring to the amount budgeted for fuel oil; Mr. Spencer suggested the Budget
37 Committee may wish to take a look at the figure used to base these costs on.

38 39 **4600 Building Improvements**

40 ***Page 30***

41 Responding to a query from Mr. Harte on which section of the building will receive
42 new lighting, Mr. Schlichter explained it would be the area from the office to the
43 cafeteria. He also explained where the new handicapped and staff bathroom would
44 be placed.

45

1 Mr. Lemire thanked Dr. Cutler and Mr. Schlichter for their assistance. He recessed
2 the meeting calling it to order again at 8:51 p.m.

3
4 **4. VOTING ON SCHOOL BOARD**

5 Mr. Lemire recommended the Committee skip the consent agenda and vote in their
6 regular manner.

7
8 **MOTION:** by Mr. Guerrette

9 *Move to set a bottom line of \$100,633.46 for account 2311, School Board General*
10 *Fund in the 2011 School Operating Budget*

11 **SECOND:** Mr. Falzone

12
13 **MOTION:** by Mr. Spencer

14 *Move to amend line item 890, Miscellaneous, page 3 under Election Services to*
15 *\$1,600*

16 **SECOND:** Mr. Peebles

17 Mr. Spencer provided the rationale for his cut, stating he based it on historical
18 spending.

19 **VOTE:** 7-1-0 (Mr. Guerrette opposed the motion)

20 **The motion carried.**

21
22 **VOTE on a new bottom line of \$100,033.46:** 7-1-0 (Mr. Guerrette opposed the
23 motion)

24
25 Mr. Spencer explained he supports Mr. Martin's suggestion of taking health care as a
26 district and would propose a figure when they got to that point in the budget. It was
27 pointed out that Mr. Martin had already cut this at a district wide level, and Mr.
28 Spencer stressed he would only change it if staff were reduced.

29
30 **5. OUTSTANDING TOWN VOTING**

31 Mr. Lambert reported the Board of Selectmen had made amendments to include 3%
32 for a COLA increase and increased accounting services (4150.10-390) and the line
33 for the bike path (4155.10-812).

34
35 There was a discussion on how much the budget was increased overall and which
36 accounts the Committee needed to reopen, as well as those which had not yet been
37 voted on and also a discussion regarding COLA.

38
39 **MOTION:** by Mr. Lambert

40 *Move to reopen account 4150.10, Financial Administration*

41 **SECOND:** Mr. Falzone

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

44 *Move to amend the bottom line for account 4150.10, Financial Administration to*
45 *\$308,458*

46 **The motion was defeated as there was no second.**

1 **MOTION:** by Mr. Spencer
2 *Move to amend line 390, Accounting Services, to \$7,135 in account 4150.10,*
3 *Financial Administration*

4 **SECOND:** Mr. Harte

5 Mr. Spencer explained this was to include audit accounting services which is a new
6 item, which will enable the auditors to check the books twice a year

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

8 **The motion carried unanimously.**

9

10 **MOTION:** by Mr. Spencer

11 *Move to amend line 812, Auditing Services, to \$18,500*

12 **SECOND:** Mr. Harte

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

14 **The motion carried unanimously.**

15

16 **MOTION:** by Mr. Lambert

17 *Move to amend line item 110, Wages – Secretarial/Bookkeeping, to \$98,769*

18 **The motion failed for lack of a second.**

19

20 Mr. Lambert asked whether anyone would support the COLA increases, but there
21 was no support for this.

22

23 **VOTE on a new bottom line of \$305,461:** 8-0-0

24 **The motion carried unanimously.**

25

26 **MOTION:** by Mr. Spencer

27 *Move to reopen account 4155, Personnel Administration*

28 **SECOND:** Mr. Harte

29 **VOTE:** 7-1-0 (Mr. Lambert opposed the motion)

30

31 Mr. Spencer explained he had reworked the retirement figures to reflect the changes
32 in staffing recommended by the Committee.

33

34 *Move to amend line 231, Firefighter Retirement, to \$18,795*

35 **SECOND:** Mr. Peoples

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

37 **The motion carried unanimously.**

38

39 **MOTION:** by Mr. Spencer

40 *Move to amend line 232, Police Retirement, to \$87,539*

41 **SECOND:** Mr. Harte

42 **VOTE:** 7-1-0 (Mr. Lambert opposed the motion)

43

44 **VOTE on a new bottom line of \$275,752:** 7-1-0 (Mr. Lambert opposed the motion)

45

46

1 **MOTION:** by Mr. Lambert
2 *Move to reopen account 4196, Insurance*
3 **SECOND:** Mr. Spencer
4

5 **MOTION:** by Mr. Lambert
6 *Move to amend the bottom line of account 4196, Insurance, to \$59,353*
7 **SECOND:** Mr. Spencer

8 Mr. Lambert stated this was to take account of new rates the town had received from
9 Primex.

10 **VOTE:** 8-0-0
11 **The motion carried unanimously.**
12

13 **Health Insurance**

14 **MOTION:** by Mr. Lambert
15 *Move to set a bottom line of \$220,832 for Health Insurance in the 2010 Operating*
16 *Budget*
17 **SECOND:** Mr. Spencer
18

19 Mr. Spencer moved an amendment to 4210.30-210, seconded by Mr. Falzone and
20 then realized he had provided the wrong figure therefore the amendment was moved
21 again as follows:
22

23 **MOTION:** by Mr. Falzone
24 *Move to amend line 4210.30-210 to \$55,510*
25 **SECOND:** Mr. Spencer

26 Mr. Spencer explained this removes the new police officer from the health insurance
27 line.

28 **VOTE:** 7-1-0 (Mr. Lambert opposed the motion)
29

30 **VOTE on a new bottom line of \$213,620:** 7-1-0 (Mr. Lambert opposed the motion)
31

32 **MOTION:** by Mr. Lambert
33 *Move to amend all the categories within the budget ending in 211 to \$22,590 for*
34 *Dental Insurance*

35 **SECOND:** Mr. Spencer
36

37 **MOTION:** by Mr. Falzone
38 *Move to amend 4210.40-211 to \$8,103*

39 **SECOND:** Mr. Harte

40 **VOTE:** 7-1-0 (Mr. Lambert opposed the motion)
41

42 **VOTE on new bottom line of \$21,907:** 7-1-0 (Mr. Lambert opposed the motion)
43

44 Mr. Spencer confirmed voting on the town budget is now complete. Mr. Lambert
45 provided a status report on the progress of the Board of Selectmen on town warrant
46 articles.

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Mr. Guerrette provided a status report on the School District, stating the Board have created an unreserved fund for maintenance, and they will prepare a warrant article in anticipation that funding for the track could be cut. He stated that warrant articles are being discussed by the School Board.

Mr. Spencer clarified what the Committee would be discussing and voting on at the next meeting. He stated he would do some preparation on consent items and e-mail to Mr. Lemire no later than Sunday night, incorporating everyone's suggestions with the understanding that they may wish to reopen GMS once the Special Education budget has been presented.

MOTION: by Mr. Falzone
Move to adjourn
SECOND: Mr. Harte
VOTE: 8-0-0

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

Minutes by: *Mrs. Sandra Maxwell (Recording Secretary)*
Date approved: *December 15, 2009*