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

6
7 **Held on March 25, 2010**

8 The Litchfield Budget Committee held a Public Hearing on Thursday, March 25, 2010, at
9 Campbell High School, 1 Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

10 **PRESENT:** J Harte, B Spencer, R Peeples, M Falzone, P Parker, E Miller, F Byron
11 (Board of Selectmen Representative), J York (School Board Representative)

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13 Mr. Harte called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and introduced the new members of
14 the Committee. He also recognized Mr. Chris Pascucci, congratulating him on running
15 for a place on the Committee.

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17 **1. Public Input**

18 There was no input from members of the public.

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20 **2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings**

21 **MOTION:** by Mr. Peeples

22 *Move to approve the minutes of the Litchfield Budget Committee meetings held on*
23 *January 14, 2010, January 15, 2010 and the Public Hearing on January 15 2010*
24 *as written*

25 **SECOND:** Mr. Spencer

26 **VOTE:** 5-0-3 (Ms. Miller, Messrs. Byron and York abstained)

27 **The motion carried.**

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29 **3. Election of Officers**

30 **MOTION:** by Mr. Spencer

31 *Move to appoint Mr. J. Harte as Chairman of the Litchfield Budget Committee*

32 **SECOND:** Mr. Peeples

33 **VOTE:** 7-0-1 (Mr. Harte abstained)

34 **The motion carried.**

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36 **MOTION:** by Mr. Spencer

37 *Move to appoint Mr. M. Falzone as Vice Chairman of the Litchfield Budget*
38 *Committee*

39 **SECOND:** Mr. Peeples

40 **VOTE:** 7-0-1 (Mr. Falzone abstained)

41 **The motion carried.**
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1 **4. Town Business**

2 **a) Police Overtime Budget**

3 Mr. Spencer he had requested this topic be added to the agenda as a result of a
4 review of the budget last year and discussions regarding how overtime money was
5 being handled for training and court within the Police Department and he asked
6 Mr. Byron to help the Budget Committee understand what is in the overtime
7 account.

8
9 Mr. Byron provided examples to explain the difficulties of allocating overtime
10 within the Police Department. He reported this had come up as part of the review
11 process at the Board of Selectmen level. He also provided a historical explanation
12 of the current allocation of overtime. There was a discussion regarding the
13 difficulty of currently tracking overtime. Mr. Byron talked about what changes
14 he would like to see; stating he needs to work this out with the Board of
15 Selectmen liaison for the Police Department to ensure overtime will be properly
16 recorded and allocated when the budget comes through. There was also a
17 discussion on court time showing up as overtime and the difference between the
18 way it is budgeted and accounted for.

19
20 *Special Officers:*

21 Mr. Spencer stated he had assumed that what was allocated under Specials
22 represented officers covering shift duties, vacations etc., but that it had come to
23 light last year that a major portion of this is made up of three officers (SRO,
24 DARE, detective). He reported he has been unable to fully understand this
25 account just from looking at it but he feels the right approach would be to break
26 out Special Officers separately. Mr. Byron clarified that the account should be for
27 the DARE and SRO officers as the detective only works eight hours per week, but
28 that the Sergeant also does detective work. He went on to say he would like to
29 have a system in place that everyone understands and which accounts for the
30 overtime correctly. Mr. Spencer suggested breaking out the SRO and DARE
31 officers which would enable the voters to see these positions exist. Mr. Harte
32 added they risk under-funding the Specials account currently and suggested
33 separate accounts for each of the SRO, DARE and Special Officers.

34
35 Mr. Byron explained what some of the problems are that they currently run into
36 such as school vacations and there was a discussion about whether they would
37 want to see the other work performed by the SRO mixed in. Mr. Peeples stated
38 Mr. Byron's suggestion of sub sections within the accounts might be a good idea
39 and there was further discussion. Mr. Harte clarified Mr. Byron may come back
40 before the next budget season when discussions with the Police Department take
41 place and things are sorted out. Mr. Spencer suggested keeping track of the
42 overtime this year to ensure they can understand it when the budget season
43 begins.

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1 **b) *Albuquerque Culvert***

2 Mr. Harte clarified that the culvert for Albuquerque is going out to bid and the
3 used of Highway Block Grant money was approved by the Board of Selectmen.
4 Mr. Byron reported that bids will open on April 5, 2010 but the Board has not yet
5 made a decision to go ahead with the work. Responding to a query from Mr.
6 Harte, Mr. Byron provided a status report on the culvert, reporting it had
7 collapsed last year and was rotted out in places. There was a discussion about the
8 current weight restrictions over the culvert.
9

10 **c) *Town Actuals***

11 Responding to a query from Mr. Spencer, Mr. Byron clarified there has been a
12 hiring freeze at the Solid Waste facility for some time. He reported that Mr.
13 Mellon will not hire additional staff until April. He explained the volume of
14 recycling is problematic as the volume takes time to process. Responding to an
15 additional query from Mr. Spencer regarding the labor account, Mr. Byron
16 clarified that skipping burns also drops labor costs.
17

18 Responding to a comment by Mr. Spencer that not much has been spent in the
19 Equipment Hire line item of the Road budget, Mr. Byron explained how the Road
20 Agent has kept costs down.
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22 Ms. Miller requested some clarification regarding the Equipment Repair and
23 Vehicle Repair lines and Mr. Byron reported he thought the Road Agent had
24 needed to repair a plow (lines 20-631 and 660).
25 There was a discussion about the condition of Albuquerque Road and whether
26 there are other roads which were suffering from pot holes.
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28 Responding to a query from Ms. Miller regarding the typical amount budgeted for
29 the Town Meeting account, Mr. Byron reported the budgeted amount has
30 historically been based on the prior year's costs.
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32 **5. *School District Business***

33 Mr. York handed out copies of Mr. Martin's monthly report and the report on actuals
34 to members of the Committee. He reported there had been a few discussions on
35 playground at GMS, explaining it could not be repaired at reasonable cost and the
36 School Board has instructed the District to replace it at a cost of \$58,000 plus
37 \$11,000 for installation. He provided a status report and Mr. Spencer reported Mrs.
38 Couture had stated the work is on hold as they are having someone else come in with
39 the insurance company to re-inspect the playground.
40

41 Responding to a query from Mr. Harte as to whether \$34,000 was to be returned to
42 FEMA, Mr. York explained it was his understanding the District will not have to
43 return the money but will need to get the paperwork in order to satisfy FEMA and
44 this is ongoing.
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1 Responding to a query from Mr. Harte regarding whether the generator has been
2 permanently installed, Mr. York reported the Board has requested a time line on the
3 generator process. He reported it is his understanding the Board approved the
4 installation of quick hook ups and the bid came in around \$6,800 but there was some
5 confusion regarding the ampage. As a result it was not installed and approximately
6 \$27,000 was spent during the last storm which covered both LMS and CHS. He
7 reported the Board has requested an investigation to see why it had been necessary to
8 spend the extra money.

9
10 *Page 3, Utilities, line 411:* Mr. Peeples queried why this line was over budget for
11 water but Mr. York was unable to provide an explanation. Mr. Peeples requested an
12 explanation for the next meeting.

13 **Action: Mr. York**

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15 Responding to a query from Mr. Spencer, Mr. York stated there had been no
16 discussion at the last Board meeting on the status of a solution for the water main
17 leak at GMS.

19 **6. Legislative Information Updates**

20 Mr. Harte provided information on the following:

21 **a) HB1677**

22 This bill to retain \$2.2million in state aid failed. Mr. Harte explained the effect of
23 the reduction on Litchfield. Mr. Spencer reported that SB465 which is basically
24 the same as the house bill had passed. After a suggestion by Mr. Spencer that the
25 Committee reach out to all Representatives supporting the bill, the Committee
26 agreed Mr. Harte should compile such a letter from the Committee.

27 **Action: Mr. Harte**

28 29 **b) SB489**

30 This bill will allow gaming throughout the state. Mr. Harte explained the purpose
31 of the bill, informing the Committee that it would provide Litchfield with revenue
32 of approximately \$1 million. He also spoke about the jobs the bill would bring,
33 stating there was also hope for a rail service to Nashua. Mr. Peeples talked about
34 a subsidy for commuter rail, and there followed a discussion.

35 36 **c) SB 465**

37 Mr. Spencer pointed out that in this bill aid would be based on enrollment. He
38 stated Litchfield will lose money on that basis but the amount per student would
39 increase. He was therefore unsure what it will mean for Litchfield.

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41 Mr. Byron reported there was also a bill going through the House which would
42 enable Board of Selectmen to take a bond and create loans to members of their
43 community to weatherize their homes.

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1 **7. Monthly Financial Report Distribution Discussion**

2 **a) Town based e-mail account discussion**

3 i) **Personal "Litchfield-nh.gov" e-mail accounts**

4 Mr. Harte reported he had received an offer from Mr. Byron to furnish the
5 Budget Committee with town e-mail accounts for Budget Committee
6 business. He talked about the advantages for the Budget Committee and
7 recommended the Committee accept the offer. There was a discussion on
8 blocking domains, as well as the benefits to the Committee of having town e-
9 mail and whether forwarding e-mail from the town server to personal accounts
10 would be beneficial. Mr. Harte polled the Committee regarding which of
11 them would like a town e-mail account.

12 **Action:** Mr. Harte to request accounts for those Committee members who
13 would like a town e-mail account.

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15 ii) **Group Folder Considerations**

16 It was agreed this would be beneficial for file sharing and Mr. Byron
17 confirmed this would be ready by mid April.

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19 **b) Town Financial Report Distribution**

20 Mr. Harte reported that Mr. Byron had offered to provide the Budget Committee
21 with weekly reports. It was confirmed that everyone would like an electronic
22 version of the reports. Mr. Spencer pointed out the advantage of weekly copies.

23 **Action:** Mr. Byron to request the reports be forwarded directly to everyone on the
24 Committee weekly.

25
26 Mr. Byron reported there were new escrow account and revenue reports.

27
28 **c) School District Financial Report Distribution**

29 i) **Monthly YTD Budget Summary**

30 Mr. Harte asked whether the Committee can obtain the School District
31 financial report electronically, and Mr. York agreed to bring this up at the next
32 Board meeting.

33
34 ii) **Monthly YTD Budget Detail**

35 Mr. Spencer requested a hard copy of the budget detail report
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37 **8. Member Input**

38 Mr. Spencer requested a hard copy of the town 2009 actuals and there was a
39 discussion regarding when the Budget Committee might expect to receive the
40 unaudited figures.

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42 Responding to a query from Mr. Parker on the status of past audits, Mr. Byron
43 reported the 2007 audit report is not complete as he refused to sign it. He explained
44 town counsel is now negotiating the management statement. He also reported that
45 the 2008 audit is under way and will be wrapping up shortly. This is being
46 completed by the new auditors, and they will then begin the 2009 audit.

1 Responding to Mr. Spencer's request for an update on the town re-assessment, Mr.
2 Byron reported the town assessment will drop by about 18%. He stated that land
3 value has dropped on average. He also reported that notices will go out to residents
4 on April 2 informing them of their new property assessment and that hearings will
5 begin on April 19. He explained the new rate will not go into effect until the
6 December tax bill.

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8 Mr. Harte confirmed it is possible to forward town e-mail to a personal e-mail
9 account.

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11 Mr. Byron announced the annual Ham and Bean Supper.

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13 **MOTION:** by Mr. Peeples

14 ***Move to adjourn until the next meeting on April 22, 2010***

15 **SECOND:** Ms. Miller

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

17 **The motion carried unanimously.**

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19 There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

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24 **Minutes taken by:** *Sandra Maxwell (Recording Secretary)*

25 **Date approved:** *April 22, 2010*