

Minutes of the Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting Held on December 1, 2016

The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, December 1, 2016 at Campbell High School, One Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

PRESENT: C Couture (Chair), K Douglas (Vice Chair), C Pascucci, D Miller, R Keating, A Cutter, J Bourque, C Harrison (School Board Representative), Superintendent James O'Neill, Frank Markiewicz, Business Administrator

Absent: P Izbicki

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Couture called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

2. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

3. REVIEW/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

Mrs. Couture added Old Business: Old Warrant Articles, after Correspondence.

4. REVIEW/ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

- **November 17, 2016**

MOTION: by Mrs. Douglas

Move to approve the November 17, 2016 minutes

SECOND: by Mr. Cutter

VOTE: 4-0-3

The motion carried.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

Mrs. Couture announced that correspondence received from the school district included class sizes for LMS FACS and Tech Ed, 2nd grade teacher information, listing by content area, default budget. Also distributed were the 2003 and 2004 warrants with regard to new and expanded positions and positions required.

- **Old Business**

- **Old Warrant Articles**

Mrs. Couture commented there was a question about the warrant articles from 2003 and 2004 regarding new/expanded positions and clarifying language in the latter year. She noted that in 2004, there was also a class size article. She indicated in 2003 the article was a petition article

and is advisory; however, it is wise to take a hard look when the community sends you a message and you do not follow it as there are always unknown consequences.

Mrs. Couture read the 2003 warrant article:

Petition Warrant #1

As a community operating under Senate Bill 2, R.S.A. 40:13, we support the Litchfield School Board creating separate warrant articles for new positions, increased hours of staff, new equipment, and architectural work. The Litchfield School Board will then be continuing past practice to provide voters with greater choice on increases in school spending. This is a petition warrant article.

*Article passes: Yes: 1,077
No: 529*

Mrs. Couture read the 2004 warrant article:

ARTICLE 21

Shall the Litchfield School District support the School Board in placing in the operating budget those positions, agreed to by the Budget Committee, that are needed to meet the minimum state and federal standards or to maintain services at current year levels? This is a non-binding, advisory warrant article.

*Article passes- Yes: 1,073
No: 921*

She indicated the Budget Committee has been using these warrant articles as a guiding principal for 13 years. She noted they are typically discussed annually.

Mr. Miller commented the significant piece is from the 2003 article and in the clarifying piece is from the 2004 article there is no statement about increasing hours or new equipment in the 2004 article.

Mrs. Douglas commented that it is clear to place one-time expenditures and new positions in the warrant. She indicated that the 2003 article states that the past practice “provides voters with greater choice on increases in school spending” for which we are not complying.

Mrs. Couture read the 2004 class size warrant article:

ARTICLE 22

The School Board has established a new policy on class size. The State guideline for maximum class size for grades one and two is 25 students and for grades three through five is 30 students. Previous budget recommendations have been based upon 20 students for grades one and two

and 25 students for grades three through five. The new policy reduces the third grade class size from 25 to 20 students and for grades four through five from 25 to 23 students. Should the Budget Committee use the lower class sizes in preparing their school budget recommendations? This is a non-binding, petitioned warrant article.

Yes: 923

Article Fails: No: 1,137

Mrs. Couture explained at the time the policy was controversial and different than what was recommended and had been researched for two years. She noted it is a non-binding petition warrant article that failed. She indicated it meant the community wanted the Budget Committee to continue to use higher class sizes in budget recommendations. She commented the Budget Committee has honored the School Board policy and has used lower class sizes.

6. BUDGET REVIEW:

Mr. O'Neill commented that he would like the Budget Committee to be aware that the district became aware that we have an additional special education student who has a placement resulting in an impact of \$106,000 per year. He indicated when preparing the FY18 budget we tried to provide a budget of actual current students in the district. He asked the Budget Committee to consider adding that placement into the FY18 budget.

• Revenues & Default Budget

Mr. Markiewicz indicated the School Board has not yet approved the revenue budget or the default budget. He asked the Chair if these two agenda items can be addressed at the end of the agenda.

Mrs. Couture agreed.

Mrs. Couture announced that she received a request for the Budget Committee to move up the Voting on the Curriculum Development Budget.

(Please note: The minutes follow the order of the agenda; however, some items may have been taken out of the order in which they were arranged.)

• CHS

Mr. Lonergan presented the FY18 CHS Recommended budget.

Mr. Lonergan commented that he was pleased to be at the meeting. He made the following statements:

CHS is a great high school and Litchfield is a tremendous community. I tried to be sensitive to what I have heard in these meetings as well as sensitive to some of the other data such as programming. There are some programs that need to be tightened up at CHS. When the process started, I met with the staff and pulled some serious money out of this budget, such as Chromebook carts because I could not justify not putting the money where it is more needed, but now I see that the Chromebooks would be an important piece for instruction. I pulled out the

musical instrument lockers and considered putting it on the warrant; pulled funds for a Mac monitor for Art class; pulled out a printer for the Tech Ed department; did not support a request for shelving to store sheet music from the music department. The school is in great shape, but there are some items that need to be addressed in the future such as the chairs in the Art room (which are breaking apart) and chairs in the Library that are old and uncomfortable. We are in maintenance mode with programming at this time. There are strong programs at CHS, but some need to be adjusted. I do not like to see the students going to Nashua or Londonderry night school, but I understand that it is necessary.

If our programs were more effective in-house we could have those students stay in the district. CTE centers are important for students who are not college bound and where we live in southern NH it is important for our children to be well versed in technology. There are no major staffing changes. With NEASC we have a great opportunity to self-analyze our challenges, host NEASC visitations and look forward to their recommendations. The Science budget has increased significantly, but if we want our students to do the hard work we want them to do, we have to pay attention to that area.

Mrs. Couture asked about workbooks for the Foreign Language classes and if this will be impacting by having Chromebooks.

Mr. Lonergan indicated that there was an increase in the price of the workbooks, and that he cannot say this would not be impacted by having Chromebooks.

Mrs. Couture commented that Mr. Lonergan mentioned chairs in the Art room and Library being old and needing to be addressed. She asked if there is a replacement plan.

Mr. Lonergan indicated he intends to have that conversation with the Art department.

Mrs. Douglas asked about drawing tables for computer-based classes. Mr. Lonergan indicated they are for Tech Ed classes.

Mr. Cutter commented that supplies are very high. He asked what are some of the contributing factors driving the increase.

Mr. Lonergan indicated Science consumables are costly and dictated by AP and PLTW; Art consumables are costly as well.

Mrs. Couture mentioned that approximately two years ago there was a grant or donation to CHS for the Science program that would have allowed the purchase of supplies and driven down that average. She commented that may have made the increase seems higher.

Mrs. Couture asked about the ten additional students budgeted for Vocational Education.

Mr. Lonergan explained that Mrs. Callinan believes there will be additional interest in CTE programs, which will be verified through scheduling.

Mrs. Couture asked if scheduling has become easier since we are sending the students to Pinkerton.

Mr. O'Neill commented one of the big challenges was the CTE program in Nashua. He indicated the travel was very challenging, but since the students have been attending Pinkerton, travel is much easier and the programs at Pinkerton are more aligned with what our students want to study.

With reference to Vocational Tuition, Mrs. Couture asked if Mr. Lonergan would like to make it so less students need to use the night programs. Mr. Lonergan indicated that students can be more successful here.

Mr. O'Neill commented sometimes you have a small cohorts of students and it may be more efficient having a small program for that cohort that is less expensive. He indicated it is not as efficient for the district to do that with such a small cohort.

Mrs. Couture commented we have one of the top graduation rates in NH. Mr. O'Neill indicated it is because we are meeting all the students' needs.

Mr. Cutter asked about the new software budgeted under Information Access Fees. Mr. Lonergan indicated that Turn It In is an anti-plagiarism program that will analyze student work and compare it to millions of papers and other work.

Mrs. Couture asked where CHS is in the NEASC process at this time.

Mr. Lonergan commented that we are in the self-study phase currently. He explained that teams have been set up consisting of teachers, parents and community members who will look at all parts of the school. We are in the early stages that will take us through the end of the school year with committee report findings provided at the end of the year. The steering committee will look at the findings over the summer and prepare final documents in the fall. In March 2018 CHS will host the NEASC visitation committee who will spend three days going to classes, talking with administrators and the community and vetting what CHS submitted.

- **Buildings and Grounds**

Mr. Markiewicz presented the FY18 Buildings and Grounds Recommended budget. He indicated that the budget reflects less than 1% increase over FY17 and represents 28% of the operating budget, excluding salaries and benefits. He commented there have been some organizational changes over the last two years, reducing salaries and benefits over that time, which allowed for more of the money to be used on the operational side. Mr. Markiewicz noted there is 247,940 sf of combined area in the school buildings with 106.2 acres of land, that is valued at \$39.2M. He commented it is a substantial budget that represents a substantial responsibility.

Mrs. Couture asked about the utility van budgeted at \$25,000.

Mr. Markiewicz explained one part of the staff reorganization was to reduce the managerial staff to one facility manager that takes care of custodial and grounds. He commented that a facility manager for maintenance was hired to focus on repairs and maintenance that will keep contractor costs down. He indicated that currently he uses his own vehicle to transport tools and stock that he has to keep at CHS from one building to another. He noted that a closed in utility vehicle that is able to be locked will allow storage of the tools and stock so there is no need to travel between the buildings. Mr. Markiewicz indicated this item is supported by the School Board and the Superintendent. He commented this van would provide mobility as well as security for the tools and stock and keep them in one place.

Mrs. Bourque asked if this item includes tools. Mr. Markiewicz indicated it is for the van and rack inside.

Mrs. Bourque commented if we do not purchase a van we would pay mileage.

Mr. Markiewicz indicated that he is currently paid mileage as the district truck is not available from April to November and would not be secure to store tools. He noted there is also the availability to store frequently used supplies and stock.

Mr. O'Neill commented one of the challenges in districts is to have a utility van to keep tools and stock for those repairs and maintenance items that need to be addressed. He indicated we will see savings in contractor services. He noted that the district truck is not closed in and therefore will not keep tools and stock protected from the weather or from damage or theft.

Mrs. Douglas commented that the van should be placed on a warrant article. Mr. O'Neill commented it is part of our operational budget and is a one-time expense. He noted he does not have an objection to placing it on the warrant.

Mrs. Douglas commented it is an easy place to decrease the budget a bit more.

Mrs. Couture indicated it is a new item. She commented the first vehicle the district purchased was on a warrant article.

Mr. Pascucci asked if we did not have this vehicle in the budget, how much would be budgeted next year for contractual services. Mr. Markiewicz indicated there is a history of costly maintenance that is contracted out and is difficult to analyze. He commented the vehicle will give that person a higher sense of ability to complete those tasks and will give the district some control of tools.

Mrs. Couture noted there is a lift rental budgeted in Equipment Rental that has never been used. Mr. Markiewicz indicated the lift is for changing lightbulbs in the gym, exterior bulbs, fixing exterior issues that are too high for a ladder.

Mr. Miller asked about the decrease in Professional Services. Mr. Markiewicz indicated there is a decrease of \$40,000 because there was a warrant article in FY17 for a building assessment.

Mrs. Couture commented the wording of the description for the divider walls at CHS is confusing. She noted the wording refers to repairs and recommends replacement. Mr. Markiewicz commented the divider walls are high maintenance and get much use every year. The cost of one panel is over \$1,000.

Mrs. Couture asked if there is a replacement plan. Mr. Markiewicz indicated there is no plan to replace them at this time. He noted they will most likely be addressed in the building conditions assessment.

Mrs. Couture asked about the gator. She commented what happens now that it is beyond its useful life. Mr. Markiewicz indicated the gator will continue to be used.

Mrs. Couture asked about the sign budgeted under GMS Building Improvement. Mr. Markiewicz commented it is a recommendation made by Homeland Security as a result of their building inspections. He indicated they pointed out that it is difficult to recognize the main entrance and recommended a sign to designate the entrance in the event of an emergency.

Mr. Pascucci commented he is trying to understand the downfall of not having a sign in the event of an emergency. Mrs. Harrison commented anyone who does not know the school looks at the façade of the 30s building as the entrance.

Mr. Cutter indicated we should evaluate all the recommendations from Homeland Security first.

Mr. Keating commented any regional teams that come in will be directed by Litchfield first responders who all know where the entrances and exits are. He indicated the assessment from Homeland Security should be looked at with vigorous eyes. He believes the money for the sign would be better spent elsewhere.

- **Food Service**

Mr. Markiewicz presented the FY18 Food Services Recommended budget. He commented that it is a self-funding program with approximately \$102,000 in reserve funds. He noted that some of the reserve money has been used when equipment has broken down. He indicated that approval of the use of those funds is done through a public hearing.

BUDGET VOTING:

- **Curriculum Development**

MOTION: by Mrs. Couture

Move to reduce Account 1000221000-734, Equipment Additional, by \$13,000

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

Mrs. Couture commented IT has a plan to phase in Chromebooks at CHS and the Chromebooks budgeted for World Languages will not be necessary as they will have them when they are phased in.

Mr. Cutter commented Chromebooks are being budgeted for freshmen in FY18 and not all students. Mrs. Couture indicated the Chromebooks are being cycled in and will be cycling through every year.

Mr. Cutter asked why there is a specific need for the Chromebooks in the World Languages line. Dr. Heon commented it will take four years by the time Chromebooks are cycled into CHS 100%. She indicated not all students in FY18 will have Chromebooks. Dr. Heon explained the technology will assist in taking assessments and AP exams for World Language students. She noted some juniors are taking Spanish I and not just freshmen. She indicated it presents discontinuity in instruction where teachers are expecting to use these every day.

Mrs. Couture commented they are not being used currently. She asked what is being done now. Dr. Heon commented all the speaking and listening is being done in class and there is no individual repeating and teacher listening. Students have to take turns when speaking for appropriate language activity. This technology will enhance instruction and allow students to excel further. She indicated in college there is a listening language lab where kids are expected to go to practice their foreign language speech. She noted she feels strongly about having this in the budget because we have been without this kind of tool for a long time.

Mrs. Couture asked if student can go to a language lab. Dr. Heon indicated it would cost approximately \$30,000 for a language lab and the students would have to be taken out of class to use it.

Mrs. Couture asked if there would be flexibility to purchase one set of Chromebooks instead of 2. Dr. Heon commented it is better than the inability to purchase the technology.

MOTION: by Mr. Pascucci

Move to amend the motion made by Mrs. Couture to reduce Account 1000221000-734 by \$6,500

SECOND: by Mrs. Couture

Mrs. Douglas asked if the students are currently not doing well in the class. Dr. Heon indicated they are struggling in communication.

Mrs. Douglas referred to the difference between the proposed budget and the default budget. She commented she understands the rationale, but believes the district will end up with nothing if there is no reduction. Mr. O'Neill reinforced Dr. Heon's concern that there are currently students who will age out of CHS before they have access to this technology. He indicated this type of technology will enhance the program.

Mr. Cutter commented the Budget Committee debated similar reductions. He indicated some members felt reductions being made were not enough to make a difference. He noted he is not supportive of either motion, but would be supportive of a motion to reduce the cost difference of what is budgeted for Chromebooks and the actual cost.

VOTE ON AMENDED MOTION: 1-7-0

The motion fails.

MOTION: by Mr. Cutter

Move to amend the motion made by Mrs. Couture to reduce Account 1000221000-734 by \$1,872

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

VOTE ON AMENDED MOTION: 7-1-0

The motion carried.

VOTE ON THE MAIN MOTION: to reduce Account 1000221000-734 by \$1,872: 8-0-0

The motion carried.

- **Human Resources**

There were no changes to the FY18 Human Resources Recommended budget.

- **Salaries & Benefits**

Mr. Miller asked about the difference in the total budgeted for Long Term Substitutes and the amount noted in the justification notes. Mrs. Messenger indicated that it is a pool of money and is budgeted that way.

Mrs. Couture commented we see it increasing. She asked if it is increasing and why is it trending up? Mrs. Messenger indicated long term subs are hired when teachers are out on medical leave, maternity leave, or take an early retirement. She noted that she has seen significant absences and believes it will increase.

MOTION: by Mr. Miller

Move to reduce Account 1011110000-110, GMS Regular Education Salaries, by \$51,985

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

Mr. Miller commented that after looking at the enrollment projections he averaged that four teachers will be enough in Grade 2.

Mrs. Bourque indicated there are currently 87 students in Grade 1.

Mr. Miller asked how many teaches are currently in Grade 1. Mrs. Harrison indicated there are four teachers in Grade 1.

DRAFT

Mr. Miller commented they are being serviced with four teachers. Mrs. Bourque commented it is a huge amount for the teachers in Grade 1.

Mrs. Douglas commented according to the policy we have to add a teacher when enrollment hits 84 students.

Mrs. Couture commented that Mr. Miller may not have been aware of the previous discussion regarding this topic.

VOTE: 1-7-0
The motion fails.

MOTION: by Mrs. Couture
Move to reduce Account 1011110000-110 by \$15,000
SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

Mrs. Couture explained that the additional Grade 2 teacher salary budgeted is based on a Master's degree salary. She believes the salary for that position can be budgeted lower.

Mr. O'Neill asked the Budget Committee to keep the current salary that is budgeted and make a reduction at the aggregate line. He is concerned about the concept of hiring a teacher with less experience at this level.

Mr. Pascucci commented he would be agreeable to a bottom line reduction.

Mr. Miller commented we cannot continue to add staff with salaries and benefits increasing.

Mr. O'Neill indicated that he understands the concerns. He commented we lost four teachers at GMS because of declining enrollment. He noted the district understands as the cohort declines we have to make some hard decisions.

Mr. Miller commented enrollment is projected to decrease by 50 students next year.

Mr. O'Neill commented we are aware that the reduction will have to be addressed at LMS next year. He indicated that we are keenly aware that we have some low enrollment in classes at CHS that will have to be addressed.

Mr. Cutter commented roles have changed at the middle school where administrators have taken on additional duties to meet the needs of the students.

Mrs. Bourque commented she is not prepared to do line by line reductions.

Mrs. Couture reminded the Budget Committee that they perform a line by line review and at the end made bottom line decisions.

DRAFT

VOTE: 3-5-0

The motion fails.

MOTION: by Mrs. Douglas

Move to reduce Account 1011110000-113, Tutor Salaries, by \$3,787

SECOND: by Mr. Miller

Mrs. Douglas commented this represents the 3% increase in the salaries. She indicated that the district now has a second union and the town has a wage plan. She commented that non-affiliated salary increases have been put on the warrant in the past.

Mr. O'Neill commented the cost of living has increased between 1.7% and 2% in the past year and is on the rise.

Mrs. Couture commented the motion is not to not give raises, but to give the voters a chance to say yes.

VOTE: 5-3-0

The motion carried.

Mrs. Douglas indicated she planned to reduce all non-affiliated staff salaries by 3%, but did not know where to apply that reduction.

It was suggested she apply it to the GMS Tutor Salaries account and the district will reallocate the reduction.

MOTION: by Mrs. Douglas

Move to reduce Account 1011110000-113 by \$53,737, which represents the 3% increase of non-affiliated staff

SECOND: Mr. Pascucci

Mrs. Douglas commented this is an overall reduction of non-union wages.

Mr. Pascucci commented this is past practice to give voters a greater choice. He indicated cost of living never matches the raise.

Mrs. Bourque commented there will be three different warrant articles for three different raises. Mr. Pascucci commented that the voters have to be well educated. Mr. O'Neill indicated that some unions preclude employees with confidential information. He noted administrator cannot join a union.

Mrs. Couture recalled that there were salary ranges in the past for administrators. She asked if they were still in use. Mr. O'Neill indicated there are salary ranges, but merit raises are applied from a pool of money for administrators that is distributed by the Superintendent.

DRAFT

VOTE: 5-3-0

The motion carried.

MOTION: by Mr. Miller

Move to reduce Account 1011110000-120, GMS Substitute Salaries, by \$10,000

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

Mr. Miller commented that what is budgeted has not been spent in the past. He indicated the reduction leaves room in there for spending.

Mrs. Harrison commented that one of her goals is to raise substitutes' daily rates. She indicated \$60 per day is low for what they do and it is hard to get substitute teachers because of the rate.

Mr. Pascucci asked why there is always money left in the budget in that account. Mrs. Harrison commented tutors and paraprofessionals are used to cover teacher duties.

Mr. Pascucci asked why the substitute rate cannot be increased. Mr. O'Neill indicated that has to be decided by the School Board. He noted that an analysis of substitute and nurse substitute rates has been completed.

Mr. Pascucci commented that is a School Board issue as there is money there, but you have to act. Mrs. Harrison commented if that account is reduced we would not be able to raise the rate.

Mr. Miller indicated if the rate were raised to \$90 per day at the 377 substitute days per year, that would equate to 22 days of absences for teachers per year.

Mr. O'Neill commented that is not the case as teachers are dedicated and have minimal amount of time out of the district. Mrs. Couture clarified that no one is saying there is a problem or teachers are absent that many days. She noted that it is up to the School Board to change the rate.

VOTE: 6-2-0

The motion carried.

MOTION: by Mr. Miller

Move to reduce Account 1021110000-110, LMS Regular Education Salaries, by \$39,410

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

Mr. Miller indicated he is reducing the lowest salary for one teacher.

Mrs. Bourque commented we heard Mr. Lecklider speak passionately about the middle school program. She indicated she cannot support the motion.

Mrs. Douglas commented she appreciates his passion, but these decisions are not made until they have to be made and numbers are decreasing at LMS. Mrs. Bourque commented she fully sees the need and importance of the program as outlined.

Mr. Pascucci commented anyone with children in a specific grade does not want to lose anything.

Mrs. Bourque commented that she feels she has been forthcoming about her purpose on the Budget Committee – that she is representing people with children in the school system. She indicated this is not about her children, but about all the children in the school.

Mrs. Douglas indicated she does not base her motions on personal feelings.

Mrs. Couture commented we heard Grade 5 is incorporated in the content area philosophy of Grades 6, 7 and 8. She indicated her observation is that a change will be needed, but not in this year.

Mrs. Douglas commented we keep saying “next year” and that year will never come. She suggested combining Grade 5 and 6 classes in a similar way as Grades 7 and 8.

Mr. Cutter commented this is where the numbers and logic do not make sense. He indicated that we have heard about the scope of the teachers’ roles changing throughout the years. He believes this is likely a true need and a reductions is inevitable, but encouraged the district to take a hard look.

Mr. O’Neill indicated we have taken a hard look at the elementary school and reduced four teachers. He commented we will need 5 teachers in both grades 1 and 2. He mentioned that a middle school teacher may have to be moved to GMS next year. Mr. O’Neill indicated we will take a hard look and make the hard decision so long as it does not make a negative impact on our children.

Mrs. Harrison commented it is not a matter of enrollment at LMS, but the program. She indicated if you reduce a teacher the program suffers.

Mrs. Couture commented we have 6 ELA teachers so we may have a teacher that teaches a 5/6 grade. She noted it is probable that it is painful to break up the team, but it is something that may have to be done.

Mr. Keating agreed with Mrs. Bourque. He commented we have professionals here to run our organization, great teachers and administrators. He indicated if a teacher has to teach two grades that is the district’s decision. He does not agree about making a reduction at this time. Mr. Keating commented it is disruptive and we should let the professionals make that choice.

DRAFT

Mr. Pascucci commented he was making arguments on both sides earlier. He indicated his intention was not to support this, but we have to question and verify. He noted if we take away the dollars the position will not go away because they will take it from someone else. He commented this needs to come from the Administration or the School Board.

VOTE: 2-6-0

The motion fails.

MOTION: by Mrs. Couture

Move to reduce Account 1031110006-110, CHS Foreign Language Salaries, by \$20,000

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

Mrs. Couture commented that CHS has a teacher that teaches four French classes for 19 students. She indicated that there are other resources, such as VLACS, that offer French for free. She believes this is a reasonable place to make a reduction.

Mrs. Bourque commented that she heard the fastest growing language other than Spanish is French. She indicated she cannot support the reduction.

Mrs. Couture explained it is offering a less expensive option.

Mr. Lonergan was concerned how CHS provides French 3 and 4. He commented colleges look for 3 or 4 years of a foreign language. Mrs. Couture indicated there are creative ways to provide French 3 and 4.

VOTE: 6-2-0

The motion carried.

MOTION: by Mrs. Couture

Move to reduce Account 1011120100-114, GMS Special Education Paraprofessionals Salaries, by \$20,000

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

Mrs. Couture indicated historically we spend between 76% and 95% on that line. She commented it has never gone above 95%.

Mr. Pascucci asked why the line increased this year. Mrs. Couture indicated these are actual people this year.

Mr. Pascucci asked if we are overspending the line. Mrs. Couture commented we historically underspend this line. She indicated it is a fluctuating account.

Mr. Pascucci commented the need for the paraprofessionals are based on IEPs and we have to do this.

VOTE: 5-3-0

The motion carried.

MOTION: by Mrs. Couture

Move to reduce Account 1021120100-114, LMS Special Education Paraprofessionals Salaries, by \$11,000

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

Mrs. Couture commented that she used the same rationale as the previous reduction. She indicated the spending in this account has not gone over 91%.

Mr. Miller pointed out that the actual expenditures in that account have exceeded what is budgeted for FY18.

VOTE: 3-5-0

The motion fails.

Mrs. Douglas asked how the 2003 warrant article impacts the proposed increased hours of the part time Special Education teacher. Mrs. Couture explained that the warrant article states we can put things in the budget that meet federal and state mandates.

MOTION: by Mrs. Couture

Move to reduce Account 1031120100-114, CHS Special Education Paraprofessionals Salaries, by \$3,000

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

Mrs. Couture indicated this represents a 1% reduction.

VOTE: 3-5-0

The motion fails.

MOTION: by Mrs. Couture

Move to reduce Account 1011114100-110, GMS Co-Curricular Activities Salaries, by \$2,561

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

Mrs. Couture indicated the reduction reflects the stipends for the Destination Imagination and Ski Club advisors since those activities are no longer school sponsored.

VOTE: 7-1-0

The motion carried.

MOTION: by Mrs. Couture

Move to reduce Account 1021114100-110, LMS Co-Curricular Activities Salaries, by \$6,000

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

Mrs. Couture indicated she based her reduction on the average of what has been spent and that some positions usually do not get filled.

VOTE: 4-4-0

The motion fails.

MOTION: by Mrs. Couture

Move to reduce Account 1031114100-110, CHS Co-Curricular Activities Salaries, by \$8,000

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

Mrs. Couture indicated she used the same rationale for the reduction as the previous item and noted that even with the reduction it leaves more in the budget than the highest amount that was spent in the past.

VOTE: 3-4-1

The motion fails.

MOTION: by Mrs. Couture

Move to reduce Account 1031114200-110, CHS Athletic Activities Salaries, by \$8,000

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

Mrs. Couture indicated she based her reduction on average spending.

VOTE: 3-4-1

The motion fails.

MOTION: by Mr. Miller

Move to reduce Account 1000221000-110, DW Improve Instruction Salaries, by \$5,000, which reflects the removal of the increased hours for the Curriculum Director position

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

Mrs. Harrison commented the position was originally full time and the increased hours restores the position to its full time status.

Mrs. Couture indicated the initial reduction in 2011 was part of the \$2M reduction in education funding and was also because of declining enrollment.

Mrs. Douglas suggested placing it on the warrant. Mrs. Bourque commented we are moving toward having too many warrant articles.

Mrs. Couture commented enrollment is decreasing. She asked for justification for the increase in hours.

Mr. Keating agreed with Mrs. Bourque regarding having too many warrant articles.

Mrs. Harrison indicated that the curriculum director also writes grants and coordinates professional development, which cannot be done with a part time employee.

Mrs. Couture commented she was under the impression that professional development was now a responsibility of the building principal. Mrs. Harrison indicated the curriculum director makes the recommendations to the principals.

Mr. O'Neill commented the number of students does not collate to a position. He indicated the district needs a curriculum director that will be able to respond to all the things that are not getting done that should be getting done. He noted the cost is small.

Mrs. Couture commented with health insurance and the other obligations it is an addition of approximately \$35,000. She indicated that she appreciates the curriculum director has the same amount of programs to address.

Mr. Pascucci commented the obvious question is why are we stopping at only a full time curriculum director and increasing the position by a few hours. Mr. O'Neill explained that retired people that work in the district are restricted by 32 hours per week and if they work more than that a penalty is assessed. He clarified the position is not going from a part time director to a full time director, but to a professional position at the systematic level.

Mrs. Douglas commented if there is that kind of a need that gives more reason for placing it in a warrant article.

VOTE: 2-6-0

The motion fails.

MOTION: by Mr. Miller

Move to reduce Account 1090232000-110, District Administration Salaries, by \$12,000

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

Mr. Miller indicated the reduction will bring the Superintendent's salary to the max value of the contract.

Mrs. Couture indicated that the Budget Committee received some new information regarding the Superintendent's contract that was not passed along to Mr. Miller. She noted the total reduction that can be made for the Superintendent's salary and benefits is \$43,900.

Mr. Miller withdrew his motion. Mrs. Douglas withdrew her second.

MOTION: by Mr. Cutter

Move to reduce Account 1090232000-110, District Administration Salaries, by \$9,400

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

VOTE: 7-1-0

DRAFT

The motion carried.

MOTION: by Mrs. Couture

Move to reduce Account 1090232000, District Administration, by \$34,500

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

Mrs. Couture indicated the reduction is based on the information received last week.

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried.

MOTION: by Mrs. Douglas

Move to reduce Account 1011241000-112, GMS School Administration Salaries, by \$35,000

SECOND: by Mrs. Couture

Mrs. Douglas commented the reduction is for the increase of the part time assistant principal to full time. She believes that the reduction is consistent with the 2003 warrant article and that it is what the people asked for. She indicated if the position is truly needed make the argument.

Mrs. Bourque indicated that the position was spoken about passionately. Mrs. Couture commented the warrant article states we can choose what we want to leave in the budget.

Mrs. Harrison commented she would argue we are not providing an adequate education at GMS and will be able to do so with a full time assistant principal.

Mrs. Couture commented this is a good time to ask the citizens as enrollment is declining and does not support an assistant principal. Mr. Miller commented it is not a question, it is the standard.

Mr. Pascucci agreed with Mrs. Couture. He commented that anyone can speak passionately about anything. He indicated the Committee's job is to take everything into consideration.

Mr. O'Neill commented he does not believe we made a passionate argument, but that we made a rational argument. He indicated the decision was based on the requirements of principalship and tremendous responsibilities of building administration (i.e. IEP meetings, scheduling, discipline, emergencies). He pointed out the other two buildings have full time assistant principals with four grade levels and GMS has a part time assistant principal with six grade levels. Mr. O'Neill believes this is the decision to increase the position from part time to full time is in the best possible interest of our children. He indicated at the elementary level it is the most important point for our children to receive the maximum level of education and instruction.

Mrs. Douglas commented she is opposing it because there is a process.

Mrs. Couture asked if we get the default budget what will happen to this position.

Mr. O'Neill indicated it is a very high priority. He stated if he has to choose between teachers in the classroom and increasing this position to full time, he will always choose to put teachers in the classrooms. He believes the administration is poorly understaffed. Mr. O'Neill explained there is a variety of educational experiences at the elementary level and a wide range of students. He noted his first priority is to put teachers in the classrooms.

Mr. Keating commented that his family felt the stresses of the administration.

VOTE: 3-5-0

The motion fails.

Mrs. Couture commented it is time to look at the assistant principal position at the middle school. She indicated there will be difficult decisions in March.

7. BUDGET REVIEW:

- **Revenues**
- **Default Budget**

Mr. O'Neill commented that he wants to be clear the operating budget has already been reduced by \$155,000, which decreases the difference between the operating budget and the default budget. He believes there will be significant reductions by the Budget Committee on December 22, which will close the gap between the operating budget and the default budget. He suggested caution when discussing the delta between the budgets as he believes that delta will change drastically. Mr. Cutter agreed.

Mr. Pascucci commented the School Board could vote it to be higher than it is currently. Mr. O'Neill commented the statement by the Business Administrator is there is currently only one variable. He indicated we are not going back to inflate the default budget.

Mrs. Couture asked about the technology replacement plan and commented it has not been approved by the School Board. Mr. O'Neill indicated that it was discussed by the School Board and they were in agreement with the plan. He noted the intent of the School Board Chair is to bring the plan forward for approval with the warrant articles.

Mrs. Couture commented that the concern is the School Board may be able to approve it, but it cannot be added to the default until approved by the vote of the community. She indicated curriculum money and technology money cannot be part of the default budget. She suggested asking legal counsel.

Mrs. Couture noted that in 2012 the proposed budget was \$104,379 higher than the default and it failed; in 2014 the proposed budget was \$170,130 higher than the default and it failed; in 2016 the proposed budget was \$55,000 higher than the default and it was approved by 71 votes. She commented it should be considered that a budget that is \$300,000 - \$400,000 higher than the default budget may not be approved.

Mr. O'Neill indicated he understands the process and by the time the Budget Committee is finished with their reductions the delta may be within historical parameters.

Mr. Miller asked about the additional \$106,000 for the special education placement. Mr. O'Neill indicated that will be added to the budget.

Mr. Miller asked about the need for a third grade teacher. Mr. O'Neill indicated it is not included in the budget. He commented that he stated if we need one we will see if it is possible.

Mrs. Couture commented March will be a difficult month. Mr. O'Neill felt the two budgets will be closer in difference by December 22. He believes there is a slim margin of swing votes in every district.

Mr. Pascucci commented we have had more attendance at the meetings and more letters indicated that we spend more money.

Mrs. Couture commented the challenge for the district is the close contact with people that have a connection with the school district. She indicated there are many people that do not have that connection and those are the people that are hard to reach.

Mr. O'Neill believes if Litchfield is going to be the very best community to live in it has to be that way for all. He commented many pay more to live in a community with outstanding schools. He believes what is being requested will be a very moderate tax impact.

8. REPORTS

- **Town**

There was no town report.

Mr. Cutter commented that we are coming closer to the end of the budget process and the tax cap needs to be addressed. He indicated the Board of Selectmen will be adjusting their budgets.

Mrs. Couture indicated she is not aware of any changes at this time.

- **RSA 32:22; Review of Expenditures**

9. MEMBER INPUT/NEW BUSINESS

There was no member input.

10. PUBLIC INPUT

Mr. Thompson commented that he added up all the positions covered by substitutes and the total is 65. Mrs. Couture indicated that is a lot.

DRAFT

21

11. ADJOURN

MOTION: by Mrs. Douglas

Move to adjourn the meeting

SECOND: by Mr. Keating

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 pm

Next Meeting: Thursday, December 8, 2016

Recorded by: Michele E. Flynn, Recording Secretary