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**Draft Minutes of the
Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting
Held on November 29, 2018**

8 The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, November 29, 2018 at Litchfield
9 Town Hall, 2 Liberty Way, Litchfield, NH 03052.

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11 **PRESENT:** C Couture (Chair), K Douglas (Vice Chair), J Bourque, J Martin, N Fordey, B
12 Hodgkins, R Meyers (School Board Representatives), B Lemire (Selectmen Representative)

13 Absent: J Whitnell, J Brunelle

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1. CALL TO ORDER

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

• PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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2. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

3. REVIEW / ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

- **November 1, 2018**
- **November 8, 2018**

MOTION: by Mrs. Douglas

Move to approve the minutes of November 1, 2018

SECOND: by Mrs. Fordey

VOTE: 6-0-1, with Mrs. Bourque abstaining

The motion carried.

MOTION: by Mrs. Douglas

Move to approve the minutes of November 8, 2018

SECOND: by Mrs. Martin

VOTE: 4-0-4

The motion carried.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

Mrs. Couture reported she received and distributed to the Committee several school district budget histories, salary histories, special education histories, attrition information and co-curricular information. She commented there was a question of nursing and how the budget was arrived at, the basis for staff requests, and the kindergarten teacher salary. She indicated she also received the object and function account reports for the FY20 School Board Recommended Budget.

She explained that the function account summary is a report of broad categories and spans across the district and departments of the total budget; object account summary contains all object

47 accounts across the budget. She commented she finds it easier to get an idea if the budget is in
48 line and is a way to compare from year to year.

49
50 Mrs. Couture announced a young lady in grade 8 at LMS adopted the Budget Committee as her
51 project and wants to know what the Budget Committee does. She will present us with an
52 ornament at the Festival of Trees at LMS.

53

54 **5. OLD BUSINESS**

55 **• Follow Up of Questions from November 15, 2018**

56 There was no old business.

57

58 **6. SCHOOL BUDGET DELIBERATIONS**

59 Mrs. Couture announced that the Budget Committee will make recommendations or changes
60 account by account in the order the budget was presented.

61

62 **Special Services**

63 Mrs. Douglas commented the analysis that Mrs. Couture sent to members was very helpful. She
64 indicated it is good historical data. She noted this is one of those budgets that we took a
65 percentage off based on historical data. She added the history reflects the three year total shows
66 90% of the budget was spent; the five year total shows 91% of the budget was spent.

67

68 Mrs. Bourque commented to clarify all the money not spent in Special Education is returned to
69 offset taxes.

70

71 Mrs. Couture indicated that is correct, but is also means that people's taxes are raised to get the
72 offset the following year.

73

74 Mr. Izbicki indicated the budget is based on actual students. He noted that the district cannot
75 predict if a family with a special needs student is going to move into the district.

76

77 Mrs. Douglas commented we hear that every year. She indicated there is a fund to cover those
78 expenses. She stated a cushion is being built in and we still have that reserve fund.

79

80 Mrs. Bandurski clarified no additional cushion is built into the Special Services budget. She
81 indicated this budget is based on current student needs and meeting the needs of those students
82 under federal and state law. She noted the budget reflects a decrease and we still plan to meet
83 the needs of the students.

84

85 Mr. Izbicki commented of the \$600,000 that was returned to the town, \$200,000 was from
86 Special Services.

87

88 Mrs. Couture commented it is not a reduction of \$168,000 if the budget totaled less. She
89 indicated she looked at the history and what a 1%, 2% or 3% reduction would look like. She
90 noted that 2% would be \$55,000 and she rounded it to \$60,000 for a historical reduction.

91

92

93 **MOTION:** by Mrs. Couture

94 *Move to reduce Function 1201, Special Services, by \$60,000*

95 **SECOND:** Mrs. Douglas

96

97 Mrs. Douglas commented the Budget Committee did not take any reduction last year. She
98 indicated her number is higher, but this moves us in the right direction.

99

100 Mrs. Bourque expressed belief that the district has been very transparent in the budget and would
101 not support a reduction in Special Services.

102

103 Mrs. Douglas commented if the students' needs currently require something that could change in
104 12 months, it means we should be facing reductions. She indicated we contract a bus to Alvirne
105 for Special Education and we run buses to Alvirne every day. She added that the Kinney Vento
106 item is also in the budget every year.

107

108 Mrs. Couture asked Committee members to keep in mind that one of the things that impacts the
109 budget is State aid and every year that aid gets reduced; also keep in mind we are raising money
110 unnecessarily that we return every year.

111

112 Mrs. Douglas commented when we lost the \$2M years ago we were forced to find reductions.
113 She indicated the State restored that funding and now we are seeing the taxes, but not the
114 corresponding offset.

115

116 Mr. Izbicki clarified this is not a \$2M loss and it is not a good situation to move that burden on
117 the taxpayers.

118

119 Mr. Lemire commented in this account if there were a reduction taken and they were to have a
120 deficit, there is a fund to offset that deficit so as not to affect those services.

121

122 Mrs. Douglas commented that in the event of a deficit we have the ability to call a special
123 meeting.

124

125 Mr. Izbicki asked if people are not happy with their tax bill, how are they going to feel when
126 those are affected going forward.

127

128 Mrs. Couture commented there are ways to remedy a deficit: deficit appropriation or warrant
129 articles.

130

131 Mr. Lemire commented if there is a special fund then he is more comfortable not appropriating
132 up front,

133

134 Mrs. Fordey commented it is hard to reduce \$60,000 and say figure out what it is. She felt it is
135 easier to identify what needs to be reduced and some of that is the history of what is needed.

136

137 Mrs. Couture commented we are not the educational experts to say this item is not needed. She
138 indicated that we do not have that knowledge of what is needed, which makes it more difficult.

139 **VOTE: 4-4-0, with Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Bourque, Mrs. Fordey and Mr. Meyers opposing**
140 **The motion failed.**

141
142 **Curriculum Development**

143
144 **MOTION:** by Mrs. Fordey
145 *Move to reduce Function 2210, Improvement – Instruction, by \$4,000*
146 **SECOND:** by Mrs. Douglas

147
148 Mrs. Fordey commented that she feels that it is not necessary for a 10 member team to attend the
149 Competency Design Studio

150
151 Mr. Meyers indicated, as a teacher, he was pleased that was proposed in the budget.

152
153 Mrs. Douglas commented this is one account she would not reduce as she is in favor of better
154 curriculum in the schools.

155
156 Ms. Widman explained this is a cross district opportunity to get members from all buildings to
157 attend the workshop. She indicated it is an investment in our staff and the reality this change is
158 to be done and done well has to come from the staff.

159
160 Mr. Meyers indicated since Ms. Widman has come to the district he has seen better work in the
161 schools and with the staff.

162
163 Mrs. Couture commented this is an overall reduction and not a reduction in one place.

164
165 **VOTE: 3-5-0**
166 **The motion failed.**

167
168 **Technology**

169 Mr. Hodgkins commented that he would like clarification in the budget on the Chromebooks.

170
171 Mrs. Couture indicated they are for the incoming fifth grade students.

172
173 Mr. Pelletier explained originally we were going to give incoming 9th grade students new
174 Chromebooks and recycle the 8th grade devices to grade 5, but we decided that grade 8 students
175 can bring their devices with them to grade 9 and the new ones would go to grade 5 students. He
176 noted that the students will have them for their tenure through the system.

177
178 Mr. Hodgkins commented that he feels parents can pay for the devices themselves. He added
179 they buy their children expensive cell phones so they should be able to purchase the devices for
180 their children. He commented if you can afford to live in this town you should be able to
181 purchase a Chromebook.

182
183 Mrs. Douglas asked if there was a ‘bring your own device’ program at one time.

184 Mr. Pelletier indicated there was a pilot the first year where we allowed parents the option to
185 purchase a device. He commented each year we narrowed it down to how many students could
186 do it and those that could not.

187

188 Mr. Hodgkins commented it is a cost that is incurred every year and should not be a school or
189 taxpayer responsibility to provide those devices.

190

191 Mrs. Bourque disagreed and commented one could use the same logic for textbooks.

192

193 Mrs. Couture commented public education should allow all children to access education equally.
194 She indicated that when a person goes to work for a company they provide the tools for you to
195 do your job. She added you do not give a textbook list parents and expect them to purchase the
196 books.

197

198 Mrs. Douglas asked if the school issues calculators to students.

199

200 Mrs. Couture indicated they issue calculators to those who cannot afford them.

201

202 Mr. Meyers clarified that a 'bring your own device' program is problematic because students
203 bring in different devices.

204

205 Mr. Lemire commented technology is essential in the growth of our students. He indicated it is
206 extremely important to have the consistent ability to perform as a group and the need for the
207 teacher to have the ability to know they are working off the same equipment. He noted there are
208 people in this town that cannot afford to do that. Mr. Lemire commented that he has no problem
209 with his tax dollars supporting technology. He added soon, globally, there will not be textbooks.
210 He indicated that technology is the last thing we should be reducing. He noted we should
211 provide a consistent product for consistent learning and instruction.

212

213 Mr. Pelletier commented in talking to districts with the model where parents pay for the devices
214 for their children there are problems. He indicated sometimes the parents do not provide the
215 device in preparation for the start of school. He noted we have those devices ready over the
216 summer for day one for the students.

217

218 Mrs. Douglas commented that the 1:1 program should have been implemented on the warrant.
219 She noted that nothing can be done about it now, but we can remind people we had this
220 discussion.

221

222 Mr. Hodgkins felt he cannot support it. He commented there is not much business in town and
223 you are taxing people in the town and not the businesses. He indicated taxes keep increasing.
224 He asked how many times can you go back to the trough until people say they cannot afford to
225 live in his town.

226

227 Mrs. Douglas commented she is favor of the principle, but does not feel it is workable.

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229 Mr. Izbicki indicated there were options proposed and this is the option that was chosen.

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VOTE: 1-7-0, with Mr. Hodgkins in support

The motion failed.

Mrs. Douglas asked about the life expectancy of the devices for LMS and CHS.

Mr. Pelletier indicated everything is on a five year plan.

Mrs. Douglas asked about the life expectancy of the switch that is budgeted for replacement.

Mr. Pelletier indicated the life expectancy is approximately five years.

Mrs. Douglas asked if they can be replaced in phases and not all at once. She asked how many switches we have.

Mr. Pelletier indicated that they are being replaced in phases and there are approximately 25 switches.

Mrs. Douglas asked why two administrators have cell phones at one school, but only one administrator has a cell phone at the other schools.

Mrs. Couture indicated there are more administrators at CHS.

Mr. Pelletier indicated that the Facility Manager and Maintenance Manager are only housed at CHS, but are district employees.

Mrs. Douglas asked how we arrived at 15 extra Chromebooks.

Mr. Pelletier indicated it is based on incoming students and also helps with loaners.

Mrs. Douglas asked about the smartboards at GMS.

Mr. Pelletier indicated that we restructured at the high school last year and we are spacing them out as needed for repair or replacement.

CHS

Mrs. Fordey commented there was some discussion about lab fees by the School Board and there was a decision made to put that back in budget.

Mr. Lonergan explained we were charging FACS students a \$20 lab fee each semester. He noted when the budget was reduced years ago the teacher asked for the implementation of lab fees for different labs she teaches.

Mrs. Couture indicated we do not charge students a lab fee for science materials or tech ed materials.

276 Mrs. Fordey recollected when she was in school the students paid extra fees for things needed in
277 FACS. She commented it goes back to the fact the taxpayers are funding it.

278
279 Mrs. Douglas commented she can see both sides. She noted she had to pay fees in school as
280 well, but if we do not charge for wood shop we should not charge for FACS.

281
282 Mrs. Fordey asked about the English course textbook replacement that is budgeted. She asked if
283 there is any idea how many books are damaged or lost and if students pay for them.

284
285 Mr. Lonergan indicated students are not allowed to walk at graduation if they do not pay for a
286 lost or damaged book. He noted that money goes into the general fund, but we still have to
287 replace some books.

288
289 Mrs. Couture spoke to co-curricular and athletic activities. She indicated that typically the
290 Budget Committee makes a reduction in co-curricular salaries because not all activities or clubs
291 are run each year.

292
293 **MOTION:** by Mrs. Couture
294 *Move to reduce CHS Function 1410, Co-Curricular Salaries, by \$12,000*
295 **SECOND:** by Mrs. Douglas

296
297 Mrs. Couture commented that she took into account some of the changes in the co-curricular list
298 from the SAU office. She indicated the reduction is based on history and additional information
299 and what reduced previously.

300
301 Mrs. Bourque indicated her number was higher. She commented she was going to propose
302 \$21,000 across all three schools.

303
304 **MOTION:** by Mrs. Bourque
305 *Move to amend the motion to reduce Function 1410 across all three schools by \$21,000*
306 **SECOND:** by Mrs. Douglas

307
308 Mrs. Couture reminded the Committee this is a reduction for the whole function account
309 including salaries.

310
311 Mrs. Bourque inquired which clubs are run and which are actually vacant.

312
313 Mrs. Couture clarified it is the principals' decision which co-curricular clubs are run and which
314 are not run.

315
316 Mrs. Douglas commented it seems like a reasonable number as we are not denying any positions
317 that are run.

318
319 Mrs. Couture clarified we are not cutting any positions. She indicated we are making a broad
320 reduction across the district for principals to decide what will be funded.

321

322 **VOTE ON THE AMENDED MOTION TO REDUCE FUNCTION ACCOUNT 1410 BY**
323 **\$21,000: 7-1-0, with Mr. Meyers opposing**
324 **The amended motion carried.**

325
326 **VOTE ON THE MAIN MOTION TO REDUCE FUNCTION ACCOUNT 1410 BY**
327 **\$21,000: 7-1-0, with Mr. Meyers opposing**
328 **The main motion carried.**

329
330 **MOTION:** by Mrs. Bourque
331 *Move to reduce Function Account 1420 across CHS and LMS by \$5,000*
332 **SECOND:** by Mrs. Douglas

333
334 Mrs. Bourque indicated she is reducing the vacant positions. Mrs. Bourque indicated that she, in
335 fact, cannot make that motion as she is employed as a coach.

336
337 *Mrs. Bourque withdrew her motion.*
338 *Mrs. Douglas withdrew her second.*

339
340 **MOTION:** by Mrs. Douglas
341 *Move to reduce Function Account 1420 across CHS and LMS by \$5,000*
342 **SECOND:** by Mrs. Fordey
343 **VOTE: 6-1-1, with Mr. Meyers opposing and Mrs. Bourque abstaining**
344 **The motion carried.**

345
346 Mrs. Douglas inquired about Challenge Day.

347
348 Mr. Lonergan indicated that it is a program that creates a climate change with regard to anti-
349 bullying. It is about bringing the community together and making a significant difference. He
350 commented we are looking to have it be an annual activity.

351
352 Mrs. Douglas commented she feels uncomfortable with these types of programs and she does not
353 know a lot about it. She indicated this can be done well or it can be controversial.

354
355 Mrs. Couture indicated the program was offered in the past and is something that has a track
356 record in town. She noted if there were an issue we would have heard from parents by now.

357
358 Mr. Lonergan indicated it is a powerful program and helps students to understand differences
359 and similarities and how to get past challenges in school.

360
361 Mrs. Douglas commented she is uncomfortable with social programs in schools.

362
363 Mr. Lonergan indicated social-emotional learning is critical in schools.

364
365 Mr. Lemire indicated that we have to remember from years past we should be careful in reducing
366 items for policy instead of financially.

367

368 Mrs. Fordey asked what is offered for \$16,000.

369
370 Mr. Lonergan explained that speakers and consultants come in and work with students, staff and
371 community teams. He indicated that travel and accommodations are also included.

372
373 Mrs. Couture indicated this is a co-curricular program and we have already taken a reduction.
374 She noted it is up to the principals to decide which programs to fund and not up to this
375 committee to make that decision.

376
377 Mrs. Douglas asked if parents have requested it. She wanted to know why we are running
378 something new.

379
380 Mrs. Couture indicated it is not new and has been going on for 10 years. She repeated we would
381 have heard of any issues from parents by now.

382

383 **LMS**

384 **MOTION:** by Mrs. Bourque

385 *Move to reduce LMS Object 610, Supplies, by \$5,000*

386 **SECOND:** by Mrs. Douglas

387

388 Mrs. Bourque commented she wanted to bring the cost of supplies per pupil closer to the high
389 school supplies cost. She believes that there is less need for paper and pencil supplies with the
390 1:1 program.

391

392 Mr. Lecklider commented that the impact on supplies will occur over time. He indicated there
393 are many variables to classroom supplies. He noted when we look at curriculum resources in our
394 cycle that is where you will see the reduction. He believes it is too soon to reduce those supplies
395 this year as this is the first year the 1:1 program has been implemented at LMS. He indicated
396 that we would like to have a tool box for teachers so there is not just one resource.

397

398 Mrs. Douglas commented even with the 1:1 program there will still be those who embrace paper
399 and pencils supplies.

400

401 Mrs. Couture commented historically the budgeted amount is on target and we really do not have
402 the data to know the impact of the 1:1 program.

403

404 **VOTE: 2-6-0**

405 **The motion failed.**

406

407 Mrs. Fordey asked if, in regard to textbook replacement, there are specific older textbooks that
408 are planned for replacement.

409

410 Mr. Lecklider indicated sometimes a series of books or content specific area is budgeted. He
411 commented that this is not a large number in terms of replacement and it is just books that age
412 out.

413

414 Mrs. Couture explained the history looks off because the number has been moved around to
415 different accounts.

416

417 **GMS**

418 Mrs. Couture commented according to one of the histories sent out, GMS has been the school
419 that has been underfunded consistently.

420

421 **MOTION:** by Mrs. Bourque

422 *Move to reduce GMS Object Account 610, Supplies, by \$6,000*

423 **SECOND:** by Mrs. Douglas

424

425 Mrs. Bourque commented she is proposing the reduction from \$60 per student to
426 \$40 per student. She indicated she hears from people that there are so many supplies that
427 additional supplies are not needed. She noted she was not sure if that is the case.

428

429 Mr. Thompson commented that we are actually concerned about supplies due to the increase in
430 students. He indicated elementary education is supply heavy and because we do not have the 1:1
431 program we use a lot of paper, folders, markers, crayons, etc. He noted that the rationale for the
432 other two schools is the 1:1 program, but GMS is not there.

433

434 *Mrs. Bourque withdrew her motion.*

435 *Mrs. Douglas withdrew her second.*

436

437 Mrs. Fordey commented she would be concerned if students did not need to buy supplies.

438

439 Mr. Thompson indicated some do buy supplies. He explained we do not want students with
440 supplies and those without to be visible. He commented we, as a school, feel an obligation and
441 duty to provide what students need to thrive.

442

443 **Food Service**

444 There were no changes.

445

446 **HR**

447 There were no changes.

448

449 **Salaries and Benefits**

450 Mrs. Couture indicated she asked for attrition information for this year. She noted there is
451 \$218,944 in attrition for this year according to the data.

452

453 Mrs. Messenger noted she looked at all the employees that left and all the salaries that are
454 different.

455

456 Mrs. Couture commented that in the past the Budget Committee always made an attrition
457 reduction. She indicated more attrition occurs at the middle and elementary schools. She noted
458 last year the School Board decided to make an attrition reduction.

459

460 Mr. Izbicki indicated the School Board made a \$200,000 attrition reduction in salaries and a
461 \$50,000 attrition reduction in benefits last year.

462
463 Mrs. Couture commented there was no attrition reduction this year. Mrs. Bourque asked for the
464 rationale.

465
466 Mr. Izbicki commented that the concern is cutting that number too close while projecting
467 \$150,000 in the budget.

468
469 Mrs. Douglas indicated there are three intents to retire.

470
471 Mr. Izbicki indicated there is no guarantee they will retire.

472
473 Mrs. Couture indicated she looked at all salaries and benefits and calculated what a 1% reduction
474 would look like. She commented 1% is approximately \$174,000, which is less than the
475 \$250,000 proposed last year.

476
477 **MOTION:** by Mrs. Douglas

478 *Move to reduce the FY20 Salaries and Benefits budget by \$174,000*

479 **SECOND:** by Mr. Hodgkins

480 **VOTE: 5-3-0**

481 **The motion carried.**

482
483 Mr. Lemire indicated he is more comfortable with Mr. Izbicki's projection.

484
485 Mrs. Couture indicated that provides historical room.

486
487 **SAU**

488 There were no changes.

489
490 **School Board**

491 There were no changes.

492
493 **Business Office**

494 There were no changes.

495
496 **Transportation**

497 Mrs. Couture asked for a status on contract negotiations.

498
499 Mr. Izbicki indicated that there was a meeting set for today, but with the Superintendent out of
500 town it was moved to next week. He commented there may be some room for savings.

501
502 Mrs. Couture commented with transportation for Special Services we assume the worst case
503 scenario and yet every year we are able to get better pricing and some sharing to bring that
504 number down.

505

506 **MOTION:** by Mrs. Douglas
507 *Move to reduce Function 2721, Student Transportation, by \$10,800*
508 **SECOND:** by Mr. Hodgkins

509
510 Mrs. Douglas commented she calculated the difference between a 3% increase and a 5% increase
511 that is budgeted to come up with the reduction.

512
513 Mrs. Bourque indicated she would like to wait until the contract is negotiated.

514
515 Mrs. Couture commented we can make new decisions the night of the Budget Hearing.

516
517 Mrs. Douglas commented she would like to have the potential increase to be accurate.

518
519 **VOTE: 4-4-0**
520 **The motion failed.**

521
522 **Special Services Transportation**
523 **MOTION:** by Mrs. Couture
524 *Move to reduce Function 2722, Transportation Special, by \$40,000*
525 **SECOND:** by Mrs. Douglas

526
527 Mrs. Couture indicated there is always a savings in this line. She commented that she looked at
528 the historical information and determined a 9% reduction.

529
530 **VOTE: 6-2-0**
531 **The motion carried.**

532
533 **Buildings and Grounds**
534
535 **MOTION:** by Mrs. Bourque
536 *Move to reduce Object 610, Supplies Buildings and Grounds, by \$6,000*
537 **SECOND:** by Mrs. Douglas

538
539 Mrs. Bourque commented that the district is asking for an increase for the new kindergarten
540 portables, but the account was underspent last year.

541
542 Mr. Izbicki indicated with the new portable classrooms and the amount of kindergarten students
543 we are not sure how much we will need.

544
545 *Mrs. Bourque withdrew her motion.*
546 *Mrs. Douglas withdrew her second.*

547
548 Mrs. Couture indicated that the Budget Committee made \$240,000 in reductions. She noted the
549 town is scheduled for the next meeting to review warrant articles.

550
551

552 **7. MEMBER INPUT/ NEW BUSINESS**

553 There was no member input or new business.

554

555 **8. PUBLIC INPUT**

556 There was no public input.

557

558 **9. ADJOURN**

559 **MOTION:** by Mrs. Bourque

560 *Move to adjourn the meeting.*

561 **SECOND:** by Mrs. Douglas

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

563 **The motion carried.**

564

565 **Next meeting: December 6, 2018**

566

567 The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

568

569 **Recorded by: Michele E. Flynn, Recording Secretary**

570

571 **Approved:**