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**Minutes of the  
Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting  
Held on April 18, 2019**

8 The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, April 18, 2019, at Litchfield  
9 Town Hall, Two Liberty Way, Litchfield, NH 03052.

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11 **PRESENT:** K Douglas (Chair), J Martin, B Hodgkins, A Cutter, W Hayes, R Meyers (School  
12 Board Representative), B Lemire and R Leary (Selectmen Representatives)

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14 Absent: J Bourque, N Fordey

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**• PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**2. PUBLIC INPUT**

There was no public input.

**3. REVIEW / ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

**• January 10, 2019**

**MOTION:** by Mrs. Martin

*Move to approve the minutes of January 10, 2019*

**SECOND:** by Mr. Hodgkins

**VOTE: 4-0-3, with Mr. Leary, Mr. Hayes and Mr. Cutter abstaining**

**The motion carried.**

**• February 9, 2019**

**MOTION:** by Mrs. Martin

*Move to approve the minutes of February 9, 2019*

**SECOND:** by Mrs. Douglas

**VOTE: 4-0-3, with Mr. Leary, Mr. Hayes and Mr. Cutter abstaining**

**The motion carried.**

**• March 28, 2019**

Mrs. Douglas mentioned that there was a small revision made to the minutes prior to the meeting.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Cutter

*Move to approve the amended minutes of March 28, 2019*

**SECOND:** by Mrs. Douglas

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**The motion carried.**

**4. CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

48  
49 Mrs. Douglas announced that a concern was raised with regard to Budget Committee members  
50 referring to town and district officials/staff by name. She indicated it was suggested to reference  
51 their position or title.

52

## 53 **5. OLD BUSINESS**

### 54 **• Adoption of Bylaws**

55 **MOTION:** by Mr. Cutter

56 *Move to adopt the Litchfield Budget Committee Bylaws*

57 **SECOND:** by Mrs. Martin

58 **VOTE: 7-0-0**

59 **The motion carried.**

60

### 61 **• Updates via Social Media**

62 Mrs. Douglas recapped that a discussion regarding transparency through the use of social media  
63 occurred at the previous meeting.

64

65 Mr. Cutter reported that he met with the Town IT Manager and set up a system for posting  
66 information for the Budget Committee. He explained the IT Manager recommended uploading  
67 information to the Litchfield NH file pages, which are linked to the Town Facebook page,  
68 Twitter and the Litchfield What's Up page. He noted that postings will be done in the  
69 recommended manner.

70

71 Mrs. Douglas mentioned all information will be archived on the Town's web page.

72

### 73 **• NHMA Training Update**

74 Mrs. Douglas indicated that she reached out to the NH Municipal Association to set up an in-  
75 house training for the Budget Committee. She announced that there will be a training on June 27  
76 during the Budget Committee meeting. She extended an invitation to the Board of Selectmen  
77 and School Board to attend the meeting, as well as anyone interested in attending.

78

### 79 **• Budget Review Calendar**

80 Mrs. Douglas recapped that during the March meeting, a proposal was made to hold budget  
81 reviews on Saturday(s) this fall.

82

83 Mr. Cutter explained it was to make it easier for those members who may not be able to attend  
84 all the sessions.

85

86 Mrs. Douglas indicated there are issues with district department heads on weekends. She noted  
87 that there is a tentative calendar and suggested the Budget Committee move forward with the  
88 budget review calendar created.

89

### 90 **• IT Expenses and Access**

91 Mrs. Douglas indicated that some questions were asked and answered regarding the Town  
92 budget IT expenditures from last year's budget.

93

94 Mr. Cutter explained his intent was not to question the Board of Selectmen, but to be sure a  
95 process was in place.

96

97 **6. REPORTS**

98 • **Town Business**

99 ○ **General Update**

100 ○ **Fire Station Update**

101 ○ **Water Update**

102 Mr. Lemire reported there were no updates since the previous month.

103

104 Mr. Cutter expressed his appreciation for the Town's responses to his questions.

105

106 Mr. Lemire commented that it is a difficult task for a municipality when predicating on the  
107 budget for previous years. He indicated there are many unknowns, such as the number of snow  
108 storms, fire calls, police, calls, price of recyclables, number of library books checked out, the  
109 number of vehicle registrations, but we do the best we can. He noted there are sometimes  
110 emergent issues that arise that have to be addressed.

111

112 Mrs. Douglas mentioned there was paving being done on Albuquerque Avenue this week.

113

114 Mr. Lemire indicated that Route 3A will be paved as well.

115

116 • **School Business**

117 ○ **General Update**

118 ○ **Financial Update**

119 Mr. Meyers reported that funds approved for the Capital Reserve Fund will be deposited from  
120 end of year funds; the district will launch a new HR software; the finance software is being  
121 upgraded and there was a meeting at GMS today regarding installation of the fencing.

122

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

124 • **Discussion of Analysis of Town Budget**

125 Mr. Cutter indicated that he distributed the analysis of the Town budget and asked Committee  
126 members if there were any questions.

127

128 Mr. Meyers asked why this is being done for last year's budget when we will be going through  
129 this process on this year's budget.

130

131 MR. Cutter indicated it is to help the Committee understand how he reviews the budget and the  
132 questions he will ask.

133

134 Mrs. Douglas commented that it is hoped the town or school would bring forth a budget that does  
135 not exceed a certain amount or percentage.

136

137 Mr. Cutter commented that this is not just looking at the budget and weighing in, but analyzing  
138 expenditures and trends.

139

140 Mrs. Douglas commented we have a discussion each year at this time regarding what we would  
141 like to see in the review process going forward. She noted that the budget review is line by line.  
142

143 Mr. Meyers commented the Budget Committee's job is the bottom line. He indicated that he  
144 does not see why the conversation has to occur before questions to the Town Administrator or  
145 District Administration.  
146

147 Mrs. Douglas commented that she is willing to welcome any conversation that comes forward.  
148

149 Mr. Cutter explained that it is just for transparency.  
150

151 Mr. Lemire commented that he was a former Budget Committee member some years prior and  
152 tried to fight the tax cap because it hinders the Budget Committee. He explained the Budget  
153 Committee cannot submit a budget that exceeds the tax cap and does not provide flexibility if  
154 needs are warranted for funding that exceeds the cap. He believes not a lot of thought went into  
155 the tax cap when it was presented and approved. Mr. Lemire indicated the Budget Committee is  
156 elected to present a budget to the town and the tax cap removes the ability to present a budget  
157 you feel is appropriate if you need to exceed it.  
158

159 Mrs. Douglas commented that the tax cap was approved by the voters and can only be rescinded  
160 if someone brings forth an article to do so.  
161

162 Mr. Cutter agreed with Mr. Lemire's remarks. He indicated there were some articles he was  
163 unable to support during a previous Budget Committee term.  
164

165 Mr. Lemire indicated that it is fortunate the townspeople can override the tax cap at Deliberative  
166 Session.  
167

168 Mr. Cutter commented the cap is a maximum number and if there are other ways to present a  
169 budget that is lower we should have that ability.  
170

171 Mr. Cutter suggested the School Board consider joining the Budget Committee during the budget  
172 analysis review.  
173

174 Mr. Meyers indicated that the analysis would need to be published prior to that meeting.  
175

176 Mr. Cutter indicated that he sent the documents to Budget Committee members. He commented  
177 that it may be a technical issue.  
178

179 Mr. Meyers indicated it would be preferable to have the analysis and questions so he can get the  
180 answers and responses for those Committee members and not have to spend 3 or 4 meetings on  
181 it.  
182

183 Mrs. Douglas commented the Town responses were received to members' questions. She asked  
184 if members had more questions.  
185

186 Mr. Cutter commented that in follow up to his questions regarding the technology line for the  
 187 Town budget, the actual expenditures far exceeded the budget, which was attributable to the  
 188 technology for the new fire station. He asked if that should have been allocated under the cost in  
 189 the fire department article.

190  
 191 Mr. Lemire indicated that could have been done that way, but we knew we would have to go  
 192 back and find additional funds for the technology within the appropriations in order to stay  
 193 within the lower cost for the new station. He noted that the technology for the police station is  
 194 included as well, which was a proactive step.

195  
 196 • **Discussion of Analysis of School Budget**

197 Mr. Meyers commented that it would be difficult to discuss the analysis since he and others did  
 198 not receive it prior to the meeting.

199  
 200 Mr. Cutter offered to table the discussion to the May 23 meeting and recirculate the analysis.

201  
 202 • **Member Input**

203 Mr. Meyers commented that he will pass along the invitation to the School Board members to  
 204 attend the June 27 Budget Committee meeting.

205  
 206 Mr. Cutter indicated he offered to present his analysis at a School Board meeting, but did not yet  
 207 receive a response.

208  
 209 Mrs. Douglas asked Mr. Meyers to inquire of Mr. Cutter's request to the School Board.

210  
 211 **8. PUBLIC INPUT**

212 Elizabeth MacDonald, 46 Naticook Avenue, asked if the Town budget analysis was posted  
 213 because it was discussed by the Budget Committee. She commented that she could not find it  
 214 online.

215  
 216 Mr. Cutter explained that it is uploaded to the Litchfield town page and then linked to  
 217 Litchfield's Facebook page and Twitter. He noted that all documents will be posted and  
 218 available to everyone on Facebook through the method recommended by the IT Manager, who  
 219 will review posts prior to publishing.

220  
 221 Mrs. Douglas encouraged the public to either attend a meeting to ask questions about  
 222 information posted online or to email the Budget Committee.

223  
 224 **9. ADJOURN**

225 **MOTION:** by Mr. Cutter

226 *Move to adjourn the meeting.*

227 **SECOND:** by Mr. Hodgkins

228 **VOTE: 7-0-0**

229 **The motion carried.**

230

231 **Next meeting: May 23, 2019**

232

233 The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

234

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

236

237 **Approved:**

DRAFT