

**Minutes of the
Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting
Held on August 22, 2019**

The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, August 22, 2019, at Litchfield Town Hall, Two Liberty Way, Litchfield, NH 03052.

PRESENT: K Douglas (Chair); A Cutter (Vice Chair); J Martin, N Fordey, W Hayes, R Meyers (School Board Representative), R Leary (Selectmen Representatives)

Absent: J Bourque, B Hodgkins

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

● **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

2. REVIEW / ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Mr. Cutter requested to add a status on the progress of the District Capital Planning Committee to the agenda.

3. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

4. REVIEW / ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

● **June 27, 2019**

MOTION: by Mr. Cutter

Move to approve the minutes of June 27, 2019

SECOND: by Mrs. Fordey

VOTE: 7-0-0

The motion carried.

MOTION: by Mr. Cutter

Move to approve the minutes of August 5, 2019

SECOND: by Mrs. Fordey

VOTE: 7-0-0

The motion carried.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

Mrs. Douglas indicated that she has received and forwarded to the Committee letters from residents in support of the teachers' contract, a summary of the court hearing for the request to hold a Special Meeting from Dr. Jette, and reports from the Town and School District.

Mr. Cutter thanked all those who took the time to write in regarding the teachers' contract. He expressed appreciation for their input.

Mrs. Douglas echoed Mr. Cutter's sentiments. She commented that the Budget Committee is trying to be sensitive to transparency during the process. On a separate note, Mrs. Douglas asked Committee members to keep in mind when replying to an email from a member of the Committee, not to "reply all", but only reply to the person who sent the email.

Mr. Cutter commented, in the spirit of transparency, there was an email sent today regarding budget review for the town to the Chair with questions for the town administrator, which triggered a "reply all" response.

6. REPORTS

- **Town Business**
 - **General Update**

Mr. Leary reported that questions received from Mr. Cutter regarding the 2019 Town Budget have the following responses:

Assessing: ongoing

Billing for Services: when they reach a certain percentage the billing is sent

NRPC Planner: not all billed yet

Cemetery Groundskeeping: a bit over budget

Public Notices/Ads: two ads for building inspector position were costly due to the use of multiple sources

Police Department Seminars: will ask the Town Administrator

Fire Department Heating: heat is running at both locations, but we will investigate further

Fire Protection Gear: purchases not all entered yet

Salary Code Enforcement: there were some temporary employees that were entered in a separate line in the budget; an offer has been made to one of the candidates who applied for the position

Highway Road Maintenance: road agent retired and full time employee filled the position; further information from Town Administrator

Catch Basin Replacements: possible accounting error

Salt Purchases: salt shed is full

Highway Vehicle Lease: plow truck

Street Lighting: Select Board has not yet discussed it]

Mr. Cutter commented there was discussion regarding switching to LED lighting.

Mrs. Douglas clarified there was discussion over the maintenance and the cost of the lighting.

Animal Control: will ask Town Administrator about building repairs

- **Financial Update**

Mr. Leary reported that the budget is trending in line.

Mrs. Douglas asked Mr. Leary to get an update on the PFOA status and legal costs.

- **Budget Review Schedule**

Mrs. Douglas indicated the town budget review will begin in October. She asked if there was any change to the order from last year.

Mr. Leary indicated there has been no mention of any changes to the schedule.

- **Schedule of Facility Tours**

Mrs. Douglas commented that the facility tour schedule has been received. June 17: Highway Department tour; September 5: Library, Cable, Old Fire Station, Town Hall tours; September 12: Town Office, Police Station, Fire Station; September 30: Solid Waste, Recycling, Dog Kennel.

Mr. Cutter commented that presented priorities not covered from the Board perspective should be included.

Mrs. Douglas asked if the tours can be recorded by the Cable Committee.

Mr. Leary reported that the town is working on hiring a building inspector, the full time employee was promoted to Road Agent, working on the transfer from Chief O’Brion to Captain Sargent; hired a police officer for the vacant position, one officer is being deployed.

- **School Business**

- **General Update**

Mr. Meyers reported teachers return on Tuesday, August 27 for District-wide opening day activities and professional development over three days; an open positions overview was provided to the School Board.

- **Financial Update**

Mr. Meyers reported the DOE 25 is due on September 1.

- **Summer Projects**

Mr. Meyers reported all projects were completed over the summer. He provided a list of projects to the Budget Committee. He indicated all projects came in at or below budget.

- **Teachers' Contract Update**

Mr. Meyers reported that the court decision regarding holding a special meeting will be posted electronically and as soon as we hear we will start the process. At this time everything is considered ongoing until the decision is received.

- **Kindergarten Enrollment Projections**

Mr. Meyers reported that currently the enrollment is at 72 students and one additional is enrolling October 1.

Mr. Meyers mentioned that, in reference to the teachers' contract, attrition costs are trending with a savings.

Mrs. Douglas asked how the food service deficit will affect the budget.

Mr. Meyers commented that it is expected to only be for FY19. He indicated much new equipment was purchased to replace older, non-working equipment, cafeterias repainted and there are many new meals. He noted that Ms. Crowley has done a remarkable job aligning with federal reimbursement. Mr. Meyers reported that meals sold have increased significantly.

Mrs. Flynn suggested that Committee members tour the schools and cafeterias.

Capital Planning Committee

Mr. Meyers indicated he does not have any information at this time.

Mrs. Fordey asked Mrs. Douglas to email Dr. Jette about touring the schools and cafeterias.

Mr. Cutter mentioned an email was sent to Dr. Jette regarding costs for the special election and to request all the costs as a summary.

Mr. Leary mentioned that legal costs should be included.

Mr. Meyers commented if the judge approves the meeting we will actually be saving money in legal fees compared to what we could spend next March.

Mr. Leary commented many people are angry that the money is being spent.

Mr. Meyers commented it is not a hidden process.

Mr. Leary indicated it sets a bad precedent. He commented the teachers are caught in the middle and deserve a contract.

Mrs. Douglas indicated that the only responsibility of the Budget Committee is financial. She commented that she has explained the Committee's concerns. She noted the School Board needs to understand that there are two separate discussions: 1) is this a food value for the voters and the teachers; 2) rationale for the special meeting. She mentioned that this is new ground for many and the School Board did follow the process according to the law.

7. MEMBER INPUT / NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Fordey commented that everyone learned a lot through the whole process for the special meeting. She indicated the last meeting of the Budget Committee was in June and many things occurred that the Committee was not privy to. She believes that honest and transparent actions have been taken and if there are any hard feelings, this is the forum to voice them.

Mrs. Douglas announced the next meeting of the Budget Committee will be September 26; Deliberative Session is tentatively scheduled for September 3 with voting on October 1.

8. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

9. ADJOURN

MOTION: by Mr. Cutter

Move to adjourn the meeting.

SECOND: by Mr. Hayes

VOTE: 7-0-0

The motion carried.

Next meeting: September 26, 2019

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Recorded by: Michele E. Flynn, Recording Secretary

Approved: