

**Minutes of the
Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting
Held on January 16, 2020**

The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, January 16, 2020 at Campbell High School, 1 Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

PRESENT: K Douglas (Chair), A Cutter (Vice Chair), J Bourque, J Martin, N Fordey, B Hodgkins, W Hayes, R Leary (Selectmen's Representative), R Meyers (School Board Representative)

Absent:

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Douglas called the meeting to order at 7:55 p.m.

2. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

3. REVIEW / ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

● **January 2, 2020**

MOTION: by Mrs. Bourque

Move to approve the minutes of January 2, 2020 as amended

SECOND: by Mr. Cutter

VOTE: 8-0-1, with Mr. Hodgkins abstaining

The motion carried.

● **January 9, 2020**

The January 9, 2020 minutes were tabled until the next meeting.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

Mrs. Douglas announced the following items were received: petitioned article (town), hearing presentations, notification from the Town Administrator regarding error in 2020 Default budget.

5. OLD BUSINESS / MEMBER INPUT

Mr. Cutter raised concerns regarding the fluctuating numbers of the school district budget. He asked if the district's numbers are accurate. He commented if the numbers are not accurate the Committee should not vote a recommendation on Article 1.

Mrs. Douglas commented that she received Mr. Cutter's calculations and Mr. Izbicki's calculations.

Mr. Cutter asked about the difference between the two calculations.

Dr. Jette indicated Mr. Izbicki is not sure where the Budget Committee's starting number came from. He expressed confidence in the district's numbers. He pointed out that the number the Budget Committee is looking at is from the original Excel file of the FY21 budget.

Dr. Jette explained that it was determined the spreadsheet from the finance system was not complete at the time the original Excel file was downloaded. He commented this can occur when we export these files from the system.

Mr. Izbicki pointed out that the official MS-22 FY2 budget was revised when the teachers' contract was approved in October.

6. TOWN BUDGET

• Warrant Articles

Mr. Cutter thanked the Town Administrator and Town Clerk for vetting the petitioned article with regard to the request to increase the Veterans' Credit. He commented that an increase in the Veterans' Credit may put the tax cap at risk.

It was suggested that the Committee defer voting until more information and clarification are received from the Town.

7. SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

• Warrant Articles

Article 1 - Operating Budget (\$23,517,016)

Mrs. Douglas recommended the Committee defer voting on Article 1 until the issue is resolved.

Mrs. Bourque asked if the Committee can vote tonight and vote again once the School Board has completed their meeting.

Mr. Izbicki provided an explanation of how eFinance and Cognos communicate. He indicated there is a difference of \$61,697 cited by the Budget Committee Chair from FY20. He commented it was suggested that it may be from a warrant article. He explained that warrant articles do not make it into Cognos.

Mr. Leary commented that he is unwilling to vote on Article 1 unless there is a hard number.

Dr. Jette emphasized the number that was reported to the State on the MS-22 is accurate and asked that Mr. Leary refrain from indicating district numbers are not "hard numbers".

Mrs. Douglas suggested scheduling a meeting sometime early next week to vote on Article 1. The Committee settled on scheduling a meeting for Monday, January 20, 2020 to take up school district and town articles that have not been voted.

Article 2 - LSSA Collective Bargaining Agreement (\$67,521)

The Budget Committee had previously voted to recommend Article 2 by a vote of 8-0-1.

Article 3 - Class Size Reduction Expendable Trust Fund

MOTION: by Mrs. Fordey

Move to recommend Article 3

SECOND: by Mr. Cutter

Mrs. Fordey expressed concern over what is contained in the article.

VOTE: 9-0-0

The motion carried.

Article 3 is recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 9-0-0.

Article 4 - Special Education Capital Reserve Fund (\$50,000)

MOTION: by Mrs. Bourque

Move to recommend Article 4

SECOND: by Mr. Hayes

VOTE: 9-0-0

The motion carried.

Article 4 is recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 9-0-0.

Article 5 - Pre-Construction Feasibility Study (\$70,000)

MOTION: by Mr. Cutter

Move to recommend Article 5

SECOND: by Mrs. Bourque

Mrs. Douglas commented that she would like to support the article, but needs more information.

Mr. Cutter complimented Dr. Jette for putting dollars behind plans. He commented the amount in the article is a best guess.

Mrs. Douglas feels the Budget Committee would support the article if the funds were placed into an expendable trust fund.

The motion and second were withdrawn.

Article 6 - Barricade Security Devices (\$35,000)

MOTION: by Mr. Cutter

Move to recommend Article 6

SECOND: by Mrs. Bourque

VOTE: 9-0-0

The motion carried.

Article 6 is recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 9-0-0.

Article 7 - Re-Core Door Locks LMS (\$25,000)

MOTION: by Mr. Cutter

Move to recommend Article 7

SECOND: by Mrs. Fordey

Mr. Hayes asked if re-coring the locks and distributing new keys will put us in a similar position to our current one. He asked about electronic access.

Mr. Meyers indicated that this will be a grand-master system. He commented once we are back to a controlled key system the building will be safer. He noted the keys we are talking about are controlled keys.

Mr. Hodgkins asked if the locks will be able to be moved if the district gets a new building.

Dr. Jette clarified the district is not planning on building a new middle school.

**VOTE: 8-1-0, with Mr. Hodgkins opposing
The motion carried.**

Article 7 is recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 8-1-0.

8. MEMBER INPUT

Mr. Hodgkins referred to the Town's Communication System article, commenting he feels the first year payment should not be deferred as it will cost taxpayers \$25,000 to \$30,000 more the following year.

Mrs. Douglas indicated the article can be amended at Deliberative Session. She encouraged all Committee members to come to Deliberative Session prepared.

Mrs. Fordey raised concern that the preparation of the hearing presentations is too much work on the Chair.

Mrs. Bourque explained typically the Chair creates the presentation and the Budget Committee reviews it, providing feedback.

9. PUBLIC INPUT

Brian Bourque, 1 Westview Drive, asked for Mrs. Fordey's thought process with regard to Article 3.

Mrs. Fordey felt that all associated costs for kindergarten should be added into the article total.

Mr. Bourque indicated the article is not specific to the additional kindergarten teacher. He commented that the funds can be used for an additional teacher for any grade level where it is required.

Dr. Jette indicated that he is confident the amount requested in the article fits the district's needs.

10. ADJOURN**MOTION:** by Mrs. Bourque***Move to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m.*****SECOND:** by Mr. Leary**VOTE: 9-0-0****The motion carried.****Next meeting: February 1, 2020****Recorded by: Michele E. Flynn, Recording Secretary**