

# Town of Litchfield, New Hampshire

## Capital Improvement Committee

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Meeting Date: 06/01/20

Call to Order: 6:06 pm

Meeting Location: Town Hall

**Meeting Called By** Capital Improvement Committee

**Type of Meeting:** CIP Meeting

**Facilitator:** Michael Croteau, Chairman

**Note Taker:** Matthew Sullivan

**In Attendance:** Michael Jette, Superintendent  
Cory Izbicki, Business Administrator  
Michelle Flynn, Admin. Assistant

**Memo:** John Brunelle hosted the meeting on Webex

**Members in attendance:**

1. Michael Croteau, Chairman (Planning Board)
2. Sean Flynn, Vice-Chair (Citizen)
3. Brian Bourque (School Board)
4. Andrew Cutter (Budget Comm.)
5. Jay Minkarah (NRPC Director)
6. Peter Stone (Citizen)
7. Steven Webber (Selectman)

**One member was absent:**

Troy Brown, Town Administrator

**Agenda Topic:** Call to Order

**Presenter:** Michael Croteau

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:06 pm.

**Agenda Topic:** Public Input @ 6:07 pm

**Presenter:** Michael Croteau

1. Selectman Rich Lascelles -

Selectman Rich Lascelles reminded the committee members that he is a recently elected Selectman for the Town of Litchfield. He also informed the members that he has represented the town for two terms in the State House and has worked as a substitute teacher at Campbell High School. Selectman Rich Lascelles commented that the students who graduate from Campbell High School are not prepared for the outside world because of Litchfield's lack of diversity.

Selectman Rich Lascelles mentioned that he knows many people agree with him politically but do not believe the town needs diversity. He said that southern New Hampshire has a crisis when it comes to affordable housing. He questioned why over 55 condominium associations could not be geared to people under 40, and if the CIP Committee would be amenable to something similar coming to Litchfield.

Chairman Michael Croteau thanked Selectman Rich Lascelles for calling in but mentioned that the information he provided was more suited for the Planning Board. Chairman Michael Croteau informed him that the Planning Board would be having a virtual meeting tomorrow at 7 pm, and he was invited to call into that meeting.

Public Input closed at 6:14 pm.

**Agenda Topic:** Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

**Presenter:** Michael Croteau

**Discussion:** None

**Motion:** ( Brian Bourque / Pete Stone ) motion to approve the meeting minutes from May 4, 2020

**Roll Call Vote:**

1. Michael Croteau, Chairman - Yes
2. Sean Flynn, Vice-Chairman - Yes
3. Brian Bourque - Yes
4. Peter Stone - Yes
5. Steven Webber, Selectmen's Rep - Yes

**Vote:** ( 5-0-0 ) The motion carried.

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**Agenda Topic:** New Business

**Presenter:** Michael Croteau

1. Superintendent Michael Jette, Business Administrator Cory Izbicki, Administrative Assistant Michelle Flynn, School Board Chairman Brian Bourque, were present to represent the Litchfield School District. Superintendent Michael Jette mentioned that he would be making the presentation to the committee.
2. The Capital Planning Committee for the Litchfield School District consists of eleven members:
  - a. Tom Lecklider - LMS Principal and Committee Chair
  - b. Michael Jette - Superintendent
  - c. Cory Izbicki - Business Administrator
  - d. Michelle E. Flynn - SAU/SB Administrative Assistant
  - e. William Lonigan - CHS Principal
  - f. Scott Thompson - GMS Principal
  - g. Dave Ross - Facility Director
  - h. Brian Bourque - School Board Chair
  - i. Christina Harrison - School Board Vice-Chair
  - j. Nicole Fordey - Budget Committee Representative
  - k. Steven Webber - Selectmen's Representative
3. **Project 1**
  - a. Superintendent Michael Jette mentioned that the priority for the Litchfield School District was the Griffin Memorial School. Griffin Memorial School was built in the 1930s. Currently, the school building has six portable classrooms out in the schoolyard. The six portable classrooms are used to accommodate the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes.
  - b. The building has significant deficiencies. The water table on the school property is very high and in the flood plains. The heating and ventilation units need to be upgraded. The School Board believes that the school needs to be replaced because of the deficiencies.
  - c. Superintendent Michael Jette said that the School Board, this year, put together a Warrant Article requesting the residents to approve \$70,000 for feasibility work. The voters approved the Warrant Article, and that amount is shown in the table below. In the years 2021 and 2022, the School Board will put together Warrant Articles for \$125,000 each year. The money will be used to pay for architectural and engineering plans. In 2023, the School Board will request \$30,000,000 to pay for an elementary school project.
  - d. Superintendent Michael Jette mentioned that a new elementary school is a priority, but the School Board has missed the opportunity to request funds for the school years of 2021 and 2022. The next opportunity to ask for funds is in 2023.
  - e. If the project is not approved, then the School District will have to spend money to renovate and maintain a building with many issues.

4. **Project 2**

- a. The School Board is looking at the replacement of mechanical systems and lighting. The replacement of the mechanical systems and lighting would create energy efficiency and cost savings. The project would replace the heating and ventilation systems at the elementary, middle school, and high school.
- b. One of the reasons this project was made a priority was because of COVID-19. Without a proper ventilation system, the virus could be quickly spread. Instead of this project being something the School District would like to have, the project is something the schools need to have.
- c. The Middle School would cost \$1,365,000 to improve the current ventilation system. Campbell High School would cost \$1,282,500 to upgrade the ventilation and lighting concerns at the Middle School and High School. The cost to upgrade the Griffin Memorial School ventilation system would cost \$1,278,000.
- d. If the residents approve the building of a new elementary school, the \$1,278,000 would not have to be spent.

5. **Project 3**

- a. The School Board intends to ask for \$85,500 in a Warrant Article. The funds would be used to repair the cracks in the pavement at the High School.

6. **Project 4**

- a. The Middle School kitchen is undersized and inadequate for the lunch service program. The School Board intends to spend \$300,000 to renovate the kitchen.

7. **Project 5**

- a. The School Board believes the life of the bleachers at the High School is at the end of their useful life. The School Board intends to ask for \$206,000 to replace the bleachers. The bleachers would be replaced in the 2022 school year.

8. **Projects 6 & 7**

- a. The School Board would request approximately \$1,070,000 for lighting and field turf at the High School. The lights would cost \$300,000, and the field turf would cost \$770,000.
- b. Superintendent Michael Jette is hoping to tie this project to the new school project. By doing both projects simultaneously, the School District may receive funding from the state.
- c. The idea is that the project would allow the school to rent out the field to other towns who want to use a field that is turf and has lights.
- d. If a new elementary school was built, it might be possible to have the turf field at the new school.

9. **Project 8**

- a. Superintendent Michael Jette mentioned that the request for additional classrooms at LMS would cost \$1,517,500. The classrooms would be built in front of the gym wall.
- b. The portable classrooms were temporary classrooms and have outlived their usefulness. The portable classrooms are rented for \$36,000 a year. The fee for renting the classrooms does not include utility costs.
- c. If a new elementary school is built, the school would be for grades K-5. The fifth grade at LMS would move to the new elementary school, and the town would not have to spend \$1,517,500 to add classrooms to LMS.

10. **Project 9 & 10**

- a. Superintendent Michael Jette commented that the School Board intends to spend approximately \$500,000 on the parking lots at GMS and LMS. The cost for the GMS is \$260,000, and the cost for LMS is \$232,000.

11. **Project 11**

- a. The School Board believes it would be a smart move to put money aside for future expenditures. The example given was the CHS roof. The roof is 20 years old and is going to need to be replaced soon.

**Proposals:**

Project	Priority	Funding Source	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026
GMS - New School	1	Building Aid Municipal Bond approved through Warrant Article	\$70,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$30,000,000		
Energy Efficient Project	2	One Time Appropriation	\$1,365,000	1,282,500			\$1,278,000	
CHS Pavement	3	Warrant Article		\$85,500				
LMS Renovation of Kitchen	4			\$300,000				
CHS Gym Bleachers	5	Warrant Article			\$206,000			
CHS Stadium Field Lighting	6	Warrant Article				\$300,000		
CHS Stadium Turf Field	7	Warrant Article				\$770,000		
LMS Additional Classrooms	8	State Infrastructure Aid, Capital Reserve W/D, and Impact Fees					\$1,517,500	
LMS Parking Lot	9	One Time Appropriation					\$232,000	
GMS Parking Lot	10	One Time Appropriation					\$260,000	
Capital Repairs	11	Annual Warrant Article	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000

12. If a new elementary school was built, Superintendent Michael Jette believes that GMS building is the best spot for the SAU office. He also suggested that with the proper renovation, the building could be a police station.
13. Administrative Assistant Michelle Flynn believes it would be less costly to update certain parts of the building that need to be revived for some community center and save the town money on finding the land and a building.
14. Superintendent Michael Jette was asked if the CHS stadium field lights and CHS stadium field turf were items that the School District needed. Superintendent Michael Jette mentioned that the high school field gets chewed up and is a safety issue. Similar to a new elementary school, the field lighting and turf would be an investment. The field would allow student-athletes and families to enjoy the use of the field. These types of fields are used all the time and may also be rented to other towns and organizations.
15. Andrew Cutter commented that the town has many needs. The example was given that the town needs new fire engines.
16. Brian Bourque mentioned that Litchfield is limited when it comes to field availability. The GMS fields have not been used frequently in the last couple of years. The reason for the lack of use is the moisture of the fields. Specific teams

at CHS go to Bedford's Sportplex to practice. These teams incur an expense for renting the facility. If Litchfield had a turf field, those teams would not have to use the Sportplex.

17. Superintendent Michael Jette was unable to provide definitive numbers with regards to student enrollment numbers. He mentioned that the elementary school numbers are substantial, but was unsure how COVID-19 will affect student enrollment in the future. He did say that when there are a disruption similar to the COVID-19 disruption, the birth rate increases.
18. Selectman Steven Webber asked Jay Minkarah if the NRPC has any numbers to show the residential increase in Southern New Hampshire. Jay Minkarah said that the NRPC had made projections out to 2035. The NRPC projections show a decrease in births and migration rates. The aging population has impacted the projections. Litchfield tends to have a younger demographic and tends to have more children. Jay Minkarah will pull the numbers and share them with the committee.
19. Administrative Assistant Michelle Flynn added that full-day kindergarten had a significant impact on the enrollment as well as families moving into the town that is coming from out of state with two or three school-aged children.
20. Michael Croteau asked if the committee knew the tax impact of these projects on the residents of Litchfield. Business Administrator Cory Izbicki commented that the calculation, at this time, was challenging to make. The local taxation and the state revenues, in three to four years, could look different. Jay Minkarah added that the committee could only make assumptions on how the state aid would look.
21. Michael Croteau mentioned that the next step for the School Capital Improvement Committee is to look at additional funding for the projects. The committee will also need to investigate what sources of revenue will be made available and try to calculate how the tax impact would look.
22. The committee agreed that there are questions that need to be addressed. If GMS is replaced with a new school, what will happen to GMS? Will the school become a police station, an SAU office, or a rec center? The GMS building also has issues with the property. The school is sitting in the middle of a flood zone, and the water table is 18 inches below the surface.

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**Agenda topic:** Old Business

**Presenter:** Michael Croteau

1. None

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**Agenda Topic:** Public Input reopened @ 7:44 pm

**Presenter:** Michael Croteau

1. None

Public Input closed at 7:45 pm.

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**Agenda topic:** Other Business

**Presenter:** Michael Croteau

1. The committee discussed when the next meeting should be held. The members agreed that they need to consider the projects that have been presented.
2. Selectman Steve Webber will call Town Administrator Troy Brown, and he agrees the committee needs to meet again this month to answer these questions. The committee decided to meet again on Monday, June 15, at 6:00 pm.
3. Chair Michael Croteau mentioned that the federal government provides grant money to the police. This type of federal funding could be used by the Litchfield Police Department to help pay for the upgrade to their HVAC system.
4. Jay Minkarah added that the School District might want to look into CARES Act funding to help pay for the HVAC system's repair at LMS.

5. Superintendent Michael Jette commented that the School Board was informed that Litchfield would receive approximately \$75,000 from the CARES Act. The problem is that the town did not receive any guidance on how the money had to be spent. The state is even at odds with the federal government concerning the CARES Act.
6. The School District has until September 2021 to spend the money.

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**Agenda topic:** Other Business

**Presenter:** Michael Croteau

None

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**Agenda Topic:** Adjourn the Meeting

**Presenter:** Michael Croteau

**Discussion:** None

**Motion:** ( Steve Webber / Brian Bourque ) motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Roll Call Vote:**

1. Michael Croteau, Chairman - Yes
2. Sean Flynn, Vice-Chairman - Yes
3. Brian Bourque - Yes
4. Peter Stone - Yes
5. Steven Webber, Selectmen's Rep - Yes

**Vote:** ( 5-0-0 ) The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 pm.

1. **Next Meeting:**

- a. June 15, 2020 @ 6:00 pm

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Approved by the Capital Improvement Committee:

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Michael Croteau, Chairman

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Sean Flynn, Vice Chairman

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Brian Bourque

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Peter Stone

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Steven Webber