

# Litchfield Voter Guide



**Guide to the Second Session of the  
2021 TOWN MEETING**

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**2021 LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING**

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**CAMPBELL HIGH SCHOOL**

**MARCH 9, 2021**

**Polls open at 7:00 AM and close at 7:00 PM**

The following information is being provided as a public service to enable citizens to better understand the matters on which they will be voting.

Additional information regarding the 2021 Proposed Town Budget and Warrant Articles may be obtained by calling the Town Administrator's office at 603-424-4046, or by visiting the Town's website at <https://litchfieldnh.gov/>.

Additional information regarding the FY22 Proposed School District Budget and Warrant Articles may be obtained by calling the SAU office at 603-578-3570, or by visiting the District's website at <https://www.litchfieldsd.org/DistrictInformation.aspx>.

<b>ARTICLE 1 - ELECTION OF OFFICERS</b>			
<b>Board of Selectmen (1) Three Year Term</b>	<b>Board of Selectmen (1) Two Year Term</b>	<b>Budget Committee (2) Three Year Term</b>	<b>Budget Committee (1) Two Year Term</b>
Steven Webber	Kim M. Queenan	Derek Barka	Kate Stevens
	Elizabeth F. Vaughan	Nicole Fordey	Scott Taylor
Write-in	Write-in	Write-in	Write-in
<b>Cemetery Trustee (1) Three Year Term</b>	<b>Library Trustee (1) Three Year Term</b>	<b>Town Moderator (1) Three Year Term</b>	<b>Trustees of Trust Fund (1) Three Year Term</b>
Steven P. Calaway	Margaret Peg Graveline	Steve Perry	John Poulos, Jr.
Amber Flindt	Laura Gandia		
	Gail Musco		
Write-in	Write-in	Write-in	Write-in

**ARTICLE 2 - ZONING AMENDMENT NO. 1**

Recommended by the Planning Board

Are you in favor of the adoption of Zoning Amendment No. 1 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town of Litchfield Zoning Ordinance as follows? Amend Section 575, Conservation Open Space Development, to clarify intended uses and ownership of open space within Conservation Open Space Developments.

**Article Explanation:** Intent of this amendment is to clarify the way open space is owned, used and managed within open space development areas. Reference to words that have the same meaning will be eliminated. No changes are proposed for permitted uses, density and dimensional requirements. Changes are intended to preserve open spaces, recreation areas, agricultural lands and forestry.

**ARTICLE 3 - PLANNING BOARD CONDITIONAL USE**

Recommended by the Planning Board

Are you in favor of adoption of Zoning Amendment No. 2 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town of Litchfield Zoning Ordinance as follows? Amend Section 507, Accessory Dwelling Units, to permit detached accessory dwelling units as a conditional use subject to Planning Board approval.

**Article Explanation:** Amendment will permit attached or detached accessory dwelling units to increase flexibility and greater variety of housing choices in the Town of Litchfield. Proposed uses shall be subject to conditional approval by the Planning Board to protect the single family character in residential neighborhoods.

**ARTICLE 4 - 2021 OPERATING BUDGET**

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 4-0-0  
Recommended by Budget Committee 7-1-0

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth in the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by the vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling **\$7,203,793**. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be **\$7,356,332** which is the same as last year with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of Litchfield or by Law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. Estimated 2021 tax rate impact: **\$0.09**.

**Article Explanation:** The operating budget recommended by the Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen is \$7,203,793, an increase of \$138,866 over the 2020 budget. Collectively, the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee made over \$200k of reductions to meet the tax cap and estimated revenue shortfalls. The proposed budget is \$33k under the tax cap. Should the proposed budget fail, the default budget is \$7,356,332; \$152,539 higher than the 2021 proposed budget. If approved, the recommended operating budget represents a tax rate increase of \$0.09 per thousand dollars of assessed value or estimated increase for a house valued at \$350,000 is \$31.50. The greatest increase in the 2021 budget is attributable to the first year payment of the communication tower project approved in 2020.

**ARTICLE 5 - POLICE CONTRACT**

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 4-0-0  
Recommended by Budget Committee 8-1-0

Shall the Town vote to approve the cost items for wage and related costs that have been included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Town of Litchfield and Council 93 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees which provides for the following increases in wages and benefits at the current staffing level and further to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$11,803** for the current fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels. Estimated 2021 tax rate impact: **\$0.01**.

Year 1 (2021)	Year 2 (2022)	Year 3 (2023)
\$11,803	\$59,799	\$56,163

**Article Explanation:** Due to COVID 19 and tax cap concerns, the Town and Union agreed to restrict negotiations to contract duration and wage adjustments only. This allowed both parties to streamline the negotiation process and address financial tax impact concerns. The proposed contract is a three (3) year agreement scheduled to expire on June 30, 2024. To assist with tax cap concerns in year 1, wage adjustments were deferred until October 1, 2021 at 3%. In the following years, wage adjustments are scheduled for July 1, 2022 at 3% and July 1, 2023 at 2.5%.

**ARTICLE 6 - HUMAN SERVICES AND HEALTH AGENCIES**

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 4-0-0  
Recommended by Budget Committee 8-1-0

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$21,255** to support Human Services and Health Agencies providing services to the Town of Litchfield. Estimated 2021 tax rate impact: **\$0.02**.

**Article Explanation:** Funding for this article supports Human Services and Health Agencies providing services to Litchfield residents. Various agencies request funding each year to help offset the cost of providing these types of services. The Welfare Director, Health Officer and a Resident, appointed by the Selectmen, review and recommend amounts, based on community needs and demands.

**ARTICLE 7 - ROAD IMPROVEMENTS**

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 4-0-0  
Recommended by Budget Committee 8-1-0

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate **\$100,000** for the purpose of road improvement projects. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance and no amount to be raised from new taxation. Estimated 2021 tax rate impact: **\$0.00**.

**Article Explanation:** Funding will support implementation of the Town's 6 year paving program approved in the recent Capital Improvement Plan. These funds will be in addition to NH State Highway Block Grant Funds (\$190k). The Town maintains approximately 63 miles of roads. In 2021, the Town is planning to pave approximately 2.6 miles. Proposed projects include, but are not limited to, Birch Street - reclaim and pave, Aaron Way - 1.5 inch overlay, Cranberry Lane - 1.5 inch overlay, Page Road - 1.5 inch overlay, Laurel Street - 1.5 inch overlay, Pheasant Street - 1.5 inch overlay and Sparrow Court - 1.5 inch overlay.

**ARTICLE 8 - PLOW TRUCK PURCHASE**

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 5-0-0  
Recommended by Budget Committee 7-2-0

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate **\$100,000** to purchase a plow truck with equipment for the Highway Department. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance and no amount to be raised from new taxation. Estimated 2021 tax rate impact: **\$0.00**.

**Article Explanation:** This article proposes to replace the 2001 International plow truck with a new medium heavy duty truck. The current truck is 21 years old with approximately 143,000 miles. It was purchased from NH State Surplus Auction and is no longer reliable due to age and condition. It most likely will not pass safety inspection this fall. The new truck will cost about \$60k for the chassis and \$40k for plow and wing equipment. Due to the size of the truck, operators will not be required to have a NH CDL License and it is excellent for small streets and Cul-de-Sacs.

**ARTICLE 9 - PROPERTY REVALUATION EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND**

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 4-0-0  
Recommended by Budget Committee 8-1-0

Shall the Town vote to establish a Property Revaluation Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a for the purpose of funding future property revaluations and to raise and appropriate **\$25,000** to put in the fund; further to

name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance and no amount to be raised from new taxation. Estimated 2021 tax rate impact: **\$0.00**

**Article Explanation:** Town is required to conduct a town wide property revaluation every five (5) years. The cost is approximately \$100k. Establishing this fund and making annual appropriations over the next four (4) years will hopefully avoid a property tax increase for this purpose in 2025.

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**ARTICLE 10 - PENNICHUCK EAST UTILITY RATE INCREASE**

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 4-0-0  
Recommended by Budget Committee 8-0-0

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$50,000** for legal counsel, consultants, witnesses, technical reviews and other expenses related to the proposed Pennichuck East Utility water rate increase case filed with the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission. This special warrant article will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7,VI and will not lapse until said rate case is completed or by December 31, 2023, whichever is sooner. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance and no amount to be raised from new taxation. Estimated 2021 tax rate impact: **\$0.00**

**Article Explanation:** Pennichuck Water has petitioned to increase water rates by 21.5%. If this rate increase is approved by the NH Public Utilities Commission, fire hydrant annual fees could increase from \$500k to \$600k per year. Many residents that were affected by the St. Gobain water contamination issue were required to connect to Pennichuck Water and already paid a 18.97% rate increase in 2017/18. The Towns of Litchfield, Londonderry, Hooksett and Pelham have joined together to share expenses needed for legal and technical assistance to oppose the rate increase. New rates could be approved in late 2021 or 2022. If approved, the funds will come from the unassigned fund balance and will have no impact on the 2021 tax rate.

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**ARTICLE 11 - FIRE STATION BOND PROCEEDS**

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 4-0-0  
Recommended by Budget Committee 9-0-0

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$23,582** for the purpose of paying a portion of the 2021 Fire Station Bond payment and to authorize the withdrawal of that amount from the December 31, 2020 fund balance for this purpose. This amount will represent the interest earned on bond proceeds that was transferred to the general fund on or before December 31, 2020. Estimated 2021 tax rate impact: **\$0.00**

**Article Explanation:** During construction of the new fire station interest was earned on the bond proceeds which are not authorized to be expended by the Board of Selectmen without voter approval. If passed, this article proposes to use all interest accrued to be applied towards a portion of the 2021 fire station bond payment. If this article fails, the interest accrued will lapse to the Towns unassigned fund balance.

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**ARTICLE 12 - FIRE FACILITIES FUND**

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 4-0-0

Shall the Town vote to discontinue the Fire Facilities Capital Reserve Fund created in 2000. Said funds and accumulated interest to date of withdrawal shall be transferred to the Building Systems Expendable Trust Fund. Estimated balance is \$622.

**Article Explanation:** The Fire Facilities Capital Reserve Fund was created in March 2000 for "the purpose of constructing fire facilities and their improvements". The Board of Selectmen believe this fund is no longer needed because the new fire station construction project is completed. This article would close the fund and transfer the balance to the Building Systems Expendable Trust Fund which is used to maintain all Town buildings and facilities.

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**ARTICLE 13 - SOLAR EXEMPTION**

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 4-1-0

Shall the Town adopt the provisions of RSA 72:61-64 inclusively, which provide for an optional property tax exemption from the property's assessed value for persons owning real property which is equipped with solar energy systems intended for use at the immediate site. Such property tax exemption shall be in the amount of the assessed value of qualifying solar energy system equipment, up to a maximum of \$27,000. This exemption shall only be available to property owners who expend funds for the installation of such systems. Therefore, if the property is sold, the new owner shall not be eligible for the exemption. **Note: Given the current number of eligible recipients this will result in the loss of \$23,018.58 of property tax revenue with an estimated tax rate impact of \$0.02.**

**Article Explanation:** This article will exempt solar equipment property assessment values up to a maximum of \$27,000. The exemption would provide a financial incentive for homeowners and businesses to invest in solar energy and apply only to the original owner of the solar equipment. Every five (5) years the equipment will be reassessed by the Town's assessing company. The maximum property assessment exemption of \$27,000 is intended to provide property exemptions for small residential and business systems; not large revenue producing

commercial systems. There are currently 61 properties that may qualify for the exemption. The average Litchfield system is assessed at \$20,319. If approved, this article will result in the loss of approximately \$23,018.58 in property tax revenue with an estimated tax rate impact of \$0.02.

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## **END OF TOWN OF LITCHFIELD WARRANT ARTICLES.**



## **TOWN AND SCHOOL DISTRICT VOTING**

### **CAMPBELL HIGH SCHOOL**

**MARCH 9, 2021**

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# LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT 2021 WARRANT ARTICLES

## ARTICLE A - ELECTION OF OFFICERS

<b>School Board Member (2)</b>	<b>Three Year Term</b>	
<b>John York</b>	<b>Heidi A. Ames</b>	<b>(Write In)</b>
<b>Melissa Castonguay</b>	<b>Elizabeth MacDonald</b>	<b>(Write In)</b>

### ARTICLE 1 - 2020 OPERATING BUDGET

Not Recommended School Board 0-5-0  
Recommended Budget Committee 8-1-0

Shall the Litchfield School District vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by the vote at the first session of the annual school district meeting, for the purposes set forth herein, totaling **\$23,715,016**? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be **\$24,194,824**, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Litchfield School District or by law; or the School Board may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only.

Estimated Tax Impact: **\$0.60** (Operating Budget)

Estimated Tax Impact: **\$1.01** (Default Budget)

**Article Explanation:** The operating budget recommended by the Budget Committee and **not recommended** by the School Board is \$23,715,016, which is an increase of \$200,686 over the FY21 budget. Should the proposed budget fail, the default budget is \$24,194,824, \$479,808 higher than the FY22 proposed budget. The Operating budget contains operating costs for the school district, food services and grant funds: 2021-2022 proposed general fund: \$22,525,606, excluding food services & grants. Please note that although the food service and grants fund budgets are included in the gross appropriation, the food service and grants are funded through federal, state and other local sources, not taxation. Increases in the 2022 budget include, but are not limited to, Year 3 cost of the LEA Collective Bargaining Agreement, Year 2 cost of the LSSA Collective Bargaining Agreement, NH Retirement Contribution rate increase for employers, 3rd year of transportation contract increases.

The default budget contains the amount of the same appropriations as contained in the approved operating budget for the previous year, reduced and increased by debt service, contracts and other obligations previously incurred or mandated by law, and reduced by one-time expenditures contained in the operating budget. (One-time expenditures are defined as appropriations not likely to recur in the succeeding budget).

Should this article be approved, the recommended operating budget will be \$23,715,016 and represents a tax rate increase of \$0.60 per thousand dollars of assessed value or estimated increase for a house valued at \$350,000 or approximately \$210. Should this article fail and if the School Board (governing body) does not choose to call a special meeting to consider a revised budget, the default budget will be deemed to have been adopted and the school district will operate under a default budget of \$24,194,824 and represents a tax rate increase of \$1.01 per thousand dollars of assessed value or estimated increase for a house valued at \$350,000 or approximately \$353.50.

**This article is asking voters if they support or do not support the operating budget.** Detailed information on the proposed operating budget and default budget can be found at <http://www.litchfieldsd.org/DistrictInformation.aspx>.

### ARTICLE 2 - TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATOR

Recommended School Board 5-0-0  
Recommended Budget Committee 6-2-0

Shall the Litchfield School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$86,200** for the purpose of funding the salary and benefit costs for a full time District-wide Technology Integrator position to support 1:1 technology education for students and staff? Estimated Tax Impact: **\$0.08**

**Article Explanation: The District has identified the need for two (2) Technology Integrators. Articles 2 and 3 taken together will fund the School District's needs.**

A technology integrator supports teachers by educating them in the use and integration of new technology initiatives in the classroom. A technology integrator supports students in their abilities and understanding of how to use the technology in new ways. In order to fund these positions, the school district identified other positions that were not needed due to a shift in enrollment and the realignment of staffing levels at each school building. If approved, the estimated tax rate increase will be \$0.08 per thousand dollars of assessed value.

- A tech integrator is not a teacher but does,
  - support students in their ability to develop creative solution
  - guide teachers in using the most appropriate tech tools for achieving their lesson objectives
  - helps create useful, meaningful, purposeful relationships with technology
  - helps teachers incorporate technology in lessons that may not have contained technology
  - engage with students to help them see how they can use technology in new ways
- A tech integrator is not an IT Technician, but:
  - teaches professional development sessions; helps to educate teachers on effective use of technology in the classroom
  - train staff and students on how to use and integrate new technology initiatives in the classroom
  - can help with minor tech support (calibrating projectors, connecting peripherals to classroom devices, work with techs on issues that occur in the classroom)
  - test and find adequate applications and websites for student and teacher use.

**ARTICLE 3 - TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATOR**

Recommended School Board 5-0-0  
Not Recommended Budget Committee 4-4-0

Shall the Litchfield School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$86,200** for the purpose of funding the salary and benefit costs for a full time District-wide Technology Integrator position to support 1:1 technology education for students and staff? Estimated Tax Impact: **\$0.08**

**Article Explanation: Please see explanation under Article 2.**  
If approved, the estimated tax rate increase will be \$0.08 per thousand dollars of assessed value.

**ARTICLE 4 - CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND**  
5-0-0

Recommended School Board  
Recommended Budget Committee 7-2-0

Shall the Litchfield School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$100,000** to be added to the Capital Improvements Expendable Trust Fund established in 2020 for the purpose of funding the study, planning and cost of new construction or renovation of existing facilities in the Litchfield School District? This sum to come from the June 30 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1 with no amount to be raised from new taxation. Estimated Tax Impact: **\$0.00**

**Article Explanation:** The District intends to use the money in this fund to complete the planning of a new building and if any funds are left over they will remain in the fund to go toward building projects. This amount is consistent with the Capital Plan adopted by the Town of Litchfield in September 2020. **Because this will be funded from remaining funds, if any, at the end of this school year, this article has no tax impact.**

Thank you for voting. We appreciate your time and support!

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*To be delivered by March 5, 2021.*