

**Town of Litchfield, NH**  
**Budget Committee Meeting**  
**June 24, 2021**  
**Litchfield Town Hall**

**In Attendance:**

**Members:** John David Son, Vice Chairman; Derek Barka; Keri Douglas; William Hayes (virtual); Kate Stevens (virtual); Scott Taylor; Christina Harrison, School Board Rep.; Robert Leary, Selectmen's Rep.

**Absent:** Chairman Andrew Cutter

**Also in Attendance:** None

**1. Call to Order:**

- a. 7:00 pm - Vice-Chairman John David Son called the meeting to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Son commented that Webex was open during the meeting for a couple of Budget Committee members attending virtually. As far as Public Input goes, Town Hall has been reopened, and Webex will only be used for Budget Committee members who need to attend meetings virtually.

**2. Public Input #1 @ 7:02 pm:**

- a. There was no one for Public Input

Public Input ended at 7:03 pm.

**3. Review / Additions of Agenda:**

- a. There was no review or additions to the agenda.

**4. Correspondence:**

Vice-Chairman John David Son mentioned that Chairman Andrew Cutter could not attend the meeting because of a conflict, but Mr. Cutter passed on the correspondence that he had received. Mr. Son reviewed the list of correspondence that the Budget Committee received.

- a. May 28 - Received the Town Budget Report.
- b. June 4 - Received the Draft Meeting Minutes from the May 27, 2021 meeting.
- c. June 9 - Received the School Business Administrator Report from June 2.
- d. June 10 - Received a request from Ms. Harrison To change the November 9 joint School Board and Budget Committee meeting date.
- e. June 11 - Received the Town Budget Report.
- f. June 15 - Received confirmation from Ms. Stevens that she would be remote for the June 24 Budget Committee meeting.
- g. June 15 - Received confirmation from Mr. Hayes that he would be remote for the June 24 Budget Committee meeting.
- h. June 18 - Received the Town Budget Report.
- i. June 20 - Received some school questions that Ms. Douglas submitted.
- j. June 21 - Received some responses from Ms. Harrison and Mr. Izbicki in response to Ms. Douglas' questions.
- k. June 21 - Received a confirmation from Ms. Harrison that there will not be a final end-of-year report until financials are closed out on June 30.

- I. June 22 - Received a request for the June 14 Business Administrator's Report and list of encumbrances submitted to Ms. Harrison for circulation to the Budget Committee.

5. **Review / Acceptance of Minutes:**

- a. May 27, 2021, Meeting Minutes -

**Discussion:** None

**Motion:** (Ms. Douglas / Ms. Harrison) motioned to approve May 27, 2021, Meeting Minutes.

**Roll-Call:**

- |    |              |   |         |
|----|--------------|---|---------|
| a. | Mr. Son      | - | Yes     |
| b. | Mr. Barka    | - | Abstain |
| c. | Ms. Douglas  | - | Yes     |
| d. | Mr. Hayes    | - | Yes     |
| e. | Ms. Stevens  | - | Yes     |
| f. | Mr. Taylor   | - | Abstain |
| g. | Ms. Harrison | - | Yes     |
| h. | Mr. Leary    | - | Yes     |

**Vote:** (6-0-2) The motion carried. (Mr. Barka and Mr. Taylor abstained)

6. **Town Business:**

a. **General Updates**

Selectman Robert Leary mentioned that the Town was close to hiring a new Building Inspector and is currently working out the details. He noted that they hoped to get him on Board by August 1. Mr. Leary commented that the Select Board had voted to approve two new full-time members and one alternate member to the Conservation Committee at the June 14 meeting.

Mr. Leary stated that the Board had a tour of Parker Park on Saturday, located by the intersection of Pinecrest Road and Charles Bancroft Highway. He stated that the tour was to show the Select Board the layout of what the Conservation Commission would like to do.

Mr. Leary then mentioned that the Rec Commission hosted a Family Fun Day on Saturday, June 19, at Roy Memorial Field. He added that the swap table at the Transfer Station has reopened. Finally, Mr. Leary said that Christina Harrison asked about Impact Fees regarding LMS repairs, and he forwarded the question to Town Administrator Troy Brown.

b. **RSA 32:22: Review of Expenditures**

The Budget Committee had received the Town Budget Reports.

7. **School Business:**

a. **General Updates**

Christina Harrison mentioned that the Litchfield School District had a hectic month. She reported that the District had graduation, promotion, and recognition. Ms. Harrison commented that the graduation and the recognition were outside at CHS and went very well. She congratulated all the families that celebrated the milestones.

Ms. Harrison stated that the School Board had a meeting on Monday, June 14, in the auditorium. Business Administrator Cory Izbicki updated the School Board regarding the LMS Energy Efficiency Projects, the kitchen

renovations, and Phase One and Phase Two of the projects. Ms. Harrison commented that the School Board is still waiting to hear when they will officially receive their ESSER funds and plan to allocate the ESSER funds to the HVAC repairs project. Ms. Harrison stated that the School Board approved \$810,000, and she sent out an itemized list of transfers that were made. She added that the funds would go towards Phase One, and the remainder will come from Reserve Funds, more ESSER grants, Trust Funds, and Impact Fees.

Ms. Harrison mentioned that the end-of-year financials are not ready, and the District is still busy closing out accounts, making transfers. She explained that the School District always budgets \$200,000 to offset the following year's tax rate. Keri Douglas commented that she noticed that one of the accounts used to fund the LMS repairs was from a Special Education Fund. She noted that one of the traditions between the Budget Committee and the School Board has been to return the unused Special Education Funds to the taxpayers. Ms. Douglas pointed out that instead of returning the funds to the taxpayers, they were being penciled in to be used at LMS.

Ms. Harrison stated the rationale was that this is a bottom-line budget, and the District has previously underspent in areas that now need repair or maintenance. Ms. Douglas was concerned that the Budget Committee would no longer increase the Special Education Budget because there was no guarantee that the unused funds would go back to the taxpayers.

Ms. Douglas then questioned the \$1,100,000 in encumbrances. She noted that in the past, the closest amount in encumbrances was \$376,000. Ms. Douglas wanted to know how the Budget Committee could go to the taxpayers and ask for a budget increase when the School District has \$1,500,000 in underspends. Ms. Douglas acknowledged that LMS needs repairs and maintenance, but she was still disappointed. Vice-Chair John David Son asked if there was a way for Superintendent Michael Jette or someone else to check with the NH-DOE about the federal funds being applied to these projects? He added that if the Budget Committee knew that the Special Education funds would not be used because the ESSER funds could be used to pay for repairs and maintenance of LMS, that would resolve the problem.

Ms. Harrison pointed out that 2020-2021 was not a typical school year. The School Board was able to transfer funds from the Salaries and Benefits line items. She added that there were positions within the School District that were not filled because of the pandemic. She noted that the bulk of the money came from understaffing and a decrease in Special Education transportation. Ms. Harrison requested the Budget Committee to think about a reasonable or sustainable budget for next year and then communicate that number to the School District. Mr. Taylor expressed his concern with the Budget Committee providing the School Board with a budget number without knowing what the School District has coming up.

Ms. Harrison commented that the School Board realizes that the next year is going to be tough financially. Therefore, the Board is spending ahead to make up for the limitations with next year's School Budget. Mr. Son mentioned that if the Budget Committee were to get the budget in advance, the Committee would be better prepared with feedback to the Department Heads. Mr. Taylor commented that he would like Ms. Harrison to present information that shows the Committee where they cut too much from their budget.

Mr. Taylor mentioned that last year the Committee had a conversation about gas prices. He pointed out that the District was getting gas at \$1.60 a gallon during the first four months, and currently, the District is paying \$3.00 a gallon. He added that the gas price would probably double by July and August.

Ms. Douglas asked what the plan was for the food service? She added that her understanding was that the food service was intended to be self-funding. Ms. Harrison noted that the past two years have been difficult because of the pandemic. The District has received increased funding for the free meal plan, but the food service relies on à la carte items to make a profit. The à la carte was removed from the food service menu last year and this year because of the pandemic.

Ms. Douglas reviewed the financial history of the food service. She stated that the information came from the Business Administrator's reports.

**b. RSA 32:22: Review of Expenditures**

**8. Member Input / New Business:**

**a. Facilities Improvement Update**

Vice-Chairman John David Son commented that the School Facilities Improvement Group had a meeting on Wednesday, June 9. The first part of the School Facilities Improvement Group meeting was a tour of LMS. The tour showed the work that has been done at the entranceway and some of the office designs. The remainder of the meeting talked about the GMS project and looked at the request for quotes (RFQ's) for architectural service and the owner's project requirement. Mr. Son mentioned that at the last Town Meeting \$100,000 was approved for architectural services, plans, and preparation for a new school. Mr. Son asked if some of the funds could be allocated to hire a marketing firm. The next meeting for the School Facilities Improvement Group is Friday, July 9.

Keri. Douglas asked if anyone knew where Litchfield stood regarding State funding? Christina Harrison stated that the intention is for the School District to apply for School Building Aid. She noted that the District needs architectural plans and engineering reports to supply to the State to apply for funding. Ms. Harrison added that a representative from the State came and informed the School Board what they would need to do to apply for the School Building Aid. The District needs to show that they require a new school building and use every inch of the current building.

**b. 11/9/21 Joint School/Budget Committee Meeting**

Vice-Chairman John David Son commented that Christina Harrison had requested to move the Joint School/Budget Committee meeting date. Ms. Harrison stated that she would be unable to attend the meeting on Tuesday, November 9, and she requested to move the meeting to Monday, November 8. Therefore, the Select Board meets on Monday, November 8 at 6:30 pm, and Selectman Leary will have to attend the Joint School/Budget Committee meeting virtually.

Mr. Son reminded everyone that the schedule that the Committee had agreed upon, from the School Budget side, had the following dates:

- i. November 2 is the date the Committee would receive the draft School Budget.
- ii. November 4 and 9 Joint Sessions with the School Board. (School Board would run the meeting)
- iii. November 11 is Veterans Day - No Meeting.
- iv. November 18 would be the School Budget Review process.

Chairman Andrew Cutter had informed Mr. Son that he was okay with moving the meeting to November 8. Mr. Cutter will watch the meeting virtually. Mr. Son will inform Mr. Cutter that the date of the meeting has officially been changed to November 8 in the auditorium.

**c. Baron's Major Brands:**

Scott Taylor commented on the proposal for Baron's Major Brands moving to Litchfield off of St. Francis Way. He wanted to know if the proposal had been approved. Selectman Robert Leary stated that the proposal had not been approved yet. Mr. Taylor then wanted to know if truck registration with the Town of Litchfield would be part of the proposal. Mr. Leary said he asked the question, but no definitive answer was provided.

Kate Stevens stated that the first thing that Baron's Major Brands needs to do is have a meeting with the Zoning Board. Currently, the area is not zoned for warehouses. If the Zoning Board approves the changing of the zoning to allow for a warehouse, then the Baron's would need to meet with the Planning Board.

Keri Douglas asked if the school followed up with the Planning Board about the Town charges for Impact Fees? Ms. Harrison stated that she believed that Mr. Izbicki had talked with Town Administrator Troy Brown about consolidating the Impact Fees into one account. Ms. Douglas said that she wanted to make sure that the Impact Fees charged were appropriate for the impact that will be made on the Town. Ms. Harrison mentioned that she was unsure whether the decision about Impact Fees was a School Board or a Select Board decision and added that she would contact Chairman Steven Webber.

Mr. Taylor pointed out all the additions that have been made to Litchfield and the proposed additions. He wanted to know when the last time the Town increased the impact fees. Ms. Stephens stated that the Planning Board is going to discuss impact fees at their next meeting.

**9. Next Budget Committee Meeting**

Vice-Chair John David Son added that the next Budget Committee meeting would be on August 26, and no meeting in July.

**10. Public Input #2 @ 7:34 pm**

a. There was no one for Public Input

Public Input ended at 7:35 pm.

**11. Adjournment:**

**Motion:** (Ms. Douglas / Mr. Barka) motioned to adjourn the public meeting at 7:36 pm.

**Roll-Call:**

- a. Mr. Son - Yes
- b. Mr. Barka - Yes
- c. Ms. Douglas - Yes
- d. Mr. Hayes - Yes
- e. Ms. Stevens - Yes
- f. Mr. Taylor - Yes
- g. Ms. Harrison - Yes
- h. Mr. Leary - Yes

**Vote:** (8-0-0) The motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Matthew Sullivan  
Budget Committee Recording Secretary

Approved by the Budget Committee:

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Andrew Cutter, Chairman

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John David Son, Vice Chairman

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Derek Barka

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Keri Douglas

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William Hayes

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Kate Stevens

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Scott Taylor

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Christina Harrison, School Board Representative

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Robert Leary, Selectmen's Representative