

**Town of Litchfield, NH**  
**Budget Committee Meeting**  
**November 18, 2021**  
**Litchfield Town Hall**

**In Attendance:**

**Members:** Andrew Cutter, Chairman; John David Son, Vice Chairman; Derek Barka; Keri Douglas; William Hayes (virtual); Kate Stevens; and Scott Taylor

**Selectmen's Rep.:** Robert Leary

**School Board Rep.:** Christina Harrison

**Also in Attendance:** Michael Jette, Superintendent; Cory Izbicki, Business Administrator

**1. Call to Order:**

- a. 6:30 pm - Chairman Andrew Cutter called the meeting to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Cutter mentioned that the meeting was starting early to allow the Committee to get through the review session and answer any questions the Committee might have.

**2. Virtual Meeting Attendance:**

Chairman Andrew Cutter commented that William Hayes was remote tonight, and the Committee would need to vote to allow Mr. Hayes to participate in the meeting.

Mr. Cutter requested a motion to allow remote participation for the Budget Committee meeting.

**Discussion:** None

**Motion:** (Mr. Son / Mr. Leary) So moved.

**Roll-Call:**

- a. Mr. Cutter - Yes
- b. Mr. Son - Yes
- c. Ms. Harrison - Yes
- d. Mr. Leary - Yes
- e. Mr. Taylor - Yes
- f. Mr. Barka - Yes

**Vote:** (6-0-0) The motion carried.

Mr. Cutter commented that two members would be late to the meeting because of the early start time. The two members who would join the meeting later were Ms. Douglas and Ms. Stevens.

Mr. Cutter asked Mr. Hayes if there was anyone in the room with him and why was he remote for the meeting? Mr. Hayes stated that he was alone, and his reason was that he was still concerned with the Covid-19 variants. He added that he had not been vaccinated for Covid-19.

**3. Public Input #1 @ 6:33 pm:**

- a. There was no one present for Public Input

Public Input ended at 6:34 pm.

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

- a. No additions or changes to the agenda.

**5. Correspondence:**

Chairman Andrew Cutter reviewed the Correspondence Summary.

**a. Town Budget Reports:**

- i. October 22, 2021
  - ii. October 29, 2021
  - iii. November 5, 2021
  - iv. November 12, 2021
- b. October 24 – Minutes from 10/21 received, which were reviewed then forwarded to the BC on October 28.
  - c. October 26 – Town Administrator Troy Brown shared the 2021 tax rate set.
  - d. October 28 – Town Administrator Troy Brown shared the Town draft warrant articles file link.
  - e. October 29 to 30 – Several emails were received between the Town, School, and Moderator on the Deliberative Session date and venue. Joint Deliberative Session scheduled for February 5, 2022.
  - f. November 2 – Paper copy version of budget available for Budget Committee members.
  - g. November 3 – Ms. Harrison shared the agenda for the November 4 budget review session.
  - h. November 4 – Request from Mr. Barka to Ms. Harrison on soft copy of budget files.
  - i. November 5 to 9 – Email exchange on Deliberative Session location. Both the auditorium and the gymnasium were reserved for February 5, 2022.
  - j. November 15 – Ms. Douglas requested revised budget files be shared based upon the School Board actions / voting.
  - k. November 16 – Ms. Harrison provided updated hard copy files pending the School Board voting on November 17.
  - l. November 17 – Ms. Harrison forwarded the Excel School Budget and access to the drive where the budget files are stored.

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

- a. October 21, 2021, Meeting Minutes -

**Discussion:** None

**Motion:** (Ms. Harrison / Mr. Son) So moved.

**Roll-Call:**

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

**Vote:** (7-0-0) The motion carried.

## 7. School Business:

### a. Superintendent Overview:

Chairman Andrew Cutter mentioned that tonight the Budget Committee would be reviewing the School Budget and asking questions that were not previously asked. Mr. Cutter commented that he wanted to start the review by having Superintendent Michael Jette provide an update on his priorities and what is in the budget that the Committee could expect.

Dr. Jette commented that the Budget Committee and the School Board had a successful joint venture with the Budget Committee members attending the School Board budget meetings. He stated that the School Board received a lean budget from the Administration, but they have some priorities that will be on the warrant articles.

Dr. Jette mentioned that the District's priorities are focused on facility planning, and he noted that the two older school buildings have drastic needs. Last year the School District started to focus on the LMS project, which is an energy project. Dr. Jette commented how new windows were installed, and the roof was replaced at LMS. He said that phase two of the project is to look at the HVAC systems that are outdated and not working correctly.

Dr. Jette stated that the School District is working on an energy redesign, including solar on the roof of the school building. The project would include updating the HVAC systems, and he noted that the idea of the project is to be cost-neutral. The money typically spent on oil and electricity would then be used to maintain and upgrade the current school facilities. Dr. Jette expects that this project will be one of the warrant articles in March 2022.

The second project is related to GMS. Dr. Jette stated that GMS is in rough shape, and the needs of the building are being articulated. The School District has been engaging with the community regarding GMS. The District met with the community members on November 2, and they will meet again on December 7. The gatherings let the community know what the District is planning and receive the voters' feedback. Dr. Jette stated that 'Reimaging GMS' can be watched using the URL address <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=appo8K7W8mM>. He noted that the School District is using a new architect who has performed a needs assessment and is overwhelmed at the needs of GMS. The School Board will discuss what to put on the warrant article and when to bring it forward to the community.

Dr. Jette mentioned that the Covid-19 numbers that the School District is looking at are the worst during the pandemic. He said that the three schools are finding clusters, after clusters, and the clusters are leading to outbreaks. Dr. Jette pointed out that the need for updated HVAC systems is not just for comfort. The systems will also provide proper ventilation to reduce health issues. CHS has a fully functional HVAC system that was paid for by using Federal Funding. LMS had some quick fixes to the HVAC system, but the system is old and has not run correctly for years. Business Administrator Cory Izbicki mentioned that the HVAC system had been replaced with a new Energy Recovery Ventilation (ERV) system for the Guidance and Administrative area. The goal is to revamp the rest of LMS. GMS has the systems up and running, but the system is old.

Dr. Jette commented that about 85% of the budget is used to pay personnel. He noted that they needed to stay mindful that a significant portion of the budget is spent on educating the children in Litchfield.

Dr. Jette stated that the enrollment in the Litchfield School District continues to decline, and most surrounding Districts are having to deal with the same issue. The School Board proposed that for FY 2023, the District will reduce

the number of teachers for kindergarten by one, increase one teacher for first grade, remain at four teachers for the second grade, reduce by one teacher in the third grade, and reduce one teacher in the fourth grade. The net reduction is two teachers.

Dr. Jette commented that the District is keeping an eye on the fifth grade regarding staffing. He noted that the fourth grade is a large class, but the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades are smaller. Dr. Jette believes that the District can reduce the LMS staff by two through attrition, and CHS has a reduction of two staff members because the enrollment has declined. Dr. Jette believes that CHS will have a student population of 370 students in a few years.

Ms. Douglas entered the meeting at 6:52 pm.

Dr. Jette commented that the School Board added two Special Education positions back into the budget. He noted that it was done because of student IEP needs. He added that the total reduction in teachers is four. Dr. Jette mentioned that an Out of District (OOD) school sent the Litchfield School District a letter in July informing the District that the OOD tuition for the school went up by 20%. The School Board believes that they can create a Special Education program that will meet student needs and allow the District to keep the students in the District.

Dr. Jette stated that OOD tuition would cost around \$120,000 per student, which does not include transporting a student to and from the school. He noted that the District is looking at more than \$150,000 per student every year to pay for the tuition at another school and the transportation cost. Mr. Izbicki commented that the cost of the transportation depends on the company that is used. He pointed out that the Litchfield School District has a contract with First Student, and they have the right to the first refusal. Dr. Jette added that there is no oversight in New Hampshire because the OOD schools that students with special needs attend are private schools.

Ms. Stevens entered the meeting at 6:58 pm.

The Budget Committee discussed the number of students in the District that are using OOD schooling. Ms. Douglas commented that she did not remember seeing 14 students using OOD schooling in the past. Mr. Barka mentioned that he remembered at least 14 students every year using schools Out of the District when he was on the School Board. He acknowledged that the District was not paying \$120,000 per student when he was on the Board.

The Budget Committee discussed their concern that the budget for the two additional Special Education teachers would not provide enough savings to make the cost neutral in the future. Dr. Jette commented that the District is required to meet the educational requirements of the students. If the District does not have the program to meet the needs of the students, then the District has to write a check to a school that can provide the necessary program. Dr. Jette mentioned that this budget is for FY 2023 and that it does not start for eight months and ends in twenty months. Speculating on Special Education is the risk that the District needs to take because they do not know if families with special needs students will move into or out of Litchfield. He noted that the School District has a Special Education Trust Fund that can be accessed if necessary.

Chairman Cutter asked Dr. Jette how the School District is thinking about the expected population growth in Litchfield with the planned addition of the new developments? Dr. Jette stated they are relying on the demographic study that was completed about one year ago. The study provided five different models, and the School District has been relying on those numbers to make its decisions. He noted that the study shows that small families will move into the new developments, which will allow the School District to keep things stable.

Mr. Cutter commented that Dr. Jette had mentioned that the student population was starting to decrease. He asked if there were any cost savings regarding the bus contract? Mr. Izbicki stated that based on how the Town is laid out; they require nine busses. Dr. Jette noted that the busses are running at full capacity, and he mentioned that the School District combined CHS and LMS students on the same bus routes, which has worked out. Dr. Jette said that when the School District negotiates a new contract, they will show the bus company the actual numbers. Currently, the School District is receiving credit on the fuel savings, and that money is being used to pay for some of the shuttle runs.

Mr. Taylor asked if the vendor had provided names of other School Districts that they had worked with and had they reached out to the other School Districts to see what type of savings they received after the system was put in place? Dr. Jette mentioned that they are using their consultants to do the design, and the consultants have completed projects with other School Districts in New Hampshire. He confirmed that before they started working with the consultants, they researched whether the consultants had a proven history of completing the project.

Mr. Taylor asked whether the consultants had provided the School District with expected savings in the 2024 budget regarding the fuel costs? Dr. Jette commented that they had not received that number yet, but asked the Budget Committee to imagine that the boiler is gone at LMS, the oil tank is out of the ground, and the 50% increase in home heating oil is not the District's problem anymore.

Mr. Izbicki stated that the Budget Committee would see that there are no significant decreases to the electricity or oil because it is too soon to see the impacts of the LMS projects. Dr. Jette and Mr. Izbicki described how the savings should be significant based on the videos showing how much heat LMS was by losing through the old windows before they were replaced.

**b. Business Administrator Report:**

Business Administrator Cory Izbicki commented that he wanted to commend the Admin. Team, the Directors, and the School Board for being cognizant of what the School District wants to do on the warrant articles and still bringing in the FY 2023 School Budget as conservative as possible.

Mr. Izbicki stated that the School Board unanimously approved the FY 2023 School Budget at last night's School Board Meeting. The Gross Appropriation is \$23,931,881. This is a 0.5% (\$130,000) increase from last year's Gross Appropriation. The proposed General Fund increase is 0.6% (\$142,000).

He mentioned that the School Board voted to reduce the number of teachers by six but added two Special Education teachers, which provided a net decrease of four teachers. The School Board reduced the budget by approximately \$534,000. The School District had two other intents to retire that came in, which added \$91,000 back into the budget. The School Board also added back in a couple of Special Education positions at the cost of \$178,000.

Mr. Izbicki commented that the School Board received the actual increase to the Health Insurance after the budget presentation. The increase was 8% (\$170,000), which allowed the School Board to reduce the budget by \$31,000. In the Special Services Budget, they noted that there were additional sessions budgeted for music therapy that helped reduce the budget.

Mr. Taylor said last year the School District was concerned that the budget was only increasing a small amount, and this year the School District is presenting an almost similar budget. He asked what the School Board learned or what has changed with the reduction in growth? Mr. Izbicki stated that they had to be very careful because of the items coming up in the warrant articles. He mentioned that the School District is looking at a new Municipal Lease Purchase for LMS and two Collective Bargaining Agreements. The District is aware that they need the recommendation of the Budget Committee if the District wants a chance at getting the warrant articles to pass in March 2022. They hope that if the District shows that they are respectful to the community and propose a responsible budget, the voters will approve the warrant articles. Dr. Jette noted that the School District budgeted for some teachers to retire last year, and the teachers chose not to retire. Once the teachers did not retire, the School District had some more breathing room than expected. Dr. Jette commented that the District received Federal Funding in the form of ESSER Funds, and other initiatives from the Federal Government helped.

Ms. Douglas asked how many teachers the School Board budgeted for retirement that did not retire last year? Dr. Jette said he would have to look for that information and get back to Ms. Douglas. She then asked what happened to the money that was budgeted for retirement but was not used? Dr. Jette said that those funds were part of the fund balance that was not used last year. Ms. Douglas requested that Dr. Jette get back to her with how many teachers were budgeted for retirement and how many teachers retired.

Vice-Chairman Son asked if the ESSER Funds could be used for HVAC systems? Dr. Jette stated that the Litchfield School District's grant for the HVAC systems had not been approved as of tonight's meeting. He added that the Federal Commissioner came out and stated that the funds could be used on HVAC systems. The District is just waiting for approval.

Dr. Jette mentioned that the new school roof would have a thicker membrane to allow solar panels installation. He noted that the warranty is for 30 years.

Mr. Taylor asked if the District had any plans to use the ESSER Funds on the current GMS? Mr. Izbicki said that they do not have any plans on spending funds at GMS that would be considered a long-term investment. He noted that they would use the funds on things for GMS that are permissible and would make the school safer and more comfortable.

Mr. Son commented that the School District could receive funds from the new Federal Infrastructure Bill earmarked for school renovation. He mentioned that part of the hold-up from the School Facilities has been around how much GMS is tiered in priority. He added that GMS is not high on the list for schools receiving renovation funds.

Mr. Izbicki stated that they have a consultant that keeps an eye on all available grants and funds that the Litchfield School District could use in their renovation project. He provided an example where the School District had \$20,000 from the FY 2021 Budget to do external lighting upgrades. The contractor came in and did an audit of the lighting at CHS. The project will cost around \$22,000, and EverSource will cover 85% of the cost. In the end, the District will pay \$3,000 to replace the external lighting at CHS. He noted that the District could do slight lighting upgrades at LMS and GMS with the remaining funds.

Mr. Cutter asked if some of the Federal Funding could be used against the project? Mr. Izbicki and Dr. Jette agreed that the Federal Funds could be used. Mr. Izbicki added that the ESSER III Funding the School District will receive is around \$750,000. He noted that 20% (\$150,000) must be used on ESY and other learning recovery programs to help students negatively affected by the pandemic. The remaining \$600,000 can be used on HVACs and the renovation

project. He stated that ESSER II, around \$330,000, is good through September 2023, and ESSER III is good through September 2024.

Dr. Jette commented that he is going to bring in a Social Worker to help with the social-emotional learning issues that the District is seeing in the three schools right now. Dr. Jette interviewed him yesterday, and he believes the Social Worker will be an asset to the District. He noted that one of the grants would pay the Social Worker for his work.

Mr. Izbicki mentioned that the State is providing additional revenue for FY 2023, and the State revenue is up to \$430,000. Ms. Douglas asked if the formula had changed and if this type of additional revenue was sustainable? Mr. Izbicki commented that the State did change the formula, and he was unsure of the sustainability.

Mr. Izbicki stated that the tax rate impact on the budget for 2022 is \$0.19 per thousand. The Draft Default Budget, pending the School Board discussion, is \$289,000 higher than the budget. The difference is 1.2%, and the tax rate on the Default Budget is \$0.42 per thousand. Mr. Izbicki stated that for the first time in three years, the food service is \$23,000 in the good.

**c. School Board Recommended Budget:**

**i. Campbell High School:**

Dr. Jette stated that the CHS Budget has a net reduction of \$12,882. He mentioned that the Principal and the facilitators did an excellent job of putting together their budget. Dr. Jette mentioned that he flagged the PPE line for all three budgets because a School Board member asked why the CHS total was more significant than the other schools and noted that the band at CHS is larger.

Mr. Taylor asked for the morning and afternoon enrollments for both Alvirne and Pinkerton regarding CHS vocational education? Dr. Jette stated that he would get that information from the Guidance Department.

Mr. Taylor mentioned that with the reduction in students, with the exception of the freshmen cookout, he did not see very much as far as a decrease. He asked if they thought there would be enough students to have teams in many of the different sports, and has there been any consideration of reductions based on just participation? Dr. Jette commented that they expect to have full teams and saw a significant uptick in student participation in sports.

**ii. Litchfield Middle School:**

Dr. Jette commented that the LMS Budget is simpler than the CHS Budget. He noted that the interim Principal Martha Thayer led the charge with getting the LMS Budget, and the new Principal met with the Administration to pull the budget together. LMS has a net reduction of \$11,044.77.

Mr. Son had a question about the athletic registration software. He asked if this was a new program that the District was using? Mr. Izbicki stated that CHS was paying for the program for both CHS and LMS for this year, and LMS will pay for their use of the program next year.

Ms. Douglas asked what CRCC registration fee was under co-curricular and lego robotics? Dr. Jette stated that he would ask and get back to Ms. Douglas with an answer.

iii. **Griffin Memorial School:**

Dr. Jette commented that Principal Dan Mitchell is in his second year as Principal of GMS and has delivered some sizable reductions. The GMS Budget has a net reduction of \$35,200. Dr. Jette mentioned that one of the significant reductions was the laminator cost.

Dr. Jette was asked why the lego group transportation to finals was budgeted for \$5,000. Dr. Jette stated that the total for the entire column is \$5,000. He noted that it is a \$4,943 overall field trip line.

Mr. Cutter stated that one of his analyses is looking at the travel and conference line items. He noted that travel was up in a few lines, and he asked if this was a general theme throughout the budget for FY2023? Dr. Jette commented that many of the conferences are reopening to in-person conferences, and the Administration is adding conferences into the budget.

Dr. Jette mentioned that Principals look at conferences like the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). Dr. Jette mentioned that ASCD has top-notch conferences, he noted that conferences are important because it allows him to network with his colleagues who are going through similar issues that he is going through.

Mr. Taylor asked how Dr. Jette decides who attends a particular conference and how many attend the conference? Dr. Jette said that those decisions are made strategically and how the District will receive the most benefit. Mr. Son mentioned that Dr. Jette had commented that he likes to have one teacher attend a conference then come back and educate the teachers about what they learned. Dr. Jette added that sometimes they do not know what they will learn at a conference until they get there.

Ms. Harrison mentioned that there was a reduction in the professional development for teachers this year because the District wants to refocus on the experts that they already have within the District.

iv. **Curriculum:**

Dr. Jette mentioned that the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment put together a budget reduced by \$1,737.90. He noted that this budget covers all the professional development needs that they have for the District. Dr. Jette commented that there are some programmatic pieces that the Director of CIA has built into the budget.

Mr. Taylor asked if the budget for books was increased because the District was looking to purchase more expensive books or if the District was trying to build a purchasing cycle? He also asked if the Budget Committee should expect that they will see spikes regularly then flatten out? Dr. Jette acknowledged that they would not have any spikes in a perfect world, and the Committee would only see a level budget. He mentioned that the District several years ago adopted ELA and Math at the same time. Because both ELA and Math were adopted at the same time it has made purchasing more difficult. The Director of CIA is trying to space out the purchase but the spike still occurs.

Ms. Douglas asked what is the renewal StudySync? Dr. Jette said that StudySync is the ELA program at LMS and the contract is being renewed for three years.

Mr. Cutter mentioned that ‘project lead the way’ is talked about every year. He asked if ‘project lead the way’ was primarily for LMS? Ms. Harrison stated that it is used in K-12. Mr. Son commented that the budgeted amount for ‘project lead the way’ is the District-Wide licenses and the school based budgets are more for consumables.

Mr. Son mentioned that there was a spike in sending teachers out for professional learning and the District is looking to bring people back in. Dr. Jette commented that there are some new AP courses and some experienced AP teachers left the District. He noted that the District had to increase the training to teach the AP test. Dr. Jette commented that students do not do as well if they are not taught this way.

v. **Technology:**

Dr. Jette stated that the District handed out one-to-one Chromebooks from first grade on. He noted that the District had developed a good replacement cycle for the Chromebooks. He commented that the District has insurance to cover damages that occur with the Chromebooks. The IT Director put together a budget with a reduction of \$96,000.

Ms. Douglas commented that there was a significant increase in the cost per Chromebook, and she wanted to know if these Chromebooks would include a touch-screen? Dr. Jette mentioned that the increase in cost is the computer chip problem that has been in the news lately. He noted that the Chromebooks were ordered last year, and the District had to wait six months for the delivery. Dr. Jette commented that the District used today’s pricing for the budget because there is no guarantee that the prices will improve.

Mr. Taylor mentioned that last year when he asked about the Chromebook touch-screen, he was told that the District had already used encumbered funds and bought the touch screens. Ms. Harrison stated that the School Board decided to avoid buying the touch screens.

Mr. Taylor asked if the smartboard purchase was a one-time purchase or if this would be the new standard item in the budget. Dr. McGee stated that Mr. Pelletier plans on this being a standard item in the budget and added that Mr. Pelletier is putting in touch-screen monitors in each school. Mr. Son commented that the smartboards are portable and cheaper compared to the monitor.

Dr. McGee mentioned that placing smartboards in the three schools will take approximately ten years.

Mr. Cutter stated that he reviewed the enrollment report sent out in October, and he saw 96 fourth-graders and 93 eighth-graders. The District budgeted for 214 Chromebooks, and Mr. Cutter wanted to know why an additional 25 Chromebooks were ordered. Mr. Izbicki stated that Mr. Pelletier puts a buffer in his orders if he has to provide loaners. Dr. Jette said he would find out why 214 Chromebooks were budgeted for, and there are only 189 students in the fourth and eighth grades.

Mr. Cutter commented that he saw 43 GMS teacher laptops at \$900 per laptop. Dr. Jette mentioned that he was reviewing the expected number of students in fourth and eighth grades to be 198 students, a difference of 16 Chromebooks. He will still look into the discrepancy.

Mr. Taylor asked who would receive the 16 cell phones? Dr. Jette stated that this is a cell phone reimbursement and the Admin Team receives the reimbursement, and the Facility Staff receives cell phones provided by the District. He mentioned that during the pandemic the cell phones were needed.

Dr. Jette apologized and returned to Mr. Cutter's question regarding 43 laptops for the teachers at GMS. Dr. Jette stated this was being done because the 43 laptops were part of the replacement cycle. Ms. Harrison noted that she believes the laptops are for the GMS teachers, UAs, and Administrative Assistants.

Mr. Son asked if the CHS lab replacement was needed? He mentioned that every student has a Chromebook and should research what they need from their Chromebook. Mr. Izbicki stated that the laptops have specific software that the student's Chromebooks do not have. Dr. Jette will ask if the lab replacements are laptops or desktops and if the student's Chromebook can do the work.

Mr. Taylor asked if there was a reason that the District requires students to use Microsoft Office instead of Google Docs? Mr. Izbicki stated that the Administration and the teachers use laptops and Microsoft Office, and added that Google Sheets is not an effective tool to use. Mr. Son asked for a breakdown of how much the line item was for Microsoft Office, Windows OS, and the Server Licenses? Dr. Jette said that he would get the information.

**vi. Special Services:**

Dr. Jette stated that the Special Services Budget was reduced by \$6,200, and he was informed that OOD in New Hampshire could only go up by 5% a year. The problem is that the District is at the mercy of private schools in Massachusetts that can increase the tuition by 20% a year.

Dr. Jette commented that he has an asterisk in his budget that Ms. Bandurski has an eye on the potential elimination of programs if the District was to get its in-house program built correctly. He noted that the plan is not to have something in the budget for next year because they will need it with the position they are going to bring in. Dr. Jette provided an example of spending \$80,000 to bring someone into the District but a reduction of \$60,000 in terms of placement.

Ms. Douglas asked if the District would be able to staff the position if the position was created? She was concerned that the position would be created and not filled. The funds would not be spent and would be transferred into the General Fund. Dr. Jette mentioned that he is concerned that they see a lot of retirements within Special Education, and the pipeline of new teachers is not there.

Ms. Douglas asked that if the position was budgeted for, but the District was unable to fill the position, would the money be rolled into the General Fund or be segregated into another account and returned to the taxpayers? Dr. Jette said that he could not guarantee that the money would be returned to the taxpayers because the School District still has to fulfill the students' educational needs.

Mr. Taylor asked if it was possible with the two Special Education positions that the District could go ahead and get students from other Districts similar to how St. Francis sent students to the Litchfield School District for therapy services? Dr. Jette said that it was possible once the District set up an approved program.

**vii. Food Service Budget:**

Dr. Jette mentioned that the Food Service Budget was reduced by \$47,000. The majority of the reduction was done because the District looked at the food costs. The District is part of the buying group for the State and also utilizing the USDA subsidies program. Mr. Izbicki commented that the District is having a lot of complications based on supply. As an example, the Food Service Department will order 64 items, and only 32 items show up.

Dr. Jette commented that part of the LMS project is the revamping of the kitchen. He noted that the kitchen is 35 years old, and there is equipment that does not work.

**viii. Facilities:**

Dr. Jette stated that the Facilities Budget has a reduction of \$109,000. He mentioned that they could significantly reduce the budget because of the Federal Funds that the District has received. Mr. Izbicki noted that a lot of underspends occurred because of the Covid shutdown, and they were able to use the extra funds to reduce the budget. He added that the FY 2023 budget is based mainly on maintenance.

Mr. Izbicki stated that the District is auditing the lights within the schools and changing the fluorescent lights with LED lights. The lights in the parking lots cost about \$40 a month.

Dr. Jette informed the Budget Committee that the District submitted a grant request to the Department of Energy last Friday. The grant is for \$80,000 to go towards the energy lighting project at CHS.

Mr. Son asked for help understanding the savings by having the portables removed. Mr. Son noted that he saw the lease payment, which was around \$36,000. Mr. Izbicki stated that the rest of the savings come from the propane cost.

Ms. Douglas asked if it was realistic to have the water budget be level-funded? Mr. Izbicki said he would look at the numbers again and get back to Ms. Douglas.

Mr. Cutter mentioned that the Facilities Budget is usually the budget that takes the hit. The reason is that this budget is not tied to the student's curriculum. He asked if the Facilities Budget was being underfunded? Mr. Taylor agreed with Mr. Cutter's thought that the budget might be too low.

Mr. Izbicki commented that when it comes to year-end, he is looking at the fund balance, and his priority has been to focus on the areas that have big-ticket items that need to be repaired or replaced. He focuses the Unreserved Fund balance on those areas so that they can use the Operating Budget during the school year to focus on maintenance. He noted in the next couple of years the District might have a septic system project to pay for at LMS. The septic system at LMS is over 30 years old. Mr. Izbicki added that the septic system would be a major project and he would not use the Operating Budget to pay for the project.

Ms. Douglas asked if the District is artificially suppressing the budget by using Federal Funds. When the Federal Funds run out will the District see a significant spike in costs? Dr. Jette stated that if they do it right there would be a slow increase because the District would be starting over regarding the maintenance costs.

Dr. Jette commented that there were some long-term projects at GMS that the District stopped financially supporting. He pointed out that the District does not want to invest significant amounts of money into a building that may not be a long-term option. Mr. Izbicki provided an example that the District would not pay to rip out the gymnasium floor at GMS if the building will not be there in two years. He added that if it is not a safety issue, they will defer the investment.

Mr. Taylor commented about the line item for the annual underground tank inspection. He wanted to know, if the municipal lease goes through, would the annual underground tank inspection be needed? He thought that the tanks would be removed. Mr. Izbicki mentioned that the underground tank inspection was for the eleven tanks at CHS, and the tanks at LMS will be decommissioned.

Mr. Taylor asked for a breakdown on page eleven of the safety inspections of the ropes course versus the rock wall? Dr. Jette stated that he would get the information for Mr. Taylor.

Selectman Robert Leary commented that Dr. Jette had mentioned using Impact Fees to pay for the lighting replacement; he noted that the Impact Fees were released for the specific purpose of the LMS HVAC system, not the lighting. Dr. Jette said that the School District had not asked the Select Board for the release of Impact Fees for the use of replacing lights. He noted that the Town of Litchfield still has \$280,000 in CHS Impact Fees, and the intent is to ask for the release of Impact Fees from the \$280,000.

**ix. Business Services:**

Mr. Izbicki said there is an increase in the Business Budget because of the annual licensing for TimeCard Plus, which is the District's clock-in system. He acknowledged that he forgot to budget for this item in the last few years, and this year he added the system to the budget.

**x. Transportation:**

Mr. Izbicki stated that the Transportation Budget is just the application of the rate for the following year. He noted that the District already knows the rate because it is part of the contract that needs to be negotiated. Mr. Izbicki stated that the contract goes through the end of 2024.

**xi. SAU Budget:**

Dr. Jette commented that the District had added back in the travel expenses, representing the bulk of the increase.

**xii. School Board:**

Mr. Izbicki mentioned that the School Board Budget would increase because the District has received Federal Funding, and the School Board is spending more than \$750,000 a year in Federal Funds. The District must have a federal compliance audit to go along with a financial statement audit, and these audits create an additional fee.

Mr. Taylor asked why line item 330 for Legal Counsel dropped to \$25,000 in FY 2021? Dr. Jette stated that the most significant expense with Legal Counsel is Collective Bargaining. The District is negotiating with the teachers, and this requires a representative that they bring, so the District brings Legal Counsel.

Dr. Jette stated that the District is currently negotiating a new CBA and hoping to take care of it in the current budget. Mr. Izbicki stated that if the District brings the CBA as a warrant article and it passes, then they are good; if it fails, they need to go back to negotiations.

Mr. Taylor asked if the District was planning on bringing the school building as a warrant article this year? Dr. Jette said that if they did, the warrant would not be a full building ask.

**xiii. Human Resources:**

Dr. Jette stated that the Human Resources Budget was reduced for FY 2023. Mr. Taylor asked if the benefits strategies helped with the Federal Student Aid (FSA) and things of that nature? Mr. Izbicki stated that he would ask Ms. Falzone if people were taking advantage of the program.

Selectman Robert Leary asked what line 890 Staff Wellness was? Dr. Jette stated that there is a Committee that meets and provides programming for the staff across the District to promote wellness.

**xiv. Salary and Benefits:**

A question was asked about line item 110 Severance and whether that was multiple services. Mr. Izbicki stated that line item 110 was broken down into the different services. The Budget Committee asked questions about courses and the teachers that taught the AP courses.

Mr. Taylor mentioned that there was a lot of discussion around three tech integrators, and he wanted to know why he was not seeing one or two tech integrators put into the budget for this year? Dr. Jette mentioned that the District is two months into their new tech integrator, and the District cannot add new tech integrators until they have the data from the first tech integrator.

Mr. Izbicki stated that the overall personnel increase is around \$183,000. He noted that the District has already updated the budget regarding health insurance.

Mr. Cutter asked if they could provide attrition to the Budget Committee over the past five years in terms of the number of employees and the impact on the budget? Dr. Jette stated that they have that information mapped out, and he will get the information to the Committee.

Selectman Robert Leary commented that it appeared that the Food Service salary went up by 7%. Mr. Izbicki stated that he would have to look into the question regarding the salary increase.

Ms. Douglas stated that CHS is similarly sized in student population to LMS and asked why the District needs additional staffing at CHS? Mr. Izbicki mentioned that CHS is a larger kitchen, and they provide more service options.

Mr. Cutter asked if there were any more questions regarding the budget? Mr. Son asked if the questions on Google Docs should be answered by using Google Docs? Dr. Jette agreed that is how the questions should be answered.

Mr. Cutter thanked Dr. Jette and Mr. Izbicki for coming to the meeting and presenting their budget. Mr. Taylor noted that he liked how the Budget Committee could hear from the different group leads and ask questions.

**8. School Business:**

**a. General Updates**

No report

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

None

**9. Old Business:**

a. None

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

a. No Member Input

**11. Public Input #2 @ 9:11 pm**

a. There was no one for Public Input

Public Input ended at 9:12 pm.

**12. School Budget Meeting Schedule**

- a. December 2 - Thursday - School Voting - Budget Sections Presented
- b. December 9 - Thursday - School Voting - Top Level
- c. December 16 - Thursday - Town and School Warrant Article Presentations
- d. January 6, 2022 - Thursday - Warrant Article Voting

**13. Adjournment:**

**Motion:** (Ms. Douglas / Ms. Harrison) motioned to adjourn the public meeting at 9:13 pm.

**Roll-Call:**

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

**Vote:** (9-0-0) 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