

Litchfield Voter Guide



**Guide to the Second Session of the
2022 TOWN MEETING**

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2022 LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING

CAMPBELL HIGH SCHOOL

MARCH 8, 2022

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 2022 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 FY23 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>.

ARTICLE 1 - ELECTION OF OFFICERS			
Board of Selectmen (2) Three Year Term	Budget Committee (2) Three Year Term	Budget Committee (1) Two Year Term	Checklist Supervisor (1) Six Year Term
F. Robert Leary	Brian Bourque	Scott Taylor	Robert Redding
Kevin A. Lynch	William G. Hayes		
Write-in	Write-in	Write-in	Write-in
Cemetery Trustee (1) Three Year Term	Library Trustee (2) Three Year Term	Trustees of Trust Fund (1) Three Year Term	
Warren Adams	Erica Charbonneau	Steven P. Calawa	
	Jennifer Ford	Michael Falzone	
	Todd Ford		
	Margaret Graveline		
	Debra Stone		
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 Amendment No. 1 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town of Litchfield Zoning Ordinance as follows? Amend Section 800.00 NORTHERN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT to allow additional business uses consistent with the mixed commercial/residential and historic character of the area, including warehousing and distribution facilities as a conditional use.

Article Explanation: This amendment is to allow additional commercial uses in the Northern Commercial Zone to increase opportunities for business development while protecting the mixed commercial/residential and historic character of the area. Additional uses would include convenience stores, breweries, distilleries, and wineries, drug stores and urgent care facilities (less than 10,000 sq. ft.), yoga studios, contractor services such as plumbers or electricians, and warehousing and distribution facilities up to 150,000 sq. ft by Conditional Use.

ARTICLE 3 - ZONING AMENDMENT NO. 2

Recommended by the Planning Board

Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 2 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town of Litchfield Zoning Ordinance as follows? Amend Section 800.00 NORTHERN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT to require sidewalks in certain locations to foster development of a walkable New England Village environment.

Article Explanation: This Amendment would require property owners and developers proposing to construct multi-family residential or non-residential properties, or alteration/rehabilitation of existing residential or non-residential properties, to construct or assist with the construction of sidewalks on at least one side of 3A in the Northern Commercial District to foster development of a walkable New England Village environment. The intent would be to connect businesses and residences in the district to the existing multi-use trail along Albuquerque. Each section of sidewalk installation is subject to NHDOT and Board of Selectmen approval.

ARTICLE 4 - ZONING AMENDMENT NO. 3

Recommended by the Planning Board

Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 3 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town of Litchfield Zoning Ordinance as follows? Amend Section 700.00 SOUTHWESTERN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT to allow certain additional business uses, but to prohibit Warehousing and Distribution facilities except as an accessory use.

Article Explanation: This would allow additional commercial uses in the Southwestern Commercial Zone, to increase opportunities for business development. Consistent with the Northern Commercial Zone, additional uses would include convenience stores, breweries, distilleries, and wineries, drug stores and urgent care facilities (less than 10,000 sq. ft.), yoga studios, and contractor services such as plumbers or electricians. To protect 3A in the center of town from excessive truck traffic, however, warehousing and distribution facilities would be prohibited except as an accessory use.

ARTICLE 5 - ZONING AMENDMENT NO. 4

Recommended by the Planning Board

Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 4 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town of Litchfield Zoning Ordinance as follows? Amend Section 950, NORTHERN COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL SERVICE DISTRICT to limit the development of warehousing & distribution facilities.

Article Explanation: Currently, warehousing and distribution facilities are allowed by right in the Northern Commercial/Industrial District without any limit on size. This amendment would allow warehousing and distribution facilities only as a Conditional Use and would limit the allowable size to 150,000 sq. ft.

ARTICLE 6 - ZONING AMENDMENT NO. 5

Recommended by the Planning Board

Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 5 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town of Litchfield Zoning Ordinance as follows? Amend Section 1000, SOUTHERN COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL SERVICE DISTRICT, to limit the development of warehousing & distribution facilities.

Article Explanation: Currently, warehousing and distribution facilities are allowed by right in the Southern Commercial/Industrial District without any limit on size. This amendment would prohibit warehousing and distribution except as an accessory use to a permitted use.

ARTICLE 7 - ZONING AMENDMENT NO. 6

Recommended by the Planning Board

Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 6 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town of Litchfield Zoning Ordinance as follows? Amend Section 1100.00, FLOODPLAIN CONSERVATION DISTRICT, to clarify that residential uses are permitted by Special Exception.

Article Explanation: Currently, commercial uses are allowed in the Floodplain Conservation District by Special Exception, however residential uses are not allowed. This amendment would clarify that residential uses are also permitted by Special Exception.

ARTICLE 8 - OPERATING BUDGET

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 5-0-0
Recommended by Budget Committee 9-0-0

Shall the Town 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 **\$7,413,037**. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be **\$7,364,547** 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 2022 tax rate impact: **\$0.09**.

Article Explanation: The 2022 operating budget recommended by the Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen is \$7,413,037 an increase of \$209,244 or 2.82% over the 2021 approved budget. The tax effort is \$72,165 below the town's tax cap. If approved, the recommended operating budget represents a tax rate increase of \$0.09 per thousand dollars of assessed value. The estimated property tax increase for a home valued at \$400,000 would be approximately \$36.00. Significant budget decreases were fire hydrants (-\$79k), debt services (-\$26k), fire (-\$19k), street lights (-\$8k) and legal services (-\$4k). Significant budget increases were personnel (\$84k), road maintenance (\$80k), technology (\$35k), parks & recreation (\$33k) and sanitation (\$30k). Should the proposed budget fail, the default operating budget is \$7,364,547 which is a reduction of \$48,490 from the proposed operating budget.

ARTICLE 9 - HUMAN SERVICES & HEALTH AGENCIES

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 5-0-0
Recommended by Budget Committee 9-0-0

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 2022 tax rate impact: **\$0.02**.

Article Explanation: This article supports local and regional 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 funding allocations based on community needs and demands.

ARTICLE 10 - FULL TIME HIGHWAY POSITION

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 5-0-0
Recommended by Budget Committee 9-0-0

Shall the Town vote to establish a full-time Highway position effective July 1, 2022 for an estimated annual wage, benefit and other related costs of **\$85,607** and further vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$41,736** for wages, benefits and other related costs for the period of July 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022. Estimated 2022 tax rate impact: **\$0.03**.

Wage & Benefits	2022	2023
Wages	\$26,000	\$52,000
Health	\$9,663	\$19,325
Dental	\$428	\$856
NHRS	\$3,656	\$7,311
SSI	\$1,612	\$3,224
Medicare	\$377	\$754
WC	\$0.00	\$2,137
Total	\$41,736	\$85,607

Article Explanation: The Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee supported this article unanimously. The Highway Department has 2 full time employees and 1 seasonal summer employee. Seasonal contractors are hired during winter operations. The department is responsible for year round maintenance of over 60 miles of town roads. This includes winter snow & ice control, guardrail & storm drain repairs, road patching, mowing, removal of dangerous trees & debris, replacement of traffic & street signs, and trash & pet waste collection along the bike path and parks. The highway department also plows parking lots, shovels steps and walkways at Talent Hall, Old Fire Station, Transfer Station and the Aaron Cutler Memorial Library and they mow the lawn at the Municipal Complex, Old Fire Station, Parker Park, Muster Field and other facilities. The department is on call 24/7 365 days per year to respond to extreme weather conditions, accidents, removal of fallen trees, patching potholes, cleaning washout debris or to set up temporary detour traffic signs to maintain safe vehicle travel around flooded or damaged roads. Almost always, emergency work is performed by the Road Agent with no assistance. Even during normal work hours the Road Agent and the other full time employee commonly work alone to address multiple work priorities or because staff is away for training, meetings or vacation/sick leave. Working alone is a serious safety condition and oftentimes when performing work in public right-of-ways a minimum crew of three is required to maintain a safe work environment. This position is requested to address safe working conditions as discussed but also to meet the department workload that has increased significantly over the past several years. In addition, the new position will help address the shortage of seasonal workers with Commercial Drivers Licenses (CDL). For the past 3 to 5 years it has become increasingly difficult for the department to hire contractors with their own plow trucks and the town has had difficulties hiring employees with a CDL to operate town plow trucks. In 2018, the Board of Selectmen hired Municipal Resources Incorporated (MRI) to conduct an evaluation of the Highway Department. MRI recommended creating a third full time position to address employee safety, department workload and staffing needs.

**ARTICLE 11 - FULL TIME SCHOOL RESOURCE
POLICE OFFICER POSITION**

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 5-0-0
Recommended by Budget Committee 9-0-0

Shall the Town vote to change the part-time School Resource Police Officer position to a full-time position effective July 1, 2022 at an estimated annual increase in wages, paid benefits and other related costs of **\$41,067** and further vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$0.00** for wages, benefits and other related costs for the period of July 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022. Estimated 2022 tax rate impact: **\$0.00**.

Wage & Benefits	2022	2023
Wages	\$0.00	\$7,952
Health	\$0.00	\$13,116
Dental	\$0.00	\$579
NHRS	\$0.00	\$19,066
SSI	\$0.00	\$0.00
Medicare	\$0.00	\$115
WC	\$0.00	\$239
Total	\$0.00	\$41,067

Article Explanation: This article is supported by the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee. The Police Department is proposing to utilize funding of an existing vacant part-time position and augment it to make a new full-time School Resource Officer position. This can be accomplished with no new tax impact by utilizing the existing funds and creating the position no sooner than July 1, 2022. However, in 2023 there will be an estimated new budgetary cost of \$42,067 to cover the additional months of salary and benefits. The addition of this position would allow for the department to have a full-time School Resource Officer assigned to the elementary school and middle school. The officer would split their time between the two schools. This would also allow the department to reintroduce the D.A.R.E program to the youth of our community. The officer would help ensure a safe school environment while acting as a mentor and role model for the children of Litchfield.

ARTICLE 12 - PART TIME CLERK POSITION

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 4-0-1
Recommended by Budget Committee 9-0-0

Shall the Town vote to establish a part-time clerk position to assist the Town Clerk / Tax Collector effective July 1, 2022. This position would be assigned to a 20 hour work week with no paid benefits at an estimated annual wage and other related costs of **\$18,323** and further vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$9,144** for wages and other related costs for the period of July 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022. Estimated 2022 tax rate impact: **\$0.01**.

Wage & Benefits	2022	2023
Wages	\$8,494	\$16,988
SSI	\$527	\$1,053
Medicare	\$123	\$246
WC	\$0	\$36
Total	\$9,144	\$18,323

Article Explanation: The Board of Selectmen and Town Clerk / Tax Collector are seeking approval to create a new part-time clerk position with no paid benefits to assist the Town Clerk / Tax Collector's Office 15 to 20 hours per week. Currently, the office is staffed with 1 full time elected Town Clerk/Tax Collector, 1 full time appointed Deputy Town Clerk / Tax Collector and 1 part time clerk 35 hours per week. No new positions have been added to the office since 1992 but the town's population has increased 40% from 5,754 to 8,641. The new position will assist with increased workload, various customer services and office coverage during elections, training, vacations, sick leave and staff vacancies. Since 2005, the office has added new statewide services for vital records, divorce decrees, hunting and fishing licenses and boat, snowmobile and ATV registrations. The office is responsible for issuing and collecting over 6,000 tax bills (\$22,385,026), 24,000 car registrations (\$1,952,385), 2,015 dog registrations (\$14,579) and 325 boat registrations (\$18,970) as well as collecting and depositing over 4 million dollars of town department revenues. The office is responsible for overseeing the day to day functions, planning and reporting requirements before and after all local, state and federal elections. It also is responsible for safe and secure storage of all important town public records.

ARTICLE 13 - FIRE ENGINE LEASE PURCHASE

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 5-0-0
Not Recommended by Budget Committee 4-4-0

Shall the Town vote to authorize the selectmen to enter into a 5 year lease purchase agreement for the sum of **\$680,000** for the purpose of lease purchasing a fire engine with equipment and attachments for the Fire Department and to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$143,586** for the first year's payment for that purpose. This lease agreement contains an escape clause. Estimated 2022 tax rate impact: **\$0.12**.

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Cost	\$143,586	\$143,586	\$143,586	\$143,586	\$143,586	\$717,930
Tax Impact	\$0.12	\$0.12	\$0.12	\$0.12	\$0.12	

Note 1: Payments will be made in advance.

Note 2: Replacement of the 1995 fire engine is consistent with the Capital Improvement Plan adopted in September 2020.

Article Explanation: The fire department apparatus fleet consists of three engines of which the newest engine is 19 years old and responds first to the majority of emergency incidents. The second engine is 21 years old and the third engine is 27 years old. All of these engines are required to provide the necessary water supply, tools and equipment needed to fight hazardous fires and respond to about 700 other types of emergency calls that occur in the community. Some require multiple engine responses or to cover a truck that is out of service for repairs or providing mutual aid to another community. The fleet is rounded out by a 31 year old tanker and a 24 year old rescue truck. The average age of Litchfield's fire apparatus fleet is 23 ½ years. The current fleet is showing its age with more frequent repairs at higher repair costs. The Selectmen and Fire Department recommend replacing the 27 year old (1995) fire engine. If approved, the new engine would become the first response engine putting the current 19 year old engine second and the oldest third to respond. The replacement was recommended as part of a comprehensive fleet analysis completed in 2021. It found the engine required extensive and cost-prohibited repairs. The engine's fire fighting water pump requires its third complete overhaul at an estimated cost of \$32,000 in addition to multiple other repairs. The fleet analysis did not recommend incurring additional repair costs on the 27 year old fire engine. If approved by voters, it will take approximately 2 years to build. Fire engines are custom built but due to the economic times and uncertainty of readily available parts, build times have more than doubled. Given this, by delivery time the 1995 fire engine will be 29 years old by the time it is retired. This article is a priority item within the town's Capital Improvement Plan and supported by the Board of Selectmen. While many Budget Committee members support the replacement of the fire truck they cannot by law vote in favor of it because it exceeds the tax cap. However, town voters are allowed to overrule the tax cap for this article by voting in favor if they choose.

ARTICLE 14 - PROPERTY REVALUATION EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 4-1-0
Recommended by Budget Committee 6-3-0

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate **\$25,000** to be placed in the Property Revaluation Expendable Trust Fund as previously established? This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance and no amount to be raised from new taxation. Estimated 2022 tax rate impact: **\$0.00**.

Article Explanation: This fund was created in 2021 for compliance with the State of New Hampshire's mandatory town wide property revaluation every five (5) years. The cost of the revaluation is estimated at \$100k. Annual appropriations in the amount of \$25k will help avoid a property tax increase in 2025. Current fund balance is \$25k.

**ARTICLE 15 - TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATION
EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND**

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 5-0-0
Recommended by Budget Committee 8-1-0

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$12,000** to be placed in the Technology & Communication Expendable Trust Fund as previously established? This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance and no amount to be raised from new taxation. Estimated 2022 tax rate impact: **\$0.00**.

Article Explanation: This fund was established in 2019 to purchase and repair critical technology and communication equipment and software for all departments including but not limited to Police, Fire, Highway, Building and Town Clerk. The town's technology and communication equipment is valued at over 1 million dollars. This \$12k appropriation will restore the fund balance to the original balance of \$50k.

**ARTICLE 16 - FIRE VEHICLE & EQUIPMENT REPAIR
EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND**

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 4-1-0
Recommended by Budget Committee 6-3-0

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate **\$25,000** to be placed in the Fire Vehicle and Equipment Repair Expendable Trust Fund as previously established? This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance and no amount to be raised from new taxation. Estimated 2022 tax rate impact: **\$0.00**.

Article Explanation: This fund was established in 2017 for fire department vehicles and equipment replacement and repair costs that exceed \$5,000. Department vehicles and equipment are aging. The average age of fire engines and trucks is 23.5 years. Unanticipated repairs can be very expensive ranging from \$30k to \$50k and sometimes more. The Fire Department operating budget does not include funding for these types of major repairs. If approved, this will increase the fund balance from \$50k to a recommended \$75k.

ARTICLE 17 - PUBLIC WORKS EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

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

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$80,000** to be placed in the Public Works Expendable Trust Fund as previously established? This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance and no amount to be raised from new taxation. Estimated 2022 tax rate impact: **\$0.00**.

Article Explanation: This fund was created in 2012 to cover unanticipated expenses for snow and ice removal and disposal costs for solid waste and recycling material. The fund also covers unanticipated costs for major vehicle and equipment repairs and replacement. If approved, this funding will enable the Highway Department to replace old unserviceable and/or unreliable plow trucks with newer used plow trucks. Current fund balance is \$20k.

ARTICLE 18 - CONSERVATION FUND CAP AMENDMENT

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 5-0-0
Recommended by Conservation Commission 7-0-0

Shall the Town vote to amend the 2014 vote regarding the deposit of land use change tax funds into the Conservation Fund to allow the balance of the Conservation Fund to accumulate up to \$2,500,000. The current limit is \$1,000,000.

Article Explanation: Voter approval of this article will increase the Conservation Fund cap from \$1M to \$2.5M. The Conservation Commission and Board of Selectmen support the article because land costs have increased tremendously making it difficult to purchase land to protect the Town's rural character and agricultural land, natural and historical resources and open space for passive recreational opportunities. The Conservation Fund balance is currently about \$985,000. The Conservation Fund is completely funded by Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) revenues; not property taxes.

ARTICLE 19 - FARMLAND CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 5-0-0
Recommended by Budget Committee 8-1-0
Recommended by Conservation Commission 7-0-0

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$35,408** to be placed in the Farmland Capital Reserve Fund as previously established? This sum to come from the Land Use Change Tax Fund as previously established, which represents land use change tax revenue received as of December 31, 2021 but not transferred to the Conservation Fund in accordance with the \$1,000,000 cap established in 2014. No amount to be raised from new taxation. Estimated 2022 tax rate impact: **\$0.00**.

Article Explanation: The purpose of this article is to appropriate the \$35,408 collected from Land Use Change Tax revenues in 2021 but placed in a separate account due to the Land Use Change Tax \$1M cap. If approved, the funds will be moved to the Farmland Preservation Fund which can be used to purchase farmland or restrictive agricultural easements. If the article is not approved, the funds will transfer to the unassigned fund balance which can be used to reduce property taxes or as a potential funding source for capital reserve funds, expendable trust funds or special warrant articles.

ARTICLE 20 - BY PETITION

Recommended by Board of Selectmen 3-0-2

To see if the Town will vote to increase the Veterans' Tax Credit and the All Veterans' Tax Credit from \$500 to \$750 per year? Note: Assuming the same number of eligible recipients (400) this will cost an additional \$100,000 with an estimated 2022 tax rate impact of \$0.08.

Article Explanation: This petition article will increase the standard war Veterans' Tax Credit and All Veterans' Tax Credit from \$500 to \$750. Currently, 400 residents qualify for said credits. Assuming the same number of eligible recipients this will cost an additional \$100,000 with an estimated 2022 tax rate Impact of \$0.08.

END OF TOWN OF LITCHFIELD WARRANT ARTICLES.



TOWN AND SCHOOL DISTRICT VOTING

CAMPBELL HIGH SCHOOL

MARCH 8, 2022

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

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LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT 2022 WARRANT ARTICLES

ARTICLE A - ELECTION OF OFFICERS

School Board Member (2)	Three Year Term	
Andrew Cutter	James Norton	John York
Christina Harrison	Leane Romano	(Write In)

ARTICLE 1 - 2022-2023 OPERATING BUDGET

Not Recommended School Board 0-5-0
Recommended Budget Committee 9-0-0

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 **\$23,766,634**? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be **\$24,184,241**, 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 (per \$1000): **Reduction -\$0.41** (Operating Budget)
Estimated Tax Impact (per \$1000): **Reduction -\$0.05** (Default Budget)

Article Explanation: The operating budget recommended by the Budget Committee and **not recommended** by the School Board is \$23,766,634. This budget represents a **forty-one (41) cent reduction** on the tax rate. Should the proposed budget fail, the default budget is \$24,184,241. The Operating budget contains operating costs for the school district, food services and grant funds: 2022-2023 proposed general fund: \$23,084,692, 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.

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 \$23,766,634 and represents a **tax rate decrease of -\$0.41 per thousand dollars of net-assessed value**. 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 \$24,184,241 and represents a tax rate decrease of \$0.05 per thousand dollars of net-assessed value.

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 - TEACHER CONTRACT

Recommended School Board 5-0-0
Recommended Budget Committee 7-0-0

Shall the Litchfield School District vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Litchfield School District and the Litchfield Education Association, which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

Year	Estimated Increase
2022-2023	\$351,187
2023-2024	\$364,665

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$351,187** for fiscal year **2023**, 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 Tax Impact (per \$1000): **\$0.29**

Article Explanation: This is a two (2) year contract to move LEA and LSSA Negotiations/contracts to different (staggered) years. Planning time language has been clarified to provide uniformity among all three schools; language added regarding remote learning on emergency (weather) days.

Year 1 (2022-2023): Salary Step equal to overall 3.70% Increase - Steps 1-7: 1.5% COLA plus step; Steps 8-11: 1.75% COLA plus step; Steps 12-15: 2.25% COLA (plus step, if applicable).

Year 2 (2023-2024):Salary Step equal to overall 3.76% Increase - Steps 1-7: 1.5% COLA plus step; Steps 8-11: 1.75% COLA plus step; Steps 12-15: 2.5% COLA (plus step, if applicable).

ARTICLE 3 - SPECIAL MEETING

Recommended School Board 5-0-0

Shall the Litchfield School District, if Article 2 is defeated, authorize the Litchfield School Board to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 2 cost items only?

Article Explanation: According to a change in the New Hampshire laws, we may no longer petition the Court for a special meeting if a collective bargaining agreement is not approved by the voters. If both articles 2 and 3 are not approved, the prior CBA will remain in effect for another year and staff will go without any changes in salary and benefits. If article 2 is approved, then article 3 is not needed. If article 2 is not approved, and article 3 is passed, then we may renegotiate the cost items of an agreement and bring the question back to the voters in a special meeting.

ARTICLE 4 - SUPPORT STAFF CONTRACT

Recommended School Board 5-0-0
Recommended Budget Committee 6-0-1

Shall the Litchfield School District vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Litchfield School District and the Litchfield Support Staff Association, which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

Year	Estimated Increase
2022-2023	\$99,433
2023-2024	\$98,202
2024-2025	\$91,822

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$99,433** for fiscal year **2023**, 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 Tax Impact (per \$1000): **\$0.08**

Article Explanation: This is a three (3) year contract to move LEA and LSSA Negotiations/contracts to different (staggered) years. Language has been added: to provide other staff to help custodians if short staffed; for staff to be paid at regular rate if asked to be a bus monitor; and to allow professional development for food service and monitors if there is a remote instructional day. Longevity added for monitors; two additional sick days for school year staff; sick day carryover extended from 15 to 20 days; sick bank changed from mandatory to voluntary with donated days matched by district; and a dollar cap on end of year funds for course reimbursement.

Salary Breakdown:

Clarification to remove distinction between Admin I and II; change to two tier grid for office staff; Year 1, 0.25% cola added to grid plus 3% step; Years 2 & 3, 1% cola added to the grid, plus 3% step. Custodians & Food Service: 0.5% cola added to grid plus one step (3%) each year. Paraprofessionals: change three year grids (certified / non-certified) to one grid per status; Year 1, 1.5% cola added to grid plus 3% step; Year 2 & 3, 1% cola added to grid plus 3% step. Monitors: create step schedule based on years of service (4 steps total); 2% cola added to grid plus 2% step each year.

ARTICLE 5 - SPECIAL MEETING

Recommended School Board 5-0-0

Shall the Litchfield School District, if Article 4 is defeated, authorize the Litchfield School Board to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 4 cost items only?

Article Explanation: According to a change in the New Hampshire laws, we may no longer petition the Court for a special meeting if a collective bargaining agreement is not approved by the voters. If both articles 4 and 5 are not approved, the prior CBA will remain in effect for another year and staff will go without any changes in salary and benefits. If article 4 is approved, then article 5 is not needed. If article 4 is not approved, and article 5 is passed, then we may renegotiate the cost items of an agreement and bring the question back to the voters in a special meeting.

ARTICLE 6 - MIDDLE SCHOOL PROJECT
(As amended at Deliberative Session 2/5/22)

Recommended School Board 5-0-0
Recommended by Budget Committee 5-3-0

Shall the Litchfield School District authorize the School Board to enter into a **20 year** municipal lease agreement in the amount of **\$4,950,000** for the purpose of funding the Litchfield Middle School project including but not limited to building renovation, heating and ventilation, lighting and controls, and renewable energy, and further to **raise and appropriate the sum of \$195,000** for the first year's payment for that purpose? This lease agreement contains an escape clause. Majority vote required.

Estimated Tax Impact (per \$1000): **\$0.16**

Article Note: This article is **not** asking the voters to raise and appropriate \$5M dollars. That is simply the amount of the municipal lease agreement. It is, in fact, **asking voters to raise and appropriate \$195,000** for the first year's payment. Subsequent year payments will be budgeted in the annual school district budget and will be offset by the energy savings that will result by solving insulation issues throughout the building and converting to renewable energy.

Article Explanation: When the Litchfield Capital Improvement Plan was approved, it included \$3.5 million dollars for heating/ ventilation repairs, kitchen renovations and expanded space at Litchfield Middle School. This project will accomplish a complete renovation of our middle school by replacing 35 year old oil boilers and ventilation equipment, removing an outdated underground oil tank, solving insulation issues throughout the entire building, renovating the kitchen to current standards and converting unused locker room spaces into flexible classrooms.

The end result will be healthier learning spaces with improved ventilation for students and staff. This will better prepare us to face the cold and flu season each year or the outbreak of another airborne virus. With high efficiency air-source heat pumps and ventilation equipment, we will use the energy savings from a solar array on the roof of the school to bring lower, stabilized energy costs to the Litchfield taxpayers for the next 30 years.

We need to spend taxpayer dollars on either upgrading our oil burners and heating systems and continuing to purchase fuel from the volatile fossil fuels market (average rate increase over the past 20 years for electricity has been 2%, and for oil has been 11%), or we can invest in newer and greener technologies and use the savings to fund the improvements for the school.

ARTICLE 7 - CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

Recommended School Board 5-0-0
Recommended by Budget Committee 6-3-0

Shall the Litchfield School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$125,000** 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 of this year with no amount to be raised from taxation. This amount is consistent with the Capital Plan adopted by the Town of Litchfield in September 2020.

Estimated Tax Impact (per \$1000): **\$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.**

ARTICLE 8 - CONTINGENCY FUND
(As amended at Deliberative Session 2/5/22)

Recommended School Board 5-0-0

Shall the District adopt the revisions to RSA 198:4-b, II enacted in 2020, which allows the District to retain up to 0.25% of the District's net assessment in any year, allows the expenditure of any amount retained after the School Board first holds a public hearing, and further requires the School Board to include a report on the retained fund balance in its annual report to the District?

Article Note: When this article was proposed at Deliberative Session (2/5/22), the percentage of the retention of funds was "up to 5% of the District's net assessment" or **up to \$723,714**, if that amount does not exceed the unassigned fund balance. The percentage was amended at Deliberative Session and reduced to "up to 0.25% (one-quarter of a percent or \$36,186) of the District's net assessment". **It is important to note that the FY22 District Net Assessment is \$14,474,273 (what is raised by local taxation) and not the total FY22 budget amount.**

Why are we asking for this?

- There is only 1 purpose - to purchase land for a new Elementary School. As the ReImagining GMS project has unfolded this year, we have learned the current district properties are not suitable for a new elementary school. This will allow us to retain tax dollars already raised toward a purchase and sales agreement with a landowner. If we are successful in signing a contract for a suitable piece of property, we will be able to petition Superior Court for a special meeting to see if Litchfield voters will approve the site and the purchase. This will allow us to continue to make progress on the design of the new school over the next 8 months, so we can present a warrant article in March 2023.
- Once this purpose has been fulfilled, we will ask the voters whether they wish to allow us to continue to operate under the adopted provision or whether they rescind this ability and revert back to the way we have been conducting our financial business.
- RSA 189:28-a requires the school board to publish in its annual report or post at the annual meeting the general fund balance sheet from the most recent audit.
- The limit on the amount retained was increased from 2.5% (2012) to 5% (2020) of net appropriations. Net appropriations are the amount of school district funds raised locally for the support of schools. That amount is determined annually. The amount, however, is **not cumulative**. In any particular year the amount retained may not exceed the amount approved by the voters up to 5% of net assessment for the District.
- An important point regarding the 5% retention rate: the percentage is a cap on the amount that can be retained from the unassigned fund balance regardless of the number of years it takes to reach that cap. It is not 5% every year, rather it is 5% total over time.

Article Explanation: RSA 198:4-b, II reads:

II. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a school district by a vote of the legislative body may authorize, indefinitely until specific rescission, the school district to retain any unused portion of the year-end unassigned general funds from the preceding fiscal year in subsequent fiscal years, provided that the total amount of year-end unassigned general funds does not exceed, in any fiscal year, 5 percent of the current fiscal year's net assessment under RSA 198:5.

(a) Prior to expending retained general funds, the school board shall hold a prior public hearing on the action to be taken with such funds. Notice of the time, place, and subject of such hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the relevant municipality at least 7 days before the meeting is held.

(b) An annual accounting and report of the activities of the retained general funds shall be presented to the school board of the district and published in the annual report.

What is the District's net assessment?

- Net assessment, under RSA 198:5, is the town's assessment on the "taxable property of the district of a sum sufficient to meet the obligations..." of the school district.
- In other words, this amount is the local school district assessment. It is arrived at by taking the district's total budget and subtracting from it all revenue sources including the school district's education grant.
- The net assessment therefore is the amount raised locally for the support of schools by taxation including any amount that is raised locally from the state-wide education property tax.

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

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To be delivered by March 1, 2022.