

*LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT*

*Our mission is to provide rigorous and varied educational opportunities that challenge and engage all students to attain their highest level of intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth. (2007)*

**LITCHFIELD SCHOOL BOARD  
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT NO. 27  
Litchfield, New Hampshire 03052**

**Approved Minutes for March 29, 2017**

**In Attendance:** Brian Bourque, Chair  
Derek Barka, Vice Chair  
Christina Harrison, Board Member  
Paula Izbicki, Board Member  
John York, Board Member  
James L. O'Neill, Superintendent  
Frank Markiewicz, Business Administrator  
Michele E. Flynn, Administrative Assistant

*(Agenda items may not be in the order in which they were addressed.)*

**A. PUBLIC HEARING**

**6:00 p.m.**

*RSA 198:20-(b) – Appropriation for Unanticipated Funds Made Available During Year.*

**The public hearing closed at 6:04 p.m.**

**I. PUBLIC SESSION**

A. Call to Order

Mr. O'Neill called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Review & Revision of Agenda

There were no revisions to the agenda.

D. School Board Reorganization:

- Welcome New Members

Mr. O'Neill welcomed Board members, Paula Izbicki and John York, to the School Board meeting and congratulated them on their election.

- Nominations for Chair

Mr. O'Neill asked for nominations for Chair.

***Mr. Barka made a motion to nominate Brian Bourque as School Board Chair. Mrs. Izbicki seconded.***

Mr. Barka commented that Mr. Bourque has done a great job over the last two years and we are fortunate to have him as Chair.

Mr. O'Neill commented he has worked with approximately 17 school board chairpersons and Mr. Bourque is one of the finest he has worked with. He indicated that Mr. Bourque is very dedicated to the schools.

***The motion carried 5-0-0.***

Mr. O'Neill thanked Mr. Bourque for serving as Chair and acknowledged it is a very challenging position and demands many hours.

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- Nominations for Vice Chair

Mr. Bourque asked for nominations for Vice Chair.

***Mr. Barka nominated Tina Harrison as School Board Vice Chair. Mr. Bourque seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.***

- Signing of the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct

The Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct were provided for Board members to sign.

- Committee Assignments

Board members volunteered for committee assignments:

Budget Committee: Mrs. Harrison

Capital Planning Committee: Mr. York

Joint Loss Management Committee: Mrs. Izbicki

Technology Committee: Mr. Barka

PERC: Mrs. Harrison

Wellness Committee: Mr. Bourque

Mrs. Izbicki suggested that it may not be necessary for Board members to serve on some of the committees.

Mrs. Flynn clarified that the understanding is if the Board established and approved the committee, a Board member is required to serve on the committee as a liaison according to Board policy.

Mr. York commented that the reason a Board member is on the PERC Committee is because in the past the Board reviewed and approved every change in the curriculum and proposed curriculum. He believes it is a better method to have a representative on the committee so they can vet the curriculum and present their recommendation to the Board on a consent agenda.

E. Summary of Non-Public Actions from March 8, 2017: *No non-public session was held.*

F. Presentations and Recognitions:

- E<sup>3</sup> Awards: Shannon Szepan, Magdala Johnson

Mr. Lonergan provided background on the accomplishments of the award recipients.

Shannon Szepan is being recognized for Outstanding Collaboration with the Administration at CHS. She has been going above and beyond in her contributions at CHS. Prior to the start of the 2016-17 school year, she offered her time to offer CPR and First Aid re-certification to staff without compensation. Later in the year when it was required by the State that more staff be certified in CPR, she volunteered to train teachers at the teacher workshop day. She regularly assisted the new PE teacher in keeping classes organized and focused on the curriculum requirements and when the PE teacher unexpectedly resigned, she stepped in to assist again.

Magdala Johnson is being recognized for Outstanding Collaboration with Colleagues and Parents at CHS. She has assisted with the two new Math colleagues this year. She recognized one of those teachers was struggling with Infinite Campus and was not comfortable with the transition to CHS and she stepped in to assist on a daily basis. That colleague resigned, but praised Magdala for all her help. When a replacement was hired, she was quick to offer assistance, provide curriculum guidance, assist with Infinite Campus, and acclimate the teacher with the students. She also created a different curriculum path to meet the needs of exceptional students, working with the case managers, parents and technology to create classes and grading processes to accommodate these varied needs.

Mr. Bourque presented Ms. Szepan and Ms. Johnson with the Empowering Excellence in Education awards.

G. Correspondence

Mr. Barka reported that correspondence was received from Barbara Towne regarding the reductions in the music program.

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Correspondence was received from Gregory Richardson regarding concerns about construction and transportation issues in the north end of Litchfield.

Mr. Bourque announced that Mrs. Flynn and Mr. Markiewicz have been doing much work with regard to the construction issue. He indicated that they have been on site, working with Pennichuck, the construction contractors, the bus company, police department and NH Department of Safety. He noted that Mrs. Flynn posted on the district website a daily schedule of work and status to date, which will be updated for changes that occur. He suggested the parties involved in the construction should be more forthcoming with alternate routes and road blocks.

H. Superintendent's Comments

- CHS Graduation

Mr. O'Neill commented on the requirements for high school graduation. He indicated that he reviewed the current number of hours and days that CHS has accumulated this year. He noted that current state law allows seniors to graduate if they completed the required number of hours needed. Mr. O'Neill commented that CHS seniors can graduate on June 9, 2017 with 34 remaining hours. He explained if they do not graduate until June 16, they will be significantly over in hours. He recommended graduation date be scheduled for June 9. He noted that seniors are looking at colleges and other venues for their future plans.

Mr. Barka asked about the last day of school. Mr. O'Neill indicated the last day of school for students is June 22, 2017.

Mr. York commented that the district uses the number of days as a requirement. He believes the law states that schools are required to have 5 additional days to serve as make up days for closures.

Mr. O'Neill explained that the NH DOE decided that instructional hours can be used, which was verified. He noted that CHS has more than enough hours to compensate for the time missed for snow days.

***Mrs. Harrison made a motion to set CHS graduation for June 9, 2017. Mrs. Izbicki seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.***

Mr. O'Neill thanked Mr. Markiewicz and Mrs. Flynn for their work regarding the transportation and construction issues that occurred recently. He encouraged parents to notify the district with any issues.

- FY18 Staff Reductions

Mr. O'Neill commented on enrollment trends at CHS. He provided information in the form of a brief presentation to help explain why those trends caused the Superintendent to reduce music and French positions at CHS. He presented information regarding past enrollment in music courses at CHS and pointed out that in certain courses there is not enough interest to run the course next year. He noted only Jazz Ensemble will continue with lower enrollment because it is more appropriate for small group. Mr. O'Neill commented the district has budgetary constraints next year and courses with less than 12 students for enrollment will not run.

Mr. York asked for an explanation of how the classes break down by teacher. Mr. Lonergan indicated they anticipate four full credit courses and two half credit courses.

Mr. York commented the Board made a recommendation a year ago to add to the music department at LMS. He indicated if you have a full time position at CHS that is being reduced to part time, move the part time position to LMS.

Mr. O'Neill indicated the Board will have the discussion about the full and part time positions.

Mr. Bourque explained that he and the Superintendent have been discussing this issue for the last few weeks. He indicated that there were deep cuts to the budget and the Board will be discussing spending ahead for next year. He commented the full time position will be divided into two half time positions – one at CHS and one at LMS.

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Mr. O'Neill pointed out that the choral program at LMS is need of the half time position. He indicated that there will be a half time teacher at CHS and the other half time position will provide more resources for the LMS music program.

Mr. York commented the Board had discussions regarding part time teachers in the past. He asked if they are teaching three classes, will they have a planning period?

Mr. Lonergan indicated it would be a Day 2 position where the teacher would teach Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Mr. Bourque commented on the Reduction in Force (RIF) notice that was sent out. He explained that, according to the LEA contract, a RIF letter is sent out to the entire LEA membership any time there is a reduction in force.

Mr. O'Neill clarified that the certification for music is K-12 and according to the Collective Bargaining Agreement, it has to go out to all schools.

Mrs. Izbicki asked if there is prior conversation with the union president.

Mr. O'Neill indicated that he discussed the situation with the union president and provided a formal letter explaining the situation. The next step is to notify all members of that certification area so they aware. He commented sometimes we get caught between confidentiality issues and we are trying to do the right thing. Mr. O'Neill further explained because of the fact that we had to notify all staff in that certification area, there was concern we would reduce a teacher or teachers, but that is not the case. He pointed out if the district ended up with the default budget we would have to cut another \$150,000. He indicated that we have to look at the enrollment in courses when making a decision.

Mr. O'Neill provided enrollment information with regard to French courses at CHS. He noted the three year trend is similar to the Music course enrollment trend. He indicated that because of low enrollment French courses will not run next year. He mentioned that there are other venues for French courses as the district is associated with VLACS and they offer French I and II courses. Mr. O'Neill indicated other programs for French III and IV are being researched. He commented he is recommending eliminating the part time French teacher due to low enrollment in these courses.

Mrs. Izbicki suggested looking into other methods like offering stipends for teachers to teach on Google Classroom or going to another district for the courses. She indicated we are a small district and we have a high school we love. She noted we want to keep offering things, but we have to start thinking differently and thinking ahead.

Mr. Bourque commented beginning next year lower enrollment will impact the middle school and then the high school four years after. He indicated there will be deeper reductions when enrollment declines.

**I. Community Forum**

Mr. O'Neill expressed his appreciation for the letters received from community members expressing their opinions regarding the music and French reductions. He indicated that this is the democratic process.

Kate Wallace, 22 Wren Street, mentioned that she is a teacher in Londonderry. She commented that she loves the Litchfield School District and that she is glad her children attended the schools. She conveyed that her son was reluctant to take music, but through the years he came to appreciate music and playing an instrument. She noted that in Londonderry there is much discussion regarding 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills that are achieved through music. Students who take music are taught team work, are disciplined and problem solvers. She asked if we are going to add someone at the middle school, what will happen when the students get to high school?

Roberta Keane, McQuesten Circle, mentioned she has a child in college. She indicated research shows music creates higher GPAs. She commented music is one recreational outlet and this district should be offering as much music as it can. She indicated music actually creates better students.

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Amy Goldstien, 1 Spicebush Circle, mentioned her daughter enrolled in the music program and will be representing CHS in the All State Festival. She commented that Mrs. Leite, Mr. Martin and Mrs. have worked tirelessly to create a great music program. She indicated reducing the instrumental music position is contrary to high quality teacher criteria. She suggested if low enrollment in electives is a concern at the high school, increase the program at the middle school to tap into the interest of the students.

Betty Vaughn, 19 Stark Lane, commented it is good that you are being thoughtful, but once you take the positions and make them half time people are less apt to want those jobs. She indicated one of the gifts of living here is the music program and reducing it is not giving it its due. She noted that there has been no discussing regarding reducing athletic funding.

Nicole Roscoe, 31 Page Road, mentioned she is a junior at CHS. She commented that she was born in Puerto Rico and had to learn English. She came to the middle school in grade 8 and was told to choose between Spanish and Music. When she came to CHS she was grateful for French courses. She indicated it is beneficial to take that third language and many colleges require more than one language. Not only do you learn the language, but you learn about the culture. She noted that taking French boosted her confidence. She started the French Club, sharing with the group of students who take French. She commented that the group is passionate and dedicated and would like to move up into the higher French courses. She indicated it is good to get out of the small town mindset and see the world and the culture out there.

Seth Bonvouloir, 1 Tamarack Lane, commented he originally was enrolled in the Spanish program, but decided to learn French last year. He loves the courses and wants to continue learning the language. He indicated there are 24,000 French speakers in New Hampshire and it is a beneficial language to learn. He noted there was an increase of 25% in people who speak French in the United States from 2014 to 2015. He pointed out the mission statement talks about learning all aspects of life and we learn about the culture as well as the language. French is the third most common language in the world, linked to diplomacy and is taught on five continents. He commented it would be damaging to eliminate the program.

Scott Cavanaugh, 19 Bear Run Drive, commented everyone has made great points. He mentioned that he is a graduate of Berkeley College of Music, is a jazz musician and took French. He indicated he works at Berkeley and in his position he is fortunate to interview students coming into Berkeley about why they want to study Music. He noted as a music student you are taught to be an entrepreneur, to create something, and to market it. So many potential music students want to study because they were inspired by their high school music teachers. Potential students at Berkeley want to teach and inspire students in music. Mr. Cavanaugh commented the Board's job is to create an environment for life-long learners and offering French is part of that environment. He encouraged the Board to look at the successes of our students and students in Londonderry. He asked the Board to look for ways to be creative and keep those programs alive.

Colby Schmitt, LMS student, commented he began playing the trumpet in grade 5 and jazz band for four years. He indicated that Mrs. Leite taught him about music and history. He expressed support for continuing to learn and play music through high school.

Amy Goldstein, 1 Spicebush Circle, commented that she was impressed with the students speaking. She indicated her daughter takes VLACS Spanish and noted it is difficult to learn over a computer.

Maddie Taylor, CHS student, commented she has been in performing arts for four years. She indicated she takes many AP courses and AP exams. She noted that she gets through it through music. She commented that music is a creative outlet and that she has learned about music therapy in performing arts. She indicated she is excited to get into it next year. She asked Board members to consider what students are going to lose.

Community Member, 9 Mason Drive, commented that her daughters graduated in Litchfield and each had 10 years of performing arts, which benefitted them greatly. They developed tremendous skills and leadership skills. She asked the Board to be creative in thinking about how to keep the courses. She commented when you start calling

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those positions part time it is a loss to the district. We want our children to be able to compete, get accepted to good schools and get good jobs.

Jim Norton, resident, commented that he has a daughter in grade 4 who is excited to go to chorus on Tuesdays. He indicated his son started in music in grade 5 and plays soccer in high school. He is in the music program where half of those students are enrolled in sports. He asked the Board to consider keeping the programs.

Phil Martin, CHS music teacher, asked the Board to think about CHS as a living, breathing environment. The people who established the high school talked about people who want an environment offering diverse courses. Students no longer feel a connection with part time teachers and they need to be able to find their teachers during the day, which can't be accomplished with a part time teacher. Ten years ago CHS had few Honors courses and AP courses, but now we have 18 Honors and AP courses. Making the position part time will result in losing what had made CHS great; a place where the DOE would point other schools to. He realizes it is difficult, but feels that this is a program that is revered and he would hate to see it come apart. He asked the Board to please do everything possible to keep the courses.

Community Member, 13 Blue Jay Way, commented that there is no excitement in losing French. The community member attended a school in Connecticut that offered Spanish, French and Sign Language. The community member suggested offering French in middle school, which may increase the numbers in the high school.

Scott Geto, Lilac Court, asked the Board to consider the number of students that take the AP course, which is a college prep course.

Caitlyn Johnson, CHS French teacher, commented it appears that the numbers decrease, but as the level of the course goes up the number of students always goes down. The number of students being retained from one level to the next is going up. She indicated if French was offered in the middle school or there was a push for students to take French I the numbers would increase in the other levels.

Nate Cooper, President LEA, thanked all community members for attending the meeting and sharing their comments. He commented the Board will take everything into consideration. He thanked the Board for allowing him to speak, address the Board and the community-at-large. He congratulated Mr. York and Mrs. Izbicki on their elections to the Board. He noted they both deserve much credit for serving on the Board. He thanked Mrs. Lepore, who was a tireless advocate for public education, for her service to the district and community. He thanked Nicole Quintana for her short tenure on the Board, bringing a teacher's perspective to the table. He thanked the departing Budget Committee members for their service and thanked the voters for their approval of Article 2 and the educational initiatives on the ballot. Mr. Cooper commented the past few months have shown the progress we made as a community and district and is a collaboration of which to be proud. He believes when we engage in healthy, productive dialogue while respecting each other's differences, it is the children that win. He noted that we need to realize the work is never done.

Mr. Bourque asked the community members to keep in mind while the conversation is centering on cutting music, the fact is we are considering eliminating one half time position with 11 total students in four electives and placing a part time teacher at the middle school to prepare students coming to the high school. He indicated the Board will continue to look at students' needs, but at this time, the need for a full time teacher at CHS is difficult to accept when there is a greater need at LMS.

Mr. O'Neill commented that we anticipated a reduced enrollment in grades 1 and 2 years ago and had to reduce teachers. For the upcoming year, we will have to hire an additional grade 3 teacher and an additional grade 2 teacher because of the needs and Board policy. These decisions are not forever and are driven by meeting the enrollment needs in the schools. If we need additional resources at the high school, we will add them. We are looking at tough times and enrollment projections are decreasing to 350 students in one school. We will have to make some tough decisions. Mr. O'Neill indicated that the district looked carefully at these programs, courses and enrollment. He noted there will be difficult decisions to be made even when he leaves Litchfield. He commented that we have to respond to the enrollment. Our cost per student is lower than the vast amount of districts that

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surround us and we need your help to get the money for our students. The School Board has to respond to what we have for money to pay teachers. We are at almost 80% in salaries and benefits, which leaves less for operations. Mr. O'Neill indicated we have tried the best we can to keep everyone in our organization, but as we go down the road and have fewer children, our decisions will be more difficult. He agreed that we should offer every course for the children, but we do not have the funds.

Mr. Barka expressed his appreciation to the community members who attended the meeting. He commented we really need the support at the Budget Committee meetings and at Deliberative Session. He indicated the district is working with less money next year than this year, and with technology increases, we will have to get creative. He appealed to the public to come to those meetings when the Board asks for help.

Mr. O'Neill commented to the public, you are the ones that advocate for education and it is your voices we need. He expressed his appreciation to the students who attended the meeting and provided comment.

Mrs. Izbicki commended the students on their comments. She commented the Board does not take this lightly. She indicated she sat in front of the Budget Committee in November and December asking them not to make reductions and was turned down. She noted it was a long, very tough fight with no one in the audience. She commented it is not an easy job once they are done with the budget and their reductions. She asked the public to consider attending Budget Committee meetings as it is hard to fight a battle by yourself. Mrs. Izbicki noted when people spoke at Deliberative Session there was a change in the reaction of the Budget Committee. She indicated it matters to everyone here, but there are two processes that occur that are dependent on each other and you want to be the voice in the decisions.

Mr. Bourque commented that the retirement and benefits costs far exceeded the reductions made in the budget. He indicated we are operating with much less in the coming year than last year and adding two teachers. He noted the Board will do what is best for the community and the schools, but does adding a teacher in grade 3 outweigh the 11 students in a music elective? He commented we have to look at where it is more beneficial and it is not an easy decision. He encouraged the public to attend the Budget Committee meetings and Deliberative Session because once reductions are made to the budget, things will have to be cut and things change when you are operating with \$1M less.

Mr. York commented the School Board had in place some goals through negotiations, but this last year's negotiations changed greatly. He indicated we are surrounded by districts that had to think of creative ways to increase money for teachers, but Litchfield did not. He noted the major issue in the high school is we are one of a handful of schools where teachers only teach five classes out of eight instead of six classes. He commented if that had been resolved through negotiations that would help solve some of these issues. Teachers have three 90 minute periods in which they are not sitting in front of students. There are creative ways to solve the problem, but it needed to be solved in negotiations. Mr. York indicated the Board makes decisions around those things, but there is only so much money and so much time. He noted the Board has been dealing with this issue for a few years.

Mr. Bourque commented that the Board has to make a decision on which direction to go.

Mr. York asked if the decision has been made. Mr. Bourque commented that he went to the Superintendent and looked at enrollment from the past and what has been projected. He indicated they looked at where reductions needed to be made.

Mr. York commented that it was decided to reduce the equivalent of one full time teacher at the high school. Mr. O'Neill answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Bourque commented that they looked at spending ahead for next year, middle and elementary school. He indicated that they did not make the decision arbitrarily as there was much discussion and research. He noted that the need for a half time teacher in music at LMS with individuals, but if we really want to make the music program flourish, we have to offer it in elementary school. He indicated the Board feels the arts teachers are important in our schools.

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Mr. York commented that there are 42 two bedroom units being constructed to be filled in September. He noted that will impact enrollment.

Mr. O'Neill explained the reason we are putting new teachers at GMS in grades 2 and 3 is because the demographic data showed lower projections. He indicated the current numbers are 87 and 88 in grades 1 and 2. The housing market turnover is due to younger families moving in and those whose children have grown and moved on moving out. Mr. O'Neill commented we anticipate more students as areas are built out over the next few years and we will have to closely watch demographic numbers and projections over the next 3 to 5 years. He indicated if enrollment at this time does not change, there will be a decline in enrollment with the current cohorts. He mentioned Litchfield ranks 8<sup>th</sup> wealthiest community in NH based on household income and we are below the funding for public schools.

Mrs. Harrison was concerned with reducing music due to low enrollment. She commented that there was discussion about trying to build up the middle school program. She acknowledged the difficulty in reinstating a full time position from a part time position. She asked how that would work with course selection.

Mrs. Callinan, Director of High School Guidance, indicated that all course options are listed in Infinite Campus.

Mr. Lonergan pointed out that Mrs. Callinan met with the students. He indicated courses are offered every year and if you do not get interest one year it is offered again the following year.

Mr. Bourque indicated there are different electives you offer that you do not run or keep.

Mrs. Callinan indicated if it does not get enough interest it will not run. She commented students have to make a choice for what they need.

Mr. Bourque commented it is true that every student does not get every selection they want.

Mrs. Izbicki asked if the stipend for music is going away.

Mr. O'Neill commented that may happen, but it depends on the stipend schedule in the CBA and discussions with the LEA. He explained when we reduce some areas we have to look at which stipend areas have not been filled for a number of years. He indicated there is money out there for stipend music programs if we have interest, a teacher, and agreeable to the LEA.

Mrs. Harrison commented it seems like a cycle that starts with LMS. She indicated by not providing students in grades 5-8 with music education, it is understandable why there would be lower enrollment at high school. She noted all 8<sup>th</sup> graders take Spanish, which explains why so many students take Spanish at high school.

Community Member, if you cut courses at the high school and build up the middle school, how do you get those courses back and how will students know the options are out there if they are not offered.

Mr. Lonergan indicated they will be offered. Mr. O'Neill commented the list of courses is consistent from year to year. Mrs. Callinan commented the Program of Studies states which courses run from year to year and we talk to Curriculum Facilitators about which courses they want to run or not run.

Mr. York asked if this reduction is a result of the budget that was approved [and there is no money]? Is everything else funded equally, or is this money going to be allocated for an elementary teacher?

Mr. O'Neill commented there was a \$450,000 delta between what the Budget Committee recommended and what the School Board felt was needed. He explained that an additional \$80,000 had to be found for a grade 3 teacher. He indicated that the budget was examined to see where a reduction could be taken. The Budget Committee reduced salaries and benefits by \$300,000. We are going to look at purchasing FY18 items this year. We looked at all areas of the budget and looked at courses last to determine which run and which do not, which ones have lower enrollment. There are a total of 24 students who want to take four courses. Mr. O'Neill indicated it is difficult to



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justify running courses with less than 6 students. He commented we had to decide to split the full time music position at the high school over two part time positions.

Community Member, asked if there was any conversation with the music teachers about the issue.

Mr. O'Neill indicated there was no discussion with the music teachers. He commented that in looking to save money, courses with low enrollment will not run and to meet needs it makes sense to have a half time teacher at the high school and one at the middle school. Mr. O'Neill noted he consulted with the Guidance Director and the Principal. He indicated if we stayed with the full time position at the high school it would not have benefitted the students nor allowed the reduction needed.

Mr. Martin asked about the teaching load of the part time teacher. Mr. Lonergan indicated it would be approximately 100 students.

Community Member, asked how many part time positions are currently at the high school and how many will return to full time at a later date. Mr. O'Neill indicated he does not have that information at this time, but offered to provide it.

Mr. Barka commented we have 300 less students than in the past and are trying to be creative. He noted we offer many courses.

Community Member, asked if anyone considered the students who left because we do not offer the courses that private schools offer? He also asked about vocational education and who pays the tuition.

Mr. O'Neill indicated the district pays the tuition and transportation for vocational education. Mrs. Callinan indicated we are charged approximately \$1,000 per student per year and 75% is paid by Perkins for CTE.

Mrs. Izbicki commented that she expects when the high school was built those people presented to the community that changes will be made going forward. She indicated we are stuck in a pattern that repeats over and over again and the School Board has to make a decision. She noted the Board is committed to doing everything possible to get these things back.

Mr. Barka commented each month when we get the enrollment report there are less students going to private schools than in the past.

Mr. York believes the reason there is not a large drop off from grade 8 to 9 is because CHS has done a good job of adding AP and Honors classes. He indicated those are the things abutting the music and language programs. Every student and parent has found that clash at one time or another. In the past it was argued more money should be put into athletics and music. We have done that and now budgets are changing.

Mr. Bourque commented in the past there was a problem reinstating a part time position to full time, but this year the Budget Committee Chair said we do not have to go back to the voters to increase that position back to full time. He indicated when there is declined enrollment we cannot keep maintaining everything we have now. He noted the budget sessions were very challenging this year with the anomalies in enrollment numbers in grade 1.

Mr. Lonergan mentioned there are nine part time positions at CHS.

Mr. Barka asked about sharing the full time teacher between two buildings. Mr. O'Neill indicated there are different schedules at each school.

Mr. York commented that he would like to hear more about the plan for the middle school.

Community Member, commented there are 12 students in chorus at LMS because it is after school and competes with sports programs. He indicated in the past there have been 108 in chorus.

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Mr. O'Neill commented that it is difficult to look at chorus as a co-curricular number.

Mrs. Harrison believes that asking the teachers for their input would be important as they are the ones who teach the classes and see the needs. Mrs. Izbicki commented everyone will see a need.

Mr. Bourque asked Mrs. Leite if given the question of where the need would be, what would be your response for how the 50% position is handled.

Mrs. Leite commented it would help reduce her load and most likely be in chorus and general music classes.

Mr. Bourque commented that the decision will be made at the April 5 meeting. He indicated whatever decision is made, those monies need to be reduced somewhere.

Mr. O'Neill expressed his appreciation for everyone who attended and voiced their opinions.

Annie Paquin, CHS student, commented it is easy for the public to say we didn't get this, so it's the School Board's fault, but being here and experiencing the meetings, it is clear how hard it is to make those decisions.

Mr. York suggested the middle school should look into changing grades 7 and 8 to a block schedule.

Mr. O'Neill commented as population reduces in the middle school, we have to reduce scheduling. He indicated that there will be 60 less students next year and we will have to address that in terms of staffing. He noted he is not aware of block scheduling in middle school, but will research it.

Mr. Bourque commented that the decision to bring both Music and French as possible reductions was not taken lightly. He indicated that any reduction will affect something and it was believes there will be minimal impact in these areas.

Mrs. Izbicki indicated the process was sound.

Mr. Bourque commented it would benefit both schools.

Mrs. Callinan pointed out that CHS has six sections math that have 27-31 students in the classes currently.

Mr. O'Neill commented it is obvious we have to reduce the budget as salaries and benefits has gone from 76% to 79%, and in a few years will be unsustainable. He indicated as you have declining enrollment staffing will have to be addressed.

Mrs. Harrison commented in theory it is a short term lull. Mr. O'Neill commented it is a three year trend line. Mr. Martin is not teaching all music classes as he takes care of the audio in the auditorium. His classes are very small and the district cannot sustain this.

**J. School Board Comments**

Mr. Bourque expressed gratitude to Janine Lepore for her service on the School Board. He thanked Mr. Barka for serving on the LEA Negotiations Committee and Mrs. Harrison for serving on the LSS Negotiations Committee.

Mr. O'Neill thanked Mrs. Messenger for provided tremendous resources and data, as well as her time, for all negotiations.

**II. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Public Minutes:**

- March 8, 2017

*LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT*

*Our mission is to provide rigorous and varied educational opportunities that challenge and engage all students to attain their highest level of intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth. (2007)*

*Mrs. Izbicki made a motion to approve the public minutes of March 8, 2017. Mr. Barka seconded. The motion carried 4-0-1, with Mr. York abstaining.*

B. Budget Transfers

*Mr. Barka made a motion to approve the February/March 2017 budget transfers. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.*

**III. REPORTS**

A. FY18 Budget

Mr. O'Neill asked Mr. Markiewicz to provide for the Board an idea of budget reductions for FY18.

Mr. Markiewicz commented that the Budget Committee reduced salaries by \$300,000. He indicated that the district was able to drill down and reduce health insurance by another \$200,000.

Mr. O'Neill commented that they reviewed what is anticipated for a fund balance at the end of this fiscal year. He indicated that it is believed there will be a significant amount of fund balance to spend ahead for Special Education, Technology and Facilities. He noted that the district has to add back the funds for salary increases for non-bargaining employees and the Grade 3 teacher. Mr. O'Neill indicated that we know our stipend positions are never fully funded and we will provide completed detail. He explained that in reviewing all areas of the budget, it was recommended to reduce the part time French position and reduce the CHS Music position to two part time positions – one at the high school and one at the middle school. He commented if we add the French position we will have to find \$30,000 elsewhere; if we keep the full time music position we have to find \$50,000 elsewhere, which may result in reducing operational areas of the budget. He noted we are getting to a point where we have to look at how we offer the best education considering the resources we have because we cannot sustain the people we have.

Mr. Barka asked about the fund balance projection. Mr. Markiewicz indicated at this time we are looking only at salaries and benefits.

Mr. O'Neill indicated there is some under spend in “stuff” in some areas, but not enough.

Mr. Bourque commented the high school principal is saying that the enrollment does not warrant the full time music position.

Mr. York asked if Mr. O'Neill is recommending to add the position to the middle school.

Mr. O'Neill explained that the he believes the half time, non-benefit position in the middle school would be beneficial and would save approximately \$20,000, but he would still have to find an additional \$30,000 to reduce in the budget. He commented the half time positions in both the middle and high schools add value and the district can still find the money to reduce from the budget.

B. March Election Results and Information

March 2017 election results were provided for the Board. Mr. Bourque reported the special education articles were not approved and the votes were close.

Mrs. Izbicki commented there has been much transparency in keeping record of how much we have had to find for special education so the public can see the reality of pulling from one for the other. She expressed disappointment with regard to the lack of support for special education.

Mr. Barka commented that it has been a challenge in the past because of remaining funds at the end of the year. He indicated the Budget Committee can say we under spend the account and it is not needed because there is money in the capital reserve fund, but the Board cannot say that.

Mrs. Izbicki commented less money is used for students on and off IEPs than would be needed for life-long special education students.

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Mrs. Harrison suggested having a target for the capital reserve fund.

Mr. O'Neill commented that Mrs. Bandurski was directed to be more conservative in her budget to the point where we are not concerned. He believes the special education budget is the tightest it has ever been and we are concerned about what will happen if we have three or four new out of district placements. He noted that it is time to turn around the non-support mindset.

**Legislative Update**

Mr. O'Neill commented on the latest legislative update. There is opposition to the bill to ratify votes for towns that postponed their town meetings. Speaker Jasper is working to invalidate the voting results and Bill Gardener, Secretary of State, is aligned with him. RSA 40:4 states the moderator has the legal authority to change the date of the vote if it is in the well-being of the voters. That was debated, but Shawn Jasper and Bill Gardener stuck to their convictions. The Governor said the moderator can change the date and there will be no repercussions. Our attorney stated the RSA does allow the moderator to change date of voting. The town talked to the NHMA and town attorney and received same opinion. It was recommended that these towns go forward as legal voting. There are some questions on bonds and budgets if that changes and towns have to revote. Mr. O'Neill indicated we are going ahead as a legal vote justified by RSA 40:4 and all attorneys are in agreement. He noted 80 communities are impacted by this.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. 2017-2018 School Calendar**

A draft calendar for the 2017-2018 school year was provided for the Board.

Mr. O'Neill indicated he shared a copy of the calendar with the Board at the last meeting. He noted the major change in the calendar is that there is no school for the full week of November 20-24, 2017. He commented teacher professional development day and parent conferences will be scheduled at the beginning of that week. Mr. O'Neill explained that it was more sensible to have one week with no school than it is to have three partial weeks in the month of November. He recommended the Board approve the calendar.

***Mr. Barka made a motion to approve the 2017-2018 School District calendar as presented. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.***

Mrs. Izbicki suggested that the district prepare calendars for two years. Mrs. Harrison agreed.

**V. PUBLIC INPUT**

**A. Community Forum**

There was no public input.

Mr. O'Neill informed the Board that the revised Facility Use policy is postponed until April 19 as there are other policies that are affected by recent issues. He indicated that the policy requires a school employee in the building while in use and the State requires certification for crowd control and fire safety.

**VI. NON-PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3II (a, c)**

*[Minutes of Non-Public Session are written under separate cover.]*

***Upon a motion by Mrs. Harrison, the Board entered into non-public session at 9:20 p.m. under RSA 91-A:3II (a) The dismissal, promotion or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted (c) Matters, which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the body or agency itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. Mrs. Izbicki seconded. The motion carried by roll call vote: Mr. Bourque, yes; Mrs. Harrison, yes; Mr. Barka, yes; Mrs. Izbicki, yes; Mr. York, yes.***

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**VII. RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION**

*Upon a motion by Mr. Barka, the Board returned to public session at 10:04 p.m. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried by roll call vote: Mr. Bourque, yes; Mrs. Harrison, yes; Mr. Barka, yes; Mrs. Izbicki, yes; Mr. York, yes.*

**VIII. ADJOURN**

*Upon a motion by Mrs. Izbicki, the Board adjourned the meeting at 10:04 p.m. Mr. Barka seconded. The motion carried  
5-0-0.*

Respectfully submitted,

Michele E. Flynn  
Administrative Assistant to the School Board