

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

December 3, 2008

(approved as amended 12-10-08)

Present:

Mr. Dennis Miller, Chair
Mrs. Cindy Couture, Vice Chair
Mr. Ralph Boehm, Board Member
Mrs. Pat Jewett, Board Member
Mrs. Dot Beauregard, Board Member
Dr. Elaine Cutler, Superintendent
Mr. Steve Martin, Business Administrator
Mrs. Michele E. Flynn, Secretary

1) Public Session – Call to Order -Pledge of Allegiance – Immediately following Public Hearing

Mr. Miller called the meeting to order at 6:43 p.m.

2) Building Committee Recommendation Discussion

Board members discussed the second half of the Building Committee recommendation entitled, 'The Plan'. It was agreed that Step 1: Utilizing the plan brought before the voters in March of 2008 for a PreK-5 school, was completed. It was also agreed that Step 2: Define and obtain estimates to replace or repair utilities systems which are in such a condition that their failure would cause GMS to shut down, has been addressed.

Mrs. Beauregard felt that the Longchamps report needs to be better defined and clarified. She added that although Step 1 may be completed, there are still responsibilities regarding state aid and tax impact that will require Board action.

Mrs. Couture suggested that Step 3: Dissemination of information to the community and press, needs additional work. Mr. Miller agreed that some of the items in Step 3 would be difficult to accomplish as they are presented. Board members discussed whether the Building Committee should establish an independent subcommittee to address and develop an information dissemination plan. Dr. Cutler suggested that the Building Committee could define and clarify Step 3 for the Board. Mr. Miller will contact Ms. Caprioglio, Building Committee Chair, and inform her that the Board has approved Steps 1, 2, and 4, and would like to discuss Step 3 with the Committee at a future meeting.

3) Review and Revision of Agenda

There was one revision: the addition of Acceptance of Donations under Business Affairs.

4) School Board Comments

Mr. Boehm commended all the students in the District who were involved in the recent Make a Difference Food Drive. He also commended the CHS Student Council for their work in collecting, packaging, and delivering the food items to the Litchfield Food Pantry. CHS seniors are to be commended for purchasing with their own money food items for the food drive. Mrs. Jewett thanked the schools on behalf of the town welfare department for the food provided to the food pantry during the recent Food Drive.

Mrs. Beauregard queried about articles for the HLN regarding kindergarten, no school on the ballot, and the default budget. Dr. Cutler will be meeting with Mr. Schlichter to work on press releases for kindergarten and an explanation that no school will be on the ballot in March 2009. They will also be planning open houses.

Mrs. Couture suggested that Mr. Martin and Mr. Miller can draft an article on the default budget.

Mr. Boehm suggested an article regarding 1st grade and kindergarten registration information.
Mrs. Flynn suggested that the aforementioned information can be included in the next addition of the District Highlander.

Mrs. Couture commented that she and Mr. Boehm visited the LMS Friends of Music meeting on November 20. Members asked questions and were given an update on the budget. Members of the FOM asked about kindergarten and Mr. Boehm and Mrs. Couture provided answers. The LMS FOM will be selling tickets for a Night of Giving with a large percentage of the ticket prices helping the FOM raise funds for items needed at LMS.

Mrs. Couture commented that she attended a Wellness Committee meeting where it was decided that a Health Fair will be held for the community in late Spring. Local organizations will be asked to sponsor related presentations.

Mr. Miller congratulated the CHS varsity football team as they participated in the state championship against Franklin on November 21. He added that the athletes conducted themselves well. He also congratulated CHS cheerleaders who participated in the state cheerleading championship.

5) Community Input

Jason Guerrette of Litchfield expressed concerns about the Board's reaction to a suggested warrant article by Mrs. Jewett for GMS renovations. He also thanked Mr. Martin for stating that he was against the GMS fire/safety voice notification system. He added that in his personal opinion it is not necessary.

Mr. Martin clarified that he did not initially believe the voice notification system was required, but he did not state that he was against it. He commented that his personal feeling is that it makes the building safer. Mr. Martin clarified that there was confusion over the fire safety consultant's recommendation and that the voice notification for the fire safety system at GMS will be included in the budget.

Mr. Guerrette expressed concern that the allocation of funds may be excessive and unnecessary to install this type of system in a building we may not want to keep. He added that voice notification is not required by code and he would like to know the code reference the consultant was using when he recommended the voice notification evacuation system for GMS. Mr. Martin clarified that the consultant did not mention it in his report, but commented on several occasions that it would not be as critical a concern if the building had sprinklers.

Mr. Guerrette commented on some of the exceptions in the life safety code in relation to the fire/life safety recommendations at GMS.

6) Recommended Action

a) Business Affairs

1) Revenue Budget

Mr. Martin distributed the recommended revenue budget worksheet to Board members. He also included the proposed FY10 operating budget tax rate impact analysis. He indicated that the operating budget, excluding the teachers' contract, will result in a \$.54 increase in property tax. He noted that over a three year period the School Tax Rate has only increased 4.49%, which includes the large decrease in the tax rate in 2006.

Mr. Miller added that the year the District returned \$1M to the taxpayers, it was the same year as the property reevaluation and many taxpayers did not see a difference in their taxes.

Mr. Martin indicated that included on the tax rate analysis sheet are clarifications on state revenue items (building aid, adequacy aid, kindergarten aid, catastrophic aid).

2) Preliminary Default Budget

Mr. Martin presented the preliminary FY10 default budget to Board members. He highlighted changes for the Board, which included the addition of the reduction that the Board cut from the Co-curricular budget; reductions to the curriculum review schedule and the technology budget; reduction in MUNIS contract; reduction in debt services. Some increases included: the modular lease account and non-Special Education transportation. Based on legal advice, the kindergarten program funding was included in the default budget. Mr. Martin also reviewed legal and regulatory requirements that were added to the default budget, which include: tuition to the Nashua program,

Paraprofessional travel & overtime required by IEP's, 504 student requirements, GMS fire alarm system upgrade-voice notification, Removal of Romex wiring at GMS, Lighting retrofit (rooms 1-10) at GMS, Gym lighting upgrade at GMS, and a Follow-up air quality test at GMS. Items related to GMS were requested by the Fire Department and Health Inspector. The FY10 preliminary Default operating budget total is \$19,734,738.76, which is \$89,745.76 higher than the FY10 Proposed Operating budget. The FY10 preliminary Default budget total is \$20,891,893.

Board members discussed their concerns with the default budget.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve the FY10 Preliminary Default Budget as presented. Mrs. Beauregard seconded. The motion carried 4-1-0, with Mr. Boehm voting in the negative.

3) Food Service Budget

Mrs. Lawrence presented the FY10 Food Service Budget to the Board. The budget reflects a food price increase. She indicated that 39% of food service expenses are salaries. No changes in staffing hours or new positions are planned for FY10. The Food Service budget is self-funded and has no tax impact on the taxpayers. The total FY10 Food Service Budget is \$622,154.

Mrs. Lawrence discussed a proposal for price increases to lunches and ala carte items for the 2009-2010 school year. She explained the percentage of meal sales at each school and how it is calculated. She indicated that the proposed increase in prices is based on:

- comparisons with actual revenue and expenditures from the FY08 budget and adjusted for the expected decrease in enrollment by an estimate 104 student district-wide,
- the estimated reduction is \$12,300,
- a decrease in the number of lunches purchased by St. Francis students may result in an estimated reduction of \$1400.
- a decrease in the number of free/reduced meal students from 120 to 100 may result in an estimated loss in State and Federal reimbursement of \$2800,
- an increase in labor costs, including benefits, by an estimated \$25,000,
- an increase in food and supplies by approximately 8.5% or \$20,200.

Mrs. Lawrence proposed an increase in lunch prices of \$.25 for children and \$.50 for adults, which will increase revenue by an estimated \$25,700. She also proposed an increase in ala carte prices by 10%, which will increase revenue by an estimated \$29,000.

Board members expressed concerns over the decrease in the number of students eligible for free/reduced lunch prices. Dr. Cutler indicated that the food service booklet with the free/reduced guidelines/application was sent home with each student on the first day of school. The booklet and application have been placed on the website.

Mr. Martin cautioned Board members that if it is decided not to increase lunch and ala carte prices, there is a risk of an over spend in the Food Services budget, which would result in drawing from the fund balance. Mrs. Couture suggested waiting a few months to see if free/reduced numbers change before the Board approves a price increase.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve the recommended FY10 Food Service Revenue and Expense Budget as presented. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

4) Warrant Article Discussion

Mr. Martin presented a draft warrant to the Board. He reviewed the draft articles with the Board. Articles included were related to: the FY10 operating budget, the Litchfield teachers' contract, the appointment of a Deputy Treasurer at no cost to the taxpayers, a Special Education capital reserve fund to be added to the existing fund, and an article regarding warrant recommendations.

Board members expressed concern over the Special Education capital reserve fund article. Mr. Boehm suggested placing an advisory article to address the possible impact of the Hudson kindergarten lawsuit on Litchfield.

Mrs. Beauregard was concerned that clear explanations be included with the warrant articles once they are revised, approved and released to the public.

5) Acceptance of Donation

Mr. Martin presented a donation in the amount of \$2,208 from the Barry family to purchase one laser printer, three LCD projectors, and two digital cameras for LMS. Also donated was a tabletop hockey game for an after school club at LMS and a Mega Math computer game that will reinforce math skills, with a combined value of \$90.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to accept a donation from the Barry family in the amount of \$2,208 for the purchase of a laser printer, three LCD projectors, and two digital cameras for LMS, with gratitude. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Mrs. Beauregard made a motion to accept the donation of a tabletop hockey game and a Mega Math computer game for LMS, with a combined value of \$90, from the Barry family, with gratitude. Mrs. Couture seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

6) Manifest

The manifest was circulated and signed by the Board.

7) **Old Business**

1) **Policies: 2nd Reading & Approval**

a) Use of Students in a Non-School Public Information Program (KDCB)

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve the Use of Students in a Non-School Public Information Program. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

8) **Policy Work Session**

SECTION E: SUPPORT SERVICES

a) Emergency Care & First Aid Policy and Procedures (EBBC/EBBC-R)

Board members reviewed the policy and procedures and suggested revisions. The policy will go to a 1st Reading.

SECTION I: INSTRUCTION

a) School Ceremonies, Observances, & Patriotic Exercises (IND)

Dr. Cutler indicated that at a previous policy work session Board members asked that policies regarding school ceremonies and observances be condensed into one policy. Revisions to the policy were suggested. The policy will go to a 1st Reading.

SECTION J: STUDENTS

a) Student Health Services (JLC)

Revisions to the policy were suggested. The policy will go to a 1st Reading.

b) Physical Examinations of Students (JLCA)

Revisions to the policy were suggested. A suggestion was made to revise the name of the policy to Student Physical Examinations. The policy will go to a 1st Reading.

c) Immunizations of Students (JLCB)

Revisions to the policy were suggested. The policy will go to a 1st Reading.

d) Communicable Diseases (JLCC)

After some discussion of the above policy language, Board members deferred the proposed policy until the policy language is revised.

SECTION K: SCHOOL & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

a) School, Community, News, & Home Relations (KA)

Dr. Cutler indicated that the Board had previously requested the policy be revised to include the news media. The policy will go to a 1st Reading.

9) **Committee Reports**

a) Budget Committee

Mr. Miller reported that the Budget Committee did not meet last week. The Committee will meet December 4. Agenda items include the presentation of the FY10 District budget and consideration of the remaining town budgets.

b) Selectmen

Mrs. Jewett reported that the Selectmen have been working on warrant articles. They are considering a warrant article for a Town Manager or Administrator. She also reported that donations from residents for servicemen will be accepted until 12/5. Residents can drop off donations at the Town Hall. Mrs. Jewett commented that donations for Litchfield families in need are always appreciated. She reported that the Women's Club is holding a holiday event to benefit CHS on December 6.

c) Legislative

Mr. Boehm reported that he was sworn in during a Legislative organizational meeting today. He also reported that the Committee on Local and Regulated Revenue, a new legislative committee, will consider all matters related to local revenue.

10) **Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A:3II (a-c)**

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

Mrs. Jewett made a motion to go into non-public session at 9:46 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. (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee. (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. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried by roll call: Mr. Miller, yes; Mrs. Couture, yes; Mr. Boehm, yes; Mrs. Beauregard, yes; Mrs. Jewett, yes.

11) **Return to Public Session**

Mrs. Couture made a motion to return to public session at 10:18 p.m. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried by roll call: Mr. Miller, yes; Mrs. Couture, yes; Mr. Boehm, yes; Mrs. Beauregard, yes; Mrs. Jewett, yes.

12) **Adjourn**

Mrs. Jewett made a motion to adjourn at 10:19 p.m. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

13) **Upcoming Meetings**

> *Litchfield School Board: December 10, 17, 2008 – CHS Media Room - 6:30 PM*

Respectfully submitted,

Michele E. Flynn
School Board Secretary