

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

November 5, 2008

(approved as amended 11-12-08)

Present:

Mr. Dennis Miller, Chair (*excused*)
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

Mrs. Couture called the meeting to order 6:32 p.m. Mrs. Couture noted that Mr. Miller is traveling on business and would not be able to attend the meeting.

2) Meeting with Litchfield Board of Selectmen

Board members welcomed members from the Litchfield Board of Selectmen to the meeting: Frank Byron, Chair; Pat Jewett and Al Raccio. The meeting was scheduled to discuss topics of mutual interest. The topics included: the Cost of Educating Students from the State's Perspective, the Future of Kindergarten, General Parameters of the Budget.

The Future of Kindergarten

Selectman Byron explained that Selectman Raccio had concerns over the stability of the costs of education funding. Dr. Cutler indicated that the District has had no word from the State that the current allocation for education funding and kindergarten would change. Dr. Cutler explained that the State will fund portable classrooms, utilities/plumbing hookups, equipment and furnishings for kindergarten spaces for 3 years, as well as allocate \$1200 per pupil for the same period. The only items the District is responsible for are the consumables. Dr. Cutler further explained that a survey was conducted last year to determine the interest and enrollment in public kindergarten in Litchfield. Results showed that the District could expect as many as 80 kindergarten students, not accounting for those in private schools whose families may not be able to afford the tuition due to the economy. Dr. Cutler also mentioned that if the town should decide to construct a new school building, the State will reimburse the town at 75% of the construction costs of the kindergarten space.

Dr. Cutler indicated that currently administrators and faculty are developing a plan and budget to implement kindergarten. When the plan is approved by the Board the parameters will be explained to the taxpayers.

Mr. Martin mentioned that he queried the District's legal counsel about the kindergarten budget in relation to the default budget. Legal counsel has indicated that kindergarten must be included in the default budget, regardless of the unfunded mandate.

General Parameters of the School Budget

Mr. Martin explained the parameters of the budget to Selectman Byron. He explained that Salaries & Benefits are up approximately 3% - 4%, although all calculations are being double checked. The total budget for FY10 has increased only .68%, as the Superintendent directed administrators to level fund the FY10 budget. Mr. Martin explained that if you exclude discretionary items [utilities, energy, contracts] the budget is actually decreased -4.81%, not including teachers' salaries. He indicated that the town will see a very lean budget this year.

Selectman Byron queried about the request to adopt Highlander Court as a town road. Dr. Cutler indicated that Chief O’Brion stated he would prepare the proposal. She will follow up with the Chief in this matter. Mr. Boehm commented that Litchfield will have three of its own representatives. Dr. Cutler suggested that the Selectmen and School Board co-sponsor scheduling a legislative session before Deliberative Session in January with the new legislators and Senator DeVries as part of the Community Engagement Plan. Selectman Byron agreed to co-sponsor a meeting on January 28 at CHS at 7:00 p.m.

Mrs. Couture queried about the rate of return for tax bills that were recently sent to residents. Selectman Byron explained that the Town Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer resigned last week and Selectmen have appointed a temporary Treasurer until the next election. Selectmen will meet with the Treasurer tomorrow (Nov. 6) evening to discuss town finances. Selectman Raccio has researched the archived Selectman meeting motions to determine that the financial records are accurate. In relation to Mrs. Couture’s question, Selectman Byron indicated that the economy has caused many residents to suffer a financial shortfall, which has affected the town finances.

Mr. Martin shared the FY10 budget status with the Selectmen. He recapped that the overall budget increase is .68%, not including salaries and benefits. Mr. Martin reviewed the discretionary items with the Board and Selectmen and explained that some items are driven by different factors, such as: items required by LFD & Building Inspector; items required by NH DOE to meet increase in student age attendance; items required by NH DOE & Health Inspector for GMS School Approval. Mr. Martin commended Mr. Lynch for his accommodation in this matter.

Mr. Raccio queried about the cost per pupil to educate children in Litchfield as compared to the State average. Mr. Martin indicated that the State average cost per pupil is \$10,716.01 for elementary, \$9,821.37 for middle school, and \$9,992.06 for high school. Litchfield’s cost per pupil is lower than the State average: \$8600.09 elementary, \$7,666.78 middle school, and \$9,507.53 high school.

Mr. Raccio was concerned about the District’s budget in relation to the State’s financial deficit and the possible reduction of services and/or funding. Mr. Martin told the Selectmen that the District has been assured that the education funding allocation, as well as the funding of kindergarten, will not change. The only funding areas that may be subject to question are catastrophic aid and building aid.

Mr. Raccio expressed concern about how the District would respond to an unexpected shortfall of funding from the State in any funding area. Dr. Cutler indicated that she met with administrators and discussed the District’s readiness in anticipation of the possibility of any funding shortfalls from the State. Administrators are considering further reductions in such a situation. Mr. Martin commented that the amount of the appropriations in the MS-22 cannot be changed without a special district meeting to change appropriations. He noted that the Department of Revenue Administration is diligent when informing the District of any shortfalls or reductions in revenue from the State. Mrs. Couture pointed out that the Board will be presenting a conservative budget for FY10 to the town.

Mr. Raccio queried about the decline in the town’s population over the past six months due to home foreclosures and how that would affect enrollment in the District’s schools. Mrs. Couture indicated that there is an increase in enrollment projections for 1st grade for the 2009-2010 school year. She also pointed out that the economy is having an impact on families who send their children to private school and that the District could see an influx of enrollment in that area. Dr. Cutler indicated that last year’s enrollment projections estimated 95 students for 1st grade and the actual enrollment is 109. She felt the current projections would increase.

Mrs. Couture and Dr. Cutler thanked the Selectmen for their attendance and commented that the sharing of information is very valuable.

Mr. Byron mentioned that the Police Chief brought police a candidate for School Resource Officer before the Selectmen on Monday night. The candidate was an SRO in Londonderry prior to applying to Litchfield.

The Board took a ten minute recess and reconvened at 7:50 p.m.

3) Review & Revision of Agenda

Revisions to the agenda included the additions of Enrollment Projections and Manifest under Business Affairs.

4) School Board Comments

Mrs. Jewett thanked everyone for the flowers and kind thoughts she received while she was ill.

5) Community Input

There was no community input.

Dr. Cutler welcomed Kerry Finnegan, 6th grade teacher at LMS, to the meeting. She is attending the Board meeting as part of a course requirement.

6) Recommended Action

a) Business Affairs

1) Draft School Board Minutes:

a) Public Minutes of October 22, 2008

The minutes were deferred to the November 12 meeting.

2) Grants Committee Request

Mrs. Beauregard reported that the Grants Committee met on October 31 to discuss donations for non-critical budget request items for the District. The Committee drafted a press release that states that the Grants Committee is seeking IRS deductible donations in check form. Dr. Cutler informed Board members that an individual has offered to purchase an LCD projector and printer for LMS. She also indicated that methods for grants and donations for education were researched. A list for items the District needs will be compiled and will be placed on the District website with the letter to the community.

Board consensus: in agreement with the Grants Committee proposal.

Mrs. Beauregard indicated that the Committee is working on more ideas and needs volunteers. She thanked members Cindy Hansberry and Laurie Barry for their work.

3) FY10 Teacher Projections

Dr. Cutler reviewed FY10 teacher projections with the Board, which were based on October 1st enrollment information. Teacher projections are as follows: Kindergarten: projected 3 teachers (subject to change); Grade 1: 6 teachers; Grade 2: 6 teachers; Grade 3: 5 teachers; Grade 4: 6 teachers; Grade 5: 5 teachers. She recommended that the reduction of a teacher at LMS can be transferred to the high school for the Student Support Counselor position. Dr. Cutler mentioned that the recommendations are in line with enrollment projections and Board class size policy.

4) 2009 Annual Meeting Calendar

Dr. Cutler distributed the 2009 Annual Meeting Calendar to the Board for their information.

5) Enrollment Projections

Enrollment projections were covered under Item 3. Dr. Cutler will forward the teacher and enrollment projections to the Budget Committee.

6) Manifest

The manifest was circulated and signed by the Board.

7) Budget Work Session

Mr. Martin reviewed the status of the FY10 proposed budget with the Board. He highlighted changes in energy based on feedback from the energy consultants, and an increase in technology supplies and equipment.

Mr. Boehm queried about the impact of falling energy prices in relation to our membership in the energy group. Mr. Martin indicated that the energy group went out on oil and saved approximately \$17,000. With the markets in flux they felt that prices would fall and recommended not to lock in prices. However, at the consultant's recommendation, Mr. Martin chose to lock in the oil at 70% of the expected volume, so that if the prices go down we will still save money.

Mr. Martin continued his review of the budget status pointing out that even with additions and changes, the FY10 proposed budget increase is only .68%, not including salaries and benefits.

Mr. Martin presented the second round of the FY10 proposed budget to the Board. He indicated that administrators did an excellent job level funding the budget. Mr. Martin is confident that the budget will be updated to include salaries and benefits for the November 12 Board meeting. He estimated that there will be a 2% - 2.5% increase in salaries and benefits.

- a) Regular Programs (1100-1199)
- b) Special Programs (1200-1299)
- c) Vocational Programs (1300-1399)
- d) Community Programs (1600-1699)
- e) Student Support Services (2000-2199)
- f) Instructional Staff Services (2200-2299)
- g) School Board (2310-2319)
- h) Executive Administration (2300-2399)
- i) School Administration (2400-2499)
- j) Business & Finance (2500-2599)
- k) Operation & Maintenance of Plant (2600-2699)
- l) Student Transportation ((2700-2799)
- m) Support Service, Central (2800-2999)
- n) Non-Instructional Services (3000-3999)
- o) Facilities Acquisition & Construction (4000-4999)
- p) Debt Service (5110-5120)
- q) Salaries & Benefits
- r) Food Service
- s) Federal Funds

Board members will review the second round of the FY10 proposed budget and discuss changes at the November 12 meeting.

8) Committee Reports

1) Budget Committee

This report was deferred to November 12. Mrs. Couture announced that she will not be able to attend the Budget Committee meeting tomorrow night [Nov. 6]. Hearing that no other Board member was available, there will be no Board representation at the Budget Committee meeting.

2) Grants Committee

This report was covered under Item 6, Section 2.

Mrs. Jewett mentioned that a community member would like to donate a fitness item to the District.

9) Policy Discussion

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

Dr. Cutler indicated that at the October 22 meeting, Board members queried about the District's position in relation to the distribution of flyers by local political organizations. She explained that she spoke with the District's legal counsel who noted that the policy's original language left the District open to all organizations including political groups. However, with the new language, the District would be obligated to distribute flyers only from local organizations. Although the Superintendent can disapprove of such distribution, if the organization took the objection to the legal level, the policy would have to be revised to reflect that the District would not be able to distribute materials from any organization.

The policy will move to a 1st Reading.

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

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

Mr. Boehm made a motion to go into non-public session at 8:46 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. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried by roll call: Mrs. Couture, yes; Mr. Boehm, yes; Mrs. Beauregard, yes; Mrs. Jewett, yes.

11) **Return to Public Session**

Mr. Boehm made a motion to return to public session at 8:53 p.m. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried by roll call: Mrs. Couture, yes; Mr. Boehm, yes; Mrs. Beauregard, yes; Mrs. Jewett, yes.

12) **Adjourn**

Mrs. Jewett made a motion to adjourn at 8:55 p.m. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.

13) **Upcoming Meetings**

>>Litchfield School Board: November 12, 14, 19, 2008 – CHS Media Room - 6:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michele E. Flynn
School Board Secretary