

LITCHFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
MARCH 14, 2013

A special meeting of the Litchfield Board of Education was held on Thursday, March 14, 2013, in the Litchfield High School Library/Media Center, at 7:00 p.m.

Present were: Mr. Simone, Chairperson; Ms. Carr; Ms. Fabbri; Ms. Rosser; Messrs. Bongiorno, Falcetti, Katzin, Shuhi, and Waugh.

Also present were: Dr. Wheeler; Mr. Lathrop; Ms. Della Volpe; Ms. Murphy; Ms. Turner; Ms. Kubisek; the public and the press.

Discussion of Budget

Dr. Wheeler and Mr. Lathrop presented a draft of Board of Education Adjustments showing 2012-2013 Revised Budget (\$15,651,751.15); 2013-2014 Superintendent Request (\$16,120,486.58) – 2.99% increase, and Board of Education Adopted Budget with a difference of -\$273,430.82 – (\$15,847,055.76 with a 1.25% increase over last year.

MOTION made by Mr. Bongiorno and seconded by Ms. Fabbri: to approve the list as presented with the following adjustments: keep in budget M.S. sports/Pay for Play; IEP Direct; dues and fees reduce by \$15,000; insurance premium reduced by \$25,000; consulting and technology services \$15,000 more; take out of budget all library books; 0.2 music teacher; all custodial phones; eliminate elementary World Languages position with an increase of .95%.

Dr. Wheeler cautioned the Board that .95% might be too low a figure. The Board of Finance makes recommendations to the Board of Education and the Board should consider possibly not reducing to that recommended percentage.

Board members discussed: furniture all out; M.S. sports back in is a philosophical difference; possibly eliminate IEP Direct and leave Silverback Milestone; capital equipment; technology maintenance; Board of Finance questioned the amount of expenditures on technology; \$280,000 cost in budget for personal devices at L.H.S.; leasing cost is \$70,000 - \$80,000; much of technology budget already taken out; need to utilize what we spent money on last year; budget driven by what Board thinks is best for students; not a huge budget to begin with; need for library books to align with Common Core State Standards; elementary Foreign Language – a special program not offered in many schools; advantages to learning a foreign language in elementary grades; technology committee presented and detailed technology needs to the Board many times; wireless viability helps technology program to continue as planned; computer labs are inefficient use of real estate; computers necessary part of students' life; need to eliminate reductions that directly impact programs such as elementary Foreign Language and library books that are needed to align with C.C.S.S.; library books needed for transition; need to defend what is best for students; need to restore anything attached to programs; need to support

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programs like the first grade position; need to make priorities; possible money gained through hiring process if hire less than budgeted for; need to redistribute K and 1st grade if numbers increase; not sure where Board of Finance came up with suggested amount to decrease; input from parents through email regarding possible program cuts; possibly decrease bus route since enrollment is down; business office to spend time going through transportation routes; budget if library books and foreign language at the L.I.S were to stay in budget – 1.1%; Mr. Bongiorno's total budget number reduction, \$294,927; and possibly eliminate .2 FTE in music.

AMENDMENT made by Mr. Katzin and seconded by Mr. Bongiorno: to put \$13,720 back in to current motion for unemployment.

AMENDMENT carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

AMENDMENT made by Mr. Katzin and seconded by Ms. Carr: to restore elementary foreign language position (\$30,000); and keep library books at last years' line (\$15,823) and add .2 music (\$13,000) and take out unemployment figure.

Board members discussed: effects on programs; reduction in insurance; reductions in dues and fees; concerns about risky reductions; NEASC membership; CAPSS membership; medical is a gamble; reduction in personnel made in 1st grade position; possible computerized music course; C.S. schedule adjustment could mean reduction in specials by .2; possibly share with other schools; possibly share library media position since one will be leaving soon; programs are not affected if this is done; need to make better use of faculty; difficulty putting programs back in after taking them out; grants that covered books defeats budget allotment when no grants are available; elementary foreign language needs teacher contact; emails request foreign language, art, science, music be included; need .2 music added at high school; Board of Finance reduced the budget; not punishing, but prioritizing; community members who emailed, want to preserve programs; and with Mr. Katzin's additions and reduction – 1.49% increase.

Amendment denied. Ms. Carr, Ms. Rosser, Mr. Katzin, and Mr. Waugh voted in the affirmative. Ms. Fabbri, Mr. Bongiorno, Mr. Shuhi, Mr. Falcetti and Mr. Simone voted in the negative. There were no abstentions.

AMENDMENT made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Waugh: to take out IEP Direct and put back library books; elementary foreign language and music – 1.34% increase.

AMENDMENT denied. Ms. Carr, Ms. Rosser, Mr. Katzin and Mr. Waugh voted in the affirmative. Ms. Fabbri, Mr. Bongiorno, Mr. Shuhi, and Mr. Falcetti voted in the negative. There were no abstentions.

AMENDMENT made by Mr. Katzin and seconded by Mr. Waugh: to keep elementary foreign language, books for the library at last years' level; keep IEP Direct – 1.40%.

Board members discussed: need for foreign language in today's generation; past experiences learning and using a foreign language; accept .2 music reduction to get the budget to pass; difficulty in hiring .8 FTE; difficulty in starting foreign language in 7th and 8th grade; elementary age mind ready for foreign language; need to keep French, Spanish and Latin in high school; Intermediate school students need more time for language arts and not foreign language; need to start foreign language in Kindergarten if possible; need to be prepared for new computer testing; high school students can end up with 5 years of a foreign language; possibly phase out elementary foreign language; difficulty stopping something already in the program; High School and Intermediate School share position; .4 supplemental skills position still in budget; .2 M.S. sections of Spanish; and possibly add a 6th class for extra pay to preserve the program.

AMENDMENT denied. Ms. Carr, Ms. Rosser, Mr. Katzin and Mr. Waugh voted in the affirmative. Ms. Fabbri, Mr. Bongiorno, Mr. Shuhi, Mr. Falcetti and Mr. Simone voted in the negative. There were no abstentions.

Board members discussed: as motion stands, need to preserve programs; feelings about foreign language at the Intermediate School or 1st grade teacher in the early grades; need to think of what taxpayers will accept; difference of opinion about programs; good handle on what Board is doing.

MOTION made by Mr. Shuhi and seconded by Mr. Falcetti: to call question.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

Budget \$286,598 – 1.12% increase.

MOTION carried. Ms. Fabbri, Mr. Bongiorno, Mr. Falcetti, Mr. Shuhi and Mr. Simone voted in the affirmative. Ms. Rosser, Mr. Katzin, Mr. Waugh and Ms. Carr voted in the negative. There were no abstentions.

MOTION made by Mr. Shuhi and seconded by Mr. Falcetti: to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

Respectfully submitted,
Donald Falcetti, Secretary
Joanne Bertrand, Recording Secretary