

LITCHFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
MARCH 8, 2010

A special meeting of the Board of Education was held on Monday, March 8, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. at the LIS cafeteria.

Present were: Mr. Katzin, Chairperson; Ms. Carr; Mrs. Fabbri; Ms. Rosser; Messrs. Falcetti, Gorman, Noone, Shuhi, and Simone; Dr. Wheeler; Mr. Buccitelli; Ms. Della Volpe; Ms. Marinelli; Ms. Kubisek; the public and the press.

Public Comment pertaining to the BOE 2010-1011 operating budget proposal

Mr. Mongeau, chairman of the LEA Public Relations Committee read a statement from the LEA regarding the risk of mid-term agreements and distributed copies of a memo from the CEA legal department and a copy of C.G.S. Section 10-153f(e).

Mr. Sapiro commented that life lessons are learned from athletics and classes and he recommended that the Board read the book Plunder and be mindful of what is committed to during negotiations.

Mr. Pavlick commented that he recommended to cut nothing and would like the Board to realize how students are counting on the 4th year of Latin class to fulfill college requirements.

Mr. Eric McGowan commented that the Board should reinstate Latin 4.

Mr. Sandrib commented that the swim team did extremely well this past weekend and would like to see the team continue next year. He asked that the Board look at all extra school funding to see how funding can be spent more equitably such as combining maintenance with the town to save money.

Ms. Mary Ann Poinelli commented on the need to maintain the swim program even if taxes need to be increased. Compared to other towns, Litchfield taxes are relatively low.

Mr. Dranginis commented on the fact that there are no other options for students who do swimming during the season.

Ms. Kuharik commented that the Board has never offered us anything to save these programs.

Mrs. McKenna requested that the Board find other areas to cut that don't affect students.

Ms. Snow-Crane commented that the swim team reaches grades 4-12 and students can qualify for scholarships for college. The Board needs to find out what CJR has planned for their future that might affect the swim team.

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Ms. Pearsall commented that the Board should keep all programs so students and parents don't have to look elsewhere for their education.

Mr. Sniffen commented that the town could possibly pay for some of these items and not the Board.

BOE Discussion and approval of the 2010-2011 operating budget proposal

Dr. Wheeler reviewed the budget reductions sheet and presented a 3.27% increase that would reinstate LHS (electives) 1.0 FTE; LHS World Language .2 FTE; and add a Pool Fee of \$17,500.

Board members discussed the following: Mr. Shuhi's list of possible reductions; library system; no guarantees for coverage of pool through foundation application; possible addition of \$15,000 to cover if foundation money does not happen; concerns over Wamogo covering the same as Litchfield for pool use; LIS world language program; numbers for staff for supplemental skills; SRBI mandates; disappointment that LEA is not willing to agree to concessions to help the budget; possibly teach science within the classroom and not have a dedicated science teacher for elementary grades; building foundation of academic skills at Center School; actual rainforest cost is \$2,400; numbers for rainforest program project; cost to students in class where sub takes the place of teacher; need for community to help the Board sell this budget to the town; safety issue without an athletic trainer; music coverage with cuts being made; possible savings in extra duty stipends; not much in budget that does not affect students that could be cut; Wamogo budget status; stipends for plays; contract negotiations; clubs that rarely meet; need for expectations for stipends; below 3% is too much to ask for; and need to consider people in the community that can't afford a large budget.

MOTION made by Mr. Gorman and seconded by Ms. Carr: to support the Superintendent's budget at a starting point of 3.27% which includes budget adjustments of LHS (electives) 1.0 FTE; LHS World Language .2 FTE; and Pool Fee of \$17,500.

Board members discussed the following: Science courses affected; pool scenario; possible participation revenue; FTE in music program; elementary Science; last 20 years of swim team budgeting, possibility of CJR returning to a facility that will allow use of pool without fees in lieu of taxes; need to look at custodians and secretaries for savings; membership fees additions; reduced PD funding; maintenance management and redeployment; possible savings suggested by Mr. Shuhi; Dr. Wheeler requested that Mr. Shuhi consult again with Mr. Buccitelli; phone system savings; and need to modify the proposed reductions list to add up to 3.27%.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative except Mrs. Fabbri, Mr. Falcetti, Mr. Shuhi, and Mr. Simone who voted in the negative.

The Board agreed to hold a special Finance Committee meeting for further budget discussions, on Monday, March 15th, at 8 p.m. following the Facilities and Technology Committee meeting (6:30 p.m.), in the LIS Art Room.

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MOTION made by Mr. Simone and seconded by Mr. Gorman to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

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

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