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LITCHFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
MARCH 9, 2011

A special meeting of the Litchfield Board of Education was held on Wednesday, March 9, 2011 at 7:00 pm in the Litchfield Intermediate School art room.

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

Also present: Dr. Wheeler; Mr. Buccitelli; Mr. Zaremski; Ms. Della Volpe; Ms. Longobucco; Ms. Murphy; the public and the press.

Public Comment

- Denise Bozzuto supported the Board finding a way to keep the Science position in the Intermediate School.
- Wendy Snow-Crane commented on the Boards' efforts in the budget process and thanked them for all that they do.

2011-2012 Budget Discussion

Dr. Wheeler discussed possible items to be reduced including LIS science position; possible change in the 1.84 reduction; and list of suggestions from Mr. Shuhi. Dr. Wheeler stated that efforts are being made to keep reductions as far from students as possible. Also, the Board believes that the 2.53% initial proposal was appropriate and reductions are being made in response to concerns expressed by the Board of Finance. The budget with 2.53% increase was the amount needed to maintain educational programming and restore a small amount that was let go last year. Reductions from this point on are reductions of needed items and not "trimmings."

Dr. Wheeler presented two options for the Board's consideration in further reducing the 1.84% budget if they wish to do so. A possible 1.45% bottom line was included that might better meet the Board of Finance's needs. In the first option a 1.84% increase would keep the Science position, and a 1.45 % increase would eliminate the position. In the second option, the Science position is eliminated and other items restored, with a 1.84% increase; at a 1.45% increase those items are placed back on the reduction list. Both scenarios have the additional \$30,000 for transportation and \$22,000 for special education included in the totals.

Mr. Gorman arrived at 7:50 p.m.

Board members discussed both options: there is a desire to delay further reductions in maintenance; consider hiring a teacher with less experience than MS step+5 for the science position; consider reducing the .4 FTE psychologist position; \$20,000 for athletic trainer; difficult to support a budget that eliminates a Science teacher but keeps the athletic trainer; need for a continuum in science instruction K-12; possibly eliminate middle school sports; believe budget at 1.25% would be compromise to recommend to the Board of Finance; reductions in supplies, increase \$13,500 for legal fees; world language program is not critical; not a year to look for growth; reductions in dues and fees; mandatory memberships; CABA, CAPSS, CASPA, nurses association; NELMS, and CEC; need to re-categorize the miscellaneous items, new object codes created; need to maintain science experience in the Intermediate School as it is in Center School; gap occurs in grades 4 & 5; need for more time to thoughtfully put together the science program; difficult time to ask taxpayers to pay for more; question what regular ed teachers will do when science teacher instructs their class; support for science teacher at L.I.S.; need to look at CABA membership dues; policy book in good shape; use as reference for policy; could look at other schools and compare and contrast accordingly; coaching dues and no library books purchased last year; professional travel and PD; and reduce science teacher salary by \$15,000, remove I pads for \$1,200, eliminate CABA membership for \$8,000 for a reduction of \$24,000 and add these reductions to the first option presented this evening; bring budget to 1.69% increase.

MOTION made by Ms. Rosser and seconded by Mr. Noone: to reduce the budget to a bottom line increase of 1.69% using Dr. Wheelers' first option as outlined above, keeping the science and World Language positions and eliminating CABA membership, \$1,200 for purchase of iPads and reducing the salary allowance for the Science position by \$15,000.

Board members discussed the following: preserves the programs; reasonable bottom line number; support for the budget if science position is eliminated; and a request by the Chair for Board members to support the budget when adopted even if individual members didn't vote for it.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative except Ms. Fabbri, Mr. Falcetti, Mr. Shuhi and Mr. Simone who voted in the negative. There were no abstentions.

MOTION made by Mr. Shuhi and seconded by Ms. Fabbri: to reduce the budget to 1.25% as explained earlier this evening as presented.

Mr. Shuhi discussed a possible alternative: .5 FTE would remain after reduction of World Language or Science position, reduction in electricity, OPEB contribution, cafeteria point of sale program, technology, leasing computers, unemployment compensation, fuel costs, PD, furniture, no reconfiguration of Special Education, athletic uniforms, supplies, and factor reductions from the first motion; keep athletic trainer and add \$13,500 for legal fees.

Board members discussed the following: reductions made in the first motion are enough; .4 school psychologist reduction, need to remove or retain the athletic trainer position; contracted services are not FTEs; 1.69% is bare bones; reductions will reduce current programs; need for special education teacher and not assistants; future costs of new special education teacher; recommendations from the principals; 1.25% will cut money and people; and need to provide for the students.

MOTION denied: all votes were in the affirmative except Ms. Carr, Ms. Rosser, Mr. Gorman, Mr. Katzin and Mr. Noone who voted in the negative. There were no abstentions.

The Board of Education's adopted budget will be presented to the Board of Finance on the march 21st.

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Simone: to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

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

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