

**Approved  
Candia Budget Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
April 13, 2011**

Members Present: Lynn Chivers, Carla Penfield, Christine Watson, Todd Allen, Kim Byrd, Judy Szot, Carleton Robie, Selectmen's Representative, Ingrid Byrd, School Board Representative, and Cheryl Eastman, Secretary

Members Absent: Craig Sandler

Public Present: Dennis Lewis, Road Agent

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. Lynn led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Introduction of New Members**

All members were asked to introduce themselves. Ingrid Byrd is the School Board Representative and has served on the Budget Committee for about two years as an alternate. Carleton Robie is the Selectmen's Representative to the Budget Committee for the third year. Judy Szot has served on the Budget Committee for three years in the past and also sits on the Board of Adjustment. Cheryl Eastman is the new Budget Committee Secretary. Lynn Chivers is serving her third year on the Budget Committee, is retired, and also works at the Library. Kim Byrd has served on the Budget Committee since it was formed, and is also on the Planning Board. Todd Allen is serving his second year on the Committee. Christine Watson is a new member and works as a Program Manager. Carla Penfield has also served on the Budget Committee since its formation.

**Election of New Officers**

Lynn announced that the positions of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary need to be voted on. Kim Byrd made a motion to nominate Lynn Chivers as Chairperson. Carla Penfield seconded. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Lynn Chivers nominated Carla Penfield as Vice-Chairperson. Kim Byrd seconded. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Carla Penfield nominated Judy Szot as Secretary. Kim Byrd seconded. All voted in favor. Kim Byrd questioned if the official title is Clerk or Secretary. Lynn Chivers checked the rules of procedure of the Budget Committee and reported it is officially known as Secretary.

**Approval of Minutes**

Lynn Chivers commented that on the Town Website, most of the minutes for the Budget Committee are listed as "unapproved" when they have in fact been approved. Lynn Chivers asked Cheryl Eastman to have those changed to "approved". Todd Allen asked if the Committee was missing the minutes of the meeting at the Town Deliberative Session on February 12, 2011. Lynn Chivers reported that those were

the minutes that Carla Penfield had done. Copies of those minutes were not available to review this evening. Lynn Chivers asked Cheryl Eastman to research the status of those minutes.

Looking at the minutes of February 9, 2011, Kim Byrd advised that the spelling of Lynn Chivers name is spelled wrong all through the minutes and needs to be corrected. Also, on page 3 of 3, under the school expenditure report, there are two places where "IAP" is referenced and it should read "IEP". Judy Szot suggested changing the second sentence with IEP to say "...school is only if the student has an IEP..." Kim Byrd clarified that "or not" should be struck from the first sentence that contains "IEP". Todd Allen made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Kim Byrd seconded. All voted in favor with the exception of Christine Watson, who abstained as she was not a member of the committee on that date.

### **Discussion of Voting Results**

Lynn Chivers asked for comments or observations regarding the Deliberative Session or the results of voting. Carleton Robie asked everyone to tell their neighbors to come because of the low turnout at the Deliberative Session and voting. Todd Allen mentioned the CYAA article that failed. Lynn felt that the CYAA had done an excellent presentation at the Deliberative Session and she wonders if they have read the Committees minutes and if they understand the Committees objections. Lynn felt that if the CYAA stopped charging the school and adjusted their scale for in-town and out-of-town kids, the funding issue for them would be a little bit different. Judy Szot commented that we have said that before. Two years ago we told the CYAA that we pay them and they charge the same for our students as for anyone else that comes in. We discuss the same issues every year. Christine Watson added that some other towns like Raymond, for example, fund their programs with substantial amounts of money so their costs are about half, so the CYAA cannot compete with them because they are subsidized by their town. Christine added that the CYAA volunteers to do things like take care of the fields at the school so they have a lot of value added services, but they do a poor job of promoting themselves and communicating. Judy Szot commented that the CYAA had taken care of the fields so well that they poisoned the school well with nitrates – at a substantial cost to the school having to drill a new well and students having to bring bottled water to school for 1 ½ years. Ingrid Byrd added that the CYAA may take care of the fields at the school, but they also use them. Carla added that they are a private organization with no accountability for any money that the town gives them. The library is essentially private and we vote to give them \$125,000 a year, but they show us their budget each year and we know how they are spending that money. But there is no accountability from the CYAA and they never show us a budget. It was made clear to the CYAA several years ago that this was one of the issues, but once the town gives them money, they are free to do as they want with it.

Christine Watson mentioned that the swap shop article was the other one that was defeated. Lynn Chivers advised that the Committee had nothing to do with that article because it was not a money article.

Carla Penfield commented that the Board of Selectmen did an outstanding job with the budget and expenses and feels that the town should be appreciative of how well they have managed the money. She asked Ingrid Byrd to pass along the idea to the School Board that they need to do a better job. Carla Penfield feels the School Board did not hear what the Budget Committee had to say this year. Carla Penfield said that she would like to see them tighten up their budget and cut corners, and she certainly would not like to see an increase in the budget. Christine Watson stated that the benefits for the school were leveled due to negotiations. Carla Penfield agreed that they did come in with a decrease in their benefit package, but felt that the school should have done that anyway. When they presented the

savings in the benefits, they gave the savings to the teachers in raises. Carla Penfield was not happy with that. The Town has been fortunate that we haven't had to lay anyone off, and it's because we have been so frugal with money. When Carla Penfield first came on the Committee, and the year before, we had seen 10-12% increases in the budget for the town and the school. It took three years to slow it down. Carleton Robie commented that the Town budget has been level funded for two years now. Ingrid Byrd stated that the school can't do anything with benefits unless there is re-negotiation of the contract. Changes happened this year because it was a re-negotiation. Ingrid Byrd also informed the Committee that the State retirement contribution rates are projected to increase from 7% to 9% next year because the State will not be funding it at all. So, we will be looking at a \$100,000 increase just on retirement. Lynn Chivers commented that everyone had received the handout "State Aid to Municipalities: History and Trends" and the Committee will be talking about it next month.

### **Review Town Budget Expenses and Revenues**

Lynn Chivers questioned that the year-end expenditure on the Direct Assistance line is projected to be \$54,935. She asked how this was calculated. Carleton Robie explained that the number was projected off the actual expenses for the first quarter. Kim Byrd asked if we pay more expenses for Direct Assistance in the winter months. Carleton said that is usually the case, with heating fuel and winter needs. He also stressed that the Board is watching the Direct Assistance line very closely. Kim Byrd commented that the projected number did not account for seasonal fluctuation. Carleton Robie also added that there have been numerous new clients over the last quarter, because people are struggling. Carla Penfield asked for the actual number of new clients. Carleton thought 4 or 5, but will confirm for the next meeting. Kim Byrd stated that the estimated percent remaining is showing a negative 11%. Carleton agreed as it shows at the current rate, but as the summer comes along, that should come back in line. Kim Byrd commented that he would like to see that remaining percent to be 0%, not a negative amount. Carleton again stated that the numbers should come back in line over the summer. Christine Watson verified that, as of right now, it is looking to be overspent. She also questioned if there will be an increase in expenses over the summer because of electric use of air conditioners.

Carla Penfield asked about the status of the winter road maintenance budget, since Road Agent Lewis is present. Dennis Lewis reported that we are already dipping into the warrant article money for winter road maintenance. He will pull some funds from other lines to get through the end of December. He reported that about \$33,000 had already been taken from the excess winter road maintenance article. This past winter it was a problem not of the amount of snow, but the frequency of the storms. He feels that between the balance in the sand line and the remaining money in the warrant article, he should make it through December, if it's not too snowy. But you just never know about the weather. Dennis feels comfortable with about \$60,000 remaining to get through the end of the year.

Kim Byrd asked Carleton Robie what the difference was between the Welfare budget and the Direct Assistance budget. Carleton explained that the Welfare budget is the stipend and administrative costs for the Welfare Director, while the Direct Assistance budget is the money that is actually spent to help people in need.

### **Review School Budget Expenses and Revenues Reports**

Proposed Budget Adjustments report - there were no questions.

Expenditure reports - Carleton Robie asked about the health insurance buy-out line on page 2 of 16 and asked if that was paid in a lump sum payment or not. Ingrid thought that it is divided into the pay checks, but she will confirm. Carla Penfield commented that several years ago, the Committee had

gotten a figure for the school buy-out and found that the school pays less than the town for their insurance buy-out. Carla asked Carleton to get the buy-out information from the Town as well.

Monthly Enrollment report – Kim Byrd wanted clarification on why they compare figures from April 1, 2010 and October, 2010. Kim felt it would be easier to compare October, 2009. Ingrid added that she has month to month figures available. Kim questioned why they were using comparisons from two separate classes for enrollment figures. Christine Watson thought that maybe it was because both April and October are the middle of quarters and that would give a stable number. Ingrid added that it shows how enrollment can change as a class moves on to the next year. Ingrid can get more detailed information. Carleton commented that it is a significant change in the numbers for Kindergarten enrollment from 40 in one year and 30 in the next. Carleton felt that having 10 less students going into the first grade next year is significant. Lynn Chivers commented that Kindergarten is a difficult enrollment to look at because some parents use private kindergartens, and the ½ day program is hard for working parents. Ingrid reported that in Oct, 2009, there were 39 kindergarteners. In Oct, 2010, there were 30. She also reported that the total elementary school enrollment in Oct, 2009 was 413, and in Oct, 2010 it was 400, which shows the steadily reducing numbers that they have consistently seen.

The next expenditure report is the same information in a different format – there were no questions.

High School enrollment report - Lynn explained that this report shows regular and special ed.

Carleton Robie asked about the issue with transportation services that the Committee heard about and how that worked out. Was a route eliminated? Ingrid Byrd wasn't sure. She thought they were still working on doing routes. They had a problem with the new software. Ingrid will find out the details. Carleton reminded the Committee that the software was an expense of around \$40,000. Kim Byrd asked to have the previous year high school enrollments totals be added to this report. Ingrid will do that going forward. Judy Szot asked about the special education percentages in two elementary grades – one was 25% and the other was 20% of the students had IEPs. She added that in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 33% of the students are special education, and receive some kind of special education services. Lynn Chivers corrected that the total is 45 students – the two numbers have to be added together, but it is still 25% of the students – which is still high. Carla Penfield had questions about an IEP. Lynn asked her to hold those questions until the Goals/Expectations discussion. Christine Watson asked if special education is always for special needs, not for children that are excelling. Ingrid clarified that was correct, and the school doesn't separate excelling students. Ingrid added that an IEP is only for students who are functioning below normal levels.

Revenue reports – no questions.

### **Goals/Expectations for the coming year**

Todd Allen wants to see if something is not recommended by the Committee, for example, the playground fund for the school, that the minutes are clear as to why, so that the Committee doesn't look like it is against the playground. Todd would rather see that in the budget, not as its own warrant article. He doesn't think of a school without a playground, so he feels it is natural to have it in the budget. He also feels that the Household Hazardous Waste Day should be included in the town budget, not in a separate warrant article every year.

As far as the minutes, Lynn Chivers questioned if people actually read the minutes. She did think Todd had a valid point, though, and wondered how to communicate the Committee's reasons to the public. Lynn commented that the Planning Board had in the past put something in the packet with the town report explaining what they recommended and didn't recommend, and why. Christine Watson thought that was a good idea, but at that point the opportunity to take any action on the issue is long gone. But it is educational for voting. Items such as putting things in the budget would need some more lead time. The cost of adding something to the Boy Scout packet was discussed. There would be the cost of the copies and the \$75.00 fee to have them included. Ingrid felt that if it was something for a town department, there would not be a fee charged. Lynn felt that it is worth checking on.

Kim Byrd reported that the agenda for the meeting tonight was not posted on the town website. Lynn Chivers explained that was because the agenda had been posted, but then Lynn changed it. The first one had been removed, but the second one did not get added to the website.

Carla said that she wanted to be able to ask questions regarding the IEP and special education expenses and have a better understanding of it all. She would like to know more about what an IEP is, get a clearer definition of what defines a special education student, and are they well diagnosed. Ingrid reported that a lot of things cannot be asked. Carla wants to know what the Committee can ask, what they can't ask, and why they can't ask and feels that even if we can't get answers to everything, just asking the questions may send a message. Christine Watson asked about the procedure for monitoring the system and if there are audits. Ingrid reported that the state audits every 2 years. Carla questioned if some minor issues automatically go into the special education category. Ingrid reported, not automatically. Ingrid reported that for kids with minor problems, the school has reading specialists and people that will work with the kids without giving them an IEP. An IEP is a last step and they are very careful to not code a kid until it is necessary. Lynn felt that we have to be very specific of information we want to ask and we may still hear "No" because of HIPPA, or we may get answers. But maybe we can ask about categories of impairments. We may be told we have 20 with reading problems, 10 with emotional problems, and 3 psychotic, for example. But then what do we do with the info, Lynn asked? Christine thought we could ask for specific costs such as transportation, but not about something that is personally identifiable. Lynn added that last year there was transportation costs for one child (we don't know who) – that kind of information we can get. Carla commented on the expenses they have seen in the school budget this past year, such as swimming, horseback riding, summer programs. She feels if we are paying for that, we should not just accept those expenses without asking questions. She wonders what else is in there that we don't know about – maybe there are less expensive alternatives. Ingrid Byrd suggested inviting Nash Ready, the Special Education Director to attend a meeting to answer general questions such as these. Lynn again asked what would it change if they even get information? Christine suggested that perhaps there could be an alternative selection that is less cost prohibitive, or suggest bulk options for purchases. Lynn said that every year they hear the comment "I am the professional and the Budget Committee doesn't know anything about it and I'll give you the information, but don't think that anything is going to change because I am the professional." Lynn and Todd agreed that if they were the people on the other side, they would be saying the same thing. Carla reported that some issues that they have asked questions about have gotten addressed. Lynn agreed and said that often the initial response they get is "nothing can be done", but then it changes. Carla cited as an example, the questions about the psychologist. For two years the Committee felt the expenses were not reasonable, and then all of a sudden, it changed. Lynn agreed that sometimes asking questions is good because something may change just because the questions are asked. Carla feels we cannot be apathetic. We cannot assume that we need everything in the budget. Maybe we do, but maybe we don't. Some schools are laying off teachers or not providing transportation because of cuts in

budgets. Carla cautioned to keep a handle on things so that Candia doesn't find itself in that situation. Judy stated that some special education (such as a 504 designation) has no cost to the town, because it only involves things such as extended test time. Some parents push to have accommodations for their kids because it helps when they are going through the college process. Carla asked if those students are included in the IEP numbers we see on these reports. Judy assumes so, but a 504 is different than an IEP, it's a Civil Rights issue. Lynn feels these are all good questions. Judy added that some are federally mandated services and we have no choice. To Judy, it makes more sense to buy a handicap van to transport someone and have that van the next year, than pay \$80,000 to transport one student for one year. Sometimes arrangements can be made that are significantly less expensive. Carla feels we need to ask more questions.

**Other Business**

There was no other business.

Kim Byrd made a motion to adjourn at 8:00 p.m. Seconded by Carla Penfield. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

The next meeting will be the second Wednesday in May.

Minutes respectfully submitted by,  
Cheryl Eastman