

**Town of Litchfield**  
**Select Board Meeting Minutes**  
**January 27, 2025**

**1.0 Convenes 6:30 PM; Pledge to Flag; Selectmen and Guests present**

Selectmen: Gary Parker, Chairman; Clarence Gowell III (identified as Rick in these minutes); Scott Weeks.

Staff: Kelly Weissenfels, Town Manager; Michael Sherman, Fire Chief; Larry Nadeau, Road Comm.; John Upham, Transfer Station Manager (absent); Tom Wood, Chm. Budget Comm.; Steve Ochmanski, Code Enforcement Officer; and others per the sign in sheet.

**2.0 Minutes of January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

There was a motion made by Scott to approve the minutes of January 10, 2025. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 abstention).

[Agenda said Jan 27<sup>th</sup>, corrected to 10<sup>th</sup>, but meeting was actually January 13<sup>th</sup>.]

**3.0 Reports and Correspondence**

**3.1 Town Manager**

A. The Stevenstown road bridge that crosses over Interstate 95 is in the process of being repaired. The crew will be working to make the repairs over the coming days. There will be one lane with a traffic light on either side during this time.

B. Regarding the mailbox that was hit on Dennis Hill Road at Mr. Hersom's residence; Kelly and Gary visited the site. It was noted that the cross beam holding the mailbox was rotted and the post holding the cross beam was now short due to the increase in road height. The resolution that was settled on was to repair the mailbox, this seemed in everyone's best interest. Public Works will be doing the repair.

Kelly and Gary also looked at the pin that was in question on Mr. Hersom's property. This pin has Reuben Wheeler's (of Wheeler Surveying) stamp on the top of the pin and Kelly has asked him to determine if the location of the pin is correct or not. Also, Kelly will draft a policy for mailboxes in town. Later in the meeting Gary explained that he and Kelly have discussed a policy for road improvements to be announced and that will give residents time to adjust their mailboxes in cases of road height adjustments.

**3.2 Code Officer/Plumbing Inspector**

A. Steve handed out his permit report from December 2024, and time was allotted for review and for questions.

B. Steve reported on the sdolar moratorium that the Planning Board has been working on. He believes they will have most of the ordinance put together after the next Planning Board meeting. Alan Plummer [Planning Board Chair] and Paul Hempstead will be at the first board meeting in February to discuss the status of the process. Changes to the ordinance will be taken to and discussed during the Litchfield Annual Town Meeting. Steve suggested extending the moratorium so the time until the Town Meeting is covered.

C. The Planning Board is also working on putting a section regarding campers into the town's ordinance, making sure all campers are to be lived in temporarily and not as a full-time

residence. Steve noted he believes there will not be a public hearing until April for the Land Use Ordinance. This will still leave be in plenty of time for the Town Meeting.

### 3.3 Road Commissioner

A. Larry and the crew are planning for the coming snow in the next week. They are working during this cold snap to get the residual ice off the roads. Larry currently has a full crew. He also would like to ask residents as well as all drivers to pull over and/or slow down when they see the Road Crew out, this would help them greatly during inclement weather.

B. There was an issue with the furnace in the Town Garage this morning when the crew arrived. Larry is waiting for a report explaining what the issue was and will update Kelly as needed.

### 3.4 Fire & Rescue

A. Chief Sherman has a fire engine leaving for repair tomorrow, it will be at O'Connors body shop. This is completely cosmetic and should be back in service by the end of the day tomorrow.

B. There are two new members that are part of the department now. They will be continuing with mandatory training over the coming weeks.

C. The Department has purchased 3 sets of turnout gear that was manufactured without PFAS. Per Chief Sherman they got a good deal on the gear since it was only \$250.00 more to purchase the PFAS-free gear. Moving forward as gear must be replaced, this is the direction they will be moving in.

C. Chief Sherman continues to work on the permits needed to replace the Wentzel Road hydrant in the Spring.

### 3.5 Emergency Mgmt.

A. Chief Sherman attended an Emergency Management Meeting for the County that was held in Augusta. He noted it was a good meeting, with lots of discussion. And Greg Thompson from CMP gave a good presentation on how CMP's Storm Response Plan works as well as the proper chain of command and how they work through the process.

B. Rick asked Chief Sherman if there was any discussion about central Maine's access to fuel during power outages. Rick said that during a power outage there is no access to fuel, which he is trying to work on at the state level but wanted to know if Chief Sherman had any input. Chief Sherman will keep it on his short list of things to think about, he gave Rick some suggestions regarding where to look for help with this.

### 3.6 Assessing Agent

A. Ellery was in the office on Thursday and will have another colleague in the office this coming Thursday as well.

### 3.7 Transfer Station

A. Kelly reports there has been a lull in activity as of late, probably due to the cold weather. A bulky bin needed to be emptied, and the paper bin is filling up slowly.

B. Recently Rick visited a grocery store that had an outside cardboard compactor that was hauled away and swapped for a new one as part of the lease. He had not been aware they could be made watertight. This might be a viable option for the transfer station as it would eliminate the need for long term storage of cardboard bales. Per Rick the compactors can be leased, or they can be bought directly from the company. Scott believes that Riverside might also be using this system.

### 3.8 Other Town Committees

## **4.0 Scheduled Business**

### **4.1 RSU4 plan to close Sabattus Primary School – Katy Grondin**

Katy opened her presentation by thanking a number of Litchfield residents and staff. She is very thankful for the help she gets when she needs it.

Katy then described the process of how RSU4 plans to proceed with the closure of Sabattus Primary School. Moving forward they plan to fit the children that will be displaced into Libby Tozier. Libby Tozier will be Kindergarten and First Grade. Katy handed out the plan to the board. There was time allotted for the presentation and then questions and comments. Katy also wanted to let people know that they can look at the RSU4 website to view the plan with maps included. Also, there is an option for residents to message directly through the site and receive a response.

Regarding the question: What about the things that are needed to bring the school up to code, (construction needs)? Katy responded that RSU4 has applied through the State to receive some funding/help for the upgrade of multiple areas. The Department of Education has already visited the school(s). Katy will provide updates as the process progresses. Per Katy they have finished the process of getting all information and materials to the State. This includes a Lack of Need report which does include a cost analysis. This report becomes public knowledge once it has had the Commissioner's review. There will be a 10-day public comment period at that point. Then there will be a public hearing followed by the referendum, which only requires the approval of 1 town in order to proceed with the closure.

Katy then handed out a report regarding repairs, and describing her priorities. The discussion continued with budgeting, etc. Katy discussed her history with Edward Little High School and how that process went in getting a new school vs expansion vs no changes at all. She did comment that she believes the State is starting to recognize the need for change and help. On the topic of communications, Katy wanted to note that the cellular connectivity in Litchfield is low. Staff have a hard time having communicating by cell phone in Litchfield. Rick said there are ways to boost the connections.

Tom asked Chief Sherman if there was a way to force the hands of cellular companies by telling them that the schools need connectivity.

Gary asked Chief Sherman if he wanted to ask Katy about only needing to get School Board approval for use of the school as the Warming/Cooling Shelter instead of having staff (facilities manager) sign and needing to start over each time there is a personnel change. Chief Sherman discussed this with Katy to find out if this is an option. Katy is happy to discuss this with Kelly and Chief Sherman at a later time.

### **4.2 Review proposed road discontinuances status and timeline**

Kelly reminded those in attendance of the plan regarding the discontinuance. He was clear about where the State mandated process stands at this time. There are a few residents that have said they have not received a letting notifying them yet that their road is on the list. Kelly read the specific list of the roads proposed for discontinuance; this has been discussed at multiple meetings. Concerns were heard as well as questions.

The residents who spoke were concerned that the process wasn't being done appropriately. Also, there was a debate about whether the town is being transparent with the process. Mr.

White has written to the town to give his concerns about the process itself, including bridge maintenance as well as timing of letters going out, etc. Kelly worked to address all concerns and questions. Kelly said that he would be recommending a date in March that the Select Board could meet, and that a public hearing would follow.

#### 4.3 Review draft FY26 town budget development schedule

The budget review for Litchfield will begin at the next Select Board meeting. Kelly said the review will be kicking off with the Roads Budget as well as the Capital Improvement Plan. Kelly would like to invite the Friends of Cobbossee [Watershed] to come and give a presentation as he has been contacted by the group. Kelly gave the schedule that he will be trying to stick to that will have the budget finalized in time to have it printed and included with the Town Report.

#### 4.4 Review of new emergency services dispatch contract

Kelly had sent the contract to the members of the Select Board. Kelly said that the price has dropped this year and explained what this should look like financially in the coming years. Kelly is requesting a motion be made to approve him signing the contract outside of this meeting time.

There was a motion made by Scott to approve Kelly, the Town Manager, signing the new Emergency Services Dispatch Contract. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

#### 4.5 Review use of contingency funds for final cost of deck/support project

Gary said that they just need to know how much more needs to be approved to pay the final bill. Per Kelly the final total was \$45,775.00 which is \$5,775.00 over what was approved at the Town Meeting.

There was a motion made by Scott to use \$5,775.00 out of contingency to pay the remaining amount for the front deck. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

#### 4.6 Supplemental Property Tax, R03-108D, \$500 – Travis Work

There was a motion made by Scott to approve supplemental Property Tax, for map R03 lot 108D, of \$500 to Travis Work. This was seconded by Rick, vote was 3-0.

### **5.0 Unscheduled Business**

#### 5.1

### **6.0 Appointments/Resignations**

#### 6.1 Appointment to the Board of Appeals – Darren Ellis

There was a motion made by Scott to appointment Darren Ellis to the Board of Appeals. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

### **7.0 Warrants**

#### 7.1 Town Warrant #13 \$54,838.38

There was a motion made by Scott to approve Town Warrant #13 in the amount of \$54,838.38. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

#### 7.2 Town Payroll #14 \$44,163.53

There was a motion made by Scott to approve Town Payroll \$14 in the amount of \$44,163.53. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

### **8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/ Communication**

8.1 Kelly let the members know that that a legislative bill has been introduced to allow County Commissioners flexibility when establishing a payment schedule for county tax bills. This hasn't been assigned to a committee yet.

8.2 Gary took time to explain his stance on Mr. Hersom's concern(s) at this time.

### **9.0 Future Agenda Items**

9.1 Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Program

### **10.0 Adjournment**

Respectfully submitted by Angela Parker

Reviewed by Kelly Weissenfels, Town Manager