

Town of Litchfield
Select Board Meeting Minutes
October 15th, 2024

1.0 Convenes 6:30 P.M.; Pledge to Flag; Selectmen and Guests present

Selectmen: Gary Parker, Chairman; Clarence Gowell III (identified as Rick in these minutes, attended via Zoom); Scott Weeks. Staff: Kelly Weissenfels, Town Manager; Michael Sherman, Fire Chief(absent); Larry Nadeau, Road Comm.; John Upham, Transfer Station Manager; Tom Wood, Chm. Budget Comm.(absent); Steve Ochmanski, Code Enforcement Officer; and others per the sign in sheet.

2.0 Minutes of September 23, 2024

There was a motion made by Scott to approve the minutes from September 23, 2024. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent)

3.0 Reports and Correspondence

3.1 Town Manager

A. The fourth RSU4 budget votes are coming up. The public meeting is on October 23, 2024, which will be held at Oak Hill High School on Wednesday. This is followed by the referendum on Tuesday November 5, 2024 at the Sportsmen's Club.

B. The Town budget audit is scheduled for the first week of December.

C. Kelly has been invited to a Kennebec County Commissioner's Open Forum, being held this coming Thursday evening from 6:30-8:30pm. There will be a presentation on how they spent their ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds. As well as some working groups to discuss whatever the Town Managers want to talk about.

Scott asked if that would be an appropriate time to bring up the request for quarterly payments. Kelly agreed, and also mentioned that he wants to mention that just because property valuations go up there isn't automatically more money available for the County to use as revenue.

3.2 Code Officer/Plumbing Inspector

A. Steve handed out his monthly building permit report.

B. The illegal junk yard situation is still on-going as Steve has not received the proof-of-delivery from the Post Office for the registered letter that was sent to Mr. Miquelon that brought him to the last Select Board meeting. The Post Office can't tell Steve where it is. The board recommended that Steve have a County Sheriff serve Mr Miquelon the next set of paperwork.

C. Steve also addressed the agenda item for a pole permit CMP requested for Upper Pond Road. It's for power to new mobile home, but the pole is in the Town right-of-way and requires approval. Larry noted that the placement is fine.

3.3 Road Commissioner

A. Per Larry they are moving along with the Town Office parking lot project. They are intending to pave mid-next week. The weather is supposed to be warm next week so there shouldn't be an issue with getting the project completed, weather-wise. Larry also noted that the existing hot top is not very uniform in thickness.

B. Buker Road has had some ditching done in the last few days.

C. The plow trucks are all set and getting ready for winter with all the gear, etc. being attached next week. Gary asked about the one-ton pickup. Larry replied that it has a bad computer.

D. The hydraulic ram on the backhoe has been rebuilt.

3.4 Fire & Rescue

Chief Sherman is at his Fire and Rescue meeting tonight. Per Kelly there was nothing urgent to report.

Kelly noted that Rodney Allen retired from the Litchfield Fire Department this past Saturday after serving 71 years as a volunteer fire fighter in Litchfield. He is one of the top five longest serving volunteer firefighters in the United States. Kelly presented Mr. Allen a recognition plaque from the town for his time and dedication.

3.5 Emergency Mgmt.

Per Kelly the Emergency Management Plan for elections is moving forward. There should be a working outline by November 1, 2024. Negotiations for a generator connection as well as acquisition of a generator are taken care of. This means if the power goes out during the elections in November, the voting should be able to continue without delay. Kelly explained the plan and how the generator will attach to the building.

3.6 Assessing Agent

Ellery Bane will be present and available at the Town Office for appointments on October 24, 2024.

3.7 Transfer Station

A. 6 new stickers issued last week for a total of 2860

B. Both the bulky bins were emptied as well as the cardboard and metal bins emptied.

C. There was a call last week to have the freon hauled off the premises. This will happen when the person/company is available to come get it.

D. A flag box (for proper retiring of American flags by the American Legion) was put up on Saturday at the Transfer Station as completion of a project by a Girl Scout.

E. Per John, this year's drug takeback day is October 26, 2024, 10 am - 2 pm. Kennebec County Sheriff's Office runs the event.

3.8 Other Town Committees

4.0 Scheduled Business

4.1 New road name request "Rocky Lane"

Heading from Rt. 126 towards the Town Office this new road is the first left after the former Country Store. This was previously a driveway; they are now putting in a second house. There was a motion made by Scott to approve the new road name of Rocky Lane. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

4.2 Bridge mats on Woodbury Dam – proposed contractor solution

Gary is looking to be certain that all parties are on the same page before this project moves forward. Mr. David Howes had asked at a previous meeting for an estimate of how much it would cost to have the town's road crew to place the mats. Kelly estimated equipment costs and labor with a final cost of \$3500.00 - \$4600.00. Mr. Howse has found an alternative option of a company to install the mats for less. This contractor is licensed and insured and gave a quote of \$2000.00. Larry, as acting Road Commissioner needs to go and witness the project being done. David is to call Kelly the day before the installation with a time to see if Larry will be available to observe the install.

4.3 Adopt 2024-25 General Assistance Ordinance *Public hearing started at 7:02 pm*

Gary asked for any public comments regarding the General Assistance Ordinance. Per Kelly there is no need to have a town vote since it's a State legislative act. Also, there are enough changes to the ordinance so it would be helpful to adopt the full new ordinance as written. With no other public comments brought to the floor, the public hearing was closed at 7:04pm. There was a motion made by Gary to adopt the 2024-25 General Assistance Ordinance. This was seconded by Scott, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

4.4 Buker Bridge (taken out of order due to the public hearing).

Gary asked to have Buker Bridge put on the agenda as the bridge has been there for a long time and it needs work. Gary wanted to know if it would make sense to have Calderwood Engineering Firm go out and look at the bridge to get some ideas going for repairs, etc. This has been a topic of conversation throughout town, on social media, and in previous meetings. Larry noted he believes that Buker Bridge belongs to the State of Maine, meaning they are responsible for fixing the bridge. Larry asked Kelly if the Town of Litchfield gets a bridge report from the State of Maine. The bridge being over 20 feet also makes it their bridge. Larry commented that he gets bridge reports every two years on the bridges that the Town of Litchfield is responsible for and he has never received a bridge report on Buker Bridge. Gary wants to be certain that the State does control the bridge since it's in very poor condition.

4.5 Way forward for recommended town road discontinuances

Kelly handed out the statute of Governing Discontinuance of Town Ways as well as the letter that was sent out to the residence that will be affected by the discontinuance. The notifications were sent out on the first week of February of 2024. Some time (to be determined) after the first week of February 2025 the Select Board will meet to determine whether to:

1. Proceed with the discontinuance process and retain a public easement on the discontinued road.

2. Proceed with the discontinuance of the road without retaining a public easement provided that the Select Board verifies that abutting property owners have negotiated rights-of-way, and updated deeds have been filed at the Kennebec County Registry of deeds.

Any order of discontinuance that is adopted by the Select Board at that meeting must be approved at the town meeting in order to be implemented. Kelly is also arranging to have an independent assessment of the effect of the discontinuances on property values.

Larry is of the opinion that the Town of Litchfield should keep the right of way along the roadways. This was discussed and seems to be the consensus, as it has been at previous meetings. The benefits of this would be that no one loses or gains any land and there would be no deed changes. Kelly will research whether or not the road would still be a public way. Several residents from Community Drive were in attendance at the meeting for this topic. They would like to have their road taken off the list of possible discontinuances. The right-of-way for the first 100 feet of the road may have been required to be Town maintained by a deed granted at the time Route 126 was constructed and redirected the original road. There is no concrete evidence of this yet, and Community Drive residents are researching it.

After some discussion and questions Scott pointed out to the attendees of the meeting that this will be finally decided by a Town Meeting Vote. This is not decided by the members of the Select Board, Kelly or Larry alone. Larry went over costs of time and maintenance.

4.6 CMP Pole Permit – Upper Pond Road

There was a motion made by Scott to approve the CMP pole permit on the Upper Pond Road. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

The motion made was amended and seconded to sign outside of a regularly scheduled meeting.

4.7 Select Board plaque for town awards

Kelly showed a photo of the award that was presented to Rodney Allen. Gary noted that he liked it and would like to see one of the plaques in person.

4.8 2024 Municipal Valuation Return (Sign)

Per Kelly, Ellery prepared the Municipal Valuation Return document for signatures at his last visit. The Town valuation was calculated at \$454,509,300.00.

There was a motion made by Scott to sign the 2024 Municipal Valuation Return. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

4.9 RSU4 Budget Validation Referendum Warrant (Sign)

There was a motion made by Scott to sign the RSU4 Budget Validation Referendum Warrant. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

5.0 Unscheduled Business

5.1 None

6.0 Appointments/Resignations

6.1 None

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant #7 \$451,716.44

There was a motion made by Scott to approve Town Warrant #7 in the amount of \$451,716.44.

This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

7.2 Town Payroll #7 \$33,308.64

There was a motion made by Scott to approve Town Warrant #7 in the amount of \$33,308.64.

This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/ Communication

8.1 Scott requested that the Recreation committee be invited to provide the Select Board with an update. This would be from Dodie Johnston as the chair, but the whole committee is welcome.

8.2 Rick would like it to be known he has agreed with the votes tonight.

8.3 Per Pat this Friday is the 20th anniversary of the Litchfield Senior Center. The Center was originally started October 15, 2004. There will be a luncheon held on Friday October 18, 2024. Gary wanted to let it be known that the Senior Center offers canes, walkers, and wheelchairs for folks to borrow.

9.0 Future Agenda Items

9.1 Letter to County Commissioners re: lump sum payment of County tax

10.0 Adjournment at 8:00 pm

Respectfully submitted by Angela Parker