

**Town of Litchfield
Selectboard Meeting Minutes
October 24, 2023**

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) (absent); Scott Weeks.

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

2.0 Minutes of October 10, 2023

There was a motion made by Scott Weeks to approve the minutes from October 10, 2023. Gary seconded the motion, vote 2-0.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence

3.1 Town Manager – Kelly Weissenfels

A. Kelly reminded everyone that elections will be held on November 7, 2023, at the Sportsman’s Club. Absentee ballots are available at the town office for pick up currently. Both the State and the RSU now have ballots available.

C. Kelly contacted Calderwood Engineering regarding status of their report on Purgatory Dam. He said Eric Calderwood provided an informal report and that their formal report would be out soon. The informal report states the gate should be replaced as it’s not in the best condition. Kelly is recommending against this, as the gate is never used. A retaining wall was suggested for when the gate fails. Also, Calderwood is recommending significant grouting be done.

D. The Town email server failed on Friday. The server had been scheduled for replacement and Kelly was looking into options for a replacement next year. However, the email server failed this past weekend. The Town IT contractor was able to get email up Sunday night on a remote server. Kelly will be looking into a permanent fix and will present his recommendations to the board.

E. The Transfer Station conversation continues with an RFQ being received from the same company that looked at the deck/wall replacement of the Town Office. Kelly will be looking for a more formal quote moving forward. There was a question from the floor about request for bids going out. The job hasn’t been put out for bid yet, there is a plan to do so in the future.

Kelly has been in touch with a company recommended by Calderwood that has done numerous stations and will continue to gather information regarding the move/expansion plan.

F. Auction international is off to a great start with the clean up of the “back lot” of the Public Works building with 10 items being put up for bid. Kelly handed out the current (as of time of printing) items and bids. All bidding will be finalized on October 31, 2023.

3.2 Code Officer/Plumbing Inspector – Steve Ochmanski (absent due to injury)

A. Kelly reports there is an investigation moving forward regarding a house on Plains Road to determine if they have/need an edibles medical license.

B. Scott asked about a house falling down next to the former fire station at Litchfield Corners. Scott suggested asking Steve to look into the property and make sure something is being done with the house to keep the area safe.

C. There has been progress on cleaning the property at 2783 Hallowell Road.

3.3 Road Commissioner – Larry Nadeau

A. Huntington Hill Road paving will be completed in approximately 2 days, as long as the weather holds out.

B. Pine Tree Road shoulders are 3/4 complete, using the shouldering machine.

C. Preparation for the Old Mill Bridge replacement is on track, three landing pads, rock and erosion control have been completed. Even with all the rain, nothing washed away. Bridge beams will be delivered tomorrow. The project should be completed roughly the second week of November. The delay was due to the need to galvanize the beams. Gary asked if that was a change from painting, since there was a \$20,000 savings in going to the painted steel. Larry said, the discount will still be honored, but the painting process wasn't working for Dirigo, so they went back to the galvanized.

D. Public Works Department is one man down currently, however Larry reports he has a couple of options for new hires.

E. Rt. 197 is looking good with the continued work of the crew that have been working to open the road up. They have been cutting trees back to get more sun exposure on the road. This is in hopes to melt the snow/ice faster during the winter months.

3.4 Fire & Rescue – Chief Sherman

Kelly noted Chief Sherman was not available to report due to a family emergency.

3.5 Emergency Mgmt. – Chief Sherman

Kelly noted Chief Sherman was not available to report due to a family emergency.

3.6 Assessing Agent

A. Ellory will be present in the building on Thursday October 26, 2023, at that time (provided mil rate is set) all information will be obtained in order to send in the information for the senior tax stabilization plan.

3.7 Transfer Station – John Upham

Kelly reports that one bulky bin was removed this week. The team is working on setting the transfer station up for winter. They will be working to get all bush hogging as well as burn pile taken care of, as well as equipment in under cover before snowfall.

3.8 Other Town Committees

A. Scott mentioned that Percy, as part of the RSU 4 Withdrawal Committee, had a meeting with the Richmond Superintendent today to gain more information on what it looks like to leave an RSU.

4.0 Scheduled Business

4.1 Review Fire & Rescue tanker bids.

There needs to be a formal meeting to review this, with Chief Sherman being otherwise engaged during the meeting they will come up with a time prior to the end of the month to get the bids reviewed formally. The timeframe is set since there would be a significant increase in cost due to emission regulations changing. Gary made it clear he would not be able to attend said meeting.

4.2 Ferrin Road paving recommendation

Larry informed the room that the crew will be paving the Ferrin Road in the next few days, barring any issues relating to weather. The chip seal will be done next year. The first stretch down by 197 down to

the bridge is looking very bad, and Larry would like permission have that first section drag-shimmed. Larry will be speaking with the road committee as well. He is looking to avoid having to redo area(s) next year and spending more money next year to redo work done this year. The total is under \$20,000.00 so won't break the road budget with savings that have been seen in other areas. Gary and Scott are happy with Larry's plan moving forward since it's not going to exceed any budgets and will not create more work for next year.

4.3 Countersign RSU 4 Warrant and Notice of Election.

It was noted that election in this case means referendum. Gary and Scott both signed the warrant, noting that the need for signature is for acknowledgement, not for authorization.

4.4 Tax Commitment – or set date to commit – Scheduled altered, moving this to the end of the meeting as it will take some time to discuss and move forward.

4.5 Auction International Postings/Process.

Randy, who is the representative from Auctions International, has started the process as previously discussed. The bids will conclude on October 31, 2023, the town has final approval over whether they will be accepted or refused.

There was a motion made to approve giving permission to Kelly (after conferring with Larry) to approve or decline and sign off on bids at the end of October 2023 when bids close. Gary stated he 2nd the motion, passed 2-0.

5.0 Unscheduled Business

5.1 Road discontinuation letter

The list of 9 roads in the town of Litchfield that will be receiving a letter of Discontinuance of Care. Kelly read the opening to the letter and explained. The Town of Litchfield is to keep an easement. There was a question from the floor about when the assessment can begin. Kelly will speak with the Town Attorney for clarification on when to start the assessment process and altering property value(s).

6.0 Appointments/Resignations

6.1

6.2

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant #12 \$1,529,453.17

There was a motion made by Scott Weeks to approve Town Warrant #12 for \$1,529,453.17. Gary 2nd the motion, vote 2-0.

7.2 Town Payroll #08 \$31,537.48

There was a motion made by Scott Weeks to approve Town Payroll #08 for \$31,531.48. Gary 2nd the motion, vote 2-0.

8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/Communication

8.1 Gary would like the Purgatory Dam to remain on the future agenda items, just as a reminder to keep checking in on the situation as it progresses.

8.2 Tax commitment discussion, previously at 4.4.

Kelly passed out a handout with information about the tax commitment and options for the mil rate.

Gary noted the town budget is under 4% while inflation is over 6%. Gary also noted that if the school

budget fails validation and ends up being increased after another round of meetings, that the town has enough in undesignated funds to cover any reasonable increase and would not have to borrow money. Since the pass/fail of the RSU 4 budget could go on indefinitely, the board feels it's time to set the tax commitment. Elton questioned how long it would be before another revaluation must be done. He was answered with possibly a couple of years for the next one. The Select Board is also trying to help the senior citizens of Litchfield and have this done by November 1, 2023 so that the reimbursement for the Senior Tax Freeze Program may be submitted on time. The decision was made to set the mil rate at \$13.50 per \$1000 valuation, providing for about \$35,000 in overlay funds. There was a motion made by Scott Weeks to set the mil rate for the Town of Litchfield for the fiscal year 2024 at \$13.50. Gary 2nd, vote 2-0.

9.0 Future Agenda Item

9.1 R02-017, 2783 Hallowell Road

10.0 Adjournment at 7:40pm

Respectfully submitted by Angela Parker