

Town of Litchfield
Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Mar 11, 2024

1.0 Convenes 6:34 P.M.; 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(absent); Larry Nadeau, Road Comm.; John Upham, Transfer Station Manager; Tom Wood, Budget Chm. (absent), Elton Wade, Budget Comm.; Steve Ochmanski, Code Enforcement Officer (absent); and others per the sign in sheet.

2.0 Minutes of Jan 8, 2024

There was a motion made by Scott to approve the minutes from January 8, 2024. This was seconded by Gary (Rick abstained), vote 2-0(one abstention).

3.0 Reports and Correspondence

3.1 Town Manager

A. The presidential primary was successful.

B. RSU4 has a meeting for the towns following the school board budget meetings. Kelly will be sending out RSU PowerPoint presentation to the board. The School Board will be meeting again this week. Per Kelly the superintendent has invited the town managers to go in after the meeting for an after-action report.

C. FY22 audit is complete. FY23 has started this week. Kelly can't guarantee a completion date, he is hopeful for the end of the month.

3.2 Code Officer/Plumbing Inspector

A. 2 permits in February, Steve will report on those at the next meeting.

B. Per Kelly, Steve checked on the status of the old firehouse in the village district. There is a mediation meeting scheduled for June to see if the case can be settled out of the court system.

3.3 Road Commissioner

A. Larry reports that washouts from the last rain have been taken care of as of this am. Travel onto posted roads was necessary to fix a couple of the culverts. Larry wants to remind everyone that those were special circumstances.

B. Grinding has been completed on Denis Hill Road; ditching will be started next week as well as continuing the tree cutting process.

C. The culvert grant did not come through as hoped so Larry has been looking into other options. He believes a like-for-like replacement with no permit required would be the next best option. However, he is waiting for a definite answer from the engineering company.

D. Larry will be meeting with a new guardrail company soon, as the previous company has stopped responding to inquiries.

E. Rick and Larry discussed the repair to the driveway to the ball fields over by the transfer station and how it has held up. Larry will investigate pricing for paving once this year's prices become available.

3.4 Fire & Rescue

A. Chief Sherman is working on a review of the OSHA regulations and how those will or will not fit into Litchfield's current demands and staffing. There are 300 pages of information to review.

3.5 Emergency Mgmt.

Nothing to report tonight.

3.6 Assessing Agent

Was in the office last week with some additional abatements to be handled, he will be back in a few weeks.

3.7 Transfer Station

A. There were six new stickers issued for a total of 2667 stickers allowing residents to use the transfer station.

B. One bulky, and the glass containers removed (to empty) from the premises this past week.

C. The staff are starting to see an up-tick in the residents' usage of the Transfer Station again for the season.

D. There was a site inspection on Friday. There were a few record keeping hits, which will be corrected. The notes were positive overall. John and Kelly have discussed the future oil building structure and the "office building/garage building. Proposed solution is to have a "finished" 12 x 20 shed on skids built and delivered, complete with electrical hookup for the attendants. In addition, two "high cube" shipping containers would be purchased, 1 for storage, 1 for a workshop, and they would be positioned to serve as a base for a roof structure with an enclosed space for a tractor garage between the containers, The representative was also onboard with the plans.

E. The miscellaneous drums currently located in the oil building that is at the transfer station will be removed soon. There is nothing to indicate what is currently in the drums.

3.8 Other Town Committees

4.0 Scheduled Business

4.1 Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed

Alex Dyer (all members introduced themselves) gave a brief synopsis on why they are asking for a small increase in dollars. She reports the team is making progress with the invasive species, however it's a battle that they have been fighting for a few years. There are multiple people that help with the removal of milfoil etc. including diver assisted vacuuming systems. Alex stated they are still receiving aid as well as matching funds from the state. She also responded to a question from the room noting that the school presence will continue this year. The team is happy with the support of the Town of Litchfield for the past decade.

4.2 Route 197 Diner Liquor License Renewal (routine)

No changes from last year and there have been no complaints heard or anything to cause the license to be refused.

There was a motion made by Scott to approve Route 197 Diner Liquor License Renewal. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

4.3 Woodbury Pond Dam – request to add bridge mats to boost weight limit – David Howse

Mr. Howse gave the background on why he would like to be proactive vs. reactive. The Select Board as well as Larry suggested going back to the drawing board, touch base with an Engineering company (Larry to get phone number to Mr. Howse). Kelly also is to reach out to Litchfield's legal counsel about the situation to see if the Town of Litchfield has any liability in the situation. Mr. Howse agreed and will be back if needed with more information.

****Change in agenda to utilize the time appropriately****

Discussion regarding Rec Committee and the possible need for a Rec Director as a paid position. Vicki introduced the topic and handed out the budget request to the Select Board. Rec Director was let go two years ago in favor of allowing the Rec Committee to run the sports programs. There are new people on the committee now and it's been noted that it's very difficult to run the program(s) while working full time. They are hoping to hire a Rec Director to alleviate some of the burden. Discussion was had throughout the room about the topic and what would be needed to move forward. There was division throughout the discussion as to whether a director truly needed.

There was a quote for 15,000.00 to restore Jim Hyde field, and per Vicki this is clearly outside the realm of possibility regardless of contributions from fundraising efforts. An additional request is to have a storage area, since the snack shack, needs to be updated. Scott asked: What about security if all the things get done? There have been issues with vandalism in the past.

Currently there isn't anyone in mind to take the director position. Scott suggested that if there was a person that had interest and could show they are going to do the job, maybe the request would be better received.

It was brought to the floor during the discussion that Sabattus Rec runs on volunteers and is a large operation. The question was then why do we have to have a paid position? So, as a suggestion, combine the kids into the Sabattus Rec Program and have it all together. Especially since they would be coming together in high school sports programs.

The discussion concluded with the Litchfield Rec Committee needing to get more information as well as settling on a job description to aid in finding the correct person for the job. Also, there may be some communication needed amongst the committee as Kelly doesn't think they are unanimous in their decision to request a paid Rec Director.

4.4 Abatement R06-L27B-ON, Sherry Fournier, \$241.65

There was a motion made by Scott to approve the abatement for R06-L27B-ON for Sherry Fournier in the amount of \$241.65. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

4.5 Prior year abatement for \$211.90 for Sherry Fournier for real estate assessment in 2021.

There was a motion made by Scott to approve the abatement for Sherry Fournier in the amount of \$211.90 from 2021. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

4.6 Prior year abatement for \$235.80 for Sherry Fournier for real estate assessment in 2022.

There was a motion made by Scott to approve the abatement for Sherry Fournier in the amount of \$235.80 from 2022. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

4.5 Abatement R07-001-01, Geroge C. Alderman, \$541.35

There was a motion made by Scott to approve abatement R07-001-01 for Geroge C. Alderman in the amount of \$541.35. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

4.6 Extend funds lapse dates for PW Fuel Depot and Central Fire Paving projects.

Kelly explained that project money was expended for the fuel depot and Central Fire Station paving after the approved lapse dates and requested an extension of those dates to the current year to allow for proper bookkeeping. No additional funds were required.

There was a motion made by Scott to extend funding dates lapsed to June 30th, 2024 (to bring the dates to a correct status for purposes of bookkeeping). This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

4.7 Request contingency funds for Town Information Technology

Kelly updated the Select Board of the request for 350.00 for EZTexting program. This allows the Town Manager & Town Office to send out updates in the event of an emergency. This will also allow residents to text into the town office when appropriate to get more information.

Gary made a motion to approve the use of contingency funds for funding EZTexting for \$350.00. This was seconded by Scott, vote 3-0.

Continued conversation ended with Kelly noting he will be requesting additional contingency funds once he has more information regarding the full costs of emergency email sever implementation and other necessary improvements to IT infrastructure.

4.8 Review Mowing Contract

Kelly has divided up the contracts for the town's mowing needs per discussion at the last meeting. He handed the contracts to the Select Board for review, 4 different contracts were given for review. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

4.9 Review Road Ordinance

Kelly handed out changes to the Road Ordinance for the board to look over and potentially approve at the next meeting. Gary wants to have a public hearing for approval for the road ordinance.

Eric wanted to discuss Section 8 as there are points that may cause more issues than resolve. Kelly explained that it hasn't been fully finalized yet. Eric also brought up the forestry portion of the ordinance as an area to take a closer look at.

4.10 Review Solid Waste Ordinance

Kelly printed and handed this out to the Select Board for review. There were a few issues brought up. First, Gary believes it to be unacceptable to tell someone they must haul their waste to Auburn (section 1.5A). If it's a licensed facility, they should be allowed to haul it to the licensed facility of their choice. Gary also finds issue with 1.5B, there is no contract at this time (see attached).

This ordinance gives the Select Board authority to set the tipping fees at the transfer station. Other issues were discussed around the table. The ordinance will be altered by Kelly and brought back to the Select Board next meeting.

4.11 Budget Review

Kelly handed out the reserve fund and carryforward summary and reviewed the line items.

The Select Board picked Monday at 7 am on April 1, 2024, for a workshop to discuss the budget items in detail. Kelly stated that there are meetings coming up that will help him to move forward; the Budget Committee and the Road Committee will be meeting this week to help get the numbers finalized. The Select Board members discussed departments and projects that have been discussed at previous meetings to try and cypher out end results, one of the topics was a cardboard compactor for the transfer station. Rick would like to see some planning done with the future projects that are currently known.

5.0 Unscheduled Business

5.1 Repurchase agreement with Lisa Asselin Jones for 21 Easy Street.

There was a motion made to approve the repurchase agreement with Lisa Asselin Jones for 2 years. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

6.0 Appointments/Resignations

6.1

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant #25 \$ 95,635.60

There was a motion made by Scott to approve Town Warrant #25 in the amount of \$95,635.60. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

7.2 RSU4 Warrant #26 \$ 360,364.63

There was a motion made by Scott to approve the RSU Warrant #26 in the amount of \$360,364.63. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

7.3 Town Payroll #18 \$ 26,268.59

There was a motion made by Scott to approve town payroll #18 in the amount of \$26,268.59. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/ Communication

8.1 Gustin Road bridge 3rd week in April for start, the weeks prior the parts are slated to be delivered.

Larry went over the plan after Rayna asked about the time frame and plan.

8.3 Per Rayna she is looking at spring as a possibility for the opening of the Food Bank. One of her last steps was finding a plumber. The last estimate given was roughly \$11,000.00, which is not obtainable per Rayna. Rick will get her contact information for a plumber he knows that might be able to take on the project.

9.0 Future Agenda Items

9.1

10.0 Adjournment at 9:38pm

Respectfully submitted by Angela Parker