

Town of Litchfield
Select Board Meeting Minutes
March 24, 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. (arrived after start); John Upham, Transfer Station Manager(absent); Tom Wood, Chm. Budget Comm. (Zoom); Steve Ochmanski, Code Enforcement Officer (absent); and others per the sign in sheet.

2.0 Minutes of March 24 10th, 2025; minutes of February 2nd, 2025, fuel depot workshop. A delay in the minutes being received requires this to be bumped to the April 14, 2025, meeting.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence

3.1 Town Manager

A. Kelly started by pointing out a few upgrades to the town office. The air conditioners have been removed since the recently installed heat pumps eliminated the need for them. Also, the florescent bulbs in the office portion of the building have been replaced with LED lights. He will be looking into getting the conference room lights switched over as well.

B. Kelly has fielded multiple requests for information as well as multiple questions trying to get a head start on the road discontinuance meeting questions.

Rick asked if all the appropriate people have been contacted to date. Kelly reports that there has been a list made of those properties that were not contacted in the initial mailing, and Kelly will be adding that to the read ahead package that will be sent to the board members.

C. Larry has signed up for a continuing education opportunity regarding dealing with difficult people/confrontation. Kelly might sign up for the class too.

D. Gary wondered if there was any progress on the cost of an electronic message sign to go in front of the Fire Station to help the community stay up to date on town news and events. Gary has heard a verbal estimate of such a purchase, and he is in the opinion it's too much for the Town to spend. Kelly stated that Chief Sherman is investigating and will have an answer soon.

3.2 Code Officer/Plumbing Inspector

A. The Lahey subdivision abandonment has been discussed lately. Since the property had been turned into a subdivision there was a road added, this has been noted as a reason the property cannot just be turned back into a single parcel of land without an

updated survey. They are looking to turn the property back into a single parcel due to the increased amount of property taxes and the property not selling as they hoped it would.

3.3 Road Commissioner

A. Kelly delivered Larry's report since the crew was out plowing the roads.

B. The town's one ton truck is out of commission currently as it's been confirmed that the transmission is no longer working. The truck is not scheduled for replacement until FY 29. Larry will be looking to budget in the repair costs of \$15,000.00 to next year to get it to the replacement date.

3.4 Fire & Rescue

A. Chief Sherman has been in touch with the salesman from NeoKraft signs, he was able to come take some measurements, etc. Chief Sherman will be getting an estimate for rehabbing the sign that is there to match the building and be overall spruced up. There are already conduit lines that run under the driveway for just such an upgrade when/if it becomes necessary. In Chief Sherman's mind both signs would stand next to each other for the future, or the digital could take the place of the middle of the sign. The roof and post would stay. Chief Sherman plans to rehab the sign at the post office as well, both these signs were originally Eagle Scout Projects. Chief Sherman has also been working on getting the Purgatory Fire Building signage put back to the original verbiage. The current sign will move into the building and a new sign honoring Mr. Cook will be installed as it used to honoring Mr. Cook as was previously the case.

B. Chief Sherman presented his February report with 7 fire calls (3 being car crashes), and a structure fire that was a mutual aid call over in Monmouth. There were 24 calls for EMS and Litchfield was able to cover 18 of those.

C. Engine #65 has been completely repaired. There are new headlights, and the old bumper was replaced with a new one.

D. Gary noted he drove by Central Fire Station and the dumpster was overflowing at one point. Chief Sherman said that he has called the company that maintains to check on when it's scheduled to get emptied. They noted it's every other Wednesday, so twice monthly. There is a possibility it did get missed per Chief Sherman, but also they had the Chili Cookoff and that did produce a fair amount of trash. He believes twice monthly should be enough on a regular basis.

3.5 Emergency Management.

Chief Sherman wants to remind the residents of Litchfield that it is up to them to be prepared in the event of emergencies, to the best of their ability. Residents should have enough non-perishables (including water), safe and reliable ways to stay warm/cool down. Three days is a good place to start. The town's EMS services can help to provide shelter in the event of emergencies but that's the extent of their reach. Rick suggested having an emergency preparedness list on the town website that people can reference.

3.6 Assessing Agent

Ellery Bane from RJD will be in the office on Thursday, March 24, 2025. Per Kelly this is the date for the State's assessing audit, where they they and evaluate what the town has claimed for various taxes, making sure all lines up with what they are expecting.

3.7 Transfer Station

A. Swap Shop items will begin being accepted a week early this year! Starting last weekend in March the shop will be open.

3.8 Other Town Committees

4.0 Scheduled Business

4.1 Community Park - Sandbar Willow endangered species survey request and Litchfield invasive plant program – Lindsay Nelsen

The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry sent a letter to the town letting them know that the Community Park supports several Sandbar Willow plants, which are considered one of the State's endangered species. They would like to come do a survey of the population. Lindsay Nelsen presented the letter to the members of the Select Board, so the letter is on record. The department would like to do its survey in the Spring of 2025 during the flowering season so they can obtain the most information available. The department is looking to obtain counts and measurements along with photos, there will be no samples taken. Per Lindsay the site is checked every 5, 10, 15 years, and there is a permission form for that every time they want to do the survey. Eric Duchette is the States Botanist who will do the base work, then volunteers help him maintain the counts, etc. [Go Botany: Native Plant Trust](#) is a place to see the photo of the plant.

There was a motion made by Scott to allow the state botanist to come into the Litchfield Community Park to survey and evaluate the Sandbar willow. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

Lindsay also presented, regarding the Litchfield Invasive Plant Program. She read some of the letter to the Select Board that will be included in this year's Warrant. She pointed out there is a cost sharing program the State is offering while working with Conservation Committees around the State. This is a 50% cost share that requires payment upfront, then submitting to the state for 50% reimbursement. The Budget request from the Conservation Committee this year is a \$2,000.00 ask. That means the State would reimburse \$1,000.00.

Gary would like to see the Litchfield Conservation Committee work harder on controlling the multiflora rose plant. Lindsay agrees with Gary regarding this. She has been going to homes to give them information. It is, however, up to the private landowners to take it from there.

4.2 Request for bids, fuel depot underground storage tank

Kelly handed out the written request for bids and the budget estimate that it was based on. He said that the letter received from the State Fire Marshall gives the town until the end of April 2025, to have a contract in hand with a firm set plan in place. Rick

suggested having this added to the next meeting's agenda to help with the State's very short turn around time.

Kelly has asked Simard's if there was a way to decrease the cost of the project. The town is left with minimal options for this. The fiberglass tanks are longer lasting than the steel, and piping is included to transition one of the partitions to gasoline if that is needed in the future. Also, if you want to have a dispenser that records and aids in keeping track of ins and outs, this is more costly upfront. However, as discussed at previous meetings it's a time saver. The members of this Select Board are all in agreement that they would like to do the job right the first time. They aren't looking to cut corners just to get cost savings.

Kelly noted the appropriation of funds clause on page 8. This makes it so that if a contract is entered into prior to the Town Meeting and the funds are then not approved at the Town Meeting the contract can be cancelled. Members are to take this home and review and be ready for motion to be made at the next meeting. Discussion was had regarding getting all the correct people from all departments as well as licensing, etc on site when the project is being done.

4.3 Request for bids, mowing contract

The Bid(s) were discussed at the last meeting, Kelly made the adjustments discussed. There was time for review and questions. There needs to be an adjustment in verbiage, where the nature of the independent contractor will read "independent contractor will not be an employee of the Town of Litchfield".

There was a motion made by Scott to approve mowing contract bids with corrections as noted. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

4.4 Request for bids, transfer station hauling

Kelly handed out bids for review, not for motion. Kelly changed the format to clear up the overall view. He has requested this to go out for bid due to review of other towns suggesting cost savings is possible. Gary asked to have Legal review the contract to make sure all is good, since the contracts have been changed in a couple ways.

4.5 Budget review – overall, and reserve accounts

Kelly handed out the "What If" report for review and then the overall budget requests for the Select Board to review.

Gary wanted to be sure the Reserve accounts have a chance to be looked at. Kelly said that the reserve accounts are currently at their minimums since the last couple years they have been drawn down to fund needed projects. Kelly reviewed the documentation with the members and went over with the members how the future withdrawals will affect each account. Rick asked if the rental of a grader was in the Public Works budget. Kelly noted that the older grader that the town currently has is still working. The Budget Committee would like to know how many reserve accounts have balances. Kelly said this will all be noted before the budget gets finalized. Gary wanted to assure Kelly that the Select Board members would like to use the grader money to pay for the Fuel Depo replacement.

5.0 Unscheduled Business

5.1

6.0 Appointments/Resignations

6.1

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant #18 \$107,136.71

There was a motion made by Scott to approve Town Warrant #18 in the amount of \$107,136.71. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

7.2 Town Payroll #19 \$42,141.85

There was a motion made by Scott to approve Town Payroll in the amount of \$42,141.85. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/ Communication

8.1 Gary wanted to know when the work is going to commence with the work for the Transfer Station's new Garage/Shed being built with the CONEX boxes. Kelly will check in with Larry to find out the time frame.

9.0 Future Agenda Items

9.1 Town properties that are available for sale

9.2 Fuel Depot Bid – motion needed

9.3 Mowing Bid – legal to review, motion needed

9.4 Account balances for baseball fields and signs

9.5 Forestry plan for the Town of Litchfield

10.0 Adjournment at 8:37pm

Respectfully submitted by Angela Parker