

Town of Litchfield
Select Board
March 27, 2023
Meeting Minutes

1.0 Convened at 6:30 PM; Pledge to Flag; Selectmen: Gary Parker, Chairman, Clarence Gowell III (identified as Rick Gowell in these minutes), Scott Weeks; **Staff:** Kelly Weissenfels, Town Manager; Michael Sherman, Fire Chief; Larry Nadeau, Road Comm.; Richard Lane, Road Advisory Committee Member; Tom Wood, Budget Comm; Elton Wade, Budget Comm and Litchfield Academy Trustee and Rayna Leibowitz, Litchfield Academy Trustee

2.0 Minutes of March 13, 2023, Meeting submitted for final approval. A motion to approve the minutes as drafted was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Gary Parker and voted 2- 0. Rick Gowell was absent on March 13 so he abstained from voting.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence:

3.1 Town Manager: A. Kelly recognized Cliff Daigle, the Animal Control Officer, for his efforts in successfully assisting the rescue of two men whose ATV had gone through the ice on Pleasant Pond.

B. Route 197 is expected to close soon while the Maine Turnpike Authority contractor completes its work on the overpass. Traffic will be detoured as planned last year. The Town Manager will be notified as soon as the exact schedule is determined.

C. The Policy Committee has met and started reviewing Town Reports for Articles enacted that result in policy formation.

D. The Budget Committee Chairman and Town Manager attended the recent RSU#4 Budget Meeting. The final information meeting will be held Wednesday, March 29 at 6:30 at Carrie Ricker School. The Administration claims they are trying to keep the budget down by deferring maintenance on buildings.

E. April 8 is the final date for paying off foreclosures before additional actions are taken.

F. The Town Manager attended the recent Budget Comm. meeting where the Transfer Station operations was discussed. The Select Board may want to invite interested parties to form a committee to investigate area transfer station activities to see if there are lessons to be learned.

G. The Town Manager has identified that the Cobbossee invasive plant control fund solicitation appears to be based on what has been contributed previously and not proportioned to amount of invasive plants or water body within the boundaries of the bordering towns or any objective matrix.

H. Town Office repairs – a local contractor recommended getting bids for the whole job, not piecing it out.

3.2 Code Enforcement Officer/Plumbing Inspector – A. Steve is absent tonight and plans to have the full year report for 2022 and last month at the April 10 meeting.

3.3 Road Commissioner – A. Selectman Scott Weeks rode with Larry for the plowing/sanding in the last storm. Another storm is coming in.

B. The new truck has been delivered to O'Connor's in Augusta. April 15 is the scheduled start to add snow-fighting equipment.

C. The rented excavator is expected to be delivered tomorrow. Ditching will start at the south end of the Huntington Hill Rd. Estimates for contracted work on this road done by the contractor are

very consistent with the estimates prepared by Road Advisory Committee.

D. Larry has received several requests for waivers of the posted roads. He reminded everyone that there are no waivers available.

3.4 Fire & Rescue – A. Chief Sherman provided the report of Fire and Rescue calls for February: 12 Fire call including 5 Mutual Aid, 2 motor vehicle accidents, 1 public arrest, 1 structure fire, 1 alarm activation, 1 furnace malfunction and 1 odor investigation. The First Responders were alerted to 24 calls and they responded to 4 of them.

B. Truck #65 Frame Replacement – 1 bid has been received and at least another one may be coming in, so the price for the first was not verbally given in a public meeting. Chief Sherman expects to make a recommendation at the April 10 meeting.

C. Chief Sherman was asked about the status of cost recovery efforts for responses to motor vehicle accidents. He advised there are 15 accident reports ready to seek recovery.

3.5 Emergency Management – The Town Manager advised he has received retirement resignations from Bruce Slattery, EMA Director and Bill Gartley, Deputy EMA Director, effective April 1, 2023. Chief Sherman will take on the EMA Director role and Bruce will be Deputy Director to ensure a smooth transition.

3.6 Assessing Agent – A workshop to discuss factoring tax rates will be scheduled when the spring work is done.

3.7 Transfer Station – A. The Swap Shop will be open for business on April 15. They will begin accepting donations on March 30 and April 1. A sign identifying handicap parking is on order. Costs are being collected for a 24 X 24 building.

3.8 Other Town Committees – Senior Center, Pat Soboleski advised the Carol Bailey String Band will be performing Wednesday at the Carrie Ricker School. The Fire Dept. is sponsoring a luncheon for Seniors and Veterans on April 1.

4.0 Scheduled Business

- 4.1 Safety and Health Award for Employers (SHAPE) presentation to Litchfield Fire/Rescue Dept. A representative of the Maine Dept of Labor, Bureau of Labor Standards, presented an award plaque to Chief Michael Sherman for the Safety and Health Award for Public Employees. This is one of 86 awards presented around the state in recognition of exemplary commitment to safe operations and health care of personnel, along with meeting standards of equipment maintenance and training. Chief Sherman recognized his personnel present and those who could not attend and commended them for their outstanding efforts, especially Lynn Martin, Tina Gowell and Reggie Poirier.
- 4.2 Set date of 2023 Town Meeting – The Town Manager suggested setting the Town Meeting dates for June 13, 8:00 AM to 8:00PM for voting (elections at the Sportsmens Club) then recess to June 17 at 10:00 AM for voting on the Town Warrant (at Carrie Ricker School). A motion to accept this schedule for June 13, 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM for voting (elections at the Sportsmens Club) then recess to June 17 at 10:00 AM for voting on the Town Warrant (at Carrie Ricker School) was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.
- 4.3 Review/Approve modifications to Litchfield Academy windows Request for Bids - The bid approved at the previous meeting contains a very specific window model from Home Depot. It was later learned that Home Depot no longer carries that line. A revision of the standards for the window and a new bid due date was proposed. A motion to approve the modifications to the Litchfield Academy Window Replacement request for bids and the new due date to be April 10 was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.
- 4.4 Review/Approve new Dispatch Service Contract – The Town Manager has received a

proposed 2 year contract with a 5% increase for FY 2024 and 5% for FY 2025. A motion to approve the dispatching contract for FY 2024 and FY 2025 and authorize the Town Manager to sign it on behalf of the Select Board was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

4.5 Budget review

4.5.1 **Fire/Rescue** – Chief Sherman is requesting an increase of \$17,250, reflecting increases in Training Stipends (\$4,000), Truck Repairs (\$7,000), Heat (\$250), Regulatory Compliance (\$500), Deputy Chiefs (\$2,500), Personal Protective Equipment (\$2,000) and Fire Prevention materials (\$1,000). A \$500 decrease in expenses for office equipment was also recommended.

4.5.2 Budget Overview Rev 2 – The Town Manager reviewed the proposed budget for **Administration** which includes increases of \$44,177, for the Town Manager (\$1,827), Office Staff Wages (\$40,200), CEO Assistant (\$1,000), Assessing (\$1,000) and Tax Maps (including updated street maps) (\$150). The CEO salary figure is not determined yet. **Ambulance User Fee Uncollectibles** – The Town Manager explained the process used by the Gardiner Ambulance contractor to try to collect debts for ambulance calls. He was asked to determine the status of the staging of an ambulance in Richmond. **Transfer Station** – the proposed budget includes an increase for the Director (\$179), Labor (\$1,050) and Tipping and Hauling for both recyclables and bulky goods (a total of \$38,700 which may be recalculated). A new Attendants Building is included under Capital Projects. Public Works staff may be called in on weekends to crush the bulky goods. The cost of this currently comes out of the Public Works budget, but should be covered by the Transfer Station. This may require some adjustment as well.

A Budget Workshop was set for April 10, at 7:30 AM.

4.5.3 Revenue projection draft –The Town Manager advised the documents are not ready. Postponed to April 10.

4.5.4 Warrant initial draft - The Town Manager advised the documents are not ready. Postponed to April 10.

4.5.5 Review additional warrant articles – The Town Manager advised the documents are not ready. Postponed to April 10.

4.5.6 Revisit remaining concerns and Capital Improvement Plan –Documents are not ready. Postponed to April 10.

5.0 **Unscheduled Business**

5.1 Elton Wade reported he has identified 20 sections of fence, each 8 feet long, suitable for the Veterans Memorial Lot. They need to be sandblasted and painted. He has contacted a shop that will do them for \$600 per section. 13 will be required for the front side of the lot. 13 X \$600 = \$7,800. No vote was taken on this.

6.0 **Appointments/Resignations**

6.1 Resignation – Bruce Slattery, EMA Director - A motion to accept the resignation of Bruce Slattery as EMA Director, effective 4/1/23, with many thanks, was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

6.2 Resignation – William Gartley, EMA Deputy Director - A motion to accept the resignation of William Gartley as Deputy EMA Director, effective 4/1/23, with many thanks, was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

6.3 Appointment – Michael Sherman, EMA Director - A motion to appoint Michael Sherman as EMA Director, effective 4/1/23 to 6/30/23 was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

6.4 Appointment – Bruce Slattery, EMA Deputy Director - A motion to appoint Bruce Slattery as Deputy EMA Director, effective 4/1/23 to 6/30/23 was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by

Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant #27 \$119,686.38 A motion to approve Town Warrant #27 for \$119,686.38 was made by Rick Gowell, seconded by Scott Weeks and voted 3-0.

7.2 Town Payroll #19 for 30,346.46 A motion to approve Town Payroll #19 for \$30,346.46 was made by Rick Gowell, seconded by Scott Weeks and voted 3-0.

8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/Communication

8.1 A resident questioned a recent Monday meeting and noted there were no minutes submitted for approval for it. The Chairman advised it was a meeting where Selectmen immediately went into Executive Session to discuss contract development for an employee. Minutes will be offered at the next meeting which will show the statutory reference for the Executive Session but not include the details of the meeting as is required. The resident stated he believed the meeting was not a legal meeting. The Chairman advised the Town attorney was consulted before the meeting was held and advised it was appropriate.

9.0 Future Agenda Items

9.1 R02, Lot 017, 2783 Hallowell Rd.

9.2 Hall across from Litchfield Academy

9.3 Warrant initial draft

9.4 Review additional warrant articles

9.5 Revisit remaining concerns and Capital Improvement Plan

9.6 FD Truck #65 repair recommendation

13.0 Adjournment at 8:50 PM

Respectfully Submitted By

Rayna Leibowitz