

Town of Litchfield
Select Board Meeting Minutes
April 14, 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 (absent).

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

2.0 Minutes of March 10th, 2025; March 24th, 2025

There was a motion made by Rick to approve the minutes for March 10, 2025, as written. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

There was a motion made by Rick to approve the minutes for March 24, 2025, as written. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence

3.1 Town Manager

A. Kelly has received news that Mr. McCall, the town's legal counsel from Jensen Baird, is moving to another firm. Kelly looking into replacement options. He asked if Mr. McCall could be retained through the move, but this isn't possible since the firm he is moving to represents RSU4, which they consider a potential conflict of interest.

B. Kelly attended a meeting with RSU4's superintendent recently regarding the RSU4 budget, as the final numbers have come in. Also, the school board voted to appoint the current principal of Oak Hill High School as the next Superintendent.

Rick asked about posting the budget for RSU4 and its associated numbers on social media, etc. Kelly will work on that as well as to get and post the date for the public budget meeting for RSU4.

There has been a People's Veto presented regarding the state budget that may affect RSU4. Gary is following this closely, and said there are reasons residents should follow this. Kelly said that if the People's Veto delays the state budget, the RSU may need to take out a bridge loan, and they are prepared to do that if necessary.

The superintendent also noted that the RSU4 School Board would like to create a maintenance reserve fund. They still need to investigate the implementation and control details.

3.2 Code Officer/Plumbing Inspector

A. Steve handed out his permit report for March on projects being started and completed around town. Time was allotted for review as well as questions.

B. Per Steve, the Planning Board will meet Thursday April 17, 2025, for a workshop regarding the Land Use Ordinance. There will be a public hearing on Thursday May 1, 2025. Steve will email the final document to the members of the Select Board.

3.3 Road Commissioner

A. Larry was able to pull the posted signs prior to the meeting, this was later in the year than normal due to weather.

B. The road crew was up on Oak Hill Road grinding trees and brush in the right-of-way today; ditching will start when the rain stops. Tree trimming and ditching will be done all over town since there is a lot to be done this year.

C. Larry is still waiting for the transmission needed for the small truck. Parts are in high demand and short supply these days.

D. The old bridge deck scrap metal on Old Mill Road will be removed in a few weeks. Per Larry they will use the excavator once they have worked their way to that side of town doing the brush trimming/grinding. They will be cutting it up and having it hauled away to recycle.

E. Calderwood Engineering has applied to the Army Corps of Engineers for a permit for in-water work for the Dennis Hill Road culvert project.

3.4 Fire & Rescue

A. Chief Sherman said he's received word on a couple exciting grant opportunities he's been informed about recently. MMA has a Safety Grant opportunity for \$1,500.00-\$2,000.00, which will be submitted tomorrow. Also, Maine EMS has \$50,000.00 allocated under sustainability for Litchfield specifically. Chief Sherman said he's getting paperwork submitted this week.

3.5 Emergency Management

Chief Sherman is working on an Emergency Plan for the town, he intends to have it done soon. The document will include minimum preparedness actions that any resident should be able to have/do in their own home.

3.6 Assessing Agent

A. There is an abatement request that will be discussed later in the meeting.

B. Ellery Bane will be back on Friday April 18, 2025.

3.7 Transfer Station

A. The Swap Shop is open and is sure to pick up with traffic soon.

B. The brush pile will open once the snow is 100% gone, Kelly and John are still looking for a way to remove the old pile of brush. Kelly believes they have a plan but is looking at fees now.

C. The garage construction date is to be determined by weather and the Public Works schedule.

3.8 Other Town Committees

4.0 Scheduled Business

4.1 Road discontinuance decision

The following is a list of roads and decisions made by the select board regarding road discontinuances after consulting the town attorney and considering feedback from the public meeting held on March 31, 2025.

Most of the roads will not be discontinued due to the following three reasons.

- A. The town's legal counsel believes it to be ill-advised.
- B. There is an opportunity for growth on the roads, i.e. more houses could and likely (in this economy) will be built on the road in the future.
- C. The residents on the road had a chance to be heard at the Public Meeting and would like to see the roads continue to be maintained by the town.

If reasons other than these were brought up in discussion, it will be noted with the motion that was made.

Beaver drive

There was a motion made by Rick to not pursue discontinuance of Beaver Drive. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

Community Drive

Gary was not aware until the last meeting that the paved portion of the road is may have specific stipulations for town maintenance in a deed. Kelly made a note to track that down when possible.

There was a motion made by Rick to not pursue discontinuance of Community Drive. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

Dingley Road

There was a motion made by Rick to not pursue discontinuance of Dingley Road. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

Easy Street Extension – Gary has driven over to the area to investigate; he feels the residents need to work with Public Works to help them help the residents of the road. In his opinion, the removal of barriers and having dumpsters being more strategically placed, as well as recognizing that the snow needs to be placed somewhere would go a long way. Rick would like to see markers etc. put up to help Public Works with snow removal.

There was a motion made by Rick to not pursue discontinuance of Easy Street Extension. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

Little Drive

There was a motion made by Rick to not pursue discontinuance of Little Drive. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

Gustin Road – Rick asked why during the construction of Gustin Road bridge were people not allowed to use the road (through to Ferrin Road) during construction for ingress and egress. It was brought up that the Ferrin Road bridge construction when that previously discontinued section was reused. Gary believes that the process should be halted at this time and once everything is cleared up, all should be investigated again later, to be sure everyone is on the same page. Per a resident in attendance there is conservation land in the area which would make it difficult for further growth.

There was a motion made by Rick to not pursue discontinuance of Gustin Road. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

Huffs Mill Road – Rick asked if Bowdoin had been contacted to see if they are willing to help with the plowing if they are driving by with a plow truck, Kelly said he had not yet talked to them but will reach out. Gary doesn't agree to have this road still maintained, he has very mixed feelings since Bowdoin has shut their end of the road down. The majority of the residents are Bowdoin residents, this is why Kelly needs to reach out to the town of Bowdoin and see if they will assist. Gary wants Kelly to be sure he reaches out since per Larry, Bowdoin plows drive right by. Rick has a list of roads that need to be investigated for safety purposes. He would like to see Larry and the Road Committee investigate for the purpose of getting written permission, again, for safety purposes. There was a motion made by Rick to not pursue discontinuance of Huffs Mill Road. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

Jungle Lane

The landowner(s) agrees to accept responsibility for road maintenance and would like the road discontinued without retaining a public easement. Tom Wood wants to be sure that he may obtain an easement on Jungle Lane and this is to be worked out privately. There was a motion made by Gary to present the residents attending the Town Meeting with a road discontinuance of Jungle Lane as a private easement with \$0 owed to the town or to the residents on or abutting Jungle Lane. This was seconded by Rick, vote 2-0.

Old Mill Road

Gary feels this is the same situation as with the Easy Street Extension. Everyone needs to work together to make it more accessible for Public Works.

There was a motion made by Rick to remove Old Mill Road from the discontinuance list. This was seconded by Gary, Vote 2-0.

This will be investigated in the future if needed.

*** Taking items out of order to be considerate of time and residents hearing hot button topics in person ***

4.2 Open mowing contract bids (7-~~pm~~ 8 pm)

Purgatory Fire Station \$200.00 per mow /Woodbury Park \$200.00 per mow, \$100.00 per hour otherwise – D.R. Lawncare, Andrew Kelly, W. Gardiner

Purgatory Fire Station \$50.00 per mow /Woodbury Park \$150.00 per mow, \$60.00 per hour otherwise -Banton and Sons, Leeds

Purgatory Fire Station \$25.00 per mow /Woodbury Park \$200.00 per mow, \$100.00 per hour otherwise - Catlins All Year Round

There was a motion made by Rick to award the mowing contract for the Fire station /Woodbury Park to Banton and Sons out of Leeds, Maine. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

Larry said that he thinks the bids should be awarded to Litchfield businesses when possible. Rick suggested this could cause people to stop bidding by causing the perception that Litchfield only accepts Litchfield bids.

Central Fire \$100.00 / Town Office \$50.00, \$60 otherwise - Banton and Sons, Leeds
Central Fire Station \$150 / Town Office \$50.00, \$100.00 otherwise – Catlin's All Year Round Landscaping

The LPR Lawn and Landscaping bid didn't follow the request put out by the town by bidding a lump sum for the season, including spring clean-up.

There was a motion made by Rick to award Banton and Sons the Town Office and Central Fire Station mowing and maint. contract. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0. All Cemeteries, a list was read with prices associated with each individually. Catlin's All Year Round was the only bidder.

There was a motion made by Rick to accept the bid received by Catlin's All Year Round. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

4.3 Town forest management – David Larrabee

Mr. Larrabee presented the comprehensive forest management plan after providing a recent history. He has a document detailing the plan. He said that a lengthy dispute regarding tree cutting that encroached on the Pine Tree Road property has been resolved and he is moving forward with harvesting on Pine Tree road as it is overdue. He has contacted the "new" abutting landowner to see if their property can be used for mid-way staging, as otherwise it is not cost effective to harvest that lot. Mr. Larrabee said that

there is an educational component to harvesting as well. In the past, 4th graders from the RSU4 were bused to the property to show them how a timber harvest is done, and a portable sawmill was brought in to show how logs are cut up. Mr. Larrabee also requested that profits from an upcoming Smithfield Plantation harvest be used to fund the property management operations of Smithfield, as has happened in the past. Kelly will add this onto the draft Town Warrant which will be presented at the next meeting.

4.4 Personal Property tax process *** taken out of order ***

Kelly handed out the statute for members of the Select Board to review. He said most people are under the impression that the personal property law pertains only to local businesses. The law actually (still) has provisions for taxation of all individuals owning personal property (this isn't referencing land) and includes property used for business. There are many specific exemptions, but for all other property the "by item" exemption is only for a value less than \$1000. This can be found in Title 36; Subsection A. The town has not been sending out letters to request individuals to report their property (as allowed for in the statute) and Mr. Russell suggested that perhaps the required letter to residents could be put into the Town Report as an addition. This option will be investigated, and Kelly will investigate the date of delivery lining up appropriately. This is all being brought up now due to one resident of Litchfield being concerned that the process for taxing personal property has not been fair in the past and a letter should be

sent to every all residents of Litchfield. Kelly has been in touch with the town's legal counsel who is in agreement that a letter should be sent out. Rick asked if there could be a post put out on social media that people can follow to get in touch with the representative to ask for the statute and law to be written more fairly across the board. Tom also made a plea to residents and gave background information. Kelly will be sure to give the contact information of our legislative representative.

4.5 Hauling contract RFP

The request for proposals was looked at last meeting and has now been reviewed by legal counsel, with changes made. It is now ready for a motion. Larry wanted to know if there was an average number of hauls added to the bid, Kelly noted the section where it can be found. Gary agrees with Larry that an average number should be added to the bid.

There was a motion made by Rick that the approval for bid to be sent out. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

4.6 Bookkeeping process consultant

Kelly and the current Bookkeeper would like to have Mark Roy from Blue Star Accounting and Advising out of Lewiston advise. This would be for a limited time, roughly 10 hours each for both reconciling of bank records with TRIO, and updating the chart of accounts to improve the structure. The fee is \$150.00 per hour and Kelly would like to use contingency funds with the amount not to exceed \$3,000.00. If Kelly thinks there are benefits to continuing the consultation he will come back to request additional funds.

4.7 Abatement R11-022A, \$223.73 Grainne & Connor Shaw

There was a motion made by Rick to sign the abatement R11-022A in the amount of \$223.73 for Grainne & Connor Shaw. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

4.8 Budget

Kelly handed out the budget for review and questions. The changes have been highlighted, the Transfer Station budget will be adjusted once the bids are in. The taxes contributed to the Paid Family Medical Leave Act will change in the future once more information comes in.

Larry pointed out that the CDL training will be coming out of this year's budget not next year's budget and requested a reduction in next year's training budget.

There is a change to Capital Road Improvement. Larry and Kelly discussed, Toby will be at the next meeting and will be able to describe this in detail.

The amount needed for Cemeteries will change now that the mowing contracts are set. Capital projects were cleaned up and 2 projects have been added.

Litchfield Academy Trustees had asked for funds to update the building request for \$12,000.00 for new lighting throughout the building, other updates are needed. That doesn't include the bell tower's reserve account.

Kelly then handed out the "what if" report and took time to explain the idea behind the sheet.

4.9 Projected Revenue

Kelly handed out the sheet(s) for review and questions. A draft warrant will be ready for the next meeting.

5.0 Unscheduled Business

5.1 Katie Slattery-Seaman presented her request for donation(s) of \$1,000.00 for the Community Cares Backpack Program, which provides food on weekends for children of families in need.

There was a motion made by Rick to add the Community Cares Backpack program to the list of charities in the amount of \$1,000.00. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

6.0 Appointments/Resignations

6.1 Appointment: Code Enforcement / LPI – Steve Ochmanski

There was a motion made by Rick to appoint Steve Ochmanski as the Code Enforcement / LPI. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

6.2 Appointment: Gardiner Public Library Trustee – Christine Parker

There was a motion made by Rick to appoint Christine Parker as the Gardiner Public Library Trustee. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

6.3 Appointment: Senior Advisory Committee – Lina Fontes; Brad Hilton

There was a motion made by Rick to appoint Lina Fontes and Brad Hilton to the Senior Advisory Committee. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

6.4 Appointment: Appeals Board – Gerard Bosse

There was a motion made by Rick to appoint Gerard Bosse to the Appeals Board. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant #19 \$457,612.56 (of which \$371,544.55 is for RSU4)

There was a motion made by Rick to approve Town Warrant #19 in the amount of \$457,612.56 of which \$371,544.55 is for the RSU4 School System. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

7.2 Town Payroll #20 \$33,613.22

There was a motion made by Rick to approve Town Payroll in the amount of \$33,613.22. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0.

8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/ Communication

8.1 There was a suggestion of “pay as you go” busing system for the RSU4. The resident has seen a lot of children being brought to school by a parent. This was brought up to a Wales School Board representative.

8.2 Tom Wood would be willing to give a presentation at a Select Board meeting on the difference between a trust land and conservation easements since they are not the same thing(s). They are held by different people. Gary would like to have this added to a future meeting.

8.3 Rayna noticed a good article in the paper about Aging in Place, she would like to see the Senior Advisory Committee take part in data collection as well.

9.0 Future Agenda Items

9.1 Town properties that are available for sale

9.2 Fuel Depot

9.3 Difference between a conservation easement and a trust

10.0 Adjournment 10:11:05 pm

Respectfully submitted by Angela Parker