

Town of Litchfield
Select Board
April 24, 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.; John Upham, Transfer Station Manager; Tom Wood, Budget Comm. Chair; Elton Wade, Budget Comm. and Litchfield Academy Trustee; Rayna Leibowitz, Litchfield Academy Trustee and other guests per the sign in sheet.

2.0 Minutes of April 10, 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 - 1. Rick Gowell abstained as he missed most of the last meeting due to a fire response.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence:

3.1 Town Manager: A. Kelly reported the Town was a victim of a \$357.85 insurance deductible scam by a person impersonating as an employee. A second attempt was thwarted.

B. Three viable candidates for a Town Office position vacancy will be interviewed this week.

C. Kelly will confirm plans to have Memorials cleaned before Memorial Day.

D. Efficiency Maine offered printed inserts to go with tax bills. They will pay their own printing and stuffing costs.

E. The water pump serving the Fire Station, Town Office and Public Works Garage failed and had to be replaced at a cost of \$3,830. The cost will be taken from the Town Office budget line.

F. The Maine Turnpike Authority advised the Route 197 overpass bridge will be closed for 1 – 2 weeks starting May 3. The MDOT advised the Thorofare Rd. will be closed from June 22 to Sept. 30 for bridge replacement. Parking and boat ramps will be accessible. MDOT advised Babcock Bridge on Route 126 will be closed July 10 to mid October for bridge replacement.

G. Annual Reports printing cost estimates– Our usual size - 6” X 9” - \$4096, 8.5” X 11” - \$4806. We will order our usual size and they will change the center page to a different color and start the Town Warrant there.

H. The plaque cost for recognition is just over \$50 each.

3.2 Code Enforcement Officer/Plumbing Inspector – Steve is absent. A. Kelly reported Steve contacted the Probate Court attorney about 2783 Hallowell Rd. but did not get a response yet.

B. New Road Name – Gideon Wheeler was present requesting Linwood Drive off Oak Hill Rd. The 911 Addressing Officer had not prepared a presentation and recommendation so this topic will be tabled to next meeting

3.3 Road Commissioner – A. Huntington Hill Road coming along well. They continued ditching through rain today.

B. Whippoorwill Road paving will be done Thursday and Friday, then moving to do the Central Fire Station. Work there will eliminate the identified low spot.

C. A request is made to move the dumpster at the Central Fire Station to a different spot to redirect the disposal truck from vulnerable areas.

D. Public Works will work with the Fire Dept to blow out some partially plugged culverts.

E. The new truck is almost completed. It is in the paint shop now. The dealer would like it

back to take to Skowhegan for a Truck Fair for a couple of days. It will have Litchfield's name on it.

3.4 Fire & Rescue – A. Chief Sherman advised there is another bid pending for the Frame Repair of #65, this one from a New Hampshire firm.

3.5 Emergency Management – No Report.

3.6 Assessing Agent – Begun working on applications for the Tax Freeze. Still waiting to see what the legislature will do about the funding. One option is to cancel any funding.

3.7 Transfer Station – A. Total stickers issued is now 2408.

B. The Sheriff's Dept did a drug take-back on Saturday which was well received.

C. There is interest in getting the brush and leaf piles open.

D. Seasonal residents are beginning to arrive in town and at the Transfer Station.

3.8 Other Town Committees – Budget Committee: Chairman Tom Wood advised an extra meeting is being held on May 1 to work on the budget in addition to the regular third Monday Meeting.

4.0 Scheduled Business

4.1 Request to pay for raising height of mailbox by Whippoorwill Rd. paving – Discussion was held. The State policy is to not pay for raising mailboxes. The Select Board requested a draft be prepared for a policy that requires the resident to be responsible for its own mailbox for repairs, replacement and raising for the next meeting.

4.2 Sign RSU#4 warrants/notices for school budget and renovation bond – State Law requires the Town's elected officials to sign notices for postings for residents to vote on certain school financial issues. The renovation bond was a new item, not generally known about. The explanation Kelly provided was that \$204,379 was needed for ADA renovations at Libby Tozier School and Sabattus Primary School. A request to have a representative of the Supt. Office present information about it at the next Select Board meeting was made. Not known is if these are new requirements. Payback is over 5 years. Some monies will not need to be paid back.

4.3 Review Request for Bid – Town Office Support Walls and Deck – Information was presented from an assessment by a building inspector so bid documents can be prepared. A budget amount is needed for the Town Meeting Warrant.

4.4 Lapse date adjustments for the following Capital Projects:

4.4.1 Academy Windows: \$20,000 – 6/30/24 - This extension until 6/30/24 for the Litchfield Academy window project was approved on a motion by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

4.4.2 Public Works Garage Ceiling Insulation: \$7,000 6/30/24 (Expected to be done by 6/30/23) This extension until 6/30/24 for the Public Works Garage Ceiling Insulation Project was approved on a motion by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0 (just in case there is an unavoidable delay).

4.4.3 Transfer Station Attendants office: \$10,000 6/30/24 This extension until 6/30/24 for the Transfer station attendant building project was approved on a motion by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

4.5 Budget Review – The final review of Department budgets was done. The amount for Town Office repairs and the Transfer Station building are still not determined and will be added as Capital Improvement Projects. The proposed budget will raise taxes for Town operations by about 3.8%. This does not include the school costs expected to be about 11%.

4.5.1 Department Budgets – The Capital Improvement budget will include \$112,000

for the Fire Dept. Equipment Reserve Account, \$127,500 for the Public Works and Garage Reserve Account for the purchase of a 2007 wheeler and \$23,000 of the cost will be used from the Reserve Account. Kelly advised there were unexpected monies received in Fiscal Year 2023 and funds not spent in addition to monies not expended that were found by the audit. Some of these funds will be proposed as sources of funding in lieu of raising funds by taxation. A full description will be developed by the Town Manager for Town Meeting.

4.5.2 Capital Improvements Plan - Reviewed

4.5.3 Draft Town Warrants – A first draft of the Town Warrant was provided to the Select Board and Budget Committee. Some additional details will be added and copies provided electronically when done.

4.5.4 Additional Warrant Articles – Two topics awaiting development of the wording are 1) providing authority to the Select Board to NOT foreclose on certain property, and 2) provide an option to dispose of surplus property (primarily equipment) by auction, not only by sealed bid.

4.6 Abatement – R2, Lot 059, \$82.32, Town of Litchfield – This was a foreclosed property that was taxed inappropriately. A motion to abate the amount of \$82.32 was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0. This will be removed from the books so no further taxation will be done. Some additional research is needed as well.

4.7 Quit Claim of U14, Lot 010, Marjorie & David Orral, Correcting 2005 Lien that had not been released. A motion to approve and sign the Quit Claim Deed for U14, Lot 010 was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

5.0 Unscheduled Business

5.1 The Chairman learned recently that another Town received \$100,000 for its Recreation Dept. through a Grant and Litchfield needs folks looking for funding like this. Discussion was held and Rick thought he knew someone who would be interested. He will talk with them.

6.0 Appointments/Resignations

6.1 Appointment to Senior Advisory Committee – Joan Puterbaugh – A motion to appoint Joan Puterbaugh to the Senior Advisory Committee was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant #30 for \$395,982.85 (\$80,147.96 plus replacement of voided RSU#4 check)- A motion to approve Warrant # 30 for \$395,982.85 (\$80,147.96 plus replacement of voided RSU#4 check) was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3-0.

7.2 Town Payroll #21 for \$27,697.93- A motion to approve the Payroll # 21 for \$ 27,697.93 was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3-0.

8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/Communication

8.1 An invitation was issued for a Concert Honoring Mothers to be held Saturday, May 13 at 2:00 PM Outdoors at the Litchfield Plains Baptist Church. This will be a Fund Raising event for the Litchfield Food Bank Building Fund. If it is raining, it will be held at the Central Fire Station. Music will be provided by the Carol Bailey String Band and Chorus.

8.2 Pat Soboleski, Senior Director, advised the Seniors bus trip will be to Oxford Casino on Thursday and the Senior Steppers will be performing at the Veterans Home in Augusta on May 8.

9.0 Future Agenda Items

- 9.1 R02, Lot 017, 2783 Hallowell Rd.
- 9.2 2022 Road Construction Cost Review
- 9.3 New Road Name (Linwood Drive)
- 9.4 Mailbox policy for costs by Town
- 9.5 RSU#4 Renovation Bond for \$204,379 Information
- 9.6 Grant Researcher, Grant Writer

13.0 Adjournment at 9:30 PM

Respectfully Submitted By

Rayna Leibowitz