

Town of Litchfield
Select Board Meeting Agenda
May 12, 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(absent); Larry Nadeau, Road Comm.(absent); John Upham, Transfer Station Manager; Tom Wood, Chm. Budget Comm.; Steve Ochmanski, Code Enforcement Officer; and others per the sign in sheet.

2.0 Minutes of April 28th, 2025

There was a motion made by Scott to approve the minutes of April 28, 2025. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 abstain)

3.0 Reports and Correspondence

3.1 Town Manager

A. Kelly reminded everyone that as of May 1, 2025 they will be seeing new license plates, and Chickadee plates will be phased out. [The state has started switching out the chickadee plates for a version of Maine's 1901 "state flag" license plate. The new plate is white and has a pine tree with a star above it. If you are an owner of a vanity plate, you'll need to go online to maine.gov/online/reservemyplate if you would like to keep the vanity plate you need to do this before your registration runs out.]

B. The RSU4 School Board will be holding its town meeting on Wednesday, May 14, 2025, at 6:30 pm in the Oak Hill High School gymnasium.

C. Per Kelly, the Kennebec County Commissioner has sent out a couple of emails stating 1) he is looking for more money/funding from the County/State to support first, the funding of the jail system. And 2) he would like to get the Commission to have five members instead of only three, so they would have an easier time with discussion and meetings. In addition Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG) has also sent out an email letting towns know the Federal Government has unfunded the Community Development Block Grant. KVCOG would like for residents to sign a petition to support the reinstatement of funds to this program. Litchfield has not used this program to date so this will not directly be affecting the town.

D. Tom asked if there was any word with how LD1506 (legislation to increase the personal property tax dollar amount). Katie had looked it up before the meeting and said that the Legislator is taking it to work session tomorrow at 1 pm. Gary said that he has spoken with Rep. Greenwood, and he is of the understanding that they may do away

with the residential personal property tax and hopefully increase the amount of the commercial property tax.

3.2 Code Officer/Plumbing Inspector

A. Steve handed out his report for April for the board to review. There were not many questions.

B. Steve reported also that the Planning Board tried to have a public hearing for the Land Use Ordinance. However, they did not a quorum, so it had to be postponed. They have scheduled a new Public Hearing for May 15, 2025, meeting to start at 6:30 pm and the public hearing will commence at 7 pm. Steve knows of two members that will be leaving the Planning Board next year. He hopes the word will get out and others will be interested in joining the once-monthly meetings.

Steve also wanted to make it clear that residential solar arrays are not being affected by this change in the Land Use Ordinance. The changes are for larger scale commercial arrays that have to come to the Planning Board to be reviewed.

3.3 Road Commissioner

A. There was a large washout on Gustin Road during the last rainstorm. The Town Crew has been working to fix it and has finished up today.

B. Ditching along Libby Road and then Buker Road will be continued. It was said that the sinkhole on Buker Road has gotten worse. Kelly will be reaching out to the State to have this fixed. Huntington Hill Road's ditches were discussed since the repair work that was done has, with the last rainstorm, washed away. Larger stones (rip rap) being used along with barriers to direct the water were discussed. Rick will be looking at one of the roads on his way to one of his stores to snap some photos of and get a possible option for a more permanent fix.

3.4 Fire & Rescue

Full report to be presented at the next Select Board meeting

3.5 Emergency Management

Full report to be presented at the next Select Board meeting

3.6 Assessing Agent

Ellery was at the Town Office last week and left an abatement which is upcoming along with a property tax topic under Scheduled Business.

3.7 Transfer Station

A. John delivered his report noting there was a bulky bin, plastic bin and a cardboard bin emptied since the last meeting. The Transfer Station is starting to see its seasonal increase in traffic.

B. There were four new stickers issued for a total of 2982 transfer station admittance stickers issued to residents.

C. Tires were picked up and removed from the property.

D. Also the Transfer Station has seen 1229 items taken so far this season.

E. Larry was at the Transfer Station last week and painted out where the CONEX boxes will be placed, so the "garage" placement and building is underway.

F. Also, per John, Old Castle came about 1 month ago and gave John a \$3,500.00 estimate for removal of brush and leaves. He believes they will be able to do this in July. He has tried to contact another suggested company to get another quote. However, they missed an appointment and did not return follow-up calls, so he doesn't think they would be an option. John said he feels Old Castle is the way to go and doesn't feel there would be a better price found. Gary agreed and this seems to be the way to go after checking with Kelly that it's within budget restraints.

G. John wanted to get some clarification regarding RSU4 dropping off their old television sets as they are renovating Libby Tozier School. The representative that dropped the televisions off told John they were informed they could pay at the end. John was uncertain where that notion came from since he remembered telling them it's a pay as you go service the Transfer Station provides. Kelly said he told them he would send a bill. The Select Board Members would like to see a bill sent each time or have the Superintendent called and find out what their plan is and send a bill for them all if that's an option.

3.8 Other Town Committees

A. Tom has recommendations as well as questions from the Budget Committee as the representative. Conversation and questions will be discussed during scheduled business.

4.0 Scheduled Business

4.1 Public Hearing - Order of Discontinuance for Jungle Lane 7 pm

The public hearing was opened at 6:57 pm with no objections. The letter of discontinuance was handed out. Gary read the letter aloud for the room and to be sure the verbiage is on record.

It was brought to the attention of the Select Board as well as Kelly that Mrs. Wood's name (Ellen R. Wood) needs to be added to the letter as her name is on the deed covering property of 187 Plains Road, Litchfield ME, 04350 Map 07, Lot 046.

As stated in the letter, a copy of the order will be filed with the Town Clerk and, if approved at Town Meeting, recorded at the Kennebec County Registry of Deeds in accordance with Maine law.

There was a motion made by Scott to approve the Oder of Discontinuance of Jungle Lane pending legal review of discontinuance order. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

4.2 Personal Property Tax

Tom, Kelly and Gary were all in attendance of the hearing on personal property tax held by the Maine Legislature. All three gave personal testimony in favor of raising the personal property tax from \$1,000.00 to \$5,000.00. In that process it was also pointed out that no one uses/enforces the personal property tax. Some of the legislators were under the impression that it was commercial tax only. A representative of the City of

Bath spoke up noting they do not enforce the individual personal property tax, they only charge commercial businesses. Kelly also pointed out to the Legislators that the constitution is not being upheld if this is not either removed or enforced. Rep. Greenwood was approached with a suggestion of working on a bill to abolish the personal side of the personal property tax and make it so it's strictly a commercial tax. At the last Select Board meeting there was a motion made to send out the personal property tax notification letter. Kelly has spoken with Rob Duplisea, Jr., Ellery's boss at RJD Appraisal, he has recommended not sending the letters as it's well past April 1, 2025, and at this point no one would be able to take advantage of the rebates. Tom suggested the residents contact Rep. Greenwood and thank him for the work he has done regarding personal property tax. He has also been helping get the town in touch with the correct members of the Turnpike Authority. As well as helping with hopefully getting the County to break the County Tax into 3 payments. Since that is how residents pay their taxes.

There was a motion made by Gary to rescind the motion made at the last meeting asking Kelly to send the Personal Property Tax letter to residents of Litchfield. This was seconded by Scott, vote 3-0.

4.3 Fire / Rescue grant

Chief Sherman has been working on the application for a \$50,000.00 grant through the County EMA. If the grant is issued to Litchfield as Chief Sherman has been notified that it will be, the Select Board will vote to accept at that time.

4.4 2025 Ratio Declaration

Kelly presented the annual declaration that the Town's percentage matches the State's valuation, at least within 10% above or below. This can then be declared at 100%, this makes the Homestead exemptions and the Veteran's exemptions all paid out at 100%. In order to meet the 10% threshold, the town's Assessor is recommending a 25% increase to all valuations. There is a penalty if the town does not declare at 100%. Gary asked if anyone would like to have Ellery come and explain this to the Select Board. Scott didn't feel it was necessary. Rick wanted to know if this increase got the town to 100% or is it only getting them to 90%. Kelly said he wasn't certain, but he thought it was 95%, which as Gary stated, keeps the town legal. Kelly said it makes sense to have some room in the percentage in case home values drop. Scott said that he has requested more than once to have a comparison done of what the costs/penalty would be if Litchfield did not keep up with the state valuation. Since there are other towns that do not do this, and essentially tell the state they do not want the money, Gary believes this question has been answered and Rick remembered a number being discussed as well. Kelly said he understood the reason for the question and gave Scott a partial explanation. Kelly will ask Ellery to be on the agenda to explain what the cost will be if the board does not follow the recommendation of the Assessor.

There was a motion made by Scott to sign the 2025 Ration Declaration for 25% factorization. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

4.5 Supplement: R13-018B \$1,840 – Dan and Paige Stanley

Per Kelly the residents would like to take their property out of tree growth.

There was a motion made by Scott to approve supplement: R13-018B in the amount of \$1,840.00 for Dan and Paige Stanley. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

4.4 Finalize Budget

The members of the Select Board as well as attendees went through the rough draft of the Town Warrant that was handed out to all in attendance. Looking for any incorrect verbiage as well as mismatched numbers/amounts in correlation to the 2024-2025 budget. Most of the notations that were made or suggested were simple adjustments, a word added or a notation to be made to make an article easier to understand.

Notable comments:

**The new Legal Council will be charging in increments of 6 minutes. So, all will be cognizant of questions as well as how time is being utilized.

**Kelly will be looking into how broad the scope of reach the Select Board has when it comes to stop lights vs. stop signs vs. flashing stop signs in town. Specifically mentioned is the intersection on Richmond Road (Rt. 197) and Bowdoin Center Rd/Huntington Hill Rd. Rick noted that the State deems the intersection to be one fatality away from [the state] stepping in and controlling traffic.

**Woodbury Pond Park was suggested as a possible increase in budget. The Select Board went on their town tour and noted a few suggested improvements as well as possible ways to increase revenue.

**Article 38 verbiage will be adjusted to be clearer regarding the need for a petition and signatures.

**Article 47 a notation needs to be made to add the Forestry Reserve fund.

**Article 47 Kelly is to get clarification regarding if the forestry service used is acquired via bidding process or not.

**Scott would like to see the tax map available for residents in attendance to view when needed [re: Jungle Lane discontinuance.

4.5 Finalize Projected Revenue, all covered in 4.4

4.6 Finalize Town Warrant, covered in 4.4

5.0 Unscheduled Business

5.1

6.0 Appointments/Resignations

6.1 Appointment: Appeals Board, Francine Rudoff

There was a motion made by Scott to appoint Francine Rudoff to the Appeals Board. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant #20 \$438,058.83 (of which \$371,544.55 is for RSU4)

There was a motion made by Scott to approve town warrant #20 in the amount of \$438,058.83 (of which \$371,544.55 is for RSU4). This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

7.2 Town Payroll #21 \$36,331.11

There was a motion made by Scott to approve town payroll #21 in the amount of \$36,331.11. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/ Communication

8.1 Driveway by ballfield washed out again, a verbal request was made to get screens on windows in conference room at the Town Office.

9.0 Future Agenda Items

9.1 Town properties that are available for sale

9.2 Study of cost of not adjusting town valuations to state expectations

10.0 Adjournment at 10:09pm

Respectfully submitted by Angela Parker.