

Town of Litchfield
Selectboard Meeting Minutes
May 13, 2024

1.0 Convenes 6:30 P.M.; Pledge to Flag; Selectmen and Guests present.

Selectmen: Gary Parker, Chairman; Clarence Gowell III (identified as Rick in these minutes) (absent); Scott Weeks.

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

2.0 Minutes of April 8, 2024, workshop minutes April 8, 2024

There was a motion made by Scott to approve the minutes from April 22, 2024. This was seconded by Gary with two changes, as follows:

3.8 Other Town Committees; Carol Baily Swing (should read Carol Baily String Band)

4.5 has too many to/too(s)

Minutes accepted with revisions, vote 2-0(1 absent).

3.0 Reports and Correspondence

3.1 Town Manager

A. Absentee ballots are now available to vote. They can be voted in person at the town office or taken home and mailed in. There will be no votes accepted regarding the RSU4 budget until Wednesday when the final numbers to be voted on are in. If passed as proposed by the School Board, the school budget is going up 8.5%, and the overall effect for Litchfield after State funding and Local Additional is a 13.5% increase in taxes due solely to RSU 4.

B. The Town received an email from Senator Collins' staff regarding her questions to the Department of Labor Secretary today. Senator Collins asked if the Department of Labor was going to support volunteer first responders by taking their comments into account in the new OSHA standards that are in the public review phase now. Per the response from the Acting Secretary, the Department of Labor Secretary will support and work with the volunteer fire departments to ensure safety while helping to keep them open.

3.2 Code Officer/Plumbing Inspector

A. Steve handed out his report for the board to review. He reports his workload is starting to pick up now.

B. Per Steve the old firehouse in the village district has been vacated. Steve has corresponded with the executor of the estate with a report that the lot will be cleaned up

over the coming weeks. Steve has been having good communications with the attorney and executor of the estate.

C. Steve will be starting his yearly property review, driving past every property in town to see if anyone needs a reminder about yard clean-ups, building permits, etc.

D. Steve reports he is staying busy with plumbing inspections as well.

3.3 Road Commissioner

A. Per Rayna, Larry wanted it relayed that he would be late since he and the crew were out working, to get as much done while it's still light out. The Gustin Road bridge replacement began today. Golf carts were dropped off for the folks that stayed in residence, most have delayed their seasonal return until after the bridge replacement is completed.

B. Once Larry was able to join the meeting, he gave his update regarding the Gustin Road bridge. The Bridge was taken apart today, the previous construction was noted to be impressive for the year it was done in. The crew was also able to take advantage of the nice weather and was able to get started on the reconstruction of the surrounding ground as well as the bridge supports today.

3.4 Fire & Rescue

A. Frame repair is expected to be completed on Engine 65 in the next couple of weeks. Chief Sherman plans to pick the truck up, however if it is necessary the shop that has been doing the work will deliver the engine themselves.

B. Scott wanted to know if there was any movement in the department regarding a presentation at Town Meeting of recommended changes to the personnel structure. Kelly said the Fire Department met last Tuesday to discuss and had reached a conclusion they would present to the board and Town Meeting. (The topic of discussion was whether to fund a position for a full-time fire chief.)

3.5 Emergency Mgmt.

Nothing to report for this meeting.

3.6 Assessing Agent

Ellery was in the office this past week with several appointments, and documents for the board to sign later in the meeting.

3.7 Transfer Station

A. John started noted there were 6 new stickers handed out totaling 2720.

B. They had to have the bulky, metal and cardboard emptied this week.

C. Last 2 weeks were a little slower than the start of the three-day weekend season.

D. Swap Shop is doing well, items are coming and going at a good pace.

Office building delivery has been delayed until May 15, 2024. The CONEX boxes will be shifted around soon to prepare for the pouring of the cement for the construction of the garage.

3.8 Other Town Committees

A. Budget Committee update was presented by Tom Wood. Tom reports that the budget committee met last week and settled all their recommendations for all the articles on this year's town warrant, this was passed along to the Select Board electronically. The next Budget Committee meeting will be June 13, 2024.

B. Per Tom the Budget Committee would recommend that a formal plan of whatever is decided about the fire chief position should be presented at the town meeting. Second perhaps a simple graphic explaining to the folks that attend the town meeting why an unassigned balance on the books. As it's all dependent on when the bills come in and the bills get paid.

4.0 Scheduled Business

4.1 Citizen's initiative to adjust land use.

Per Kelly there has been a petition circulated titled "shall the map intitled Town of Litchfield official land use district map, adopted June 2023 be further amended by moving lot 1221D on the town tax map R02 from the Rural District to be part of the Village District map?" Steve, along with Mr. Champagne, who has been circulating the petition, explained the request would allow an auto repair garage by extending the village district to lot R02-121D off of Arquette Lane. Next step is to have this be an item on the 2024/2025 Warrant, Gary stated it will be added.

4.2 Report of the Policy Review Committee

The report was reviewed and discussed. One article the committee wanted to highlight was the one regarding town property. There is a suggested revision for the article, which was read aloud. There was time given for specific discussion regarding this.

4.3 Woodbury Dam bridge mat liability – Dave Howse

Mr. Howse was in attendance to discuss the topic again since he was given time to do some research on his side of things as well as the town doing research on their side. This was discussed and questions asked with the result that Mr. Howse is going back to the drawing board now that he understands there is a way it can be done where he wouldn't be personally liable. Also, he understands the town of Litchfield will not be taking on the project or helping with the installation of any part of the reinforcement of the dam. The Board said they understood his position but are not interested in taking on the additional liability. He will engage an engineering company.

4.4 Open mowing contract bids (7 pm) (taken out of order due to time)

There were 4 different Contracts put together this year to try and get more companies involved/interested in the projects. These could have been bid on all four projects together or bid on one project and let the other three be bid on by any number of other companies.

Bids:

*LPR Lawn & Landscaping, 30 Nedeau Drive - Litchfield ballfields \$600.00 per mowing

*Butler Lawn & Landscape LLC - Woodbury Pond Park \$150.00 / Purgatory Fire Station \$50.00 / Hourly Labor \$45.00(cutting brush/fence repair/other). Maggie Eaton Cal Ripken Field \$175.00 / Central School Field \$175.00 / Jim Hyde Babe Rooth Field \$175.00 / Town Museum \$25.00 / Hourly Labor \$45.00 / Town Office \$55.00 / Central Fire Station \$95.00 / Hourly Labor \$45.00 / Cemeteries ranged from \$50.00 - \$60.00.

*Catlin's All Year Round - Cemeteries ranged from \$25.00 - \$100.00 / Hourly Labor \$100.00 / Woodbury Pond Park \$150.00/ Purgatory Fire Station \$50.00 / Town Office \$45.00 / Central Fire Station \$120.00 / Maggie Eaton Cal Ripken Field \$100.00 / Central School Field \$100.00 / Jim Hyde Babe Rooth Field \$100.00 / Town Museum \$25.00

**There was a motion made by Scott to accept Butler Lawn & Landscaping LLC bid for Woodbury Pond/Purgatory Fire Station for \$150.00 and \$50.00 respectively, with a \$45.00/hour labor rate. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0(1 absent).

**There was a motion made by Scott to accept Catlin's All Year-Round Yard Service for the mowing and maintenance of Maggie Eaton Cal Ripken Field \$100.00 / Central School Field \$100.00 / Jim Hyde Babe Rooth Field \$100.00 / Town Museum \$25.00 / Hourly Labor \$100.00. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0(1 absent).

**There was a motion made by Scott to accept Butler Lawn & Landscape bid for the lawnmowing and maintenance of the Town Office \$55.00 / Central Fire Station \$95.00 / Hourly Labor \$45.00. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0(1 absent).

**There was a motion made by Scott to approve the bid from Butler Lawn & Landscape LLC for mowing and maintenance of town cemeteries (list read aloud) \$680.00 (total) / Hourly Labor \$45.00. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0(1 absent).

4.5 Sign 2024 ratio declaration

Kelly handed the declaration to the Select Board members in attendance, they had time to review, ask questions and sign the document. Due to the town having factored last year, the declaration this year will be 100% without any changes to property values.

There was a motion made by Scott to approve and sign the 2024 property tax ratio declaration. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0(1 absent).

4.6 Quitclaim for R03-108a

There was a motion made by Scott to approve Quitclaim for R03-108a, from a completed repurchase agreement. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0(1 absent).

4.7 Quitclaim for R03-108a-ON

There was a motion made by Scott to approve Quitclaim for R03-108a-ON, also from a completed repurchase agreement. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0(1 absent).

4.8 Set date for Public Hearing of Solid Waste Ordinance amendments

There was a motion made by Scott to set the date for the hearing of the Solid Waste Ordinance amendments for May 28,2024 (7pm). This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0(1 absent).

Rayna and Gary will be sitting down to go over the ordinance to deal with typos, etc.

4.9 Sign RSU warrant and notice of election.

Kelly reviewed and handed out the updates for the most recent vote date. This notice of the election is required to be signed as an announcement RSU 4 referendum.

4.10 Review Town Warrant for final approval

This was also handed out to the board members in attendance; time for review and questions was allotted. Kelly noted the adjustments that were made since the last meeting.

There was a motion made by Scott to approve the town warrant as revised. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0(1 absent).

5.0 Unscheduled Business

5.1

6.0 Appointments/Resignations

6.1 Resignation Vicki Russell, Recreation Committee

There was a motion made by Scott to accept the resignation of Vicki Russell from the recreation committee with regrets. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0(1 absent).

6.2 Resignation Katherine Slattery-Seaman, Recreation Committee

There was a motion made to accept the resignation for Katherine Slattery-Seaman from the recreation Committee with regrets. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0(1 absent).

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant #31 \$334,613.11

There was a motion made to approve the town warrant #31 in the amount of \$334,613.11.

This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

7.2 RSU 4 Warrant #32 \$360,364.63

There was a motion made by Scott to approve RSU4 Warrant #32 in the amount of \$360,364.63. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

7.3 Town Payroll #22 \$31,170.56

There was a motion made by Scott to approve town payroll #22 in the amount of \$31,170.56. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/ Communication

8.1

9.0 Future Agenda Items

9.1 Select Board Web Page

9.2 Select Board Plaque for Special Recognition Recipients

10.0 Adjournment at 9:35 pm

Respectfully submitted by Angela Parker