

Town of Litchfield
Select Board Meeting Minutes
May 27, 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; Larry Nadeau, Road Comm. (absent); John Upham, Transfer Station Manager; Tom Wood, Chm. Budget Comm.; Steve Ochmanski, Code Enforcement Officer (absent); and others per the sign in sheet.

2.0 Minutes of May 12th, 2025

There was a motion made by Scott to approve the minutes of May 12, 2025. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence

3.1 Town Manager

A. Kelly said the Town Warrant has made it to the printers so that should be out to the residents next week at the latest.

B. The next school budget public vote is Tuesday the 10th, from 8am -8pm at the Litchfield Sportsman's Club. Then Litchfield's Town Meeting will be held on June 14th, at 10am at Carrie Ricker Middle School.

C. Thursday June 5th, 2025, there will be a Meet the Candidate(s) night for the incoming Selectman Candidates. The Town is sponsoring the event this year, as no local organizations were able to sponsor and provide the leg work involved. This is a time for residents to come and hear from the candidates, then there will be time for one-on-one questions. All Candidates that are up for elected positions have been invited. Tom Wood has volunteered to MC the event.

D. After reaching out to three law firms, Kelly only heard back from one, the one suggested by the town's previous lawyer. Kelly has been working with Amanda Meader and reports the interactions have gone well thus far. Kelly asked the Select Board to approve the continuation and vote to have Attorney Meader as the town's new legal counsel. She has offered to come to a meeting and introduce herself to the Select Board. This will be discussed further during Unscheduled Business.

E. Kelly is working to update the personnel policy as the staff has requested some changes for consideration.

F. Rick asked Kelly to be sure that the town has insurance coverage for any of the town's employees doing town business while in their personal vehicles. Kelly will investigate this further to be sure the coverage is there.

3.2 Code Officer/Plumbing Inspector

Nothing to report that can't wait for Steve.

3.3 Road Commissioner

A. The crew is working on Libby Road ditching.

B. The post, mentioned during the last meeting as prep for the new CMP meter, will likely be put up tomorrow at Woodbury Pond Park.

C. Robert, (who is training for his CDL) received his Class A permit.

D. Scott asked if the state is aware of the flooding on Plains Road, since the road is still flooded. Historically the water has receded faster.

3.4 Fire & Rescue

A. Chief Sherman has been speaking with a gentleman from Vermont who is an engineer specifically for rural water supplies. He specializes in dry hydrants, and all the calculations that are necessary to assure proper water flow. Chief Sherman is excited to have this contact and opportunity to have the expertise and contact moving forward. Chief Sherman said he will be in Litchfield June 9th to see the sites in person.

Rick and Chief Sherman had a discussion suggesting that there may be a possibility that the town could see savings on insurance if the hydrants get certified and have a good evaluation rating. Chief Sherman will be working to see if this is an option in the coming months as he moves forward.

B. Residents might see the EMS/Fire Crew out on the water this Summer for some more boat training.

C. Chief Sherman will be meeting with the Fire Chief in Livermore, Maine to see in person the Turbo Draft Unit he has mentioned previously as a cost effective and useful upgrade for the pump trucks to reach water supplies.

D. Chief Sherman mentioned the next to be replaced tanker truck, this would be roughly a year away. He said he plans to keep the current tanker as long he can. There are a few uses outside of the fire department for it, but it will need additional garage space. Since the arrival of the new truck is roughly a year away, he has time to work out long-term storage.

*** 4.1 taken out of order due to timing. ***

3.5 Emergency Management

A. Nothing additional to report currently

3.6 Assessing Agent

Ellery will be back in the office on June 5, 2025, for any questions or concerns needing to be addressed.

3.7 Transfer Station

A. There has been nothing but the normal routine at the Transfer Station in the last two weeks, all is well.

B. As soon as the weather cooperates and the crew is available after Libby Road ditching is done, the foundation for the new garage will be poured so the CONEX boxes can be moved into place.

C. Kelly said someone offered to take the existing oil shed once it's no longer needed. Also, before the shed is moved and the foundation poured, there needs to be an investigation regarding the soil under the oil shed. Someone with some knowledge of the area/soil contamination and whether the area should be disturbed needs to be consulted. Gary stated that the likelihood the old dump site continues underground far enough to be concerning is high. The old dump took up a lot of land there and then was mounded up as best they could and covered over. Kelly and John will investigate certifying and/or getting DEP in to look at the area.

3.8 Other Town Committees

Tom stated that the Budget Committee will have its recommendations at the Town Meeting for the 12 items not yet commented on.

4.0 Scheduled Business

4.1 Liquor license renewal – Meadows Golf Club ****Public Hearing opened at 6:58pm****

Kelly handed out a copy of a complaint letter that the town received regarding concerning behavior(s) observed in the parking lot after closing of the restaurant. He summarized the letter and pointed out that the concern was that there was no expansion of the establishment occur.

Gary has never heard anyone complain about the business, any time he has been on premises he has not seen or heard any issues.

Randall, the representative of Doolins and the Meadows Golf Club, was taken aback by the letter, which he had not been provided in advance. He stated there was no expansion of change of hours in the renewal request.

Scott stated he too hasn't seen any issues when he was a patron of Doolins Pub.

This observation was echoed by an audience member.

The public hearing closed at 7:08pm

There was a motion made by Scott to approve the liquor license for Meadows Golf Club.

This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

4.2 Fire & Rescue Sustainability Grant acceptance

Chief Sherman noted that the title of the grant is officially the EMS Sustainability Grant. Maine has been awarded \$50,000.00. To receive the grant Chief Sherman wrote a brief summary of intended projects, in which he listed the 4 areas he intended fund.

1. Training
2. Equipment Purchasing
3. Vision 2035

4. Mental Health Program, making resources available to EMS staff for prevention instead of being reactive.

The grant was approved for Litchfield by the providers under these parameters. Chief Sherman now needs the Select Board or the Town Manager to sign accepting the grant. Gary ask Chief Sherman if he had considered future costs of programs implemented with grant funds. Chief Sherman assured Gary that they both had some of the same views regarding avoiding future costs due to grant projects..

Rick wondered if MMA would give a checkmark towards the town's worker's comp program, which might be enough of an offset to cover the cost of the program if the department finds one that works. It was also mentioned that sometimes insurance policies have programs focus on mental health and well-being. This is something that Kelly will look into with MMAs current policies.

Chief Sherman said that it would be great to investigate, but was concerned that most times with such programs they seem to have the wrong focus. He's heard comments like "why did it take so long for this to be brought to a professional's attention", etc.. Chief has also had the good fortune to speak with a specialist that works in the field of mental health and specifically works with law enforcement. Chief Sherman thinks this is a great opportunity to do things better.

There was a motion made by Scott to allow Kelly the Town Manager to sign and accept the \$50,000.00 EMS Sustainability Grant. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

4.3 Advance the lapse date for Litchfield Academy windows 2nd special project

There are two windows left to be replaced in the Academy Building. Last year it was stated that two windows got were left out, and not included in the approved contract. Kelly said there is just over \$4,000.00 left of the allocated funds for the project. The committee has someone looking to find someone to complete the project, but as with all construction these days, this is proving difficult.

There was a motion made by Scott to extend the lapse date for the Litchfield Academy Windows Special Project until June 30, 2027. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

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

Gary asked if the budget committee would be willing to take on this study and look into what comes with or would be lost if the town told the state "Litchfield doesn't want to do this anymore." Ideally, then all future boards will be able to look at the study quickly to adjust the plan if needed. Tom said he would be willing to take this back to the budget committee, but it won't be done quickly, he believes this to be a marathon project not a sprint. He would like to see the motion made and it to have a deadline stated, further out than 30 – 45 days.

There was a motion made by Scott to invite the budget committee to do a study of the cost of not adjusting town evaluations to state expectations and provide a report back to the Select Board by the end of November. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

4.5 Final Warrant and Budget for Town Meeting **Order adjusted to be cognizant of time** Kelly handed out the copies of the final version that is at the printers. There are no changes other than the budget committee's request to have their recommendations removed until they had a chance to meet, which as previously stated will be provided at the Town Meeting. The members of the Select Board noted they are fine with the final copy and do not need to re-hash any of the articles. Tom would like to see a sheet with the Budget Committee's recommendations once they have had their meeting to be able for residents to follow along with during the meeting.

There was a motion made by Scott to approve the final warrant and budget for the town meeting. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

4.6 Request Expanded Plot at Mitchell (S. Oak Hill) Cemetery – David Blocher

After a brief history of the cemetery and how the Town of Litchfield came to be financially responsible for this cemetery provided by Kelly. There was a motion made by Scott to grant the request for David Blocher to expand the Mitchell Cemetery. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

5.0 Unscheduled Business

5.1 Approval of the new town lawyer

There was a motion made by Scott to approve Litchfield's new town lawyer, Amanda Meader, based on recommendations from the town's previous lawyer. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

6.0 Appointments/Resignations

6.1

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant #22 \$72,517.05

There was a motion made by Scott to approve town warrant #22 in the amount of \$72,517.05. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

7.2 Town Payroll #23 \$36,299.16

There was a motion made by Scott to approve town payroll #23 in the amount of \$36,299.16. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/ Communication

8.1 Discussion pertaining to Meadows Golf Club's recent complaint.

Turning attention to the complaint given to him, Randall gave a history of the new light fixture including the two discussions had with the adjacent property owner. Randall doesn't feel that the Meadows Golf Club should be spending more funds on the light fixture to appease the neighbor in question as there was more than one discussion he was involved

in. The light in question is also set on a timer to go off at 10:30 pm. He ended by stating how disappointed he was to not have been told about this before attending the meeting where he was handed the complaint letter. Also, Randall has an issue with the inspection that was done of the property and the letter he received after the inspection.

The author of the letter of complaint was not in attendance during the public hearing/meeting.

The Select Board members need time to evaluate all that was brought to their attention tonight regarding the complaint(s) and will keep in contact with Randall as they progress and come to a decision about how to move forward.

9.0 Future Agenda Items

9.1 Town properties that are available for sale

9.2 Woodbury Pond Park lease

9.3 Oil cleanup at the Transfer Station

10.0 Adjournment at 8:21pm

Respectfully submitted by Angela Parker