

**Town of Litchfield
Selectboard Meeting Minutes
June 24, 2023**

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

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, Chm., Elton Wade, Budget Comm.; Steve Ochmanski, Code Enforcement Officer; and others per the sign in sheet.

2.0 Minutes of June 12, 2023 Scott Weeks motions to approve the minutes as written from June 12, 2023, Rick 2nd, voted 3-0.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence

3.1 Town Manager – Kelly Weissenfels

A. Town meeting was successful, the budget passed. On request of one of the candidates (Mark Russell) there was a request for inspection of ballots which was performed on Thursday, June 22nd. Participants expressed that it was educational. Mr. Russell identified several ballots with partially filled bubbles. All ballots were correlated to the number of ballots counted by the voting machine. The next step would be to file for a recount, and Mr. Russell has 5 business days to apply. Once the written request is received Kelly has 5 days to schedule and perform the recount.

B. RSU 4 dates for a second vote to approve the budget have been posted; it's being called The Road to the 2nd Budget Referendum. All Meetings will be held at 6:30 pm. The full schedule is as follows:

Wednesday June 28, 2023 – Budget workshop @ Central Office

Wednesday July 12, 2023 – Budget Discussion @ Central Office

Wednesday July 19, 2023 – Budget Vote (If needed) @ Central Office

Thursday July 27, 2023 – Public Budget Meeting @ OHHS

Tuesday August 15, 2023 – Budget Referendum

C. Kelly has had discussions with a Monmouth Selectman regarding possible collaboration with their transfer station, similar to how Wales does currently. Kelly is still looking into options and plans to have more to discuss at the next Select Board meeting July 10th.

D. A concerned citizen that lives on Pleasant Pond Lane off Thorofare Road stopped in to point out that boat ramps are being left open during States work, but it is very difficult to get in and back around to appropriately launch boats. Residents of the land would like a load of gravel delivered to make up for the additional traffic using their road as a turn-around. Gary mentioned that he believes this is an issue for MDOT, as the bridge project is being performed by the State. Scott believes it's possible to access both launches without issue by backing into the south launch to turn around.

3.2 Code Officer/Plumbing Inspector – Kelly reports that Steve Ochmanski will be available for the first meeting of next month with a full update.

3.3 Road Commissioner – Larry Nadeau

A. Grinding and injection done on Lunts Hill Road; paving has begun. The crew will continue when the weather permits. The Ferrin Road project has been started the crew completed grinding the 4" hot top before end of day.

B. Pine Tree Road ditching has started. Fill is available for anyone on or near Pine Tree Road that reaches out to Larry and is ready to receive fill.

C. Larry is still looking to hire (1 position open).

D. Scott questioned if there has been an inspection of Small Road yet? Larry will make a phone call tomorrow to get an update.

3.4 Fire & Rescue – Chief Sherman

A. Chief Sherman reports the company has been called to see what the next steps are to start frame repairs. He is waiting on forms to fill out. Once they arrive Chief Sherman will sit with Kelly to fill out and sent off. Then he will be sure to get a timeline figured out for the rest of the project.

B. Chief Sherman has spoken with all 3 primary companies regarding the tanker and getting a good price. Looking to get the companies to know they are all being consulted, to get the best price and to be sure due diligence is being done.

3.5 Emergency Mgmt. – Chief Sherman

A. There was a good meeting last week to get all major points hammered out for the warming/cooling shelter(s). Minor points are what temps would be best to open shelters at. Looking actively for volunteers to help with the shelters also.

The meeting with member of RSU4 was postponed, and Chief Sherman will be speaking with John Varney, the RSU4 facilities manager, to work out details of the contract to use Carrie Ricker School as the shelter once meeting is rescheduled.

-Gary questioned if there will be a cost to training, etc.? Chief Sherman doesn't think so, will get details on that as well and report back.

3.6 Assessing Agent - Kelly Weissenfels

A. Kelly reports representative was here last week and will be back at the end of July. Code Enforcement will be providing the permits from the past year to be sure they will be assessed properly.

B. Resolution of the Senior Property Tax Freeze law is still in Legislation.

3.7 Transfer Station - Kelly Weissenfels

A. The leaf pile was emptied over the last couple weeks, as it was taken away for mulch. This is at no charge to the town.

B. The mandatory mowing of the mound (previous dump site) is going well.

3.8 Other Town Committees

Pat S. – The Litchfield Senior Steppers were at Schooner Estates today; the crowd was very receptive. Also, the Carol Baily String Band and Chorus are scheduled to perform at an outdoor concert July 5th (weather permitting). July and August are very busy times for the groups so keep an eye out for updates.

Elton – Supplied an update regarding the window project for the Academy Building, windows are in the process of being ordered. Window sashes will be available for Citizens to pick up at the Transfer Station.

4.0 Scheduled Business

4.1 Election of Select Board Chairperson

Scott motioned to have Gary Parker sit as the Select Board Chairperson, Rick 2nd, vote 2-3(Gary abstained from vote).

4.2 Gustin Rd. Bridge repair – Larry explained the issue and presented photos of a full thickness hole in bridge. Gary led discussion of next steps and concluded that there needs to be an evaluation of the bridge to find out the extent of what the town needs to do and is going to do. Larry mentioned there has been a design provided by Calderwood Engineering for complete replacement. The final decision of tonight's discussion was the hole is to be covered as soon as possible for immediate safety, then a decision can be made. Kelly is to call Calderwood to look at the bridge ASAP. Also need to find out if Fire

Trucks can go over bridge safely. Larry will keep the people living on the road abreast of information gained.

4.3 Spirit of America Award nomination

The deadline for submission of Spirit of America award nominations for next year (2024) is June 30, 2023, this honors volunteerism. Kelly would like to nominate the recreation committee. They have built and maintained a successful program this year with no director. Scott would like a list of names of nominees from the past to be sure there are no repeats nominated. Also, Gary would like to see a list of names of the members of the Rec. Committee.

Scott motioned to nominate the Recreation Committee for the Spirit of America Award, Rick 2nd, voted 3-0.

4.4 Contingency Fund expense approvals

Kelly had totals for Transfer Station overages, and the conference room chairs for approval to use Contingency/Overlay funds. \$30,000.00 in fund, Transfer Station overspending due to transportation \$21,000.00 over budget and will be \$26,000.00 over by end of fiscal year. The fire station is \$7,500.00 over budget, town office chairs \$3,500.00. Total \$37,000.00 out of Contingency/Overlay funds.

Scott motions to give permission for the use of funds not exceeding \$40,000.00 from Contingency and Overlay funds to cover Transfer station, Fire Department and office chairs, Rick 2nd vote 3-0

4.5 Transfer Station Capital Project Funds lapse date adjustment

In order to keep these funds from lapsing into unuse Kelly would like to have a motion to adjust the date for the following. The Lapse Dates that were moved to 2024, Transfer Station Capital Project lapse in 2023 so the remaining \$1,025.00 may be included in the \$60,000.00 approved at Town Meeting for the Transfer Station multi-function building.

Scott motion to change laps date to June 30, 2023, Rick 2nd, Vote 3-0.

4.6 Approve purchase of PW Front Loader as well as a Plow Truck.

The Public Works department has been waiting for a quote for the front-end loader purchase that was approved at the Town Meeting. Kelly and Larry would like to move forward as quotes have been received. Larry and Kelly reported options and prices of competing models, showing due diligence for the best price, and fit for Litchfield's Public Works Department.

**Front end loader bid from Komatsu \$180,561.00/\$159,704.00 after trade in/Caterpillar (\$30,000 higher than all others)/Case \$199,900.00. Trade in value of currently owned front-end loader \$32,000.00.

Scott motion to approve the purchase of front-end loader Komatsu in the amount of \$159,704.00 after trade, Rick 2nd, (On review of the video the vote was pre-empted by discussion and will need to be completed at the next meeting.)

**Plow truck - Larry spoke about Plow truck's specification and add-ons. He investigated claims of lower priced plow trucks available and found numbers that were being used were not equivalent with complete plow package and power level required for Litchfield. O'Connors sales representative has agreed to match last year's price for this year's purchase. This is going to be an acquisition of the same truck (same specs and add-ons) as last year's. Time frame on delivery will be in the 4th quarter, it's believed that the new plow truck will be delivered before this years (2024) plow season starts.

Scott motioned to approve the purchase of a new plow truck from O'Connor's for \$243,262.00, Rick 2nd, voted 3-0.

**Scott interjected to ask Larry to put together a list of items that can be sold/auctioned off for the next selectboard meeting. They would like to look at what's available in order to clear some things out before winter comes.

4.7 Look at changing Town Office hours to accommodate reduced staffing.

Both recent front office hires have unfortunately stepped down. Kelly has reviewed the remaining applicants and their experience level just wasn't the right fit. Instead of going through an interview process again Kelly has spoken with the ladies working the front office and has created an alternate proposal that will allow them to work with the team that has been successful (though at max capacity) for the past 6 months. The proposal is to change the hours of operation of the Town Office. Giving the ladies an opportunity for 1 hour each day for uninterrupted work. The possible new schedule would be as follows:

Monday – Thursday 8am-4pm (with an additional hour on either side of the workday where doors are locked, allowing for time to get additional work done.) Thursday would be 8am-6pm. Vacation time would be covered by other staffers in the office.

*One thing that has helped with the phone traffic is to add a direct line to Steve for Code Enforcement questions. As a fair amount of phone traffic has been Code Enforcement related.

Time was afforded for conversation regarding concerns and options. The Board agreed that a temporary change in hours was OK, but not to stop looking for the right fit for hire since there is no backup aside from the Town Manager. Advertising will be sent out on all platforms available.

4.8 Kelly would like to see the government move forward with obtaining a bid for the Town Office structural repairs to have time to get them done this season. The Select Board reviewed the bid request and discussed options of how to get more bids through the door. One of the advertising routes that must be taken is advertising in the newspaper, this rule will continue to be followed, and bids will be due on July 24th.

Scott motions to approve request for bid of Town Office structural repairs and deck reconfiguration, Rick 2nd, Vote 3-0.

4.9 Repurchase agreement – R03-108A Katelyn Campbell (Danforth)

Scott motion to approve the repurchase agreement for R03-108A by Katelyn Campbell (Danforth), Rick 2nd, vote 3-0.

4.10 Repurchase agreement – R03-108A-ON Katelyn Campbell (Danforth)

Scott motion to approve the repurchase agreement for R03-108A-ON by Katelyn Campbell (Danforth), Rick 2nd, vote 3-0.

4.11 Supplemental property tax– Tree Growth penalty \$9,054.39, R14-041, J. and G. Hughes

Scott motioned to approve supplemental property tax for Tree Growth penalty \$9,054.39, R14-041, J. and G. Hughes, Rick 2nd, Vote 3-0.

5.0 Unscheduled Business

5.1 Gary presents budget and audit for discussion.

Gary stated that there hasn't been a completed audit on time for 2 years. Gary also pointed out that the town could be fined a considerable amount if an audit is not completed and that they are important for budget planning. Kelly reported that the 2022 audit is nearly complete and promised that the 2023 audit would be completed by the end of December [on time] and available for the next budget season. Kelly explained to the board that the audit has been delayed in order to wring out procedural errors that have repeatedly made reconciliations more time consuming than necessary. Additionally, having the bookkeeper dual tasked as the registrar has added to the delay, as elections tasks have required more

time than expected. Kelly stated that in addition to the annual audit, there is a requirement to present monthly reports to the Board that has not ever been done as far as he is aware. This process will be implemented as part of the overall audit preparation resolution.

6.0 Appointments/Resignations

6.1 Re-appoint Michael Sherman as Chief of Fire & Rescue and Forest Fire Warden

Scott motioned to Re-appoint Michael Sherman as Chief of Fire & Rescue and Forest Fire Warden, Rick 2nd, voted 3-0.

6.2 Re-appoint Tina Gowell as Deputy Chief of Rescue

Scott motioned to Re-appoint Tina Gowell as Deputy Chief of Rescue, Rick 2nd, voted 3-0.

6.3 Re-appoint Pat Soboleski as Senior Center Director

Scott motioned to Re-appoint Pat Soboleski as Senior Center Director, Rick 2nd, voted 3-0.

6.4 Appoint Rochelle Lebel to Senior Advisory Committee

Scott motioned to Appoint Rochelle Lebel to Senior Advisory Committee, Rick 2nd, voted 3-0.

6.5 Re-appoint David Kamila as Cobbossee Watershed trustee

Scott motioned to Re-appoint David Kamila as Cobbossee Watershed trustee, Rick 2nd, voted 3-0.

6.6 Re-appoint Janis Boyer to Conservation Commission

Scott motioned to Re-appoint Janis Boyer to Conservation Commission, Rick 2nd, voted 3-0.

6.7 Re-appoint Michael Seaman to Planning Board

Scott motioned to Re-appoint Michael Seaman to Planning Board, Rick 2nd, voted 3-0.

6.8 Re-appoint Dennis Tompkins to Planning Board

Scott motioned to Re-appoint Dennis Tompkins to Planning Board, Rick 2nd, voted 3-0.

6.9 Re-appoint Mark Evans to Woodbury Pond Dam Advisory Committee

Scott motioned to Re-appoint Mark Evans to Woodbury Pond Dam Advisory Committee, Rick 2nd, voted 3-0.

6.10 Appoint Jim Adams to Woodbury Pond Dam Advisory Committee

Scott motioned to Appoint Jim Adams to Woodbury Pond Dam Advisory Committee, Rick 2nd, voted 3-0.

6.11 Re-appoint Dodie Johnson to Recreation Committee

Scott motioned to Re-appoint Dodie Johnson to Recreation Committee, Rick 2nd, voted 3-0.

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant #36 \$111,134.41

Scott motioned to approve Town Warrant #36 in the amount of \$111,134.41, Rick 2nd, vote 3-0.

7.2 Town Payroll #25 \$29,776.20

Scott motioned to approve Town Payroll #25 in the amount of \$29,776.20, Rick 2nd, vote 3-0.

8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/ Communication

8.1 Scott brought up the reconditioning of the cemetery fence that was approved at the Town Meeting.

He would like directions about what the next steps are as he is responsible for getting them to the facility that will be painting them. Discussion followed and the next steps will be that Kelly will contact Elton Wade to sort the stored sections of fence, and check with Acorn Fence to find out if removal of the old fence was part of the price that was given for installation.

9.0 Future Agenda Item

9.1 R02-017, 2783 Hallowell Road

9.2 Update from RSU4 withdrawal committee – Next meeting is Thursday June 29, 2023.

10.0 Adjournment – 9:15pm

Respectfully submitted by Angela Parker