

Town of Litchfield
Selectboard Meeting Minutes
July 8, 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); Scott Weeks.

Staff: Kelly Weissenfels, Town Manager; Michael Sherman, Fire Chief (absent); Larry Nadeau, Road Comm.; 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 June 24, 2024

There was a motion made by Scott to approve the minutes of June 24, 2024. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence

3.1 Town Manager

A. Per Kelly Woodbury Pond Park has been very popular during the heat. There are a few more items on the improvements list but things are coming along well. Kelly had a discussion with the park manager, she will be popping in to make sure numbers are matching funds received during different times of the week. So far things have been going well.

B. RSU4 Public Meeting and vote on the latest budget will be held this Wednesday July 10, 2024, at 6:30pm at the High School. Absentee Ballots will be available on Thursday following that meeting. The referendum itself will be Tuesday July 30, 2024, held at the Town Office.

C. There are some upcoming issues regarding the dams in town. Legal will be putting together a written description of the legal risks to the town regarding the proposed hydropower project, or any third party project, at the dam in Purgatory Village.

D. Kelly heard from Dave Howse what he had heard from Calderwood Engineering that the proposed mats would provide the needed support on the Woodbury Pond Dam for vehicles and trucks driving over the dam. Kelly was reminded by Gary that this needs to be received by the town in writing,

E. Tom was curious if there was anything pressing Kelly would need the budget committee to discuss. If not, he would recommend canceling the July Budget Committee meeting. Per discussion there isn't anything pressing to be worried about.

3.2 Code Officer/Plumbing Inspector

A. Per Kelly, Steve has been plenty busy and will have his report at the next meeting.

3.3 Road Commissioner

A. Town received its new excavator on July 1, 2024. The team has been trying the attachments out this week, per Larry the town will be seeing some grinding of rights-of way around town

once Dennis Hill Road project is completed. He said they would start with Libby Road and then move to Small Road.

B. Dennis Hill Road will be ground on July 15, 2024. The project will proceed from there. Pine Tree Road and Ferrin Road will be chipsealed beginning on the July 15th as well. Larry knows this is a logistical issue but is not the person in charge of the project(s) timing. They need to be done and this is when they can/will be done. Gary asked Larry to be sure the company doing the work had everything they needed as they seemed to have rough starts in the mornings.

C. The town has received two CONEX boxes, which are being delivered over the next week. One for attachments for the excavator, the other for tires, rims and cones, etc.

D. Larry wanted to remind residents the crew(s) might be seen heading home a couple hours early during this heat. Safety is the number one priority. Rick wanted to know if the air conditioners in the equipment are being used. Yes, per Larry, however it's the people that do not have access to AC that are most at risk, i.e. traffic direction, chainsaw handlers, etc.

3.4 Fire & Rescue

A. Kelly mentioned he was expecting Chief Sherman to be on Zoom tonight and negotiations are underway about the Fire Chief's contract. This prompted discussion about whether the position was going to be advertised or not. See notes to follow in Unscheduled Business.

B. The engine frame repair has been completed. The final check has been written and Kelly had expected that the truck had been picked up. Rick interjected that there had been a delay and the truck was still at the vendor.

3.5 Emergency Mgmt.

A. The list of damages from the 2023 winter storms has been submitted to FEMA. Kelly said that the process is proceeding and we will be hearing more soon.

Gary wanted to know if the grant for the culvert has been submitted and if anything had been heard. Larry reports the submission has been sent and probably will not hear back until around October 2024.

3.6 Assessing Agent

Ellory will be in the office Thursday July 11, 2024.

3.7 Transfer Station

A. A total of 2780 stickers have been issued to date. John reports there have been a few temporary stickers issued as they needed to order more.

B. Per John they had a busy week as both bulky bins, metal bin, tv trailer and tire trailer had to be emptied this past week.

C. John also stated the crew is in the new building and happy with how that turned out.

3.8 Other Town Committees

4.0 Scheduled Business

4.1 Request to sell Single Axle International Plow Truck using Auctions International

Per Kelly and Larry there are still items (fencing, plow blade, etc.) that haven't been picked up, from the last online auction, though these items have been paid for. Discussion was had on how to proceed. Moving forward, all sales will have the contracted amount of time to come get the items sold. If items are not picked up within time allotted, they will be placed back up for bid. Larry thinks it's time to put the single axel International plow truck up for bid, he has had a couple people asking about it. He wants to be clear the Ford will not be going up for a bid, this is not the truck in question.

Larry has seen the new truck; it's being built this month. Larry mentioned there may be a few other things kicking around they could put up for bid. Gary requested a list for the next meeting that can be discussed.

4.2 Way forward for RSU4 Withdrawal Investigation Comm re: letter from J. Turcotte (SEE ATTACHED)

Percy took the floor to start discussion stating he had a discussion with Mr. Turcotte prior to this letter coming out. Percy suggested looking at some of the other surrounding area school plans for separation. The major concern is the Town of Litchfield's aggressive time frame for the project. Our committee was hoping to see numbers by the end of September so something could happen in November of 2024. This doesn't seem reasonable to Mr. Turcotte. Per Mr. Turcotte, summer isn't the best time to start the project as teachers etc. aren't available for comment and questions. Gary did state he is taking responsibility for the aggressive time frame. He has, since hearing from Mr. Turcotte, understood that this will be time-consuming and will take longer than he was expecting.

One of the major take-aways of the letter received. per Gary, is that Mr. Turcotte will be doing the sit-downs with the current administration and others that need to be involved. More discussion, questions and opinions were heard. Conversation continued regarding another poll going out, the town will be seeing more information and questions about this.

4.3 IT Managed Services Contract

Kelly would like to see Darren Ellis as the IT consultant for the Town of Litchfield. He has proposed a contract that keeps Mr. Ellis employed through the town and will have more leeway for IT projects needing to be done around the office. Costs of the contract, etc. was briefly discussed and Kelly pointed out that the labor costs are in line with or better than other local towns. Kelly was seeking the Select Board's approval to sign the contract. The Select Board members will be reviewing the contract and addressing any questions with Kelly at the next meeting.

4.4 Quitclaim Deed for R02-085A, 403 Academy Road, Theresa Pinkham – This updates the records for a lien that was paid off in 2021.

There was a motion made by Scott to approve Quitclaim Deed for R02-085A, 403 Academy Road, Theresa Pinkham. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

4.5 MMA Policy Committee Election

Kelly gave an explanation, this committee is elected every two years, and this year there is one nomination for Sharon Segal from Wales and a request from Fayette to write-Selectman John Beekman.

There was a motion made by Scott to select Sharon Segal and write in John Beekman for the 2 open positions on the MMA Policy Committee. This was seconded by Scott, vote 3-0.

5.0 Unscheduled Business

5.1 Fire Chief Position

There is was a disconnect in communication regarding this position and whether the Fire Chief position would be advertised or not. Gary recognized that while the intent stated in Select Board meetings was to advertise it, the statement at the Town Meeting by representatives of the fire and rescue volunteers that they had voted to have Chief Sherman be the full-time chief had appeared to supersede the original intent, and there was no objection at the time from the legislative body (residents present). Kelly asked Rick about the precedent in a volunteer Fire Department, and Rick said the practice has been that the volunteers choose their chief. After comments of concurrence from the audience, the board agreed that Chief Sherman will be getting the position at this time. However, Kelly will draft a procedure moving forward for this position being hired in the future in the instance that Chief Sherman steps down for any reason.

6.0 Appointments/Resignations

6.1 Appoint Greg Anderson to Cobbossee Watershed District Board of Trustees

There was a motion made by Scott to appoint Greg Anderson to Cobbossee Watershed District Board of Trustees. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

6.2 Appoint Greg Anderson to New Mills Dam Committee

There was a motion made by Scott to appoint Greg Anderson to the New Mills Dam Committee. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

6.3 Appoint William Martin as alternate Code Enforcement Officer

There was a motion made by Scott to appoint William Martin as alternate Code Enforcement Officer and Local Plumbing Inspector. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant #1 \$560,441.89 (RSU 4 \$409,164.72, Town \$154,277.17)

There was a motion made by Scott to approve town warrant #1 in the amount of \$560,441.89. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

7.2 Town Payroll #26 \$60,890.09 (includes Fire / Rescue training stipends)

There was a motion made by Scott to approve town payroll #26 in the amount of \$60,890.09. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

7.3 Town Payroll #26a \$12,476.19 (correction to regular payroll)

There was a motion made by Scott to approve town payroll #26a in the amount of \$12,476.19. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

7.4 Town Payroll #26b \$6,887.22 (correction to Rescue training stipends)

There was a motion made by Scott to approve town payroll #26b in the amount of \$6,887.22.

This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/ Communication

8.1

9.0 Future Agenda Items

9.1 Select Board Communications

9.2 Select Board Plaque for Special Recognition Recipients

9.3 IT Service Contract

9.4 Fire Chief contract

10.0 Adjournment at 8:21pm

Respectfully submitted by Angela Parker