

Town of Litchfield
Selectboard Meeting Minutes
July 22, 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 (absent).

Staff: Kelly Weissenfels, Town Manager; Michael Sherman, Fire Chief; Larry Nadeau, Road Comm.; 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 July 8, 2024

There was a motion made by Rick to approve the minutes of July 8, 2024. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

Kelly noted one adjustment that with Steve Ochmanski's appointment to CEO, this needed to read Local Plumbing Inspector as well.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence

3.1 Town Manager

A. Recommended adjustment to the agenda, 2 quit claims Kelly put on the agenda are not ready at this time. Kelly also noted he would like to add an abatement to unscheduled business.

B. New hire to the front office, Kelly wanted to welcome Esther Newendyke. Kelly has called in some temporary help for the next few weeks. Selena Nadeau. **Becky** Lamoreau also offered to help.

C. Heat Pump installation will start at the Town Office this Friday. As well as the following Friday. They should be up and running by the start of August per Kelly.

D. The RSU4 withdrawal survey (spoken about at the last regularly scheduled Select Board meeting) was put together and finalized by the current committee and will be in mailboxes starting tomorrow.

E. The RSU4 Budget Referendum will be held at the town office from 8 am - 8 pm. Kelly invites everyone to come out and vote!

3.2 Code Officer/Plumbing Inspector

A. Steve handed his report to the members of the Select Board and Kelly. Steve noted he has 5 on-going replacement plumbing systems.

B. Planning Board had a public hearing for the zoning change. Per Steve now this can go to a special town meeting. The Planning Board has met about the moratorium, they are working on verbiage. Once they are happy with that the document will go to the town attorney and then a public hearing will be scheduled. Once those steps are completed the Moratorium

will be delivered to the Select Board. Steve and Gary reiterated previous discussion(s) had during recent Select Board meeting(s).

3.3 Road Commissioner

A. Per Larry the grinding and injection has been done on Dennis Hill Road. They will start paving tomorrow July 23, 2024.

B. Pine Tree Road has been chip sealed and swept; they will do one more pass with the sweeper as there is a bit more loose stone they need to get up.

C. Per Larry the Libby Road has been opened up with the aid of the new excavator and grinder head. This has opened up the overhead height of the road. Small Road will be completed next. Once the paving is done on Dennis Hill Road there are some culverts around town that need attention. Ending the season with completion of the culverts on Dennis Hill Road.

D. Gary and Larry discussed the post appearance of the grinding on the sides of the roads, especially the Libby Road. Gary isn't happy with the appearance, Larry told him to wait till the regrowth happens, it will no longer be noticed. Gary also wanted to discuss the removal of the pine trees by the fire station. Gary mentioned this has been discussed before a few years ago. Chief Sherman remembers this being discussed between him and Gary. Larry is happy to take those trees down, as now is the time. Also, there is at least one oak that is dead and leaning over the Town Museum. The main concern is the one with the bark that has fallen off and is dead. Larry will be taking a look tomorrow with the tree service the town uses currently.

E. Ferrin Road was chip sealed as well as swept and in Larry's opinion came out well.

F. Rick wanted to know if there were guardrails going up by the new bridges that were put in. Larry reports that he plans to use waste blocks, he is waiting until there are 25 in house before they are placed permanently.

3.4 Fire & Rescue

A. Engine '65 has returned to Litchfield after being in Portsmouth, NH having a frame replaced. The truck was completely taken apart and all parts, but the frame were reused on a brand-new single channel. Chief Sherman is happy with the work that was done. The truck seemed to have ridden well during the trip back to Litchfield. This week the truck is going for a pump test up to Reliance Equipment in Vassalboro, once the truck has passed its yearly testing, the town will have engine '65 back for good.

B. Per Chief Sherman, OSHA has received the public comment sent by the Litchfield Fire Station and he has received a confirmation number associated with the comment. He handed a copy of the comment to the members present at tonight's meeting. He then summarized what was in the 5 pages sent to OSHA. Chief Sherman and Gary discussed a recent ruling of the Supreme Court that would mean OSHA not having unbridled power any longer. Chief Sherman then went on to summarize the public comment sent into OSHA.

Chief Sherman's and the department's main argument is the loss of people/staffing. Next is the timeline for implementation being so short. Also, the expense associated with the transitions they are trying to implement.

3.5 Emergency Mgmt.

Nothing new at this time.

3.6 Assessing Agent

Annual inspection was completed last week. A representative of the State comes in to perform an audit of the Town assessment process and documents, to ensure everything is up to par. Kelly has not received the report back yet. However, he trusts that when it does it will show all is in good order.

3.7 Transfer Station

A. There were 8 new stickers handed out this week for total of 2790.

B. Per John both bulky bins and the cardboard container needed to be dumped this week. Currently this seems to be the norm.

C. The swap shop is doing well with a constant in and out of items.

3.8 Other Town Committees

4.0 Scheduled Business

4.1 Transfer Station potential for expansion/relocation, DEP permitting options - Peter Maher

Mr. Maher brought a large map and handouts to aid his discussion. He noted the town will have difficulty expanding the transfer station into the adjacent parcel of land that it owns. The basis for his findings were that it's a sandy gravel pit over an aquifer, these do or could provide drinking water to the local residents, so the state in various places. He reports that the cost for permitting would be large and there would be no guarantee the town would get a permit to expand. You have to be able to prove to the DEA that you aren't making things worse than they already are. Discussion continued with questions from the room ending with the previous statements being summarized.

4.2 Contract reviews: CEO, Fire Chief

Kelly provided the draft contracts to the members of the Select Board. Gary thinks the contract looks good for the most part. He would like to discuss a couple possible adjustments. Gary would like to adjust Section 2 under terms at the end, Gary would like it to read "for any reason after review by Select Board". Point of clarification, He would like the Select Board members to be notified of the termination and reasoning. Then Gary noted another change that was needed Kelly already noticed. A paragraph in the contract needs to be titled Fire Chief, not the Public Works Director. Gary will send Kelly the corrections he is suggesting. Rick doesn't see any issue with this document, he has more thoughts about the future status, etc, that can be discussed later.

4.3 Dennis Hill Road topcoat accelerated schedule

Kelly turned this topic over to Larry to discuss the schedule and needs moving forward. Larry heard from a member of All State asking if the Town really didn't want top coating this year? Larry let him know the finances were not available this year and the plan is to finish the project next year. Larry said he was offered by this member of All States that it could be done this year, and they would bill next year. However, the accounting doesn't work that way so there needs to be a discussion on how to move forward. Kelly stated the only way this could work is to take the funds from the undesignated surplus. Getting the topcoat done will at any time (now or next year) be at an increased cost. Per Larry and Kelly, the contract we have been using with All States is 4 years old, and that price has been retained. Moving forward there will either be a 15% increase to complete the job this year or the job will be completed at next year's price under a new contract. In Gary's opinion the project should be completed next year with it being added to the warrant for a vote at Town Meeting. The only benefit to the town would be getting a possible 4% savings (through earned interest) against the price increase that Larry and Kelly noted will happen. Rick would like to do some more research on this and would likely have an answer for the next meeting regarding this.

4.4 IT Managed Services Contract review

Gary didn't have time to review this contract. Rick wasn't certain on the rate that was being and if there was going to be a savings at all to the town. Rick also would like to see the contract extended to the Fire Department as well. Per Kelly Darren is happy with the contract as written. Kelly noted that there could be an adjustment to the contract in which the Fire Department is included in the contract. Kelly will have the discussion with Darren and give the members of the Select Board an update. Both Rick and Gary said that they were good with the contract.

4.5 Set date for Special Town Meeting (District Map change, Dennis Hill Road, Solid Waste Ordinance, RSU4 Withdrawal Consultant)

August 12, 2024, is the earliest per Kelly to have the Special Town Meeting. Gary would like to see the Meeting be held August 26, 2024.

There was a motion made by Rick to set the Special Town Meeting for August 26, 2024. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

4.6 Review Invitation for Bids for Town Office parking lot

Rick has yet to look at the bid Kelly provided him with a copy. While Kelly was up getting the bid for Rick to review Larry commented that there is a mandatory pre-bid walk through. It's a situation that if you don't show for this, you don't bid. Larry would like to see the time changed for the walk through as it would be best to not have vehicles in and out. Larry would like to see the time changed to 7 am on August 6, 2024. As a fun side note, as part of reshaping the lot around the Town Office, the granite slabs around the flower beds

(including the “rock” just below the front steps to the Town Office), will be returned to Craig Aronson, who had originally donated them to the Town.

There was a motion made by Rick to accept the invitation for bid for the Town Office parking lot with the discussed changes. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

4.7 Set date for Solid Waste Ordinance review and public hearing

Per Gary this will be August 12, 2024, at the regularly scheduled Select Board meeting.

They must review the ordinance before it goes to the Special Town Meeting.

There was a motion made by Rick to set the Solid Waste Ordinance Review and Public Hearing on August 12, 2024, at 7pm prospectively. This was seconded by Gary. Tom made the point that all ordinances should have a standard format and Gary agreed that it could format decisions could be made in the future and as ordinances were modified, they could be adjusted to the format. Gary closed discussion, but moved to the next agenda item without calling for a vote.

4.8 Tabled until the next meeting.

4.9 Tabled until the next meeting.

4.10 Sign -RSU4 Budget Referendum Warrants. The Board signed the RSU4 Budget Referendum warrants for posting.

There was a motion made by Rick to sign the RSU4 Budget Referendum Warrant(s). This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

5.0 Unscheduled Business

5.1 Abatement R2 Lot 35B-01 in the amount of 106.65.

There was a motion made by Rick to sign the abatement for R2 Lot 35B-01. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

6.0 Appointments/Resignations

6.1 Appoint Fire Chief – Mike Sherman

There was a motion made by Rick to appoint Michael Sherman as Chief of Fire and Rescue. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

6.2 Appoint Assistant Chief of Rescue – Tina Gowell

There was a motion made by Rick to appoint Tina Gowell as Assistant Chief of Rescue. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

6.3 Appoint Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) Officer – Kelly Weissenfels

There was a motion made to appoint Kelly Weissenfels as Freedom of Access Information Act Officer. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant #2

There was a motion made by Rick to pass Town Warrant #2 in the amount of \$127,193.95. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

7.2 Town Payroll #1

There was a motion made by Rick to pass Town Payroll #1 in the amount of \$28,971.78. 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 Communications

Kelly reports this is going well.

9.2 Select Board Plaque for Special Recognition Recipients

This is also moving forward, as Rick provided a contact of someone who could help.

10.0 Adjournment at 8:33 pm

Respectfully submitted by Angela Parker

4.1 Peter Maher of Sevee Maher Engineering will provide a summary of his preliminary evaluation of the potential expansion / relocation site for the transfer station.

4.2 Select Board concurrence or recommendations for CEO and Fire Chief contracts negotiated by the Town Manager - separate email.

4.3 Dennis Hill top coat of pavement was budgeted for next year (FY26), but some cost savings (and project completion) may be worth moving that to this year

4.4 Per last meeting IT Managed Services Contract review/approval - provided at June 8th meeting and separate email.

4.5 A Special Town Meeting is needed for re-approval of the district map change from June's Town Meeting. For discussion: Additional approvals that could also be voted on at this meeting are the Dennis Hill Rd pavement, an updated Solid Waste / Recycling ordinance, and initial money for an RSU4 Withdrawal consultant.

4.6 Town Parking lot bid invitation - draft attached.

4.7 If a Solid Waste ordinance is to be voted on at a Special Town Meeting, both a review and Public Hearing should be scheduled prior to the Town Meeting.

4.8 The 2nd RSU4 Budget Referendum Warrants must be signed prior to posting.