

**Town of Litchfield
Selectboard Meeting Minutes
August 14, 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 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(absent), Chm. Budget Comm.; Steve Ochmanski, Code Enforcement Officer; and others per the sign in sheet.

2.0 Minutes of July 24, 2023

Scott motioned to approve the minutes from July 24, 2023, Rick 2nd, vote 3-0.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence

3.1 Town Manager – Kelly Weissenfels

A. School budget goes out for vote to the towns tomorrow (August 15,2023). This has been discussed in several of the recent Select Board Meetings, the town government is urging all residents to get out and vote. The Sportsman’s Club will be open from 8 am – 8 pm tomorrow (August 15, 2023).

B. Speeding noticed around town has been a topic frequently brought to the attention of the Town Manager. Kelly discussed Buker Road as many calls are coming from that area. Things to think about as options are: signs indicating to slowdown; also rumble strips could be put down along with speed humps. Since Buker Road is a 45-mph road, this is the speed humps would need to be set to, which would likely not slow anyone down at all. The room discussed the option of lowering the speed limit on the road, however as Larry pointed out this isn’t something the town is allowed to manage. The area has been very dangerous for years now and isn’t going to get any better if people do not slow down going through the area.

C. Kelly announced that there are 2 new part time employees; one working with the front office and the other dedicated to elections.

D. Kelly wanted to let everyone know the State has placed a do not drink order on the water at Libby Tozier School. This means no filling water jugs from the spigots outside. The filtration system will be replaced hopefully before the school year starts. A date of August 25, 2023 for the estimate for replacement of the system.

E. The Car Show has been moved to the Fairgrounds as the school yard is too wet this year for cars and traffic.

3.2 Code Officer/Plumbing Inspector – Steve Ochmanski

A. Steve handed out his report to the Select Board, there was time for review and discussion. Steve noted there were quite a few requests for solar last month.

B. There is a road name request that Steve brought to the Select Board’s attention. The road is off the Wentzel Road, the owners would like to use Wing Lane as their road name. The board approved the request.

C. Steve received an email last week from the folks at 2483 Hallowell Road. Report is that the Barn and the L shaped addition off the back of the house is due to officially come down on October 31, 2023. If demolition isn’t complete by then Steve will bring this back to the Select Board.

D. The planning Board has approved a U.S. Cellular tower going up at the corner of Rt. 197 and Small Roads.

**An alteration to the schedule was made in order to allow Steve to address this topic during his report.*

4.1 Action regarding clean-up of 136 Whippoorwill Rd. – J. Phillips (Code Officer report)

Steve reports the property does not be legally fit the description of a junk yard, and there is no open trash at this time. The owner of the property has worked to clean the property up and Steve feels it's appropriate to close the case.

3.3 Road Commissioner – Larry Nadeau

A. Larry reports they have hired 2 new part time employees. They have come to the crew with Class A licenses, so they have hit the ground running. The crew is now able to have more than one excavator going at a time.

B. Pine Tree Road has been coming along well, all projects are still on schedule even with all the rain. The ditching will be done soon with injection still planned for the end of the month.

C. The grading on Guston Road was completed this past week.

D. Larry reports that the walk through with MMA was done last week.

E. Finally Larry wanted to know if there was a resolution to his contractual question from the last meeting. Gary read a statement that according to State statute, all employees report to the Town Manager, with the result being that Larry reports to Kelly, that his contract is Kelly's responsibility, and that it would be highly unusual for a Select Board not to support a Town Manager's hiring decision. Since the Board has not been operating this way, Scott made a motion to have Town Manager oversee the Road Commissioner's contract negotiations moving forward, Rick 2nd. An amendment of the motion was made by Scott to officially have ALL contracted employees be overseen by the Town Manager as well as their contract negotiations, Rick 2nd, vote 3-0.

3.4 Fire & Rescue – Chief Michael Sherman

A. The frame for Engine 65 has been ordered. Coastal Truck and Autobody (out of Portsmouth, NH) will commence work as soon as it has arrived. The timeframe appears to be the end of August through the beginning of September. There is a possible turnaround time of 4-6 months.

B. The Chief has been continuing to do his leg work regarding the new tanker truck that was approved at the town meeting. Chief Sherman has gotten most of the prices from the known Maine companies that work building tanker trucks. He is looking to have quotes to present at the next Selectboard meeting. There was a question whether the acquisition of information regarding the prices of said tanker truck was on the up and up by Mark Russell. It was found that due diligence has been and will continue to be performed. Chief Sherman would like to complete the investigatory process by the next meeting. As stated in a previous update, Chief Sherman would like to be sure the truck comes from a local company so repairs can be done locally when needed and to keep money in the local economy.

3.5 Emergency Mgmt. – Chief Michael Sherman

There is nothing new currently.

3.6 Assessing Agent – Kelly Weissenfels

The Tax Commitment Workshop is set for August 28, 2023, at 7:30pm. This will also cover factoring and how the numbers are figured. This is contingent on Spring work done by RJD.

3.7 Transfer Station – John Upham

A. Nine more stickers where issues for a total of 2534 for the use of the Transfer Station

B. Only one bulky container needed to be emptied this week, so things may be slowing down as summer starts to wind down.

- C. The Swap Shop is doing well. There were 241 items taken this week for a total of 4463 items.
- D. There are 2 more Sundays this year. August 27th is the last Sunday the Transfer Station will be open for 2023.
- E. The Conservation Committee Chairwoman stopped in to discuss date and procedure for the Roadside Clean Up Day. This will be held on October 14, 2023. The staff would like to see all items separated prior to coming onto the Transfer Station property. The Flow of traffic and the day would go better for all involved if this request could be observed.
- F. Gary would like to see the guys get their building alternative figured out before winter. The process needs to get started soon as winter will be upon us soon.
- 3.8 Other Town Committees – None brought to the attention of the Select Board.

4.0 Scheduled Business

4.1 Action regarding clean-up of 136 Whippoorwill Rd. – J. Phillips (Code Officer report) – see above.

4.2 Review estimates received for Town Office structural repairs.

Kelly has one proposal (not a bid) in hand to date. There has been plenty of time given as well as multiple attempts to advertise trying to get contractors attention for bidding. Due diligence has been completed; and the repairs need to get started soon as winter is closing in. Kelly has spoken with VG Home Improvement, and he feels confident the they have the knowledge and experience to complete the project. The Select Board spent more time discussing options of how to fix the issues at hand. There was discussion as to whether the conference room needs to have a separate ingress and egress (this will be investigated).

Discussion concluded with Scott making a motion to authorize Kelly and Gary to finalize a plan with the contractor and to move forward without bringing information back to the Select Board again, Rick 2nd, vote 3-0.

4.3 Set workshop date – Calderwood Engineering – bridge replacement options

Discussion was had about bridge design, there were a couple clarifications about the design including width and comparison to other bridges in town. The workshop will be held August 22, 2023, at 7:30 am. Rayna suggested this be a Zoom meeting so all parties can ask questions if desired. The Board agreed.

4.4 Update on road construction costs and road bond balance

Kelly handed out a rough draft for the room to look at. It looks like at this point the work that has been done is either on budget or slightly under budget to date and it seems that the Road Commissioner and Road Advisory Committee have done a good job with their projections and work. There were a couple of side notes made at this time, Dennis Hill Road will be destructed then reconstructed next year. Also, Larry noted the work that is being done on Huntington Hill Road has caught the attention of one of the construction magazines. There will be an article published, Larry will be getting a copy to share with the interested parties.

5.0 Unscheduled Business

5.1 None at this time

6.0 Appointments/Resignations

6.1 None at this time

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant #4 \$281,472.11

Scott motioned to approve Town Warrant #4 \$281,472.11, Rick 2nd, vote 3-0.

7.2 RSU4 Warrant #5 \$370,046.88

Scott motioned to approve RSU4 Warrant #5 \$370,046.88, Rick 2nd, vote 3-0.

7.3 Town Payroll #2 \$34,627.04

Scott motioned to approve Town Payroll #2 \$34,627.04, Rick 2nd, vote 3-0.

7.4 Town Payroll #3 \$46,319.73

Rick motioned to approve Town Payroll #3 \$46,319.73, Scott 2nd, vote 3-0.

8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/ Communication

8.1 Scott wanted to discuss the guardrails on Buker Road, he feels they are unnecessary and possibly are a safety hazard with how narrow it makes the road. Discussion was had with no resolution, as it was also pointed out that without guardrails accidents would end up in the water.

8.2 Rayna questioned if a letter was sent to DOT about the signage. Kelly stated it it hadn't made it to the top of his long-to-do list yet.

8.3 Gary Quintell has a land dispute that he was looking to discuss and asked the Board to consider his appeal to rescind a driveway entrance permit. He also asked whether the Litchfield Road Ordinance is being revised. Kelly stated that the Ordinance is being considered for revision and presentation at next year's Town Meeting primarily due to Mr. Quintal's case. Gary stated that the Board had consulted legal counsel and that the ordinance provided no option for an appeal. The only recourse in this situation would be for Mr. Quintal to take the matter to the County Superior Court. Discussion was had with no resolution for Mr. Quintal as the Select Board's hands are tied. However, the Select Board is aware of the concern and has started the process of amending or re-writing the ordinance to avoid such issues in the future.

9.0 Future Agenda Item

9.1 R02-017, 2783 Hallowell Road

9.2 Update from RSU4 withdrawal committee

10.0 Adjournment 8:26 pm

Respectfully submitted by Angela Parker