

Town of Litchfield
Select Board
February 24, 2020
Meeting Minutes

1.0 Convened at 6:30 PM; Pledge to Flag; Selectmen: Gary Parker, Chairman, Rayna Leibowitz, Mark Russell; **Staff:** Trudy Lamoreau, Town Manager; Stan Labbe, Fire Chief, Tina Gowell, Rescue Chief; Steve Ochamanski, CEO; Larry Nadeau, Road Comm.; Bryan Lamoreau, Transfer Station Manager; Pat Soboleski, Senior Director; Road Advisory Committee Members: Toby Jutras, Chm., Tamas Szepsy; John Upham, FOAA Officer; Budget Comm Members: Elton Wade, Rodney Allen, Tom Wood; Broadband Comm Members Larry & Joline Bell; Town Office Staff: Kelly Weissenfels and Diane Larrabee **and Guests Present** per the sign-in sheet.

2.0 Minutes of February 10, 2020 Meeting submitted for final approval. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mark Russell, seconded by Gary Parker and voted 3 - 0.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence:

3.1 Town Manager: A. Trudy Lamoreau, Town Manager, provided a letter from Tom Wood on behalf of the Budget Committee, regarding the RSU#4 Budget relating to \$3.7 Million capital improvements and maintenance commitments which are expected to increase Litchfield's apportioned costs an additional \$100K to \$125K a year for 17 years. (see also 3.8 Budget Comm below)

B. Thirty Two foreclosure notices were sent out this week. Many are expected to be paid soon and/or repurchase agreements set up.

C. Several people have been in to complain about the Transfer Station not allowing citizens to leave items because they didn't have the new stickers. To date, 670 new stickers have been distributed.

D. Fuel assistance requests are up, but the Fuel Fund has covered them.

3.2 Code Enforcement Officer/Plumbing Inspector - A. Steve Ochmanski, CEO/LPI, advised he has received 15 applications in the past two weeks.

B. On Thursday, the Planning Board met and decided to hold a Public Hearing regarding proposed changes to the Land Use and Shoreland Zone Ordinances, including the sale of recreational vehicles. This will be held on March 5 at 6:30 PM.

C. The Planning Board provided a statement regarding their determination that the proposed Mass Gathering Ordinance would require changing both the Land Use Ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan. This will be reviewed by the Mass Gathering Comm.

3.3 Road Commissioner - A. Larry Nadeau, Road Comm. advised there has been a lot of rain with snowstorms this year.

B. He reminded folks when they meet a plow to slow down and move over. Plow trucks need extra room.

C. Frost heaves are showing up in all the old familiar places. Folks need to slow down before hitting them.

D. The garage got a cleaning inside when the weather was nice and the doors could be opened.

E. Larry is reviewing information regarding the proposed truck purchase.

F. The Chairman requested a summary of costs of repairs to the Freightliner truck.

G. Electricity is connected to the outside of the building on Oak Hill for the PW radio system

3.4 Fire & Rescue - A. Chief Labbe advised they have responded to several vehicle accidents lately.

B. Repairs to two vehicles recently came in over \$10,000.

C. Rescue has been very busy. Daytime (weekday) response is more of a problem as most responders work out of town weekdays.

D. Gardiner Fire Dept. got their two new ambulances. Both are 4 wheel drive. They are hoping to add additional personnel.

E. Tina Gowell requested a letter of appointment to the Ambulance Advisory Committee representing Litchfield. A motion to authorize the Town Manager to provide the letter was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Mark Russell and voted 3 - 0.

3.5 Emergency Management - No report

3.6 Assessing Agent - Assessing agents will be in on Wednesday this week. They have completed the spring work identified to date. The maps are not back from the Lewiston Technical School yet. We usually get them back in late April, according to the CEO.

3.7 Transfer Station - A. Bryan Lamoreau, the Transfer Station Manager advised they have been busy.

B. Both cardboard containers have a hole on the roof allowing water to drip in. They will need to be plugged when weather conditions allow.

C. The snow blower died.

3.8 Other Town Committees: A. Road Advisory Committee: Toby Jutras, Chairman, provided spreadsheets showing a revision to \$600,000 a year to do the construction projects within 7 years. Funding options are being researched for \$2.8 M including a conventional loan, a construction loan or line of credit. Discussion with Kennebec Savings Bank disclosed there might be a possibility of having a 2 year period of paying interest only, but going longer was doubtful. More information is expected.

B. Broadband Committee: Larry Bell, Chairman, provided a copy of the article going into the March Sodalite. A new vendor, TK Networks, has gone online and is offering service to folks who have a line of sight to the WCBB TV Tower on Oak Hill at this time. More options may be offered if more towers can be accessed. A Broadband Vendor Night is being planned for Tuesday, March 24 at 6:30 at the Senior Center. KVCOG recommends collaborating with area communities. Larry advised both Spectrum and Consolidated Communications have discounted service plans for qualifying low income subscribers.

C. Budget Committee: Tom Wood provided additional information regarding the planned RSU#4 capital improvements and maintenance projects. The Oak Hill High School will be connected to Sabattus Water District at a cost of \$650,000 and windows are being replaced at the Sabattus Middle School. Funding for this will be repaid over a 17 year period with refinancing scheduled a few years down the road expecting a lower interest rate. This has all been set up through a performance contract for a fixed amount that is non-negotiable and has already been signed, end of discussion.

D. Mass Gathering Committee: Gary Parker, Chairman, advised he has received an email from KVCOG regarding their review of the draft Ordinance. He will review the comments, including referenced information, before calling a meeting of the Committee.

4.0 Agenda Adjustments

4.1 Cemetery Signs

5.0 Scheduled Business

5.1 Mary Jo Mason Update - Charles Parsons, Mary Jo Mason and their attorney, Simon Beirne, attended the meeting to request an extension of time for the Stipulated Judgement signed in mid-December. That document gave them until Dec. 31, 2019, to obtain financial coverage for repairs or replacement of the structure or vacate within 60 days, which would be March 3rd. Mr. Beirne advised they have been working to find a loan source. They submitted an application to the USDA Rural Development Loan Program. It was not complete and additional information is needed, and it may or

may not yet be provided. They are requesting an extension to April 30 for the USDA application to be decided, with a 60 day period to vacate (June 30). If the loan is approved, they would have repairs completed or the structure replaced by August 31 or would vacate the house by Sept. 30. Mr Beirne was asked to submit the proposal to the Town's attorney, and the Board will take information from our attorney. The Chairman advised the March 3 date is a firm date. It was noted that none of the requirements of the Stipulated Judgement have been met. The November 30 deadline for submitting a detailed repair or replacement plan that met MUBEC requirements was not met. The December 31 deadline for having verifiable funding to repair or replace the structure was not met. Additionally, the Local Plumbing Inspector advised he received a complaint regarding a suspected malfunctioning septic system. He completed 3 visits to the site and smelled sewage on two of them. He also observed soapsuds foam at the outlet of the culvert draining the area in front to this house.

5.2 Doug Caton Consent Agreement Update - A Certified Letter was received from Mr Caton and copies provided to the Board. - The Code Enforcement Officer is expecting a hard date to go back to court. Doug does not allow him access for inspection.

5.3 Cobbossee Yacht Club Association - Organization Update/Financial Information - Tamara Whitmore brought information regarding the Yacht Club and Friends of Cobbossee Watershed regarding the proposed increase in the courtesy boat inspections this summer and increased efforts to control invasive water plants. An increase in the requested budget amount is expected.

5.4 Kent Ackley, Representative to the Legislature for Litchfield, Monmouth and Wales: advised 1) There has been action on a bill regarding a death benefit for first responders who die in the line of duty. It was reported out of committee with a unanimous ought to pass. The Governor supports it and has promised to sign it if passed by the Legislature.

2) Financial good news: there is an expected increase in Revenue Sharing to towns with an increase of more than \$74,000 for Litchfield over last year.

3) CMP Corridor: Clearing has started along the existing power line right of way in anticipation of approval. The proposed route includes some public reserve lands so that might help block it. Petitions containing 75,000 signatures were submitted. Waiting for at least the required 63,000 to be validated. There is a loophole in the referendum question. Kent has put in a bill to close that loophole.

Questions - Who proposed a 17 cent increase in the gas tax? Kent advised there are 13 states in the east and northeast supporting it.

Would Kent submit a bill to require MTA to pay the ambulance costs for response on the turnpike if the patient doesn't pay? Gardiner Ambulance bills Litchfield for calls not paid if they occur in Litchfield, regardless of the origin of the traveler. Litchfield tax-payers should not have to pay those fees. It apparently happens all the length of the Turnpike.

5.5 Budget Review - General Government, Employee Benefits, Town Office Operations, Fire & Rescue, Transfer Station and Seniors were reviewed and discussed.

6.0 Unscheduled Business

6.1 Cemetery Signs - Rayna Leibowitz provided a list of cemeteries with and without trust funds available which should have signs made. Additional research is needed for two trust funds that do not have sufficient information in their name to recognize the purpose of them. She is reviewing old Town Reports to try to obtain more information.

8.0 Appointments and Resignations

8.1 The Health Officer, Annette Albis, has resigned as she has moved out of town. Her resignation was accepted with thanks on a motion made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Mark Russell and voted 3 - 0.

9.0 Warrants

9.1 Town Voucher #17 for \$37,226.21 A motion to approve was made by Mark Russell, seconded by Rayna Leibowitz and voted 3 - 0

9.2 Town Payroll #17 for \$20,324.20 A motion to approve was made by Mark Russell, seconded by Rayna Leibowitz and voted 3 - 0

11.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/Communication

11.1 Leon Gordon, Lunts Hill Road, attended to advise the Board that the road is in very poor condition and the plow driver goes so fast he is not doing an adequate job. Mr Gordon was thanked for attending and this information will be discussed with the Road Commissioner.

12.0 Future Agenda Item

12.1 Feedback on Selectman's Handbook

12.2 Town Office Renovation Update

12.3 Cemetery Signs

12.4 Update regarding the new dispatching protocols

12.5 Cost of repairs to the Freightliner truck

13.0 Adjournment at 9:40 PM

Respectfully Submitted By

Rayna Leibowitz