

Town of Litchfield
Select Board
March 23, 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; Bryan Lamoreau, Transfer Station Manager; Road Advisory Committee Member: Toby Jutras, Chm.; Lindsay Nelsen, Conservation Comm.; John Upham, FOAA Officer; Kelly Weissenfels, Town Office Staff **and Guests Present** per the sign-in sheet.

The Chairman, Gary Parker announced the meeting will be telecommunicated to the public which allows video and audio participation if listeners have camera capability through a telecast provider and the instructions are posted on the Town's website. The process allows participation of the viewers so anyone who wants to speak should raise their hand to be recognized. Voting must be done by roll call so they will be shown as initials and vote in these minutes.

2.0 Minutes of March 9, 2020 Meeting submitted for final approval. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mark Russell, seconded by Gary Parker and voted: RL Yes, MR, Yes, GP Yes.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence:

3.1 Town Manager: A. The County Budget amount has been received and reflects a 10% increase for each town. The County Administrator explained part of the increase is because the Maine State Police would no longer be sharing patrol duties to the rural towns so the Sheriff's Office will need to increase their capability.

B. The Cobbossee Watershed amount reflects a 5% increase.

C. The Town Office has received numerous calls from residents of other towns who want to register their vehicles here. They have been turned away as it is not possible.

D. Tax maps - The closing of schools due to the coronavirus means our tax maps will not likely get done. A vendor from the Bangor area has been identified by the Assessing Agent who has a good reputation for updating tax maps for other towns. A preliminary estimate was about \$1500. This vendor will be invited to attend a meeting so more information can be obtained. Gary and Mark want to participate in it.

E. The foreclosure notices have generated a lot of traffic and many have paid the past due amounts

F. The Town Manager has not received a call back from the auditor regarding Mark's question about the grant for the Conservation Comm.

3.2 Code Enforcement Officer/Plumbing Inspector - Absent. Trudy advised the Mason and Caton cases are on hold. Applications are coming in for buildings, septic and plumbing permit services.

3.3 Road Commissioner - Absent to prepare for plowing/sanding operations with 5 - 10 inches of snow expected later tonight.

3.4 Fire & Rescue -Trudy advised the Fire Chief reported to her that rescue calls have gone down since Covid-19 has gotten into Maine. The FD responded to a woods fire Saturday. FD meetings are suspended.

3.5 Emergency Management -The Director is in contact with Trudy and Stan every morning. He has a number for state and county EMA information and resources for additional Personal Protective Equipment for responders if needed.

The Oak Hill Radio is not operational yet. Waiting for FCC approval.

3.6 Assessing Agent - Ellery and Rob will be here Friday.

3.7 Transfer Station - A. Bryan reported the last week has been interesting. There have been 965 stickers issued. 36 of them were issued at the Transfer Station last weekend. 2 folks from Pittston were

turned away. The roll-offs were not picked up last week because of sickness. The two bulky, two cardboard and plastics cans were all still full when they opened on Friday. He expects to have them gone this week.

Bryan will remind folks through the Sodalite that if its during or immediately after a storm, expect the Transfer Station to be closed as the Public Works crew need to take care of the roads first and the Transfer Station may not be plowed yet.

There was discussion about disposal options for recyclables and Bryan will do some research and report back.

3.8 Other Town Committees: Road Advisory Comm.: Toby Jutras advised the RAC would be open to further discussion about the proposed Road Improvements budget given the pandemic situation in an effort to reduce the tax burden.

4.0 Agenda Adjustments

- 4.1 Poverty Abatement for Real Estate Taxes
- 4.2 Repurchase Agreement
- 4.3 Repurchase Agreement
- 4.4 Conservation Commission Funding

5.0 Scheduled Business

5.1 Action on funding Broadband Grant writer – Chairman Larry Bell of the Broadband Committee participated by video-conference. Discussion was held regarding the experience of the grant-writer who submitted the proposal. He advised that several near-by towns (Richmond and West Gardiner were identified) are being approached to launch a united effort in hopes of leveraging a higher priority and lower costs for all.

Research was done regarding the budgeted amount for a grant amount from the June 2017 budget for FY 2017-2018 where \$5,000 was approved. There had been \$2,533 expended from that amount leaving \$2,467. A motion was made to approve the expenditure of up to \$3,000 for this grant-writing contract using as much of this balance as possible by Mark Russell, seconded by Rayna Leibowitz and voted RL Yes, MR yes and GP Yes.

5.2 Discussion Video Telecommunications regarding Selectmen's Meeting – The Chairman advised the ability to use telecommunications for this and future meetings is because the Governor has authorized it for the duration of the Covid – 19 pandemic to allow municipal governments to function. It would not be allowable otherwise. He expressed appreciation to Toby Jutras for his assistance in enabling the process by providing technical assistance. The Town Manager was asked to contact various department heads to determine if they had any problems accessing the meeting electronically. Feedback from the public is also invited.

5.3 Proposed Road Posting Ordinance Public Hearing (7:00 PM) A motion was made to enter a Public Hearing regarding the proposed Road Posting Ordinance at 7:00 PM by Mark Russell, seconded by Rayna Leibowitz and voted RL Yes, MR Yes and GP Yes. The Chairman explained the proposed Road Posting Ordinance and requested public comment, either in support or opposed to the proposal. One comment in support of the Ordinance was made. Written and email comments had been invited. The Town of Litchfield Facebook account had been reactivated following the previous meeting on March 9, and contained information about the proposed Public Hearing, and some 470 people had logged onto it since that date. The Chairman asked for comments from those attending through the telecommunications link. There were none. The Chairman closed the Public Hearing at 7:05 PM.

5.4 Vote on Proposed Road Posting Ordinance – Discussion was held regarding some of the wording of the Proposed Road Posting Ordinance. It was noted that neither the Road Commissioner nor the Select Board has any enforcement authority or responsibility. The Road Advisory Committee did not provide an opinion on this as the scheduled meeting of the Committee had to be canceled due to a storm, but the Chairman stated that he feels posting the roads would extend the condition of roads but understands

enforcement would not be likely. He does not know the economic impact of businesses in town.

The issuance of Permits identified in Section 4 was amended to require the Chairman of the Selectboard to be informed of the permit(s) issued. A motion to approve the proposed Town of Litchfield Ordinance Restricting Vehicle Weight on Posted Roads as amended was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Gary Parker and voted RL Yes, MR Yes and GP Yes.

5.5 Budget Review – Emergency Services Dispatching has increased by \$1,064 to \$32,770. Library increased by \$1,571 to \$24,038. The Town Manager was asked to request any available usage information by Litchfield card-holders. There was discussion about Trio back up processes, including grant money for future projects not yet identified and the need for information (from the Auditor) about how Special Projects funds not completely expended can be reassigned. The cost of repairs to the Freightliner truck has not been provided as requested. Kelly thought he could compile the figures. The Public Works and Garage accounts are the last big ones to review. They will wait for the Road Commissioner to be present for the review.

6.0 Unscheduled Business

6.1 Poverty Abatement for Real Estate Taxes – Copies of Case #2020-1 were provided to the Board for review for a later meeting.

6.2 Repurchase Agreement – Map R11, Lot 15A, Caron Foren for \$4,959.96 payable as \$206.64 a month for 24 months. A motion to approve the Repurchase Agreement was made by Mark Russell, seconded by Rayna Leibowitz and voted RL Yes, MR Yes and GP Yes.

6.3 Repurchase Agreement – Map R3, Lot 103B, Michael Cunningham for \$4,591.98 with a \$400 down payment and \$192.00 per month for 24 months. A motion to approve the Repurchase Agreement was made by Mark Russell, seconded by Rayna Leibowitz and voted RL Yes, MR Yes and GP Yes.

6.4 Conservation Comm Funding – Discussion was held regarding the Commission’s request for funding for a 6 person Conservation Corps Field Team for one week for \$3,950. Lindsay Nelsen, Conservation Comm. Chairwoman, advised the primary effort of this team would be to work on control of invasive plants on town-owned property, especially the Community Park and Smithfield Plantation, as well as making benches and/or picnic tables for these facilities. Requesting these services is not expected in future years unless specific tasks for them to do can be developed. The team will be camping at the Litchfield Fairgrounds. There will be no liability for the town as the team has its own insurance.

Mr. Nelsen advised there are some patches of Japanese Knotweed identified and she intends to use the services of the Turf Doctor to mitigate it again this year and will reach out to private property owners to encourage their participation in the control efforts on their property as well. Prior costs for this had been funded through the Road Improvement Fund and she is hoping for that source to continue to be available for it. She was thanked for her efforts to control the invasive pants. There was also some discussion about the control of multiflora rose infestations and she recommended dabbing Round-Up on cut stems in the late summer period.

8.0 Appointments and Resignations

8.1 Dori Upham - Local Health Officer – A motion to approve the appointment was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Mark Russell and voted RL Yes, MR Yes and GP Yes. It was noted she should research her role and responsibility in relation to the current Covid – 19 situation.

9.0 Warrants

9.1 Town Voucher #19 for \$45,225.91 A motion to approve was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Mark Russell and voted RL Yes, MR Yes and GP Yes.

9.2 Town Payroll #19 for \$21,652.52 A motion to approve was made by Mark Russell, seconded by Rayna Leibowitz and voted RL Yes, MR Yes and GP Yes.

11.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/Communication

11.1 Tom Wood thanked the Select Board for the electronic meeting that enabled him to participate when he would not have been able to attend in person.

11.2 A meeting was set for the Select Board to hold executive sessions for discussion of the Town Manager's contract and a performance evaluation for the Road Commissioner for April 2 at 1:00 PM (Note: This date was changed to April 9 when the Chairman felt he should self-quarantine for 2 weeks).

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 New Dispatching Protocols

13.0 Adjournment at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted By

Rayna Leibowitz