

**Town of Litchfield
Select Board Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2026**

1.0 Convenes 6:30 PM; Pledge to Flag; Selectmen and Guests present

Selectmen: Gary Parker (absent/Zoom), Chairman; Clarence Gowell III (identified as Rick in these minutes); Tom Pelletier.

Staff: Kelly Weissenfels, Town Manager; Michael Sherman, Fire Chief; Corey Hanson, Public Works Director; John Upham, Transfer Station Manager; Tom Wood, Chm. Budget Comm.; Steve Ochmanski, Code Enforcement Officer; and others per the sign in sheet (attached).

2.0 Minutes of Dec 12th, 2025

Postponed due to not enough members who were present at December 12, 2025, meeting, present at this meeting, to vote on minutes.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence

3.1 Town Manager

A. Auction went well with a total amount of \$5,669.00 collected. Several old plows blades and wings were sold as well as the old above ground fuel tanks from the fuel depot.

B. Academy Building's lighting installation is in progress and reportedly going well and looking good.

C. Kelly received word that the Buker bridge will be updated this summer with a significant repair or replacement. Kelly was unsure which, at the time of this report. Buker bridge is a state bridge so dates, updates, etc. will be set and notified on their schedule. Kelly historically has had at least a month's heads up when they have done significant work around town that has included road closures.

D. KVKOG will be sponsoring an abandoned and discontinued roads discussion/meeting on January 22, 2026. Kelly said this will be a recorded discussion and will be available online at a later date.

E. The Litchfield town audit is progressing, and Kelly is hopeful that they will have a draft by the end of January.

F. There has been a KUDOS letter directed to Fire/EMS department of Litchfield. There was a gentleman passing through town who reported and assisted with a vehicle accident. Citing years of experience working with EMS teams, he sent a letter to the Town Manager noting that the two Litchfield responders who arrived at the accident were among the best he's seen.

3.2 Code Officer/Plumbing Inspector

A. Steve handed his two-page report to the members. Rick asked about a dock that was on the list. Steve gave a brief review of how and what can be done with new dock installations.

B. Steve updated the Select Board that the Planning Board had held the public hearing for the first large solar array being proposed for the town of Litchfield. The review for the permit will be January 22, 2026, at 6:30 pm. The public hearing was roughly two hours long with questions asked in information gathered.

3.3 Transfer Station

A. The bulky bin was emptied this week, along with the tin and a cardboard bin.

B. The Transfer Station issued 6 new stickers for a new total of 3181.

C. There was a need for sanding on Saturday, John thanked Corey and the crew for their continued support.

3.4 Public Works

A. Corey updated the Select Board on staffing. One gentleman was given the option and decided to leave, the next day a new hire was brought on board and has been, thus far, working out excellently.

B. All equipment is currently in working order. There is an upcoming topic that needs to be addressed, but otherwise things are going well for public works.

C. Corey said the plow routes that have been recently redivided are working out well with the three-man crew. They were able to keep up during the last large snowstorm that hit the area. The new average time for the routes is an hour and a half, the team is generally all back within fifteen minutes of each other. The one-ton driver does the intersections, fire station parking lot, town office parking lot, etc. Corey is happy with how it's been working out. Tom P. asked if the crew had been seeing much in the way of folks plowing their driveways into the road. Corey commented that it happens on every single road in town. People plowing their driveways into the road, across the roads, leaving the banking at the end of the driveway extended into the road. He said it generally happens after they have plowed and he isn't going to send a truck back out to clean up driveways. Kelly said the state law says that you can push snow across the road but not leave it there. Safety is the major question and concern. Tom P. would like to see at least a reminder sent out to residents.

D. Corey asked to revisit the mailbox policy that is supposed to be a work in progress. This was brought up during multiple meetings starting in January of 2025 continuing through February 2025 when a resident's mailbox was replaced by the town. Corey would like to see a policy or ordinance and suggested adopting the Maine DOT mailbox policy, attached to these minutes.

****Kelly asked if 6.2 could be taken out of order at this time. ****

3.5 Fire & Rescue

A. Chief Sherman said there was a crash on Rt.197 that sheared the head clean off the brand-new hydrant they installed this summer. This means the town is down one hydrant and this will be repaired during warmer weather. The department has all the relevant information pertaining to the incident so that the Town of Litchfield will not be accruing any cost for repairs.

B. The last quarter of 2025 saw an increase in calls responded to by the department that was nearly double what it has been historically.

C. Chief Sherman wanted to take a minute to remind people to maintain fire safety. Stressing making sure your alarms have fresh batteries. Tom P. would like to see the Fire Department put together some short videos as reminders for residents.

3.6 Emergency Management

A. Kennebec County Office of Emergency Management is working on a new countywide risk assessment. This is a major undertaking of the assessment that is already in place and will be put in place at the local levels. Chief Sherman said they are doing a great job.

B. Water is still in short supply; conservation is critical. MEMA's website has a large display and links to follow with all the information you need to gain information as well as resources.

3.7 Assessing Agent

The Assessing Agent was in office this past Thursday and has left an abatement and two supplementals for review and vote. Kelly doesn't have his next scheduled date available at the time of this meeting.

3.8 Other Town Committees

A. The Budget Committee has finished its report regarding the coordination of the town's valuation with the state valuation. Tom presented the committee's three-page report with the recommendation that Litchfield keep up with the valuations. Also to start and maintain a reserve account so the cost for the re-valuation isn't such a shock at the end of four years. Tom gave a brief overview of the report. There is a possibility that the town can help some of the residents (elderly, disabled) within the town's oversight.

4.0 Scheduled Business

4.1 New road name – 258 Lunts Hill Road to Fawn Ridge Lane

There was a motion made by Rick for 258 Lunts Hill Road to be now named Fawn Ridge Lane. This was seconded by Tom P., vote 2-0 (1 absent).

4.2 Transfer Station permit application prep cost estimate

Kelly reminded everyone of the happenings as of late. When the Town Dump changed to a transfer station it was done as a permit by rule, which does not now allow for any changes without reapplying. This incurs a \$2,000.00 application fee. Olver Associates has provided a proposal of \$14,600.00 to provide detailed drawings and a hydro cad storm water runoff plan. Kelly said that there are funds available from the allocation for building the shed/tractor storage and additional storage. As Rick stated there isn't much choice in whether this process gets done as the process has been started. Per Rayna's suggestion Kelly will request quotes be looking for other engineering companies to acquire quotes from.

4.3 Public Works 1-ton truck repair estimate vs. new purchase

There was a discussion during the last meeting about the 1-ton truck and what's needed to get that repaired so that it will pass inspection, and an estimate was needed before any more discussion and or decisions. Kelly said the estimate has come in from Joe Champagne and sits at just over \$11,000.00. And now there seems to be an additional issue with the rear differential. So now the task is to compare the cost of repairs vs. buying a new truck. Corey said he has been looking at options of new or used. Corey feels that when you buy used you are buying someone else's issues. He is seeing a lot of options currently that with the trade of the 1-ton, a 2025 could be purchased for approximately \$40,000.00 - \$45,000.00. The 1-ton is currently sitting in 4th place to be replaced. Corey reminded everyone that the \$11,000.00 plus just gets the truck an inspection sticker, there are more issues that need to be addressed than what the \$11,000.00 plus covers. Kelly did say there is enough currently in the highway equipment fund to cover the cost of the newer truck with a good trade-in for the currently owned 1-ton. Rick would like more information and Tom P. would like to have a report on how much has been spent on the 1-ton to maintain it yearly. Corey will gather more information and provide that before asking to move forward.

4.4 Jim Hyde ball field sign reimbursement – contingency

The materials cost added up to \$147.57, as time was donated to get the project done, the \$147.57 is all that will need to be taken from contingency. Kelly said the Contingency Fund account sits at \$30,000.00.

There was a motion made by Rick to reimburse the cost of materials for the Jim Hyde ball field sign, in the amount of \$147.57 from contingency. This was seconded by Tom P., vote 2-0 (1 absent).

Rayna wanted to know why the funds wouldn't be taken from the recreation funds. Kelly noted that since the sign had been requested by the Select Board it wasn't right to make rec committee pay for it.

4.5 Abatement for R01-073, \$183.52 Stephen Lajoie & Theresa Johnson

There was a motion made by Tom P. to abatement for R01-073, in the amount of \$183.52 Stephen Lajoie & Theresa Johnson. This was seconded by Rick, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

4.6 Supplemental tax for R07-042C-1, \$204.20 Lon Cameron & D. Tyler Kidder

There was a motion made by Rick that the supplemental tax for R07-042C-1, in the amount of \$204.20 Lon Cameron & D. Tyler Kidder be approved. This was seconded by Tom P., vote 2-0 (1 absent).

4.7 Supplemental tax for R08-009A, \$1,832.80 Peter & Betty Cameron

There was a motion made by Rick to approve the supplemental tax for R08-009A, in the amount of \$1,832.80 Peter & Betty Cameron. This was seconded by Tom P., vote 2-0 (1 absent).

5.0 Unscheduled Business

5.1 Kelly handed our Select Board guide for consideration and future discussion that Cheryl had found online from another town.

5.2 Tom P. wanted an update regarding the junk yards around town. Kelly stated, this would have been a question for Steve and he (Kelly) is hesitant to answer as he is not 100% sure how things are progressing.

5.3 Tom P. asked for an update regarding the Purgatory Fire Station sign replacement. Chief Sherman said that once the electrician helping with the project is back to town after his vacation the project will get started. He is away for 3 weeks.

5.4 No new news regarding New Mills Dam revitalization project.

5.3 Tom P. asked about the status of water purification verification for the town office and fire department. Kelly said he had been expecting a company name from Gary, but would begin cost research.

5.4 At the end of the meeting Tom P. brought up the item of camp gravel mix specs, etc.. Corey said he did gather some information regarding the mix as was discussed at previous meetings. Corey has been in contact with MDOT and a couple of other municipalities around are getting their mix from Card's Excavation in Bowdoin. Instead of having just crushed rock and dust mixed they are placing a ¾" gravel that packs better and stays more solid. Per Corey this has soil in it and can be watered and therefore stays more solid. He thinks it's same price or cheaper than what the town is getting currently, no price stated.

6.0 Appointments/Resignations

6.1 Sue Weber – Resignation from Recreation Committee

There was a motion made by Rick to accept Sue Weber's resignation from the Recreation Committee. This was seconded by Tom P., vote 2-0 (1 absent)

6.2 Kirsten Whitten – Appointment to Recreation Committee

Kristen Whitten was in attendance of the Rec Committee meeting downstairs of the town office and Kelly had requested she come up around 7pm to join the Select Board meeting so they could see who they were appointing and could ask questions if needed.

There was a motion made by Rick to appoint Kristen Whitten to the Recreation Committee. This was seconded by Tom P., vote 2-0 (1 absent).

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant #12 \$110,113.45

There was a motion made by Rick to pass town warrant #12 in the amount of \$110,113.45.

Tom P. stated that the motion was seconded, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

7.2 Town Warrant #13 \$689,494.85 (of which \$402,366.38 is for RSU4)

There was a motion made by Rick to pass town warrant #13 in the amount of \$689,494.85 (of which \$402,366.38 is for RSU4). Tom P. stated that the motion was seconded, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

7.3 Town Payroll #12 \$33,085.07

There was a motion made by Rick to pass town payroll in the amount of \$33,085.07. Tom P. seconded the motion, vote 2-0 (1 absent).

8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/ Communication

8.1 Rayna had sent a memo to Rick and Kelly that will be forwarded to Tom and Gary. She has started drafting a communication (to whom it may concern, as it might be sent to numerous agencies) regarding the intersection of Rt.197(Richmond Road) and Huntington Hill and Center Roads. Rayna wants the Select Board's opinion of options to be sent to the agencies that will be receiving the Communication. Rayna reviewed the options she has researched. Rick knows something needs to be done but isn't sure what exactly. Tom P. would like to see the four-way stop and the reduction in speed to 35 mph at minimum as well as warning signs for the sign change. Tom W. agrees with Tom P., everyone would like to see some continuity. Rayna will go back to the drawing board and send her letter back out to the Select Board.

9.0 Future Agenda Items

9.1 Progress update regarding: Properties considered junk yards without permits in town.

9.2 Water purification program

9.3 Rt.197 corridor

9.4 Web page upgrades

9.5 Transfer station quotes

10.0 Adjournment at 8:25pm

Respectfully submitted by Angela Parker