

Town of Litchfield
Select Board Meeting Minutes
November 24th, 2025

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

Selectmen: Gary Parker, 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 (absent); Tom Wood, Chm. Budget Comm. (Zoom); Steve Ochmanski, Code Enforcement Officer (absent); and others per the sign in sheet (attached).

2.0 Minutes of Nov 10th, 2025

There was a motion made by Tom to approve the minutes of November 10, 2025. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence

3.1 Town Manager

A. The fuel depot installation is running on schedule to date. The installation should be completed by the end of next week. The location has been moved due to future proofing. The tank has two chambers, and if the town decides to dispense gasoline in addition to diesel the dispenser setback distance at the current location is not far enough from the road. Another conduit will be added for future use. Rick asked if there was also discussion of a canopy in the future. Corey has spoken with the installation company about that for the future and it doesn't make any difference in construction doing a canopy now vs. later.

B. Transfer Station site plan cost estimate should be back from Olver Associates next week.

C. Grant workshop that was held last week provided possible options for the Town to pursue. Kelly said he will be working to move forward with the Community Resiliency Grant. This is a project that will partner with area towns and will possibly provide up to \$175,000.00 to put towards the previously discussed New Mills Dam Repairs. Gary said he hasn't seen any communication that resulted from the workshop held on November 18, 2025, regarding this topic. Kelly will correct that oversight. Rick would like to see the Transfer Station on the future agenda items until this process is completed.

D. Kelly is looking to move forward with an auction of the surplus of plow blades, the old fuel depot tanks, and the old oil shed. He had a meeting with the point of contact from the online auction company previously used. Photos and descriptions were taken with Corey's help.

E. The FY24 financial audit should wrap up next week, followed immediately by the start of the FY25 audit.

F. The Town Office will be closed from 12pm - 2pm on Thursday, December 18, 2025 for a staff Christmas party.

3.2 Code Officer/Plumbing Inspector

A. December 3, 2025, Steve will be out of the office for a septic system workshop.

*** Order adjustment***

The RSU4 Superintendent was in attendance at this meeting, Kelly suggested the order be changed to be cognizant of his time.

Mr. Marco Aliberti updated the Select Board. RSU4 will begin their budgeting process in the coming weeks and will be extending an invite to selectmen and town managers that would like to attend review meetings that will be held the day after school board meetings (generally held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month). He also will be back in January to update in person on the budget progress.

Mr. Aliberti said the school year has had a positive start, he is happy to report that the staff is back in full swing with academics as well as extracurricular activities. Libby Tozier hosted a Literacy Night; parents enjoyed a presentation on the importance of reading and writing, and the children played literacy games with their teachers. Carrie Ricker School hosted a math night where families had the opportunity to participate in several math activities.

Oak Hill High School has had a few assemblies focusing on school-wide goals in the areas of academics and behavior where students participate in games against their teachers and other staff members. The boys' soccer team made it to the semi-finals this season, while football made it to the second round of playoffs. Students from Oak Hill High School also were in attendance of the Litchfield Fair to assist with the younger students during Farm Day. Mr. Aliberti commended Chief Sherman, thanking him for his work and instruction on fire prevention.

Rick asked if there was an ongoing list of maintenance needs for all the schools. Mr. Aliberti said each of the schools have five-year improvement plans. Libby Tozier has \$150,000.00 earmarked for updates and a window replacement project. There has also been a grant application submitted to the state for an SRRF (School Revolving Renovation Fund) grant. This is a split portion (state pays half and taxpayers pay half over a ten-year time frame).

Gary asked if anyone has seen a difference in the traffic pattern/speeds going through the school zone(s). Mr. Aliberti believes that there has been a change, there has been a police presence that has also helped. Gary also recommended that someone inform the school bus drivers that they need to slow down. He is aware they have a schedule, but they need to slow down, which he said has been mentioned more than once to the school's managing team. Members of the audience agreed. Rick informed Mr. Aliberti of the issues the Board is attempting to address on Rt. 197 regarding speed and accidents. Mr. Aliberti said he would be happy to give testimony or write a letter,

whatever might help, regarding what he and his staff have experienced in the area as well. Rick will leave that to the Town Manager to acquire one if/when needed.

Chief Sherman also thanked Mr. Aliberti and the Facilities Director for their continued involvement and cooperation in the Safety Committee.

3.3 Transfer Station

Kelly said the Transfer Station has been doing well, both bulky containers, the paper and the plastic containers were also emptied. All has been status quo since last update. Tom gave praise to the team, saying the grounds at the Transfer Station look nice.

3.4 Public Works

A. Corey said all of the trucks the team has are operational, T25 is not back yet. Corey got a phone call from O'Connor today, they have located one cooler [EGR cooler] in the entire country. The major issue is they need to get ahead of potentially 150 other dealerships looking for it. It won't be in for 3-4 weeks, best case scenario. O'Connor is also looking into getting an aftermarket cooler and seeing if they can install it under warranty. Rick suggested making sure they run a test on the oil to be sure no cross-contamination has happened once the part gets replaced. Corey said if the truck is needed back in service quickly, they could possibly get the aftermarket part and put it in themselves, but that's going to cost \$2,000.00 for the part and the warranty would then be voided.

B. There has been another full-time seasonal driver hired for the plowing season. He comes to Litchfield with four years of plowing experience as well as a number of years of fleet maintenance experience.

C. Corey and the team continue to coordinate with Simard and Sons on the fuel depot install, as well as cleaning around the yard continuing to make sure everything stays tidy for winter and snow removal.

D. Corey and the team have been out already a couple of times this season during the middle of the night to sand the roads.

3.5 Fire & Rescue

A. Chief Sherman said the crew has been busy as of late. They have gotten called out to Augusta recently for a structure fire and today there was a structure fire in Litchfield. There were multiple towns involved in fighting that fire, Sabattus, Wales, Manchester, Richmond and Gardiner. Chief Sherman thanked all the towns for their help.

B. All Equipment is up and working, training is going well. The Fire Department has CPR refresher training tomorrow, and yesterday they had a fire training session at Central Station. Since fire danger has finally dropped to normal levels they were able to burn the large brush pile they have been stacking since May for just this purpose.

C. Chief Sherman said there is another Junior that has officially joined the department. Also, there is another young (19-year-old) member of the community that is being brought along as well. He is hopeful they will continue.

D. Rick gave Chief Sherman an update regarding the drinking water at the fire station and surrounding area. There is a possibility of yet another grant that could help to update and/or get new filtration systems. Chief Sherman asked if there was a recent test done. Per Kelly it was a few years ago.

3.6 Emergency Management

Nothing new to report

3.7 Assessing Agent

December 11, 2025, is the next time RJD will be present at the Town Office for questions from residents.

3.8 Other Town Committees

A. On behalf of Smithfield Plantation. Elton Wade reported there was activity last Thursday at Smithfield Plantation. Timber is being harvested and third grade students were hosted to see how the process works, including milling logs into lumber. Everyone seemed to have a good time, and the event was well attended.

B. Elton also mentioned that the Academy Building lighting project and committee are currently waiting for the supplier for further details. Once they have the items needed the project will continue to be completed. Kelly will contact the company and find out the status of the parts.

C. Tom Wood said the Budget Committee met last week and voted on a recommendation and report that will come out final by the end of the month. This report was requested during a mid-to-late summer select board meeting. This is the report regarding keeping pace with the state/town evaluation, the why vs. why not to do the evaluation, etc..

Also, Tom said there was an invitation issued to the representative of the New Mills Dam Committee. They came to the Litchfield Budget Committee's meeting and gave a very helpful explanation of the history as well as the plan moving forward. Tom said they have been told that New Mills Dam has a plan that, for lack of another phrase, can be compared to Litchfield's Capital Improvement Plan. This will be sent out and also an invitation to attend a on of the Litchfield Budget Committee's monthly meetings.

4.0 Scheduled Business

4.1 PW 1-ton (Ram 5500) maintenance vs. replacement

Kelly said the 1-ton is not on the replacement schedule for 3 more years. The transmission has just recently been replaced, however there are a number of other maintenance issues noted that have prompted the need for a discussion about possibly moving up the timeline of replacement. Kelly said there is enough money in the Public Works Equipment Fund to pursue another truck.

Corey reminded the Selectmen of the history, there was a computer issue last year that had the truck out of commission for months. Corey was able to find an aftermarket alternator that bypasses the computer. However, the truck's dash is still lit up with all the

check engine lights and codes. The battery also needs to be changed out frequently, the oil pan is now completely rusted through, which requires ½ the motor to come out for replacement of the oil pan. Corey is, however, happy with the new plow and sander attachments on the truck. The repairs reportedly would take a couple of weeks if done in-house. Rick would like to see a line-item explanation of all the things wrong with the truck as well as the cost of parts and labor to repair the truck. Gary asked if they wanted a new 1-ton or a used one. Cory said they won't be picky as long as it's better than what they are working with currently. Corey did say it needs to be 550 5500 or bigger to handle the plow and sander that is on the current truck. Numbers will be gathered, and this will be re-addressed once a repair vs. purchase comparison matrix is created.

4.2 Gustin Road closure for winter maintenance

Kelly said there was a question regarding Gustin Road winter maintenance road closure brought to him by a resident. Kelly looked up the warrant article that was passed at the 2019 town meeting and found it expired after five years (last winter, due to the legal requirement to include a time limit). So Gustin Road is now reopened, but safety concerns remain. However, Corey suggested that there may be ways to reduce the danger. According to Corey the road is now wider than it used to be due to repairs from the last washout. Also, if snow banking is formed during plowing on the edge of the road, instead of pushing it over the side of the ravine, this should reduce the chance of cars going over the edge. Rick asked if leaving an embankment would cause a water flow issue when melting or rainstorms occur. Cory said at this point the water flow is mainly directed to the side of the road opposite the ravine.

Ms. Perkins from Wenzell Road was in attendance to support the road remaining open. The end result: the road is going to stay open for the winter and a determination made in the spring if it can be maintained safely, or if a new closure order should be pursued.

4.3 Approval review of town personnel policy

The Policy was handed out to the selectmen for review of the changes that were discussed at the last meeting.

Changes:

Employee Benefits

Sick and vacation time has been replaced with a paid time off (PTO) plan. Full-time, Part-time, and limited part-time employees are all entitled to paid time off earned by years of service, and PTO will be front loaded at the anniversary of the date of hire. One week must be used each year, and one week may added to carry over each year.

Compensatory Time

Must be used within the year it was accrued, will not be carried over, and will not be paid out at termination of employment.

Insurance allowance

The stipend for health insurance has been replaced with straight coverage. The town will cover single plan health, dental and vision for full time employees at 100%, and

part-time employees at 50%. Full time employees that carry their own insurance will qualify for a stipend of 50% of the cost of a single health insurance plan and 25% for part time employees. They must provide proof that they have their own insurance. This change has been budgeted for this fiscal year and will be retroactive to July 1, 2025. There was a motion made by Tom P. to approve the latest version of the Personnel Policy on November 24, 2025, with a retroactive start date of July 1, 2025. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

4.4 Comprehensive Plan Update

The last update was in 2013. While talking with the KVCOG grant planner she pointed out that there is a state requirement to update the plan every 10 years. Kelly has begun looking at the process as there are some larger procedural requirements to discuss. A committee needs to be formed, so planning of the update process can begin. Gary feels that someone from the Select Board should be on the committee. Kelly pointed out the update process can be lengthy. Kelly will put the information out to the public to see if some interested residents come forward.

4.5 Town Budget Schedule

Kelly passed out his planned schedule with explanation. He plans to meet with all the department heads during the month of January to produce a town manager's budget for the Select Board to review in the following months. Kelly put the schedule together by working requirements backwards from the date of the town meeting. The schedule shows the first presentation of the budget for February 2026. Upcoming budget topics will also be printed in the Sodalite.

4.6 Abatement – U28-027, Daniel & Katrina Conlon, \$64.12

There was a motion made by Rick to approve abatement U28-027, Daniel & Katrina Conlon in the amount of \$64.12. This was seconded by Gary, vote 3-0.

4.7 Pole permit – Tutt Lane, power to new residence

Kelly presented that the pole would be placed on town property (other than by right-of-way along town roads), but in discussion it wasn't clear if Tutt Lane is private or public. The Code Enforcement Officer was called and was able to explain that Tutt Lane is maintained by those landowners who were granted a right-of way across the town property that is currently in a conservation deed of trust.

There was a motion made by Rick to approve the requested CMP pole permit for Tutt Lane aka: Havey Line. This was seconded by Tom P., vote 3-0.

5.0 Unscheduled Business

5.1

6.0 Appointments/Resignations

6.1 Appointment - Kelly Eaton to Recreation Committee

There was a motion made by Tom P. to approve the appointment of Kelly Eaton to the Recreation Committee. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.
Tom Wood also said that the memorial sign for the ball field should be ready for viewing during the first December select board meeting.

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant #10 \$81,473.42

There was a motion made by Tom P. to approve town warrant #10 in the amount of \$81,473.42. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

7.2 Town Payroll #10 \$28,733.15

There was a motion made by Tom P. to approve town payroll #10 in the amount of \$28,733.15. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

7.3 Town Payroll #10a \$1,950.08

There was a motion made by Rick to approve town payroll #10a in the amount of \$1,950.08. This was seconded by Tom P., vote 3-0.

The second payroll was for payout of vacation for a terminated employee. Gary noted that this employee had been sent to school to get his Commercial Drivers License and wanted to know if he would pay back the pro-rated cost. Kelly answered that he would not. The agreement was written only to ensure the individual would not quit for a higher paying job without paying back a portion of the expense.

8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/ Communication

8.1 Rick asked if there was any progress on his request to get the website updated and get communications out to the public. Kelly said that he has a part time employee that has an interest in the updating the website and in the long term he will be looking at budgeting for a full upgrade to the website.

8.2 Rick asked if anyone had looked into using the previously discussed camp road mix at the new location of the fuel depot to improve access there, and if not, suggested doing so. Corey would also like to find out what DOT is using on the shoulders. Corey also suggested getting a roller to compact whatever aggregate is decided on.

9.0 Future Agenda Items

9.1 Rte 197 Traffic Corridor Concerns

9.2 Camp mix gravel specification approval

9.3 Town Website maintenance and improvements

9.4 Transfer Station – suggested here until completed

10.0 Adjournment at 8:22 pm

Respectfully submitted by Angela Parker
edited by Kelly Weissenfels