

**Town of Litchfield
Select Board Meeting Minutes
February 9th, 2026**

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 (absent); Corey Hanson, Public Works Director; John Upham, Transfer Station Manager (absent); Tom Wood, Chm. Budget Comm.; Steve Ochmanski, Code Enforcement Officer; and others per the sign in sheet (attached).

2.0 Minutes of Jan 12th, 2025

There was a motion made by Tom P. to approve the minutes of January 12, 2025, as written.

This was seconded by Rick, vote 2-0 (1 abstain).

It was brought to the attention of the board that the minutes they most recently read through were from January 12, 2026.

There was an amendment made to approve the minutes of January 12, 2026, by Tom P. This was seconded by Rick, vote 2-0 (1 abstain).

3.0 Reports and Correspondence

3.1 Town Manager

A. Kelly has reached out to other vendors for proposals regarding the Transfer Station site plan and should have another for the next meeting.

B. The General Assistance Audit was completed last week and Kelly said Litchfield did well. The Financial Audit is complete for 2024 with 2025 being worked on currently by the accountant(s). They are working on it around the tax preparations they do during this time of year.

3.2 Code Officer/Plumbing Inspector

A. Steve presented his report to the Select Board, he let them know it has been quiet lately with building permits and has had time to catch up on office work.

B. Planning Board is working on "reviewing the Site Plan review," how they review documentation, including what is reviewed and how. They plan to have all changes ready for town meeting. Also, the solar array passed review three weeks ago and will be going in soon.

C. Steve is working through the Junk Yard properties and has been in contact with the town's attorney, who has previously rewritten the letter that will be sent out once photos can be taken. As soon as the snow melts, Steve can get photos and will be sending letters to the property owners.

3.3 Transfer Station

A. John said no containers needed to be emptied this week, since it was so cold it wasn't very busy last week.

B. There are now a total of 3185 passes so far.

C. There is a new sign identifying the Transfer Station that is visible when you drive in. This was provided by private donation.

3.4 Public Works

A. Corey said everyone is doing well, one person moved from part-time to seasonal. He will only be called in when there are storms when the town needs another plow driver.

B. The 5500 is back on the road again. The repair was done in the town shop.

C. Litchfield can get salt again, which is a good thing. Tom P. asked if the cost had gone up. Corey said we won't know until the bid goes out again.

3.5 Fire & Rescue

A. Kelly said the draft budget is complete.

B. The Sign for the Purgatory Station is back up and installed with the light as Chief Sherman had planned.

C. Chief Sherman will be back in office to respond to any further questions regarding Fire & Rescue on Tuesday.

3.6 Emergency Management

A. Training events are coming up starting the February 23rd and the next two Mondays (in March) with Kennebec County EMA.

B. There was an Ambulance Advisory Committee meeting tonight attended by Jay Danforth. A swing shift staffing proposal is being discussed. Chief Sieberg from the Gardiner Fire Department be at the next meeting to discuss the proposal. Jay will attend to report on the meeting and support discussion.

3.7 Assessing Agent

The team working with the Assessing Agent has begun the site visits for 25% of the town. They are looking for improvement projects that were not part of a permit process. Found valuation will be added, but a full re-valuation will not occur until all properties have been visited. The process that is being followed has been discussed at previous select board meetings.

3.8 Other Town Committees

Elton gave an update that the Academy Building lighting is finished being switched over. The electrician has been very helpful in sourcing the light covers, etc. Everyone seems to be very happy with the update in lighting.

4.0 Scheduled Business

4.1 RAM 5500 replacement: gas vs. diesel; level of urgency

Kelly and Corey have had a chance to discuss the issues of the 5500 replacement, and they both agree that it seems like they can hold off on replacement currently. They feel an emergency

town meeting is not currently needed. They will try to get the truck through the winter and possibly replace the RAM 5500 in July.

Corey discussed the cost effectiveness of diesel fuel vs. cost effectiveness of gas fuel. A gas powered vehicle is less expensive to buy with upfront costs, and cheaper to maintain during the year as well. Corey said he doesn't feel that the number of miles driven yearly makes it less cost effective to buy a truck that uses diesel fuel.

Toby asked what this truck was used for. Corey said plowing and sanding during the Winter and hauling things during the Summer. Corey also noted that he has spoken with another municipality that sounds as though they are not happy with the diesel truck they purchased. Larry N. noted most municipalities have diesel and would have requested diesel when given the option between two different trucks that use the two differing fuel types. Larry also said he knows Corey can do the repairs that need to be done to the RAM 5500.

Also, during discussion, it was brought to the attention of the Select Board that all the trucks need current inspection stickers. This is due to repairs as well as this task being put off in previous seasons. Rick suggested that audience members send their suggestions and questions to Kelly for the Select Board can review, as they would like to see all information that can be gathered.

Tom W. asked if there were records of the repairs, Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF) / Diesel Exhaust System and fuel consumption as he feels this would help with the decisions that need to be made now and in the future.

4.2 Dennis Hill Rd culvert replacement: draft plans

According to communications between Corey, Kelly and Calderwood Engineering, the option of putting in a bridge on Dennis Hill Road is not possible due to the slope of the hill, there is disagreement about this from Larry N. as he believes that it would still be the better option.

Gary wanted to know what the bottom line will be for the culvert system they are now proposing. A sum of \$38,000.00 was mentioned for the ½ Culvert alone with a poured concrete base being a separate fee.

Rick said he would like some explanation as to why the bridge is no longer an option and wants to see all the data. Kelly assured the board that this proposed culvert plan will work with the grant that has been awarded to Litchfield.

Toby also asked some pertinent questions for more research to be done.

Kelly is to get back into contact with Calderwood to get more information.

There was a motion made by Rick to approve Larry Neaudeau Jr. to work with the town and the road advisory committee to come up with a viable plan to replace the culvert in Dennis Hill Road. This was seconded by Tom P., vote 3-0.

4.3 Kennebec Sheriff dispatching move cost proposal

The following is a brief overview of discussion had about preliminary information that was delivered to the Selectmen in readaheads.

Currently Litchfield pays the Augusta Regional Communication Center (RCC) about \$42,000.00 for dispatch of fire and law enforcement. Litchfield's portion of the newly proposed Kennebec Sheriff Office preliminary plan would be about \$55,000.00. Which is likely in addition to the previously discussed \$42,000.00.

There was a suggestion made to get the State Representative involved to get some movement if needed.

More information needs to be acquired, and Kelly will keep the Select Board apprised of the movement as it happens.

4.4 FY27 budget review - Public Works

Corey presented his budget with decreased wages and various other decreases totaling a 1.7% decrease from last year's budget. As previously discussed at Select Board meetings there will be an ask at town meeting this year for funds to purchase two traffic control lights for work zones. This would replace worker flagging (standing holding stop/slow signage in work zones for the Litchfield Road Crew). The equipment rentals line has an increase for the rented use of a large roller to help with repair of the town's dirt roads. All will have details in the town warrant for the Town Meeting in June. As presented, this is a rough draft.

5.0 Unscheduled Business

5.1

6.0 Appointments/Resignations

6.1

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant #15 \$ 465,590.79 (of which \$402,366.38 is for RSU4)

There was a motion made by Rick to approve town warrant #15 in the amount of \$465,590.79 (of which \$402,366.38 is for RSU4). This was seconded by Tom P., vote 3-0.

7.2 Town Payroll #16 \$ 35,255.09

There was a motion made by Tom P. to approve town payroll #16 in the amount of \$35,255.09. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/ Communication

8.1 Rayna has a letter drafted concerning the Rt 197 corridor which was provided to all attendees. She would like to aim to use social media to help get the word out to the residents of Litchfield. Rayna has been making a great effort to get the word out and will continue to once she gets approval to keep spreading the word. Tom W. is willing to take the letter to the Superintendent once it's written for a face-to-face conversation to relay its importance.

8.2 Mark Russell shortfall \$300,000.00

Mark wanted to clarify what he heard while watching the last Select Board meeting on video. As Kelly said at the last meeting there were several factors complicating the audit for a few years. Kelly went through the explanation of what happened again, as he did last meeting and that while all town funds were accounted for properly and verified by the auditors, his tracking of the carryforward for roads was inaccurate. Tom W., as a representative of the Budget Committee, also said that the Budget Committee was involved and should have caught the error. Kelly said he has fortunately gained enough information and knowledge of the process to make sure, to the best of his ability, that such mistakes do not happen again. Also, the staff involved in the process have continued to gain confidence with the process.

8.3 Mailbox policy — Gary presented the verbiage he would like to have added, as follows: The Selectmen reserve the right to review any complaints pertaining to winter destruction of a mailbox due to plowing. We also direct the Town Manager to direct the public works department to distribute this policy and contact homeowners of any height increase that could make a legally installed mailbox become non-conforming. Furthermore, we would ask that all town mailboxes be reviewed and violations be brought to the owner's attention through written notice and signed by the owner.

Tom P. wants a full version for next meeting to review for a motion.

8.4 Kelly said that in recent history the only public access to drinkable water is at the academy building. The Select Board needs to discuss again the water filter(s) to make other sources of water drinkable. Kelly had a representative out this afternoon to the property to evaluate the options for filter systems. The town garage was evaluated along with the town office and the fire station; they are in the process of testing the water. Kelly said they are estimated \$5,000.00 for the town office to have all faucets produce drinkable water. The town garage and fire station are not suitable locations for a whole building system.

9.0 Future Agenda Items

9.1 Rte.197 Corridor Survey

9.2 Mailbox policy (final draft)

9.3 Transfer Station Permit

9.4 New Mills Dam Grant

9.5 Continuing Education for Road Crew

9.6 Special Town Meeting Plan

9.7 Water Purification Programs

9.8 Web page upgrades

9.9 Dennis Hill Culvert/Bridge Plan

10. Getting Trucks Inspectable & Inspected

10.0 Adjournment at 9:02 pm

Respectfully submitted by Angela Parker