

Town of Litchfield
Select Board
June 28, 2021
Meeting Minutes

1.0 Convened at 6:30 PM; Pledge to Flag; Selectmen: Gary Parker, Chairman, Rayna Leibowitz, Clarence Gowell III (identified as Rick Gowell in these minutes); **Staff:** Kelly Weissenfels, Town Manager; Steve Ochmanski, CEO/LPI; Michael Sherman, Asst. Fire Chief, Betsy Sherman, Reggie Poirier, Deputy Chief, FD; Larry Nadeau, Road Comm.; Bryan Lamoreau, Transfer Station Manager; Road Advisory Committee Members: Toby Jutras, Chm., Richard Lane and Tamas Szepsy; Lindsay Nelsen, Chm., Conservation Comm.

2.0 Minutes of June 14, 2021 Meeting submitted for final approval. A motion to approve the minutes as corrected was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0. A citizen advised the election of the Board Chair should be done at the July 12 meeting.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence:

3.1 Town Manager: A. Kelly Weissenfels advised a county tax bill has been received from Kennebec County for \$418,455.99 which is about \$400 more than estimated.

B. Kelly advised he received a letter of complaint regarding a neighbor's loudly crowing rooster. The Animal Control Officer was informed.

C. A call of complaint was received regarding a neighbor's free ranging chickens coming onto the caller's property. The caller keeps their own chickens contained.

D. A squirrel has been squatting in the Woodbury Pond Park attendant's building.

E. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds that came to the state in early Jun to be distributed by June 30 have not been distributed. The state has requested an extension that has not yet been granted. A future meeting will be needed to review procedures and processes.

F. A meeting has been set up with Monmouth to discuss the Woodbury Pond Dam situation and potential funding from Monmouth.

G. The award of grants through the Northern Regional Border Commission (NRBC) is expected in mid-August. Litchfield's request was for \$1M and would require a \$400K match.

H. The Town Manager was asked if the checklist for foreclosures had been received from the Town's law firm and he reported it has not been received.

I. The hearing with the Court in Augusta regarding the property at 2787 Hallowell Rd. has been scheduled for Tuesday, June 29 at 10:00.

3.2 Code Enforcement Officer/Plumbing Inspector – A. Steve Ochmanski advised there are several problems with a solid waste (trash) hauler working in Litchfield. Because of the pandemic, the license renewal requirements lapsed to this year. A photograph was shown to the board identifying a lack of covering for the trash, a poorly secured bag was partially hanging over the tail gate, the required tonnage reports of waste hauled have not been submitted, the driver repeatedly stops near the top of a blind hill to pick up trash without pulling off the road creating a very unsafe situation. Steve was directed to notify this hauler to attend the next Board meeting to address these issues.

3.3 Road Commissioner – A. Larry Nadeau, reported ditching has started on the Wentzell Road. Ditching on this road has not been done for a very long time. He advised the legal width of the road is 25 feet from the center line and the ditching, honoring that width, is removing some roadside

brush that some homeowners may want left standing. They will be invited to plant replacement vegetation on their property outside the 25 foot point.

3.4 Fire & Rescue – A. Mike Sherman advised Darren Ellis is updating computer systems for the Fire Dept. Five computers have been donated by LL Bean and these are being set up.

B. The installation of Bluetooth technology in the new fire truck is very functional and additional capability can be added as funds allow.

3.5 Emergency Management – Nothing new

3.6 Assessing Agent – Nothing new

3.7 Transfer Station – A. Bryan reported DEP has determined propane tanks cannot be accepted at the Transfer Station. Bryan called Maine Oxy and they are no longer accepting them. He called Blue Rhino and was told there is a shortage of tanks available. If a local business would collect them, Blue Rhino would pay a fee to recover them. Bryan talked with Percy's Hardware and they are willing to accept them.

B. Bryan talked with the Amish carpenters in Whitefield and they are scheduling work a year out.

C. For Conservation Day, 2 Committee members paid all disposal fees from 8 AM to noon, a total of \$325. An additional (bulky) container was brought in, just in case it was needed.

D. On Sunday, an 80 year old man fell into the bulky container. Staff was able to help him get out and he did not receive any identified injuries. There was discussion to determine if any mitigation steps need to be taken to prevent it from happening again, but there were no recommendations. It was noted that notification to DEP is required if any injuries occur.

3.8 Broadband Committee – A. The Broadband Committee has requested additional information from the two finalists after reviewing the proposals previously.

B. The next meeting of the Broadband Committee has not been announced.

C. There was discussion about meetings with the bidders separately and not as public meetings as recommended by the consultant, because proprietary information may be discussed. A legal opinion about this will be sought.

3.9 Other Town Committees – Road Advisory Committee – A. Toby Jutras, Chairman, advised they are re-establishing the meeting schedule for the third Wednesday of each month at 6:00 PM.

B. Last week the members did a road survey to identify the current conditions of all town owned roads. This information will be put into their road conditions computer program which will analyze it and provide prioritization information. There are some subjective factors, such as level of use, that will require local knowledge input.

C. The current recommendation for work to be done is for \$650,000. Most of this work is to add a final wearing surface to roads in good condition to make them less permeable to water and thus maintain their longevity.

D. The Committee will review and prioritize the list of roads.

Conservation Commission – A. Lindsay Nelsen, Chairman, advised for Conservation Day there were 71 tires, 12 TV's, 3 carpets and 2 refrigerators paid for at the Transfer Station.

B. She discussed the desire for mowing at the Community Park and accepted the recommendation that weed whacking around the kiosk would be acceptable.

C. The Brown Tail Moth situation in Litchfield has been pretty bad. The offer was made to have the Commission research effective treatments and/or responses for possible implementation next

year, as the caterpillar phase is nearly over now. The Board was in favor of them bringing recommendations forward in the late winter or early spring next year.

Recreation Committee – A. Kelly advised that Tiffany informed him that Soccer registration is under way with it scheduled to start in later August.

B. Discussion of leaving Woodbury Pond Park unlocked with no attendant present was held. The recommendation of the Board is to lock the gate if the attendant is not present. A sign at the gate inviting patrons to return at another time might be appropriate.

5.0 Scheduled Business

5.1 Schedule Code Enforcement Officer Contract Review – A motion to schedule this review for Wednesday, June 30 at 10:00 AM was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

5.2 Schedule Town Manager Performance Review – A motion to schedule this review for Wednesday, June 30 following the review above was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

5.3 Road Bond Option Comparison – Kelly contacted the Maine Bond Bank, Androscoggin Bank and Kennebec Savings Bank for comparison figures. Kennebec Savings Bank offered to match Androscoggin Bank's rates, so the Androscoggin Bank was eliminated. The Maine Bond Bank requires an application in early August for an auction in November. While their rate is lower, early repayment is not an option. A chart was distributed showing current interest rates for the Bond Bank and Kennebec Savings for 10, 15 and 20 year loans. The chart was reviewed and discussed. A motion was made to request a loan from Kennebec Savings Bank for a 15 year period at a proposed rate of 2.79% (fixed interest) by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0. This will require an annual payment of \$359,306.04 (which may be paid in semi-annual payments, thus reducing the total interest) which will otherwise be \$989,771.27 over the life of the loan unless payments are accelerated to pay the loan off early (without penalty).

5.4 Woodbury Pond Dam Phase 1 Proposal – Authorize Acceptance – A meeting will be held on Wednesday with the Town of Monmouth to apprise them of the Dam problems and ascertain their likely level of financial assistance for the work to be done. Discussion here identified the need to determine who would be getting needed permits for the work and determine exactly what the \$8500 - \$9500 for Phase 1 would be paying for.

5.5 Annual Shelter Contract Review – Kelly provided the proposed shelter contract for review. A final decision on it will be made at the July 12 meeting.

5.6 Demolition Bid Review/Approval – A review of the proposed bid was held and some changes were made to it. The decision was made to hold off on issuing it until after the June 29 Court experience. Action is moving forward to secure the building.

5.7 Street Lights – Upgrade to LED – Finalize List – The Street Light Committee drove to Purgatory, Litchfield Corner and across the Huntington Hill Road to assess the condition (working or not), effectiveness and value of retention and conversion to LED of the lights. The resulting recommendation was to remove 7 lights, invite a citizen to assume costs for 1 light and invite RSU#4 to assume the cost for 1 light in front of Libby Tozier School. Two new lights were recommended, one at the junction of Libby Road and Huntington Hill Road and one at the junction of Dennis Hill Road and Route 126 as long as nearby neighbors who would be impacted by the light are agreeable. Both are expected to improve public safety, especially for crews plowing these areas in snowstorms. The

Town Manager was authorized to complete the actions necessary to accomplish this and try to identify a contractor to do the conversion to LED for the lights remaining in service by a motion by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0. It was also noted that the light was not functioning at the corner of Hallowell Road and the Plains Road.

5.8 Contingency Fund Use Summary and Approval Request – The Town Manager discussed the expected processes and procedures relating to year end bookkeeping and subsequent audit. It appears no action is necessary at this time.

5.9 Quitclaim, Lien Discharge, Ronald Hickey, Map R 14 Lot 059. This lien has been paid. A motion to approve the discharge and sign the Quitclaim was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

5.10 Quitclaim, Completed Repurchase Agreement, Brandon Smith/ Kayla Moore, Map R02, Lot 045 - A motion to approve the discharge and sign the Quitclaim was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

5.11 Supplemental Tax, Ann Turnbull, Map R07, Lot 018 – Tree Growth Removal Penalty in the amount of \$523.20 - A motion to approve the Supplemental Tax in the amount of \$523.20 was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

7.0 Appointments/Resignations

7.1 Fire Chief Resignation – Stanley Labbe – A motion to accept the resignation of Stanley Labbe, Fire Chief, with regrets and appreciation was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

7.2 Fire Chief Appointment – Michael Sherman - A motion to approve the appointment of Michael Sherman as Fire Chief effective July 1, 2021, and authorize the Board to sign the appointment paper outside a regular meeting was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

7.3 Road Advisory Committee Appointment - Michael Eaton - A motion to approve the appointment of Michael Eaton as a member of the Road Advisory Committee and authorize the Board to sign the appointment paper outside a regular meeting was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

8.0 Warrants

8.1 Town Warrant #23 for \$70,259.93. A motion to approve the Warrant# 23 was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

8.2 Town Payroll #25 for \$43,858.87 A motion to approve the Payroll # 25 was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

9.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/Communication

9.1 2793 Hallowell Rd. property – some clean up has taken place. The Maine State Credit Union is in the process of foreclosure.

12.0 Future Agenda Items

- 12.1 Feedback on Selectman’s Handbook
- 12.2 R02, Lot 016, 2787 Hallowell Rd
- 12.3 R02, Lot 017, 2783 Hallowell Rd.
- 12.4 Animal Shelter Contract

12.5 Woodbury Pond Dam
12.6 Code Enforcement Officer Contract
12.7 Trash Hauler Complaint

13.0 Adjournment at 9:45 PM

Respectfully Submitted By

Rayna Leibowitz