

Town of Litchfield  
Select Board  
March 28, 2022  
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, Fire Chief; Larry Nadeau, Road Comm.; Pat Soboleski, Seniors Director; Elton Wade, Litchfield Academy Trustee and Budget Comm.; John Upham, Acting Transfer Station Manager; Road Advisory Committee Members: Toby Jutras, Chm., and Richard Lane; Larry Bell, Chm., Broadband Comm. via Zoom and Tom Wood, Chm. Budget Comm. and Broadband Comm.

**2.0 Minutes of Mar. 14, 2022 Meeting submitted for final approval.** A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 2- 0 – 1 Parker abstained as he was not in attendance of the 3/14/22 meeting.

**3.0 Reports and Correspondence:**

3.1 Town Manager: A. Kelly introduced Jill Bouchard who has volunteered to fill the vacant school board vacancy until a new member is elected.

B. IT Updates – the counter computers have been updated. Darren worked to move VOIP to Consolidated Communications but was unable to complete it before leaving.

C. Woodbury Pond Dam fence was widened on Saturday.

D. A quote has been received for placing permanent bollard posts at the sand pile for \$1,557.54.

E. Kelly has talked with three candidates for the Clerk of the Works position All have similar backgrounds, experience and qualifications. Selectperson Leibowitz asked to see the document regarding tasks and expectations that was developed. The \$10,000 identified to be devoted to this in earlier discussions will only finance about 16 full days of work. That will not be enough if on-site monitoring work is expected. Road work is expected to start in May.

F. Kelly advised a communication from the lawyer regarding 2783 Hallowell Road illegal junkyard case outlined steps that would need to be taken if the Town wanted to pursue this case now or we could have the case dismissed at this time and wait until Probate Court has handled the estate issue when the case could be addressed with the heirs at that time. A motion to request dismissal of the case at this time was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

G. Woodbury Pond Dam – Engineering firm info and bid form expected by next meeting. Plan is to get bids out for opening in early May.

3.2 Code Enforcement Officer/Plumbing Inspector – A. Steve advised permit applications are just getting busy. He issued only three building permits in February.

B. The two illegal junkyard issues are being addressed as the operators said they would be. On Route 197, the uphill site is having vehicles and materials moved as promised and the downhill site is waiting for the ground to dry up and a crusher would be moved in to crush junk and vehicles prior to removal

C. New Road Name proposed – Devil’s Ledge Road near 891 Richmond Road. A motion to approve Devil’s Ledge Road was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 –

0.

3.3 Road Commissioner – A. Larry advised the crew is down to 2. A new hire is expected to start on Thursday.

B. Cold Patching has been started on Lunts Hill Road, then moving to Dead River Rd and then the other side of town.

C. He is planning to have bollards for the new fuel depot. The surface will be paved.

D. Larry accompanied folks from All States Construction in assessing the condition of paving and/or chip sealing on roads considered unsatisfactory. A remedial proposal will be submitted. No action can be done until May or June at the earliest.

E. Guard Rails needing work are on Buker Road and Dead River Road. Others will also be assessed. Larry has notified the company which handles them to give notice of requested work.

F. The Maine Turnpike Authority has been asked to have the start of replacement work on the Route 197 overpass postponed for a week (or maybe two) because town roads are still posted for heavy loads.

3.4 Fire & Rescue – A. Chief Sherman advised the maintenance of vehicles and equipment has been completed and they are ready for response.

B. When asked about fire permit costs, he advised there was inconsistency regarding permitted burns are allowed. The Forestry permit process and on line permit process are now the same, i.e. weekdays are 4:30 PM to midnight and weekends are 9:00 AM to midnight. These hours reflect the availability of local firefighters should a response be necessary.

C. Recent rains resulted in the identification of drainage issues in the back yard of the fire station. He asked for Calderwood Engineering to assess the situation and devise a solution.

3.5 Emergency Management – No report

3.6 Assessing Agent – No report

3.7 Transfer Station – A written report was provided and is part of the record.

3.8 Broadband Committee – A. Larry Bell reported the franchise agreement with Charter Spectrum is now in the hands of the Select Board for review. It will be added to the agenda for April 11 to give the Board time to review it.

b. Redzone is on track to complete testing by mid-May and installations can start in June. They have received 122 contacts and are still looking for 250 customers by April 17.

3.9 Other Town Committees – None reported

#### **4.0 Scheduled Business**

4.1 Open/Award bids for Litchfield Academy Windows – 7:30 PM – One bid was received from Maine Highlands Construction for \$39,757.00 for 18 windows. A motion to not accept this bid was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

4.2 Disposition of Traffic Light Preemption Equipment/Funding from Turnpike – Chief Sherman reviewed the timeline of obtaining traffic light preemption equipment paid for by the Maine Turnpike Authority. Now that the equipment has been received (but not yet installed) and the Turnpike is scheduled to have Route 197 at the Turnpike overpass on Route 197 closed within the next week or two, it seems imprudent to expend the funds to have the equipment installed in fire apparatus now. Accordingly, the devices will have no value to the town as no other uses can be identified for them. Chief Sherman suggested offering to return the nearly \$10,000 to the Maine Turnpike Authority (reflecting an amount received less restocking fees that are expected to be charged for returning the devices). The matter was discussed and the Board agreed with Chief Sherman's suggestion. No

vote was taken on the matter.

4.3 WWII Honor Roll repair at the Memorial Lot of the Plains Cemetery – Elton Wade – Elton has inspected the World War II Memorial at the memorial lot at the Plains Cemetery which is in need of significant repair. He feels he can make temporary repairs for this year but asked if the Town would support permanent repair costs for next year, with an expectation the labor can be donated. He was asked to get cost estimates and get back to us so they could be included in budget considerations.

4.4 Review/Approve road improvement recommendations for the 2022 season – additional discussion was held as Chairman Parker was not present to participate at the last meeting. He would like to see the Whippoorwill Road given priority over the Lunts Hill Road due to higher numbers using the road. However, it was noted the road Advisory Committee has the discretion to adjust the order to best facilitate completion. It appears the Route 126 (Babcock Bridge) project may be pushed ahead to 2023 and may require reconsideration of the scheduled repairs for Dennis Hill Road.

4.5 Budget Committee Recommendations – Tom Wood, Chairman, provided a written document to guide his comments to the Select Board. 1) Finalizing a budget this year will be very challenging. 2) The Capital Improvements Plan needs to be updated to reflect the true needs out further than it currently does and every department needs to be faithful about putting needs in the plan annually, even if timing or costs need to be adjusted later. 3) If the Select Board would like the Budget Committee to review and/or make recommendations regarding the Roads and Bridge Reconstruction Projects, it would be willing. 4) RSU#4 Budget involvement based on situations, conditions and financial challenges coming over the horizon that will be here sooner than we think. 5) Libby Tozier School may be returned to Town control within the next several years. The implications of that are numerous and we don't fully know what they are. A recommendation was made for the Select Board to form a Select Committee to investigate the issues that are likely to arise. This Committee might consist of a Select Board member, a Budget Committee member and 5 other core group members with ability to be of value to the effort. Other participants will be used as needed. A motion to form this Select Committee with the recommended make up was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0. Chairman Parker was selected from the Select Board and Tom Wood from the Budget Committee. 6) A joint meeting of the Select Board and Budget Committee as a workshop on the budget was established for Monday, April 4 at 9:00 AM.

4.6 Review/Approve Charter – Spectrum Cable Franchise Agreement – tabled to April 11 meeting.

4.7 Review/approve additional bank account to allow for Rec Committee SportsEngine App ACH deposits. Resident Jill Bouchard advised she volunteers for the Sabattus Rec. program and she is familiar with this process and how convenient it is for parents and the Rec Director to handle registrations and other facets of the program. The Town Manager has discussed it with the Auditor. A motion to authorize the Town Manager to establish the account and ensure accountability for it was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

4.8 Schedule RSU#4 budget workshop w/ superintendent and Litchfield School Comm. Members – Established for April 7 at 6:30 PM.

4.9 Budget review –Town Office Operations – The status of the area under the outside door in the Conference Room needs to be examined for problems, Public Works- The starting pay of PW employees with like licenses needs to be gathered from neighboring towns, Flaggers – Certified flaggers need to be rented in groups of 3 @ \$35.00/hour each for 10 hour days, Roads Budget, Capital Improvements add Insulation for Town Garage, Purchase of a used grader, Purchase of a dump truck, Work on Fire Station rear lot., Special Projects, some with end dates that cannot be completed will

need to have dates moved out. Additional research needs to be done on some items in several categories.

## **5.0 Unscheduled Business**

5.1 David Russell – Driveway waiver Request – Mr Russell at 61 Dennis Hill Road has cleared land to put another driveway in so he can have a circular driveway to allow safer entrance and exiting of his property when towing a trailer or camper. This driveway does not have the full 450 foot sight line because of a hill above him and trees with overhanging branches below him. Allowing a second entrance would eliminate the need for him to back his camper and trailer into his yard, creating times when both travel lanes would be blocked to oncoming traffic. The downhill trees are on private property and the owners are currently out of state and their return date is unknown so tree trimming or removal is uncertain. A motion to approve a variance for the driveway in the interest of safety was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

5.2 Date & Location for 2022 Town Meeting the date of June 18 with elections being held June 14, 2022 was set. The Town Manager will determine if the Gym at the Carrie Ricker School is available. The question was asked if the Senior Center could use the gym at Libby Tozier School after school ends to minimize costs for rental of space if the Academy is not big enough.

## **6.0 Appointments/Resignations**

6.1 Appointment of RSU#4 School Board (J. Bouchard) A motion to appoint Jill Bouchard to serve on the School Board until a replacement is elected was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 -0.

## **7.0 Warrants**

7.1 Town Warrant #24 for \$54,430.68 A motion to approve the Warrant# 24 in the amount of \$54,430.68 was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3-0.

7.2 Town Payroll #19 for \$35,179.82. A motion to approve the Payroll # 19 in the amount of \$ 35,179.82. was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 -0.

## **9.0 Future Agenda Items**

- 9.1 Feedback on Selectman's Handbook
- 9.2 R02, Lot 015, 2793 Hallowell Rd
- 9.3 R02, Lot 017, 2783 Hallowell Rd.
- 9.4 Budget Committee Suggestions
- 9.5 Safety Flaggers
- 9.6 Purchase of Jersey Barriers from MTA
- 9.7 Charter Spectrum Cable Franchise Agreement
- Clerk of the Works position
- Capital Improvements Plan Update

## **13.0 Adjournment at 11:05 PM**

Respectfully Submitted By

Rayna Leibowitz