Town of Litchfield
Select Board Meeting Minutes
March 23, 2026

1.0 Convenes 6:3 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.; Steve Ochmanski, Code Enforcement Officer (absent); and others per sign in sheet (attached).

2.0 Minutes of March 2, 2026

There was a motion made by Tom P. to approve the minutes of March 2, 2026, as written. This was seconded by Gary, vote 2-1-0.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence

3.1 Town Manager
A. Transfer station permit work has been proceeding. There was a meeting with Sevee Maher Engineers, and a Dig Safe permit is needed, then the town will be able to start a site survey as planned.
B. Kelly will be continuing with the 97 Whippoorwill Road foreclosure – he asked to add this to unscheduled business as 5.1.
C. Kelly said the Town Office is very close to having the online property tax payment program up and running. He hopes this will be in time for next payment, since testing the demo program went well.
D. The office had another upgrade, there is a larger counter at the front desk for the residents to be able to spread paperwork out. Also, the new flooring was installed in the bathroom.
3.2 Code Officer/Plumbing Inspector
Steve will be in attendance at the next meeting with his monthly report. There was nothing additional for tonight's meeting.
3.3 Transfer Station
A. Kelly said that this was a quiet week for the Transfer Station, no bins needed emptying.
B. John will be assisting with the site survey for the previously discussed/approved upgrades to the Transfer Station.
3.4 Public Works
A. Corey said that he has hired a new employee who starts April 6, 2026.
B Otherwise the crew has been busy with seasonal work.

3.5 Fire & Rescue

A. Chief Sherman said the fleet is up and running well. There is still one truck left to go through annual service and inspection to get stickered.

B. Since January, the department has seen three members leave due to time constraints or conflicts with other personal commitments such as education. There are currently 17 members, which is low for the jobs needing to be done. Chief Sherman took a moment to remind all residents that Fire & Rescue is always looking for volunteers to come out and join the team. There are no restrictions on people who may apply, but not all applicants are accepted. Not all jobs involve interior firefighting work. If you have been wondering how to help the community with volunteering, this might be just the ticket. The 3rd Tuesday night of every month is the monthly meeting where the department would love to share more information for anyone looking to participate.

3.6 Emergency Management

A. Chief Sherman wanted to remind all to conserve water as the water table remains low even after the snow we have been seeing. He would recommend all residents and anyone else in Maine keep this in mind when doing chores, etc. The Maine Emergency Management website Drought Taskforce report shows upwards of 1000 dry wells in the state currently.

3.7 Assessing Agent

Litchfield's assessing agent will be returning on April 9, 2026.

3.8 Other Town Committees

A. The Road Advisory Committee did their annual review of the roads. Toby, who is the chair of the committee, will have a full report of recommendations for the next select board meeting. He said the Committee will be meeting this week to discuss their findings and formulate an official report.

His brief initial findings cause him to recommend crack sealing areas as that appears important as a preventative measure. Toby said they will likely put together a three-stage proposal with: 1) essential projects; 2) prudent; 3) then a comprehensive category. The $300,000.00 funding gap discrepancy in the carryover, discussed in previous meetings, will cause an issue this year [as the normal $600,000 as must be exceeded, and it's likely Litchfield will be looking at over a million dollars for the essential list that includes Dennis Hill Road's two projects needing to be done. The Road Committee meeting will be this Wednesday, March 25, 2026.

B. New Mills Dam -- Greg Anderson, one of Litchfield's representatives in the subcommittee for the New Mills Dam repairs gave an update of where the committee stands currently. There will be a meeting of the subcommittee tomorrow, March 24, 2026, to discuss the proposal and possibilities of getting grant funding, etc. They are hoping to have a final proposal to present with all the numbers and what's going to be needed from the towns involved. The grant they are hoping for is through the Economic Development Administration and is a million-dollar grant with a 20% match.

4.0 Scheduled Business

4.1 Watershed Friends funding presentation: including support of Tacoma Lakes, Cobbossee Lake, Pleasant Pond / Cobbossee Stream Associations – Jennifer Peasnall

Ms. Peasnall joined her friends and volunteers during tonight's meeting. The Watershed Friends are asking for $18,700.00, which is just a 5% increase from last year's request. This is in line with the other towns that enjoy the watershed properties. Since last year had a minimal growth of milfoil seen and removed, there will be no renewal of the restrictions by the Department of Environmental Protection Agency, etc. Another success from last year was a sample survey taken in 2024, when an inspector found some invasive Swollen Bladderwort taken from a boat leaving Pleasant Pond. In 2025 there was a very thorough survey of the area, Ms. Peasnall reports that they are optimistic that since they know where the species was found they can work to contain its spread. Tacoma lake had no invasive species found. Woodbury boat launch needs to be watched closely to hopefully stop any deposits of additional plants and/or new species of plants. $18,700.00 ask for this budget is to include hiring 30 people to help with surveying. The Watershed Friends remain hopeful of eradicating the water chestnut that was found last season. Even though 100% eradication is not likely to happen. Jennifer went on to explain why it is still important to fight for the watershed, a decrease in property value and water quality were two of the major reasons. It is not known what the long-term effect would be on fish and wildlife.

*** Academy building discussion marked for 5.2***

4.2 Town Office water filtration – contingency fund request

Kelly, responding to a request from the Select Board, said that the full building filtration system he was asked to investigate came in estimated at $5,200.00 from Aerus out of Augusta, which was the least expensive. This does not include the fire station, that would be an additional $1,800.00 which, Kelly said, does not seem needed at this time and the town garage doesn't feel it's necessary either. The Select Board continued discussion about whether to have the full system installed or not. The topic will be tabled for now until more information can be ascertained about the state's involvement/requirements.

4.3 FY27 Budget Review Summary – Full budget from workshop, special and capital projects

The Select Board reviewed the changes that were discussed during the budget workshop that was held on March 19, 2026, unfortunately the audio for the workshop was not captured.

The reductions discussed during the workshop were entered and showing on this latest version of the budget. Regarding expenses-to-date, Katie Slattery-Seaman asked about assessing not showing $30,000.00 per quarter. Kelly said the full charges are not in this version of the budget as the invoice has not yet arrived.

There are more adjustments to come on the budget. Rick asked about insurance changing since there are plans to hopefully have even less employees in the Public Works department. The flagging/light(s) trailers the Public Works Department would like to see passed during town meeting will reduce staff so insurance cost(s) should be reduced further. Service contract and workers comp to be evaluated again.

Gardiner EMS and their proposal for two additional staff members were discussed, as this will be a large budget item this fiscal year. Gary asked what had happened to the fly car idea that was being floated around last year. Selectmen will continue to be interested in the momentum of Gardiner's request. Kelly will investigate the fly-car topic and keep the Select Board up to date as he gets more information. Increases to the Garinder EMS are not reflected in this version of the budget. Gary isn't in favor of the increase in staffing as there is already an increase being seen. Rick would like to know what the amount per household is when it comes to taxes. He would like to see Chief Sieberg come back out to have a conversation about this. As suggested, this could be through Zoom.

5.0 Unscheduled Business

5.1 Selling 97 Whippoorwill Road

Kelly has engaged a realtor to put the home on the market. The property has gone through foreclosure, the owners have passed away, and no descendants can be found. Kelly is looking for approval from the board to sell the property for approximately 50% of what the estimated value would have been if it were to be sold as a non-foreclosure, as the realtor advised this is a common practice with foreclosed properties due to risk that the property could be reclaimed. The asking price would be around $60,000.00 – $65,000.00.

There was a motion made by Tom P. to give Kelly (Town Manager) the authority to proceed with the sale of 97 Whippoorwill Road. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0 (pass)

5.2 Academy Building Project Funds

Kelly is still looking at the numbers currently, and so the extension will be moved to a future meeting.

6.0 Appointments/Resignations

6.1 Ballot clerks for state elections (list of 21 individuals, 2 - year appointment)

There was a motion made by Tom P. to accept the appointments for the 2026 list of state ballot clerks for the two-year appointment, amended: to be signed outside of a regularly scheduled Select Board meeting. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0 (pass per Gary)

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant #18 $65,441.41

There was a motion made by Tom P. to approve town warrant #18 in the amount of $65,441.41. This was seconded by Rick, vote 3-0.

7.2 Town Payroll #19 $30,851.27

There was a motion made by Rick to approve town payroll #19 in the amount of $30,851.27. This was seconded by Tom P., vote 3-0.

8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/ Communication

8.1 Written complaint handed to Selectmen by Mr. Tristan Russell, topic unknown.

9.0 Future Agenda Items

9.1 New Mills Dam Grant

9.2 Web page upgrades

9.3 Water filtration system

9.4 Academy Building funds

10.0 Adjournment at 9:25 pm

Respectfully submitted by Angela Parker