

Town of Litchfield
Select Board
April 13, 2020
Meeting Minutes

1.0 Convened at 6:30 PM; Pledge to Flag; Selectmen: Gary Parker, Chairman, Rayna Leibowitz, Mark Russell; **Staff:** Trudy Lamoreau, Town Manager; Stan Labbe, Fire Chief; Steve Ochamanski, CEO; Bryan Lamoreau, Transfer Station Manager; John Upham, FOAA Officer.; Kelly Weissenfels, Town Office Staff. No others were present in compliance with Covid-19 mandates.

The Chairman, Gary Parker, advised the meeting is being available to the community via interactive telecommunications which allows video and audio participation to those having camera capability using instructions available via the Internet. Voting by the Select Board will be done by roll call and will be recorded in the minutes using their initials and their vote.

2.0 Minutes of March 23, 2020 Meeting submitted for final approval. A motion to table the minutes to the next meeting as neither Mark nor Gary had read them was made by Mark Russell, seconded by Rayna Leibowitz and voted RL Yes, MR Yes, GP Yes.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence:

3.1 Town Manager: A. The Town Manager reported taxes are coming in very well.

B. Business has been conducted from the porch of the Town Office using the mail box pass through quite successfully. Most people appreciate being able to do it.

C. The Conservation Commission requested erecting one or more signs near the Town Office to direct people to the path leading to the Community Park and/or the Turkey Trail. After discussion was held, it was recommended a representative of the Conservation Commission appoint a delegate to discuss the placement location(s) with the Road Commissioner to ensure they are appropriately visible and traffic will not interfere with public Works operations or produce any unsafe situations.

D. The Town Manager has developed a process for General Assistance applicants to obtain an application through the mail box pass through and conduct telephone conversation(s) before processing them.

E. The laptop being used by the Emergency Management Director is not providing adequate functionality and may need to be replaced. Steve advised it is at least 12 years old.

F. Tax Map updating project – The maps will be retrieved from the school in Lewiston as soon as the instructor is allowed back into the building. The contractor in Bangor will contact us about a meeting once the Covid-19 situation calms down and we have the maps to work with.

3.2 Code Enforcement Officer/Plumbing Inspector – Steve Ochmanski advised Building Permit applications are still coming in. Plumbing Permit applications are not.

3.3 Road Commissioner – Absent from meeting as he was assisting the Fire Dept. with weather-related responses.

3.4 Fire & Rescue – A. The Fire Dept. was responding to several different calls when the meeting opened but Chief Labbe was able to join the meeting before it ended.

B. Chief Labbe advised he would like to have some consideration for increasing the pay of Deputy Fire Chiefs by \$1,000 for each.

3.5 Emergency Management – A. Bruce Slattery, Director, advised he has been very busy the

past several days with the very heavy snowstorm bringing own trees and wires.

B. Bruce has forwarded several pieces of information regarding the PW communications issue to the Chairman. Bruce has talked with the rep from RCM who advised mapping of communications coverage in the Town shows there are some areas that simply will not be well served, given the topography. Even a taller antenna would not significantly eliminate some pockets. What we have is as good as it gets. The system was tested when it was activated and everyone seemed satisfied with it then. Extreme weather conditions or problems with radios in vehicles or other random factors could impact the quality of service.

3.6 Assessing Agent – Ellery Bane was here last week and will be back on April 27. There has been a great deal of progress made with the spring work and they feel they are ahead of the normal schedule for it.

3.7 Transfer Station – A. Bryan Lamoreau, Transfer Station Manager, advised 1008 Stickers have been issued to Town of Litchfield residents or seasonal property owners to date.

B. Single Source Recycling – Bryan talked with Almighty Waste and was advised Oxford is the only town they were aware of who was considering it. Bryan tried to call Oxford but was unable to reach anyone and left a message. Bryan also called EcoMaine but had to leave a message there.

C. The latest Maine Townsman Magazine had the announcement of a solid waste management conference later this month and the suggestion was made that this might be a source of information. It is apparently an annual conference by MMA and is quite informative.

3.8. Other Town Committees:

Broadband Committee: Larry Bell, Chairman, advised they are working with Casco Bay Advisors Group to prepare the grant application to be submitted in early May. He was asked how TK Networks is doing. He advised they are working with customers they can serve with line-of-sight service as a pilot project. They expect to expand as funding allows. He has not heard any complaints.

Mass Gathering Ordinance Committee: Gary Parker, Chairman, advised he has sent the reworked Ordinance to committee members for review. Once they have read it, another meeting will be called to discuss the changes. Select Board members Mark Russell and Rayna Leibowitz requested a copy as well.

4.0 Agenda Adjustments

4.1 Discussion of Town Meeting Date See 6.1

5.0 Scheduled Business

5.1 Mary Jo Mason – the Town has foreclosed on the property for non-payment of taxes for 3 years. The resident came in and paid one year's taxes. The mortgage holder paid another year's tax amount. The third year tax remains unpaid. All three years must be paid to eliminate the foreclosure. The Town Manager will notify the mortgage holder of the situation.

5.2 Abatement – Peak Partners LLC (Personal Property #2704). The Assessing Agent recommends an abatement of \$1,363.60 as it was approved as a BETE exemption. A motion to approve the abatement of \$1,363.60 was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Mark Russell and voted RL Yes, MR Yes, GP Yes.

5.3 Bill Monagle, Cobbossee Watershed District – Participating via telecommunications from his office, Bill discussed the budget challenges and advised the costs for water analysis is expected to increase but they have decided not to hire a summer intern this year to minimize a large increase in costs to the towns they serve, given the economic climate at this time. Bill also discussed the issue of

alewife restoration above the dams via stocking above the Gardiner dams and the potential installation of fish ladders to allow natural migrations into Cobbossee Lake and beyond. Bill has written a synopsis of the issue which he will forward to the Town Manager for distribution to the Board.

5.4 Executive Session – Abatement Case #2020-01 (Schedule date and time) Discussion – can this be postponed until the Covid-19 issue settles down? The Town Manager was asked to contact MMA about the time frame and if it can be extended, contact the applicant for their agreement.

5.5 Budget Review – Discussed the Revenues projections. Recommended lowering the expected Revenue Sharing amount to \$200,000 in anticipation of the state not meeting expected payments. A Budget Committee member advised the school costs of RSU#4 may be increasing 6% - 8% of the local amounts, but there is no published budget showing the figures yet. Another Budget Committee member asked about the County Budget (increase). Selectman Russel explained the County uses the State’s valuation of each town in the county and pro-rates each town’s cost for a proportional share of the proposed budget. This process does not apparently include any possibility of input from the towns regarding the total amount of the budget or how those figures are determined.

5.6 Action on Town Manager and Road Commissioner contracts – As the Road Commissioner was absent only the Town Manager’s Contract was addressed. A motion to approve the Contract for the Town Manager as she had agreed to accept it and authorized the Select Board to sign it outside of a meeting was made by Mark Russell, seconded by Rayna Leibowitz and voted, RL Yes, MR Yes, GP Yes

6.0 Unscheduled Business

6.1 Discussion of Town Meeting Date: The new date for the State’s Primary Election has been announced by Governor Mills as July 14, 2020. We have normally scheduled our Town Meeting for the Saturday following the State’s Primary, so that would be July 18. Because there is still so much uncertainty in this Covid-19 situation, it may be premature to make a commitment at this time. A resident suggested we consider making our schedule conditional on the ultimate date of the State’s Primary Election. Further discussion was tabled to the next meeting (April 27).

9.0 Warrants

9.1 Town Voucher 20# for \$347,312.33 A motion to approve was made by Mark Russell, seconded by Rayna Leibowitz and voted: RL Yes, MR Yes, GP Yes

9.2 Town Payroll #20 for \$25,727.65 A motion to approve was made by Mark Russell, seconded by Rayna Leibowitz and voted: RL Yes, MR Yes, GP Yes

Town Payroll #21 for \$18, 247.37 A motion to approve was made by Mark Russell, seconded by Rayna Leibowitz and voted: RL Yes, MR Yes, GP Yes This is the second payroll for the three week period between March 23 and April 13.

11.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/Communication

11.1 Board Member Leibowitz advised a review of Town Reports back through 1902 has been completed regarding the Cemetery Trust Funds. A written report will be provided to the Board at the next meeting. Some interesting historical information was gleaned from the reports as well. It was an interesting project.

12.0 Future Agenda Items

12.1 Feedback on Selectman’s Handbook

- 12.2 Town Office Renovation Update
- 12.3 Cemetery Signs
- 12.4 Update regarding the new Dispatching Protocols
- 12.5 March 23, 2020 minutes approval
- 12.6 Road Commissioner's Contract
- 12.7 Annual Town Meeting Date

13.0 Adjournment at 8:43 PM.

Respectfully Submitted By

Rayna Leibowitz