

Town of Litchfield
Select Board
October 12, 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; Michael Sherman, Fire Chief; Road Advisory Committee Members: Tamas Szepsy and Richard Lane; Larry Bell, Chm., and Joline Bell, Broadband Comm.. Others per the sign in sheet.

2.0 Minutes of September 27, 2021 Meeting submitted for final approval. A motion to approve the minutes with typo corrections made was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3- 0.

Minutes of September 2, 2021 Tax Commitment Workshop Meeting submitted for final approval. A motion to approve the minutes as drafted was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3- 0.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence:

3.1 Town Manager: A. Taxes are coming in well. The first installment is due 10/15 with interest starting 10/20.

B. Liens have been filed on 86 properties. This number is slightly lower than last year.

C. A house is vacant on Whippoorwill Road due to the death of the owner. It has cats left in it. The Animal Control Officer was able to catch all but one. A trap has been left. Select Person Leibowitz expressed concern about perishable food left in the house. Kelly will look into steps available to take care of it.

D. The approximate number of patrons for Woodbury Pond Park has been identified. Records are being developed showing this as well as income and expenses and maintenance tasks that are needed. Prior to 2018, the Town received income from the State for the park. Kelly will try to determine the status of this fund source.

E. The MMA Risk Manager provided some training and education for Kelly and information about the program. Kelly found it very useful and interesting.

3.2 Code Enforcement Officer/Plumbing Inspector – A. Steve was absent but had left the Permit Logs for August and September. They showed \$1200 in permit fees was collected for owner-valued improvements of \$982,631.

B. Frank Lane’s property has become an illegal junkyard. Steve will contact him to clean it up to avoid enforcement actions.

C. Dan Field is also again in violation.

D. Steve will be contacting the bank that has foreclosed on the property at 2793 Hallowell Road with instructions to clean up the illegal junkyard there.

3.3 Road Commissioner – A. Larry is absent but he provided Kelly with information for his report. Ditching on Whippoorwill Road is completed.

B. Sand Bagging the Woodbury Pond Dam will be done after the water level is drawn down starting Oct. 15.

C. Larry and Steve met with the Planning Board regarding the new above ground fuel depot

being planned for the lot across from the Town Garage. A Full Site Plan Review by the Planning Board will be required for their November meeting. The Fuel Tanks will be temporary structures.

3.4 Fire & Rescue – A. Chief Sherman advised the Department is working on compliance issues. Equipment is being tested, hose testing is done, pump testing is done. The Forestry and Tanker Pumper are to be done this week.

B. The First Responder class starts 10/18 and runs two nights a week until January. Chief Sherman is taking the class so will not be able to attend the Select Board meetings for the duration.

C. Fire Department log for September –11 responses including 5 accidents, 4 lines down, 1 car fire on the Turnpike and 1 mutual aid to Richmond.

D. There were 30 calls for emergency medical response. Our first responders went to 4 of them.

E. Chief Sherman discussed the accident with a CMP contracted tree trimming crew. A car drove into the back of the chipper. There was no one directing or controlling traffic at the time of the accident.

F. Dry hydrants have been checked by a diver in the past 2 weeks. 8 are OK, one is out of service because of excessive sediment. It is expected to be cleaned next spring.

G. Two day pump classes were held last weekend. They were good training.

3.5 Emergency Management – No report.

3.6 Assessing Agent – Ellery Bane, Assessing Agent will be back 10/21. He was here last week and met with several residents with questions about their tax bills.

3.7 Transfer Station – A. Kelly reported Byran is developing specifications and plans of work for site work for moving the bins so bid documents can be prepared.

3.8 Broadband Committee – A. See 5.2 and 5.3 below.

B. Spectrum’s (cable) franchise agreement is still pending. Spectrum is now stating they want to build out on their nickel.

3.9 Other Town Committees – None offered

4.0 Agenda Adjustments

4.1 2787 Hallowell Rd Update

4.2 Expenditure of ARPA Funds

4.3 Town Constable Appointment

5.0 Scheduled Business

5.1 Bid Opening/acceptance – Winter sand – Gary Parker, Chairman opened the sealed bids for winter sand from (A) St Laurent & Sons, Lewiston for \$13.32/yard and (B) Steve McGee Construction, West Gardiner, for \$10.60/yard. A motion to accept the bid from Steve McGee Construction was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

5.2 Broadband – recommendation to reject bid finalists - Larry Bell, Chairman, recommended rejecting the proposals from Axiom and Spectrum in favor of the proposal from Redzone. A contract attorney, experienced in broadband negotiations has been suggested. Redzone is developing a launch plan. A motion to reject the proposals submitted by Axiom and Spectrum and approve Redzone’s proposal was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

5.3 Broadband – recommendation to approve negotiation/engagement of wireless solution – Our Broadband Consultant has recommended Eaton Peabody, Attorneys at Law of Bangor to represent Litchfield in negotiations with Redzone, intending to get the best package possible. A motion to

contract with Eaton Peabody, Attorneys at Law of Bangor to represent Litchfield in negotiations for a contract with Redzone was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

This was followed by discussion of establishing a public meeting to provide information for interested residents. The meeting was set for Tuesday, Oct. 19, at 6:30 at the Town Office Conference Room.

5.4 Review/sign 2021 Municipal Valuation Return – The State report identifies the taxable valuation of Litchfield at \$363,189,700. Select Person Leibowitz requested the Town Manager obtain the Municipal Valuation Returns for the Towns of Sabattus and Wales. A motion to approve signing the Municipal Valuation Return was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

6.0 Unscheduled Business

6.1 2787 Hallowell Rd Update – the Occupants have left the property. Demolition will occur on Oct.15. The resident removed two items that were wanted. The swimming pool needs disassembly so it will be done after demolition of the building is completed.

6.2 Expenditure of ARPA Funds – Kelly advised the guidance regarding use of American Recovery Act (ARPA) focuses on COVID-19, loss of funds, outdoor activities & parks and revenue lost, stipends for employees working during COVID and Broadband, especially filling the gaps. Litchfield has received \$93,953 which is about 25% of Redzone’s contract amount that is expected to be paid when a contract is signed. A motion to use the funding from ARPA to meet the first payment when negotiations are complete and the contract with Redzone is ready to be signed was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3 – 0.

6.3 Town Constable Appointment – Additional information was requested regarding the training and experience of the candidate. This item was tabled to the next meeting.

8.0 Warrants

8.1 Town Warrant #7 for \$951,429.48. A motion to approve the Warrant# 7 was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3-0.

8.2 School Warrant – October for \$306,328.42 A motion to approve the School Warrant for October was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 2-1.

8.3 Town Payroll #7 for \$22,525.34. A motion to approve the Payroll # 7 was made by Rayna Leibowitz, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 3-0.

9.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/Communications

9.1 Rayna Leibowitz, as Co-Director of the Litchfield Food Bank advised Modern Woodmen has offered a matching grant for the Food Bank up to \$2,500 for donations received October 11 to 31.

10.0 Future Agenda Items

- 10.1 Feedback on Selectman’s Handbook
- 10.2 R02, Lot 015, 2793 Hallowell Rd
- 10.3 R02, Lot 016, 2787 Hallowell Rd.
- 10.4 R02, Lot 017, 2783 Hallowell Rd.
- 10.5 Budget Committee Suggestions
- 10.6 Woodbury Pond Dam Fence
- 10.7 Town Constable Appointment

13.0 Adjournment at 8:10 PM

Respectfully Submitted By

Rayna Leibowitz