

Town of Litchfield
Select Board
November 14, 2022
Meeting Minutes

1.0 Convened at 6:30 PM; Pledge to Flag; Selectmen: Clarence Gowell III (identified as Rick Gowell in these minutes), Scott Weeks; **Staff:** Kelly Weissenfels, Town Manager; Michael Sherman, Fire Chief; Larry Nadeau, Road Comm.; John Upham, Transfer Station Manager; Tom Wood, Budget Comm. Chair; Dian White, Elton Wade and Rayna Leibowitz, Litchfield Academy Trustees; Pat Soboleski, Senior Director. Gary Parker, Chairman, was absent. Rick Gowell presided.

2.0 Minutes of Oct. 24, 2022 Meeting tabled to the next meeting.

3.0 Reports and Correspondence:

3.1 Town Manager: A. Kelly reported the preparation and conduct of the election went well. 1893 votes were cast. The RSU#4 budget vote passed in all 3 towns. Some staff members were out for illnesses but we got through it with no major problems

B. Kelly advised the Maine Turnpike Authority assured him the Route 197 will be open this winter, probably between Dec. 1 and 31.

3.2 Code Enforcement Officer/Plumbing Inspector – A. Kelly reported for Steve who is out. The October Building Permit Log will be presented at the next meeting.

3.3 Road Commissioner – A. Larry Nadeau reported snow is expected Wednesday. All the trucks are geared up and ready. He has a full crew but some are not experienced road plow drivers. Winter sand/salt is in and surplus is currently being delivered.

B. Dead River Road shoulders have been done.

C. Whippoorwill Road overlay is not expected to be done this fall. They will try to get the shoulders addressed.

D. Guard Rails on Buker Road – the company will try to get them repaired this fall.

E. Fire Station yard being paved this week.

F. The Fuel Depot base coat will be done tomorrow. May be completed next week.

3.4 Fire & Rescue – A. Fire apparatus is being housed in the Town Garage while the Fire Station yard is being paved. Chief Sherman expressed appreciation to the Road Commissioner for allowing it,

B. Paving of the base level will be done tomorrow. Good job. Looks right. Water flows where it should. Big improvement. Kudos to the Public Works crew.

C. Chief Sherman is looking into some maintenance on a piece of equipment that may need to be done soon. More info to come on it when he has details.

D. Fire calls for October – 14 including 3 trees down, 4 power lines down, 4 motor vehicle accidents, 1 building fire and 1 carbon monoxide call. There were 27 EMS calls and Litchfield's First Responders responded to 3 of them. It was noted the number of responses by first responders is trending upwards.

E. The Fire Dept. roster is up to 21 with 2 new members within the last 3 months.

3.5 Emergency Management – no report

3.6 Assessing Agent – He was here Nov. 10 to correct an error identified in 4.7 below and will be back here Dec. 14 to address any requests from residents after receiving their tax bills.

3.7 Transfer Station – A. John Upham reported a total of 2316 stickers have been issued. Collection containers were emptied as required. The final efforts on rehabilitation of the bottle room have now been completed. A new bush hog has been purchased for the tractor. Thanks to the Public Works Dept. for picking it up and delivering it in the rain this past weekend. Tires continue to be brought in. The tire container is almost full again. A part time worker has terminated employment for health reasons. John is getting good feedback from residents regarding the new placement of the recycling containers together. They will be monitoring the traffic flow to determine what, if any, changes would benefit the flow.

3.8 Other Town Committees – No reports

4.0 Scheduled Business

4.1 Set and sign Property Tax Commitment – A motion to set the tax rate for 2022 at \$15.72 per thousand was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 2 – 0. This will allow the tax bills to be prepared. Distribution is expected the first week in December.

4.2 Sign Municipal Valuation Return 2022 provided by State Property Tax Division – Kelly advised this is required to be signed and submitted within 30 days of the tax commitment. A motion to approve and sign the Municipal Valuation Return 2022 provided by State Property Tax Division was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 2 – 0.

4.3 Review/Approve Fire Department Cost Recovery Contract – Prior to this meeting, the document had been reviewed by the Select Board, Fire Chief, Town Attorney and Central Maine Cost Recovery resulting in some minor changes. A motion to approve the final contract and authorize the Town Manager to sign it on behalf of the Town of Litchfield was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 2 – 0.

4.4 Review/Approve Foreclosed Property Sales - Kelly advised the Town Attorney has reviewed and approved the process being used as well as providing some forms for documenting the transactions. Also, he advised a new foreclosure item has been added to the list which is a mobile home on Nutting Lane which does not include the land (see 4) below). A buyer is interested in it. Other properties to be advertised are 1) Peace Pipe Drive, Map U28, Lot 86 which is a very small lot, formerly a coal bin. The minimum bid will be \$1,000; 2) 2787 Hallowell Road; 3) R03, Lot 41 on the Richmond Road (former location of the Ferrin School; 4) 13 Nutting Lane, mobile home only, buyer will be required to remove it or contract with landowner for lot rent and 5) 1372 Hallowell Road. The small lot near the Maxwell Road cannot be offered for sale as research found it was purchased by the town and not obtained through foreclosure. Sale of this lot will require an affirmative vote at Town Meeting so Kelly will prepare a warrant article for it for the next Town Meeting.

The schedule for advertising was discussed and bids will be accepted until 4:00 PM on December 12, 2022 and they will be opened at 7:00 PM on Dec. 12. This schedule was accepted on a motion made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 2 – 0.

4.5 Review Litchfield Academy Windows Bid – Discussion was held but additional information is needed to finalize it.

4.6 Approve \$271,561.01 from Road Bond for Whippoorwill Rd. Paving Invoices (Warrant #13). The Budget Committee has requested more detail regarding the breakdown of costs to be compared with the original estimate approved by the Select Board. A motion to approve the transfer of funds in the amount of \$271,561.01 was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 2 – 0.

4.7 Abatement – Tree Growth Penalty Issued in Error – Chadd & Jennifer Hill, R11, 015B

There had been no payment of the supplemental tax bill approved at the last meeting. A further review of the situation identified an error had been made relating to the dates the Forest Management Plan was required and no supplemental tax bill was indicated as a penalty. Approval of this abatement will correct that error. A motion to approve the abatement of a Tree Growth Penalty issued in error was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 2 – 0.

4.8 Schedule Public Hearing for Junkyard Permit Renewal Application – Levi Bolton, 1062 Plains Rd. - This was scheduled for Monday, December 12 at 7:30 PM.

4.9 Schedule Second Review Day for Personnel Policy – set for Dec. 19, 2022 at 7:30 AM.

4.10 Approve Canceling Dec. 26 Select Board Meeting – A motion to cancel the Select Board meeting for December 26 was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 2 – 0.

5.0 Unscheduled Business

5.1 Sportsmens Club Pond Washout Potential – There was concern expressed regarding potential failure of the containment which is a primary source for filling water tankers for the Fire Department. It appears beavers have moved in and are working hard to block the outflow from the pond. Contact will be made with the Wildlife Warden and the Dept. of Transportation (if necessary) regarding beaver removal.

6.0 Appointments/Resignations

6.1 Kelly Eaton, Ad Hoc RSU#4 Withdrawal Investigation Committee – A motion to appoint Kelly Eaton to the Ad Hoc RSU#4 Withdrawal Investigation Committee was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 2 – 0.

7.0 Warrants

7.1 Town Warrant # 13 for \$385,505.25, A motion to approve the Warrant # 13 for \$385,505.25 was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 2 – 0.

7.2 Warrant #14 for \$348,777.42. A motion to approve the Warrant # 14 for \$348,777.42 was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 2 – 0. There was discussion about payment of costs that were previously made and what additional monies are due. Kelly advised an adjustment will be made in the next payroll after tax bills have been sent out and the cash flow is improved.

7.3 Town Payroll # 9 for \$27,594.39. A motion to approve the Payroll #9 for \$27,594.39 was made by Scott Weeks, seconded by Rick Gowell and voted 2 – 0.

8.0 Selectmen/Public Discussion/Communication

8.1 There was brief discussion about the Policy Committee consideration and a recommendation for not more than 5 members was made.

8.2 Scott advised he will not be here for the Select Board meeting the second Monday in February, 2023.

9.0 Future Agenda Items

9.1 Feedback on Selectman's Handbook

9.2 R02, Lot 017, 2783 Hallowell Rd.

9.3 2783 Hallowell Rd Update

- 9.4 Creating a Policy Committee (up to 5)
- 9.5 Building Permit Log for October
- 9.6 Litchfield Academy Windows Bid

13.0 Adjournment at 8:10 PM

Respectfully Submitted By

Rayna Leibowitz