

Town of Litchfield, New Hampshire

Board of Selectmen

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Meeting Date: 12/09/19

Call to Order: 6:30 pm

Meeting Location: Town Hall

Meeting Called By: Board of Selectmen
Type of Meeting: Selectmen's Meeting
Facilitator: Steven J. Webber

Note Taker: Matthew Sullivan
Minutes Approved: ___/___/_____

In Attendance: Troy Brown, Town Administrator
Memo: Karen White was in attendance

Selectmen in attendance:
1. Steven J. Webber, Chairman
2. F. Robert Leary, Sr.
3. Brent T. Lemire
4. Kevin A. Lynch
5. Kurt Schaefer

No Selectmen were absent:

Agenda Topic: Call to Order

Presenter: Selectman S. Webber

1. 5:30 pm – Paperwork Review
2. 6:30 pm – Call to Order
3. 6:30 pm – Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Topic: Review and Approval of Consent Items

Presenter: Selectman S. Webber

1. Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes from November 25, 2019
2. Accounts Payable Manifest from December 3, 2019, of \$56,402.81, and December 10, 2019, of \$152,144.09.
3. Payroll Manifest from December 5, 2019, of \$87,631.98, and December 12, 2019, of \$66,536.36.
4. Land-use Change Tax (3)

Vote 1:

Discussion: None

Motion (Selectman B. Lemire / Selectman K. Lynch) To approve the Items of Consent.

Vote: (4-0-1) The motion carried. (Selectman K. Schaefer abstained)

Vote 2:

Discussion: Selectman B. Lemire remembered he was excused from the November 25th meeting and he should have abstained from voting.

Motion (Selectman K. Lynch / Selectman R. Leary) To approve the Items of Consent.

Vote: (3-0-2) The motion carried. (Selectman K. Schaefer and Selectman B. Lemire abstained)

Agenda Topic: Items Moved from Consent

Presenter: Selectman S. Webber

1. None

Agenda Topic: Items Added to Consent

Presenter: Selectman S. Webber

1. None

Agenda Topic: Public Input

Presenter: Selectman S. Webber

1. None

Agenda Topic: Business

Presenter: Selectman S. Webber

1. **NRPC Commissioner – Joshua Smith (term expires – 3/31/2021):**

- a. The Planning Board has voted to support Joshua Smith’s appointment to the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) as a board member.
- b. The seat has not been filled for a couple of years.
- c. Joshua Smith was unable to attend the Board of Selectmen meeting.
- d. Joshua Smith will try to attend the December 16th meeting. If he is unable to attend, he will meet the Selectmen at the beginning of 2020.

2. **Acceptance of Unanticipated Funds for Talent Hall- \$3,000.00:**

- a. The Litchfield Pickleball Association has donated \$3,000 to the Rec Commission.
- b. The Litchfield Pickleball Association informed the Rec Commission that no strings were attached to the donation.
- c. T.A. Troy Brown informed the Selectmen that the Rec Commission would like to use the donation to improve Talent Hall.
- d. Selectman Brent Lemire asked the town administrator if the Selectmen had to decide how the money was spent, or could the Selectmen allow the Rec Commission to make the decision. T.A. Troy Brown stated the Selectmen were only accepting the money with the condition that the money is used for improvements to Talent Hall.

Discussion: Selectman K. Lynch stated, “I want to make it clear that the donation is for the building maintenance”. Chairman S. Webber stated “The motion was for any Talent Hall improvements’. Selectman K. Lynch agreed.

Motion (Selectman B. Lemire / Selectman K. Schaefer) I move to accept the unanticipated funds, in the amount of \$3,000, from the Litchfield Pickleball Association to be used for the Talent Hall building improvements at the discretion of the Rec Commission.

Vote: (5-0-0) The motion carried.

3. **Pat Jewett Volunteer Appreciation Award:**

- a. Laura Gandia spoke to T.A. T. Brown about the town making a formal announcement that the town is accepting applications for the 2020 Pat Jewett Volunteer Appreciation Award.
- b. John Brunelle has posted the announcement on the town’s website and social media.
- c. The deadline for nominations is February 7, 2020.
- d. The Board of Selectmen will discuss at the next meeting when to have the ceremony.
- e. T.A. Troy Brown mentioned that Pat Jewett’s birthday is March 1st.

4. **PSNH / Eversource Property Tax Settlement Agreement:**

- a. T.A. T. Brown mentioned the tax abatement appeal has been pending for several years.
- b. A settlement agreement has been reached. The attorney's for Litchfield, as well as other towns, have negotiated the settlement.
- c. A settlement agreement will settle the 2015 tax appeal. The settlement is in the amount of \$46,905.
- d. The town was aware of this when they set the overlay and the tax rate for 2019.
- e. There are funds available to make this payment before the town closes the fiscal year-end.

Discussion: None

Motion (Selectman K. Schaefer / Selectman B. Lemire) I would like to motion to approve the settlement agreement with Public Service of New Hampshire (PSNH) in regard to the disputed tax year of 2015 in the amount of \$46,905 to be paid from the 2019 overlay amount.

Vote: (5-0-0) The motion carried.

5. **2019 Budget Projections:**

- a. The town is looking at an unexpended balance of \$128,000.
- b. **The Board of Selectmen:**
 - i. The Board of Selectmen's budget had an overage of \$11,787.
 - ii. The overage is primarily based on the health insurance cost for the library employee. The Selectmen had agreed to cover any of the unbudgeted costs. Because the town did not have a budget to charge the expense to, the Board of Selectmen decided to charge the expense to the Board of Selectmen health insurance line.
- c. **Personnel Administration:**
 - i. The Personnel Administration budget had an overage of \$10,925.
 - ii. The majority of the overage was caused by payroll costs associated with the New Hampshire State Retirement for both the union and non-union employees.
 - iii. A portion of the overage is covered by the allotment that the town has set aside for the performance-based wages. The town also had a special warrant article for the union contract. The funds were raised to cover the costs of the union contract.
- d. **Cemeteries:**
 - i. The Cemeteries budget had an overage of \$5,704.
 - ii. The Cemetery Trustees had an overage this year because the community service program was eliminated.
 - iii. The contract the trustees have with the lawn mowing and maintenance is on a cost per cut basis.
- e. **Road Maintenance:**
 - i. The Road Maintenance budget had an overage of \$6,277.
 - ii. T.A. Troy Brown believes that for the first time in a long time the town will exceed the Road Maintenance budget.
 - iii. Chairman Webber mentioned the recent snowstorms have forced the town to use up a large amount of salt for the roads.
 1. The Road-Agent and his staff have turned in 45 hours of overtime, because of the snowstorms.
 2. The contractors have not submitted their time, but the town administrator believes the hours will be similar.
- f. **Animal Control:**

- i. The Animal Control budget had an overage of \$13,535.
- ii. T.A. T. Brown stated the overage was caused by the fact that the heating system broke.
- iii. The town charged the cost to replace the heating system. The town was also forced to use electricity to heat the building last year.
- iv. These two factors created the overage for the Animal Control budget.

g. Revaluation of Property:

- i. The Revaluation of Property budget had unspent funds of \$46,325.
- ii. TA Troy Brown will ask the Selectmen to encumber \$50,000 from this line item. The amount of encumbered funds will match the proposed amount for the 2020 budget.
- iii. The town administrator expects a \$90,000 cost for the revaluation of property in 2020.

h. Legal Expenses:

- i. The Legal Expenses budget had unspent funds of \$34,000.
- ii. The town still has two months of unprocessed legal expenses.
- iii. A large reason for the unspent funds is the special funds set aside for St. Gobain.

i. Police Administration:

- i. The Police Administration budget had unspent funds of \$22,620.
- ii. The most likely reason for the unspent funds was the town had an officer out on military leave.
- iii. This amount could decrease because of vacations, holidays, and winter storms.

j. Total Turn-back:

- i. The amount could decrease, but the town is estimating a \$128,000 turn-back.

Agenda Topic: Public Input - started at 6:51 pm

Presenter: Selectman S. Webber

- 1. None

Public Input closed at 6:51 pm.

Agenda Topic: Business (continued)

Presenter: Selectman S. Webber

6. 2019 Re-encumbrances:

a. Fire Department:

- i. The software to help bridge the Hudson and Litchfield fire departments has been put on hold. John Brunelle and Chief Fraitzl have requested the funds be re-encumbered.

01-9551.17-001	Fire Department	Software Contract to Bridge Hudson and Litchfield	\$5,000
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b. Recreation Commission:

- i. T.A. T. Brown stated that the Recreation Commission is looking to spend the remaining \$459.15. One idea is to purchase benches for the John Bryant River Access.

01-9551.17-002	Rec Commission	John Bryant River Access Project	\$459.15
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c. Police Department:

- i. T.A. T. Brown stated the funds were intended to purchase equipment that would allow the police officers to identify drivers who have a criminal record. The police department was hoping to receive state funds to help purchase the equipment.

01-4210.10-740	Police Dept.	Speed and Traffic Enforcement Equipment	\$15,000
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d. General Government Building:

- i. T.A. T. Brown intended to meet with different vendors and receive quotes for furniture in the TA, Finance, and Selectmen's Office. The time was not available to meet with the vendors this year.

01-4194.10-750	Gen Gov't Build	Furniture for TA, Finance, and Selectmen's Office	\$5,000
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e. Information Technology:

- i. T.A. T. Brown stated that John Brunelle may spend the \$9,341.87 before the end of the year. If not, John Brunelle would like to re-encumber the remaining funds.

01-4150.20-740	Info. Technology	Miscellaneous Info Technology Equipment	\$9,341.87
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7. New Encumbrances:

a. Cemetery Trustees:

- i. The cemetery trustees have requested that \$5,000 be encumbered. The money would allow the trustees to remove trees at the Hillcrest, Pinecrest, and Muster site cemeteries.

01-4195.10.650	Cemetery	Tree Removal Muster Site	\$5,000
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b. General Government Building Maintenance:

- i. The countertop at the Town Clerk's office needs replacement. The trim work has fallen off the countertop. The new computer equipment does not fit the old countertop. The replacement of the countertop would be all-new material.

01-4194.10-630	Gen Gov't Bldg Maintenance	Town Clerk Countertop	\$6,000
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c. IT Equipment Purchase:

- i. These funds would help John Brunelle complete the door security - phase II.

01-4150.20-740	IT Equipment Purchase	Door Security Phase II	\$25,000
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d. Assessing Revaluation Property:

01-4152.10-312	Assessing Revaluation Property	2020 Update	\$50,000
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e. General Government Building Maintenance:

- i. T.A. T. Brown mentioned that the current HVAC unit at the Town Hall and Police Station is at the end of its lifespan. TA Troy Brown requested a proposal to replace the HVAC units. The price to replace all the units is \$80,000. Each unit is a separate stand-alone unit. This allows the town to replace units at different times.

01-4194.10-630	Gen Gov't Bldg Maintenance	Town Hall, Police HVAC Replacement	\$50,000
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8. 2020 Draft Warrant Articles:

a. Operating Budget:

- i. The Budget Committee has approved is \$7,067,631. The budget is not final, the Budget Committee still have public hearings to go through.

b. Default Budget:

- i. The Default Budget appears to be set at \$7,050,661. The difference between the current 2020 Operating Budget and Default Budget is only \$16,970.

c. Article Three -Full-Time Highway Department Employee:

- i. The budget for the new full-time Highway Department employee is \$35,964. The tax impact is four cents. The full-time Highway Department employee will be effective on 7/1/2020.
 - 1. 2020 - The new position will have six months of cost to the town. The costs include wages, health insurance, dental insurance, and payroll taxes.
 - 2. 2021 - The position will have an estimated 12-month cost.

d. Article Four - Public Safety Communication System:

- i. The price of the Public Safety Communication System is estimated to cost \$700,000.
 - 1. The \$700,000 will be leased over five years.
 - 2. The yearly payments for the new Public Safety Communication System will be \$147,474.
 - 3. The tax impact is 16 cents.
- ii. Selectman R. Leary suggested leasing the communication system over a longer period time. The belief is the system is expected to have a lifetime of 20 years.
- iii. The town administrator will work with the leasing company to receive new leasing figures for five, eight, and ten years.

- iv. The town administrator advised the Selectmen not to word the Warrant Article 'not to exceed \$700,000'. The reason for not wording the Warrant Article with a definitive figure is the prohibiting of spending \$5000 if the final project cost was \$705,000.

e. **Library - Expendable Trust Fund:**

- i. \$5,000 will be placed in the Library Trustees Expendable Trust Fund. The tax impact is one cent.

f. **Article Five - Health and Human Services Agencies:**

- i. The budget for the Health and Human Services Agencies is \$25,000. TA Troy Brown was not sure if he would have the exact budget number by the meeting on December 16th.
- ii. Chairman S. Webber asked when the Warrant Articles needed to be approved. TA Troy Brown said the Warrant Articles are typically signed in early January.
- iii. Selectman K. Lynch asked that TA Troy Brown send the Selectmen the dates for the Deliberative Session and the Budget Hearings.

g. **Article Six - General Assistance - Expendable Trust Fund:**

- i. The Expendable Trust Fund will be funded with \$10,000. The tax impact is one cent.

h. **Article Seven - Darrah Pond Milfoil Treatment:**

- i. The town administrator received correspondence from Solitude Lake Management. After assessing Darrah Pond, Solitude Lake Management is advising a three-year treatment plan. The cost of the plan is estimated at \$35,000.
- ii. Selectman B. Lemire asked if the state-assisted with funding for the milfoil treatment. TA Troy Brown stated there is a chance for state-assisted funding.

i. **Article Eight - Painting of the Old Town Hall:**

- i. The town administrator received an estimate of \$25,000 to paint the old Town Hall.
- ii. The Unassigned Fund Balance would be used to pay for the painting of the old Town Hall.
- iii. There will be no tax impact.

j. **Article Nine - Purchase a Plow Truck:**

- i. The estimated cost to purchase a plow truck is \$100,000.
- ii. The truck will be purchased with the cash from the Unassigned Fund Balance.
- iii. There will be no tax impact.

k. **Article Ten - Replenish Building Systems Trust Fund:**

- i. \$50,000 will be moved from the Unassigned Fund Balance to the Building Systems Trust Fund.
- ii. There will be no tax impact.

l. **Article Eleven - The Technology & Communications Expendable Trust Fund:**

- i. \$25,000 would be moved from the Unassigned Fund Balance and transferred to the Technology & Communications Expendable Trust Fund.
- ii. There will be no tax impact.

m. **Article Twelve - Community Center Design:**

- i. The Rec Commission wants to have a vote to see if the residents are interested in having the Rec Commission investigate the need to construct a new community center.

n. **Petition Article - Elderly Exemptions:**

9. **2020 Default Budget:**

- a. T.A. Troy Brown and Finance Manager, Karen White have gone through the 2020 Default Budget line by line.
- b. T.A. Troy Brown and Finance Manager, Karen White agree that the 2020 Default Budget is similar to what was approved last year.
 - i. The 2020 Default Budget will only carry one police cruiser, instead of two.
 - ii. The 2020 Default Budget will have an increase because of the benefit costs of the union contract.
 - iii. The 2020 Default Budget will have an increase because of wage increases for the non-union employees.
- c. The Default Budget is set at \$7,050,661.

Agenda Topic: Other Business

Presenter: Town Admin. Troy Brown

1. None

Agenda Topic: Administrator Report

Presenter: Town Admin. Troy Brown

1. **Christmas Eve Party:**
 - a. T.A. Troy Brown requested the Board of Selectmen approve Town Hall closing at noon on December 24th. This would allow all the employees to attend the annual Christmas party.

Discussion: None

Motion (Selectman B. Lemire / Selectman K. Schaefer) I move to approve the administrative request.

Vote: (5-0-0) The motion carried.

2. **Meetings:**
 - a. December 16, 2019 @ 6:30 pm - Meeting
 - b. December 23, 2019 @ 6:30 pm - Meeting

Agenda topic: Selectman Reports

Presenter: Selectman S. Webber

Selectman S. Webber - Conservation Commission:

1. Selectman S. Webber had nothing to report.

Selectman K. Schaefer - Rec Commission:

1. Selectman K. Schaefer had nothing to report.

Selectman Robert Leary, Jr. - Budget Committee:

1. The Budget Committee will work on the 2020 School Budget, at their next meeting.

Selectman Brent T. Lemire - Heritage Committee:

1. The Heritage Committee reviewed its first demolition permit. The Heritage Committee will be allowed to take pictures of the house that is being demolished.

Selectman Kevin A. Lynch - Planning Board:

1. Selectman K. Lynch mentioned that the Planning Board met. The compliance meeting for Mel's Funway was postponed.

Agenda Topic: Adjourn the Public Portion of Meeting

Presenter: Selectman S. Webber

Motion To Enter Non-Public Session (Roll Call Vote)

Discussion: Selectman R. Leary wanted to remind the residents of Litchfield to be patient. The interim Road Agent and his staff are doing the best they can. The Road Agent had to deal with equipment breakdowns and employee health issues.

Motion (Selectman R. Lemire / Selectman K. Schaefer) motion to enter non-public session per RSA cited below:

1. RSA 91-A:3, II(a) - The dismissal, promotion or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a public meeting, and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted.
2. RSA 91-A:3, II(b) - The hiring of a public employee.

Roll Call Vote:

- a. Selectman R. Leary - yes
- b. Selectman B. Lemire - yes
- c. Selectman K. Lynch - yes
- d. Selectman K. Schaefer - yes
- e. Selectman S. Webber - yes

(5-0-0) Motion passed

Entered Non-Public Session:

7:21 pm

Reconvene Public Session:

8:27pm

Motion Made To Adjourn:

Motion: Selectman Lynch motioned and seconded by Selectman Leary to adjourn the meeting.

Vote: (5-0-0)

The meeting adjourned at 8:27mpm.

Approved by the Board of Selectmen:

Steven J. Webber, Chairman

Kurt D. Schaefer, Vice Chairman

F. Robert Leary, Sr.

Brent T. Lemire

Kevin A. Lynch