

Town of Litchfield, New Hampshire

Board of Selectmen

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Meeting Date: 06/22/20

Call to Order: 6:37 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

In Attendance:

Troy Brown, Town Administrator
Thersa Briand, Town Clerk

Selectmen in attendance:

1. Steven J. Webber, Chairman
2. F. Robert Leary, Sr., Vice Chairman
3. Richard W. Lascelles
4. Kevin A. Lynch
5. John E. Pinciario

No Selectmen were absent:

Memo:

John Brunelle hosted the virtual meeting by using Webex

Agenda Topic: Call to Order

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

1. 5:30 pm - Paperwork Review
2. 6:30 pm - Call to Order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance
3. Chairman Steve Webber took a moment to read a prepared statement about the preliminary property assessment notices that homeowners received this weekend.

“The state requires that all the property in a municipality be assessed at its full or true market value. Further, New Hampshire’s Constitution Part Two (Form of Government), Article Six (Valuation and Taxation) requires that each municipality takes value anew, every five years. The town has no control over this action.”

“Based on its newest estimates, The New Hampshire Department of Revenue Association (DRA) will issue a new rate, which will be reflective in the December bill. The 2020 School Budget was approved by the voters at the March Town Election. The New Hampshire DRA will set the new tax rate to meet these dollars around the September timeframe. Your property taxes are then calculated by taking your assessment, dividing by 1,000, and then multiplying by the tax rate. The assessors, Avitar Associates, are state certified individuals whose duties are to discover, list, and value all taxable property in the municipality in a uniform and equitable manner. Please take the time to verify that your tax cut is correct and get any errors that we visited. If you feel your assessment is incorrect, please reach out to Avitar Associates at the email address on the letter you received. I have asked the Town Administrator, Mr. Brown, to request that Avitar Associates attend the next meeting to discuss the process, guidelines, and information they used in setting the preliminary assessment values, so we all understand how these values were arrived at.”

Agenda Topic: Review and Approval of Consent Items

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

1. June 8, 2020 Meeting Minutes
2. A/P Manifest: 6/16/2020 - \$430,679.58 & 6/23/2020 - \$25,298.80
3. P/R Manifest: 6/18/2020 - \$80,576.56 & 6/25/2020 - \$67,349.05
4. Abatement
5. Intent to Cut

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman Robert Leary / Selectman Richard Lascelles) So moved

Roll Call Vote:

1. Selectman J. Lascelles - yes
2. Selectman R. Leary - yes
3. Selectman K. Lynch - yes
4. Selectman J. Pinciario - yes
5. Selectman S. Webber - yes

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

Agenda Topic: Items Moved from Consent

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

1. None

Agenda Topic: Items Added to Consent

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

1. None

Agenda Topic: Business

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

1. **Investment Policy:**

Second Reading:

- a. T. A. Troy Brown commented that at the last Board of Selectmen's meeting he reviewed the town's Investment Policy. The Investment Policy has been in place for several years, and there has not been a need to make any changes. State law requires the Board of Selectmen to review and adopt the Investment Policy for the investment of public funds.
- b. The policy's primary purpose is not only to remain in compliance but also to preserve the safety of the fund's principal. The policy requires that the Town Treasurer make investments that still allows the town to have access to the cash.
- c. The policy also requires that the town maintain the annual bonding levels through the property liability insurance carriers. The employees who handle the cash must maintain a certain bonding level.
- d. The Town Treasurer can delegate the authority to deposit funds. The Town Treasurer has authorized the Town Clerk / Tax Collector and the Deputy Clerk to make deposits. The deposits happen daily or at least weekly. The Board of Selectmen already acted on the Town Treasurers delegation of authority.
- e. Chairman Steve Webber asked the Selectmen if they had any changes or comments to the Investment Policy. No comments or changes were made.

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman K. Lynch / Selectman R. Leary) I make a motion to accept the Investment Policy as written.

Roll Call Vote:

1. Selectman J. Lascelles - yes
2. Selectman R. Leary - yes
3. Selectman K. Lynch - yes
4. Selectman J. Pinciario - yes
5. Selectman S. Webber - yes

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

2. **HVAC Cleaning:**

- a. T.A. T. Brown mentioned that at the last meeting one of the action items was to have the Town Hall, including the police station, ventilation system cleaned. Since the building was constructed, the town has performed annual and quarterly preventative maintenance. In the last twenty years, the town has not had a company come into Town Hall and clean out the ductwork.
- b. Selectman Kevin Lynch confirmed that over the past twenty years, the ductwork had never been cleaned. The town only maintained the ducts by changing the filters.
- c. T.A. Troy Brown contacted the HVAC company, and they said that they do not provide the cleaning service, and they did not have a company they could recommend. The HVAC company heard that a business by the name of Armstrong Duct, Vent, Hearth & Home, out of Manchester, provides ventilation cleaning. T.A. Troy Brown contacted Armstrong Duct, Vent, Hearth & Home, they came down to Town Hall and did a walkthrough of the building. The company informed T.A. Troy Brown that the ventilation cleaning would be straight-forward without any complications.
- d. The quote that was provided was \$5,850. T.A. Troy Brown stated that he wanted to run this by the board and make sure they were all in agreement. He believed that the cost of the cleaning would be 100% reimbursable.
- e. Vice-Chairman Robert Leary was concerned that most ventilation cleaning companies would charge \$500 to clean the ventilation of a house, and Armstrong Duct, Vent, Hearth & Home was charging \$5,850. T.A. Troy Brown mentioned that the cost was probably because the building has five heating and cooling systems. Typically, a residential house only has one HVAC unit. Selectman Kevin Lynch commented that a building with five HVAC systems has more extended ductwork than a residential home.
- f. Selectman Rich Lascelles requested that the Board of Selectmen receive one more quote for cleaning the ductwork. Selectman Robert Leary agreed that one more quote was needed. Chairman Steve Webber asked T.A. Troy Brown to get one more quote for cleaning the ductwork.

Agenda Topic: Public Input

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

1. None

Agenda Topic: Business (Continued)

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

1. **2021 Budget Process:**

- a. T.A. Troy Brown mentioned that the Budget Committee is already preparing their meeting schedule. He has already spoken to Chairman Andrew Cutter about the Budget Committee's schedule. The plan is based on the fact that the town will be prepared to present the budget.
- b. T.A. Troy Brown wanted to have a conversation with the Board of Selectmen and their expectations. He wanted to know if they had any guidance that they wished to provide.
- c. Chairman Steve Webber commented that the town would be constrained financially next year. He would like to see a zero-based budgeting approach. He wants to break down every budget in the town and assess where every dollar is coming from and what the funds are being allocated for.
- d. Chairman Steve Webber would also like to limit the Warrant Articles this year. The town can expect a Warrant Article for the Operating Budget, and if things go well, one for the Police Union. Vice-Chairman Robert Leary and Selectman Rich Lascelles agreed that the town needs a very tight budget for 2021.
- e. Selectman Rich Lascelles said he was a big fan of Jimmy Carter, who believed in the zero-based budget in the mid to late 1970s.

- f. T.A. Troy Brown mentioned that he would create a budget schedule between now and the next Board of Selectmen's meeting. He will also work on the proposed language to define a zero-based budget.
- g. Selectman John Pinciario said that he was on the Board of Selectmen with Frank Byron. Unless one has a certain amount of money already appropriated, zero-based budgeting is hard to do.

2. **Public Meetings During Covid-19:**

- a. T.A. Troy Brown said that the new guidelines allow for a gathering of ten people or more. T.A. Troy Brown spoke with the Emergency Management Team and discovered that room capacity would be an issue. After measuring the meeting room, He realized that the town would struggle to allow more than eight.
- b. T.A. Troy Brown provided an example by using the Planning Board. The Planning Board consists of seven members, and typically they have presenters for the property owner. The presenters can be architects and engineers. The meeting room could easily have 12 to 15 people per meeting.
- c. At this time, T.A. Troy Brown does not believe that meetings can occur where residents can attend. He believes that the meetings during the month of July should remain virtual.
- d. Vice-Chairman Robert Leary suggested that the meetings occur at Griffin Memorial gymnasium or Talent Hall. T.A. Troy Brown and Chairman Steve Webber said that would not be an option. Talent Hall, for example, does not have the bandwidth capability needed to have the meeting.
- e. T.A. Troy Brown commented that the auditorium was mentioned as an option, but they believed using the hall was unfair to the School District. The School District is trying to ensure that the schools are properly cleaned for the students to return in the fall safely.
- f. Chairman Steve Webber mentioned that the next step would be to have the board meet in the conference room, and everyone else would be virtual. The larger committees would need to have a size limit because of the six-foot radius requirement.
- g. Vice-Chairman Robert Leary said that when it came to the Board of Selectmen, the room would consist of the five Selectmen, the Town Administrator, and an LCTV member. Chairman Steve Webber said that LCTV could record the meetings remotely.
- h. T.A. Troy Brown mentioned that the end of August and the month of September would be spent on budget development.

3. **July & August BOS Meeting:**

- a. Last week T.A. Troy Brown sent an email to the Board of Selectmen. The email informed the board that he would be going on vacation right around July 4. He would return from vacation on July 13. T.A. Troy Brown and Chairman Steve Webber put together a proposed schedule for meetings.
 - i. Monday, June 29 - CIP Committee
 - ii. Monday, July 13 - CIP Committee
 - iii. Monday, July 20 - Board of Selectmen
 - iv. Monday, July 27 - Board of Selectmen
 - v. Monday, August 10 - Board of Selectmen
 - vi. Monday, August 17 - Board of Selectmen
 - vii. Monday, August 24 - Board of Selectmen
 - viii. Monday, August 31 - Board of Selectmen
- b. Selectman Kevin Lynch wanted to know why the Town Clerk & Tax Collector could not manage the town while T.A. Troy Brown is on vacation. T.A. Troy Brown commented that Town Clerk Theresa Briand would be on vacation from July 6 through July 13.
- c. Selectman John Pinciario was concerned that 14 business days were too long to go between the Board of Selectmen meetings. Chairman Steve Webber mentioned that the Board of Selectmen went from May 11 until June 8 without a Board of Selectmen's meeting.
- d. The majority of the Board of Selectmen were uncomfortable with the proposed schedule. The Board of Selectmen agreed to the following meeting schedule:
 - i. Monday, June 29 - CIP Committee

- ii. Monday, July 13 – Board of Selectmen
- iii. Monday, July 20 – CIP Committee
- iv. Monday, July 27 – Board of Selectmen
- v. Monday, August 10 – Board of Selectmen
- vi. Monday, August 17 – Board of Selectmen
- vii. Monday, August 24 – Board of Selectmen
- viii. Monday, August 31 – Board of Selectmen

- e. Selectman John Pinciario asked if there would be any supervision of Town Hall by an Administrator from Monday, July 6 through Monday, July 13. T.A. Troy Brown mentioned that Town Hall is a small workforce. This is not the first time that both he and Town Clerk Theresa Briand have been on vacation at the same time.
- f. Selectman Kevin Lynch mentioned that he was not concerned about the supervision. He was more concerned with scheduling the Board of Selectmen meetings. He believes that the two girls in Town Hall can handle the show. Selectman Kevin Lynch’s other concern is that residents may expect the town employees to answer a question about the assessment. He asked Chairman Steve Webber if what he read at the beginning of the meeting could be placed on the town website. Chairman Steve Webber responded that the residents should contact Avitar Associates to request an appointment or meeting. He suggested that LCTV and the website should list whom to contact with any questions about the assessment.
- g. Vice-Chairman Robert Leary asked if the residents knew how to access their tax cards. Chairman Steve Webber said that the letter from Avitar Associates provided step-by-step instructions to access their tax card.
- h. Selectman Kevin Lynch asked if the town could send the residents an electronic copy of their tax card. T.A. Troy Brown said that the town could either fax or mail a copy of the tax card. The Board of Selectmen agreed with faxing the document but did not agree with mailing a copy to the resident.
- i. Selectman John Pinciario recommended that the Town Administrator and Finance Director / Asst. TA take vacations on different weeks; starting 2021. Separate vacation weeks would allow for a supervisor to be present at Town Hall.

4. **Next Meeting(s):**

- a. July 13, 2020 @ 6:30 pm
- b. July 27, 2020 @ 6:30 pm
- c. August 10, 2020 @ 6:30 pm

Agenda topic: Administrator’s Report

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

- 1. None

Agenda topic: Selectmen Reports

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

Selectman Steve J. Webber – Rec Commission & CIP Committee:

- 1. The Rec Commission will meet tomorrow night, June 23, at 7:30 pm.
- 2. The last CIPC was on June 15. The Conservation Commission requested \$2,000,000. The funds would be used to purchase land over the next five years. Chief Frank Fraitzl requested the purchase and replacement of two fire trucks. The first replacement would be the 29-year old tanker. The second replacement would be the 25-year old fire engine. The tanker and fire engine cost are about \$650,000 each. Chief Benjamin Sargent came in and

requested \$6,000,000 million to build a new police station. The construction cost is around \$4,000,000, and outfitting the building is an additional \$2,000,000.

3. Chairman Steve Webber mentioned that the Selectmen previously discussed permitting the Millennial race. He will sign the permit for the race to occur next week. The race starts at Sawmill Park and goes into Manchester, and part of Londonderry. T.A. Troy Brown said the race would give priority to Litchfield residents.

Selectman Robert Leary Jr. - Budget Committee:

1. The Budget Committee will meet on Thursday, June 25. The Budget Committee is starting to hear everything occurring with the Capital Improvement Planning Committee (CIPC).

Selectman Kevin A. Lynch - Planning Board:

1. Selectman Kevin Lynch did not go to the last Planning Board meeting because he was under the weather.

Selectman John E. Pinciario - Conservation Commission:

1. Selectman John Pinciario had nothing to report.

Selectman Richard W. Lascelles - Heritage Commission:

1. Selectmen Rich Lascelles commented that last week he had a good meeting with Police Chief Benjamin Sargent. Selectman Rich Lascelles and Chief Benjamin Sargent cleared the air. He assured Chief Benjamin Sargent that he supports the police department. They talked about the recruitment for the police department, the screening, and the psychological testing at the police academy. Chief Benjamin Sargent answered Selectman Rich Lascelles' questions and put his mind at ease. Selectman Rich Lascelles mentioned to Chief Benjamin Sargent; the Litchfield School District needs more in-person School Resource Officers (SRO). He particularly would like an SRO at Campbell High School. Selectman Rich Lascelles, Selectman Kevin Lynch, and Assistant Fire Chief Doug Nicoll discussed the water issues in Litchfield. They will meet with Pennichuck Water on Wednesday.
2. Selectman Rich Lascelles had nothing to report with regards to the Heritage Committee.

Agenda Topic: Added Business

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

1. **Opening the playgrounds:**

- a. Residents have been asking about the opening of the playgrounds. The Emergency Management Committee met and agreed that the playgrounds should be reopened with signage. The signs would read 'play at your own risk and that the equipment is not being sanitized'.
- b. Chairman Steve Webber contacted the School Board about the reopening of their playgrounds. He believed that both the school and town playgrounds should open at the same time. This would decrease the chance of confusion.
- c. The School Board discussed the topic and agreed to reopen the school playgrounds on Tuesday, June 23.
- d. The five Selectmen agreed to reopen the town playgrounds with signage.
- e. Chairman Steve Webber will inform the Rec Commission of the Selectmen's decision to reopen the town playgrounds.

2. **Road Race**

- a. Chairman Steve Webber mentioned that the Selectmen previously discussed permitting the Millennial race. He will sign the permit for the race to occur next week. The race starts at Sawmill Park and goes into Manchester, and part of Londonderry. T.A. Troy Brown said the race would give priority to Litchfield residents.

3. **Public Library:**

- a. Selectman Rich Lascelles asked if the library should be reopened. T.A. Troy Brown said that was up to the Library Trustees, and the Selectmen do not have control of the library.

4. **Fourth of July Parade:**

- a. Selectman Rich Lascelles asked if the town should have a Fourth of July Parade. Chairman Steve Webber mentioned that he liked the idea of having a parade, and would ask the Emergency Management Team for their input.

Discussion: The Selectmen agreed to endorse a Fourth of July Parade as long as the residents use social distancing. The Selectmen suggested that residents wear a mask.

Motion: (Selectman R. Lascelles / Selectman J. Pinciario) So moved

Roll Call Vote:

1. Selectman J. Lascelles - yes
2. Selectman R. Leary - yes
3. Selectman K. Lynch - yes
4. Selectman J. Pinciario - yes
5. Selectman S. Webber - yes

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

Agenda Topic: Adjourn the Public Portion of Meeting

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

1. **Motion To Enter Non-Public Session (Roll Call Vote):** (Selectman Robert Leary / Selectman Rich Lascelles)
Motioned to enter non-public session per RSA's cited below:
 - a. RSA 91-A:3, II(a) - Compensation of an Employee
 - b. RSA 91-A:3, II(a) - Compensation of an Employee
 - c. RSA 91-A:3, II(a) - Compensation of an Employee
 - d. RSA 91-A:3, II(a) - Hiring of an Employee
 - e. RSA 91-A:3, II(a) - Hiring of an Employee

Roll Call Vote:

1. Selectman J. Lascelles - yes
2. Selectman R. Leary - yes
3. Selectman K. Lynch - yes
4. Selectman J. Pinciario - yes
5. Selectman S. Webber - yes

Vote: (5-0-0)

2. **Entered Non-Public Session:**

7:40 pm

3. **Reconvene Public Session:**

8:56pm public session was reconvened and Chairman Webber asked for public comment. There was no public comment. Chairman Webber apologized for forgetting to open up public comment at 6:45pm. Pinciario moved and seconded by Lynch to appoint Troy Brown as Interim Zoning Administrator until July 31, 2020 with no additional compensation. Vote passed 5-0-0.

4. **Motion Made To Adjourn:**

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman Pinciario/ Selectman Lynch) moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 pm.

Roll Call:

1. Selectman J. Lascelles - yes
2. Selectman R. Leary - yes
3. Selectman K. Lynch - yes
4. Selectman J. Pinciario - yes
5. Selectman S. Webber - yes

Vote: (5-0-0)

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 pm.

Approved by the Board of Selectmen:

Steven J. Webber, Chairman

F. Robert Leary, Sr., Vice Chairman

Richard W. Lascelles

Kevin A. Lynch

John E. Pinciario