

Town of Litchfield, New Hampshire

Board of Selectmen

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Meeting Date: 07/13/20

Call to Order: 6:33 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
Theresa Briand, Town Clerk

Selectmen in attendance:

1. Steven J. Webber, Chairman
2. F. Robert Leary, Sr., Vice Chairman (Virtual)
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 Webber

1. 5:30 pm – Paperwork Review
2. 6:33 pm – Call to Order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Topic: Review and Approval of Consent Items

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

1. June 22, 2020 Meeting Minutes
2. A/P Manifest: 6/30/2020 – \$116,121.76, 7/07/2020 – \$113,569.56, and 7/14/2020 – \$424,116.17
3. P/R Manifest: 7/02/2020 – \$64,553.99, 7/09/2020 – \$61,214.15, and 7/16/2020 – \$61,168.19
4. Elderly Exemption (1)

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman Richard Lascelles / Selectman Kevin Lynch) 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. **Avitar:**

- a. **2020 Valuation Update:**

- i. T.A. Troy Brown commented that Litchfield had just gone through a property valuation update. Chad Roberge works for Avitar, and he was the Project Manager for the town of Litchfield. Chad Roberge was responsible for the oversight of the entire update. The last time the Town Administrator spoke to Chad Roberge, he requested that the Selectmen receive an update on the valuations, trends that he saw, and feedback from citizens.
 - ii. Chad Roberge mentioned that today was the first day of hearings based on a property owner's valuations. The biggest concern was the change in value from last year to this year. The explanation for the increase was that the valuation was based on a five-year time frame. He said that some people were concerned about being charged for a garage that they did not own. Chad Roberge noted that most homes in Litchfield have garages. Avitar will review the cases and make sure that the houses do have garages.
 - iii. The only other concern was about solar panels. Chad Roberge said that he received calls about the solar panels. He was asked whether they add value or not add value to the house. He told the residents that the solar panels do add value to the house.
 - iv. Chad Roberge asked T.A. Troy Brown if he needed to go into the overall change in value. T.A. Troy Brown asked him to go over the change in value. Chad Roberge mentioned that the overall change in value from 2015 until 2020, on average, was an increase of 26% to 27%.
 - v. T.A. Troy Brown questioned how many appointments he had scheduled for the week. Chad Roberge commented that he had 22 today, 16 for tomorrow, 14 on Wednesday, and 11 on Thursday. Residents who emailed Chad Roberge with easy questions were emailed back with a resolution. He added that most residents in Litchfield have gone through the procedure two to three times. The residents were informed that as the valuation goes up, the tax rate goes down.
 - vi. Selectman Rich Lascelles asked Chad Roberge if he had an overall valuation of the town, and how much the valuation went up. Chad Roberge did not have the information available at the time. He offered to email the Selectmen the information.
 - vii. T.A. Troy Brown reminded Chad Roberge that he was going to look into the utility values. Chad Roberge said that the numbers he emailed to T.A. Troy Brown were accurate. T.A. Troy Brown asked when the town might expect to receive the utility value numbers. The numbers will help the town estimate the new tax-rate. Chad Roberge believed that he could get the numbers to T.A. Troy Brown by the end of the week.
 - viii. Chad Roberge added that if residents had concerns, they could continue to contact him. The last date to meet with residents is October 1, 2020. After October 1, the taxpayer would need to go through abatement. Selectman Kevin Lynch asked that the date be added to the town website.
 - ix. Selectman Kevin Lynch asked if Chad Roberge knew the exemption for a resident adding solar panels to one's house. Chad Roberge said that 90% of the towns offer assessed value. If a resident pays \$150,000 for solar panels, and they are assessed at \$30,000, the taxpayer is only exempted from the \$30,000.
 - x. Residents have until this Friday to go online and schedule an appointment with Avitar. After Friday, the residents may use the email address provided in the letter that was sent out.

2. **Pennichuck Water Meeting:**

- a. Selectmen Rich Lascelles and Kevin Lynch met with three representatives from Pennichuck Water, a couple of weeks ago. The meeting was to discuss why certain residents have discolored water.
- b. Pennichuck mentioned that most likely, the discoloring of the water is caused by manganese. There may also be some iron in the water.
- c. Customers of Pennichuck Water will be receiving a letter from the company. The letter is dated July 13, 2020. The letter will inform the residents of what Pennichuck Water is planning to do.
- d. Pennichuck Water says that COVID-19 and the dry weather have caused the water usage to be abnormally high.
- e. The plan is for the town to study the situation over the summer. Nothing will be corrected this summer. Pennichuck will look at the results in the fall and flush out where they feel it is necessary.
- f. Pennichuck Water has dropped off sample bottles to the town. They want the residents to report any discoloration to the company ASAP. Residents are asked to save a sample of the water and mark the container the time, date, and address.
- g. The water samples provided to the town will be analyzed.
- h. A lot of the water coming into Litchfield is not from wells. The water is coming from a new line that was put across the Merrimack River by Pennichuck.
- i. The town is still going to map out the areas that are being affected by the water's discoloration.

Agenda Topic: Public Input @ 7:05 pm

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

- 1. None

Agenda Topic: Business (Continued)

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

3. **Policies and Contracts:**

- a. Selectman Rich Lascelles requested a hard copy of all the contracts, policies, and procedures. Chair Steven Webber mentioned that the information could be found on the town's website. Selectman Rich Lascelles and Selectman Kevin Lynch prefer to receive hard copies instead of accessing the information online.

4. **The Purchasing Policy:**

- a. This policy is also reviewed on an annual basis by the Board of Selectmen.
- b. The Purchasing Policy applies to all Town Departments, Boards, Committees, Commissions, Elected and Appointed Officials under the Board of Selectmen's authority.
- c. All purchases require prior approval by the Department Heads or designee.
- d. **Purchasing Policy Thresholds:**
 - i. **Board of Selectmen** - any amount greater than \$12,000 needs to be approved in advance.
 - ii. **Town Administrator** - signs off on purchases anywhere from \$5,000 but less than \$12,000.
 - iii. **Department Heads** - signs off on amounts below \$5,000
 - iv. **Competitive Bidding** - any amount greater than \$12,000 requires three competitive bids.
 - a. Pre-Approved Vendors (Appendix A) - do not require competitive bidding.

Some of the factors considered when determining the 'best overall value' as referenced in Section 1.c are:

- a. Price
- b. Quality
- c. Warranty

- d. Service
- e. Availability
- f. Past Performance of the Vendor
- g. References

Disposal of Surplus Property:

- a. Department Heads should notify the Town Administrator at least annually about any property considered surplus.
- b. Purchasing Policy Thresholds:
 - i. Less than \$100 - Department Heads may dispose of the items as appropriate following the Town Administrator's notification.
 - ii. \$100 but less than \$1,000 - The Town Administrator will have the authority to transfer property from one department to another, including surplus equipment as trade on replacement equipment, authorize placement in state surplus auction, retaining parts or authorizing the sale by public, or electronic auction.
 - iii. Greater than \$1,000 (excluding real estate) - All items declared surplus with an estimated value of greater than \$1,000 would be reported to the Board of Selectmen with the board retaining authority to authorize the form of disposition.

Selectman Rich Lascelles asked T.A. Troy Brown if the town puts commodities out to bid each year. T.A. Troy Brown said the gasoline is paid on a cash basis. T.A. Troy Brown mentioned that he thought the town did business with Burke Oil. Since Troy Brown has been the Town Administrator, the oil contract has not gone out to bid. He mentioned concerning the heating fuels; the town piggybacks the school district. The school district can negotiate a better price for the fuel and the town benefits from the discount.

Selectman Rich Lascelles asked T.A. Troy Brown if the town piggybacked with the school district for other items. He used examples of copier charges, paper, and office supplies. T.A. Troy Brown responded by saying that the town is always looking for a good price. The most expensive thing that Town Hall purchases is copying paper. Before buying the copying paper, they shop around at three different vendors.

Selectman Rich Lascelles asked T.A. Troy Brown if the sand and the salt on the sidewalks was a contract. T.A. Troy Brown said that the salt and sand were state bid price. The town uses the state bid price to purchase the salt and sand. The contractor the town hires to spread the town's sand and salt on the parking lot and sidewalks. Selectman John Pinciario mentioned that salt has a consortium. The consortium in District Five consists of Derry, Londonderry, Hudson, Litchfield, and Pelham. T.A. Troy Brown commented that the school district uses the town salt, and the town charges the school district quarterly.

Chair Steven Webber asked if anyone had any further comments or questions. He mentioned that the Board of Selectmen would have a second reading of the Purchasing Policy at the next meeting; then vote on the policy. Selectmen Rich Lascelles asked how the old farm hall that the town owned was disposed of. Selectmen John Pinciario said the equipment was disposed of by bids.

5. 2021 Budget Schedule Adoption:

- a. T.A. Troy Brown commented that he shared the projected Budget Schedule with the Board of Selectmen, all the boards and committees, and the Budget Committee Chair.
- b. The Budgeting Schedule:
 - i. August 3, 2020 - All the budgets submitted to the Town Administrator
 - ii. August 10, 2020 - First review of the budget by the Board of Selectmen
 - iii. August 24, 2020 - Second review of the budget by the Board of Selectmen
 - iv. September 14, 2020 - Third review of the budget by the Board of Selectmen
 - v. September 21, 2020 - Wrap up the budget.
- c. T.A. Troy Brown mentioned that all the numbers needed, the Board of Selectmen would not have. For example, health insurance, property liability, worker's compensation, and the school bid price for fuel will not be available in August or September.

- d. Chair Andrew Cutter has lined up the Budget Committees schedule. The month of October has been dedicated to the Budget Committee for the Town's Budget.
 - i. January 14 or 16 will be the Budget Hearings.
- e. Selectman John Pinciario asked if there would be more Board of Selectmen meetings because of the budget. Chair Steven Webber commented that the board would still meet twice a month, but the meetings would start a half-an-hour earlier at 6 pm. The Selectmen agreed that meeting at 6 pm would not be an issue. T.A. Troy Brown said he would make the change to 6 pm.

6. Warrant Articles:

- a. The month of December will be spent doing Warrant Articles for both the school and the town.
- b. Selectman Rich Lascelles asked when the deadline was for a resident to send in a Petition Warrant Article. T.A. Troy Brown and Chair Steven Webber believed the deadline is in February 2021. T.A. Troy Brown will add the date to the town's website.
- c. T.A. Troy Brown commented that the Selectmen should start thinking of Warrant Articles they may want to be submitted. T.A. Troy Brown will reach out to the other committees, boards, and departments and remind them of the Warrant Article's deadline.
- d. Chair Steven Webber said the Capital Improvement Planning Committee (CIP) has been listening to committees present projects for the town. The CIP Committee will choose a couple of the projects presented and bring them to the voters.
- e. Last year, the Selectmen chose to remove the fire truck and Darrah Pond milfoil treatment from the Warrant Articles.

New Transfer Station Sticker:

- a. Before last week, Dave Mellen approached T.A. Troy Brown about the need for residents to update their Transfer Station stickers. Dave Mellen was going to purchase the stickers, but T.A. Troy Brown said he wanted to bring the subject to the Board of Selectmen.
- b. Dave Mellen already has a design for the sticker. At the bottom of the sample sticker, the sticker reads Transfer Station and River Access. The sticker color is burnt orange.
- c. T.A. Troy Brown recommended that the sticker include either the name Rec Facilities or Town Facilities.
- d. Dave Mellen commented that in the past, residents would not place the sticker on the car. Dave Mellen wants to make sure once a resident receives a sticker, the sticker is placed on the car. He believes the stickers should be replaced every three years.
- e. The residents need to show their car registration in order to receive the sticker. The sticker does not need to be purchased.
- f. The Board of Selectmen agreed to leave the sticker as is.
- g. Selectman Rich Lascelles mentioned that he read that a person on 'What's Up??' asked if people could drive past the gate at Darrah Pond. The answer is no, and the Rec Commission is working on getting a sign and new locks to stop people from driving past the gate or leaving the gate open.
- h. Chair Steven Webber commented that the Rec Commission would be proposing two projects to the CIP Committee. One of the projects is to have the Darrah Pond parking lot graded properly then paved. The other project is to have lights added to Darrah Field.

2. Review Reopening Plan:

a. Public Meetings

- i. T.A. Troy Brown said that he removed most of the chairs in the meeting room before he left for vacation. He set up the room so everyone would be at least six feet apart.
- ii. The tables are set up with four protective panels that separate the committee or board members. The room is designed to allow a portion, if not all, of committee members to attend the meetings. The members who are unable to attend in-person will be able to attend virtually.
- iii. The Selectmen spoke about adding more tables and protective panels to allow more committee members to attend in-person.

b. **Town Hall Protective Glass:**

- i. T.A. Troy Brown and Terri Briand have been working with a vendor to replace the glass at the Dispatch, the Town Clerk, and the Building Department transaction windows.
- ii. The quote to change out the windows is around \$15,000. The quote includes building proper transaction drawers. The transaction drawers will be large enough to fit a license plate through.
- iii. The glass will be bullet-resistant, and the town employee will have a microphone to speak with a resident.
- iv. T.A. Troy Brown mentioned that the government would reimburse even the money spent now. The benefit is that the town is protecting its employees and residents with government funds. The town is also making sure if something similar happened again, the town would continue operating.
- v. Selectman Kevin Lynch commented that the glass in the lobby is already bullet-resistant. Selectman Kevin Lynch believes that the existing glass can be modified and allow the town to save money.
- vi. T.A. Troy Brown commented that all three windows would be bullet-resistant because a person wanting to harm will not target only one window.
- vii. Chair Steven Webber said that he would like to speak to the Emergency Management Team on Wednesday and hear what they have to say about the plan.

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman Rich Lascelles / Selectman John Pinciario) Motion to open as soon as practical, working with the Emergency Management Team.

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.

c. **Customers Traveling Outside Country:**

- i. Nothing

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

- a. July 27, 2020 @ 6:30 pm
- b. August 10, 2020 @ 6:30 pm
- c. August 24, 2020 @ 6:30 pm

Agenda topic: Administrator's Report

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

1. The Historical Society is about to receive a lot of material, and they do not have space to store the material. The Historical Society would like to set up a tavern room in the old Town Hall. The tavern would be a tribute to the old Griffin Tavern.
2. The Historical Society has asked for two things. One is to have the fire department remove their items from the old Town Hall. They would also like to use the shed that is located behind the old Town Hall. T.A. Troy Brown said he would reach out to Chief Frank Fraitzl and see what the status is with the stored items.
3. The old Fire Station stores the election trailer, fire department boat, and the mowing equipment. The upstairs has three offices, and not much is stored upstairs. The stairs inside the building are not in good shape.
4. Dave Mellen had an employee make improvements to some of the sheds down at the Solid Waste Department. The same employee has recently been making improvements to the dog kennel.

Agenda topic: Selectmen Reports

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

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

1. The Rec Commission will meet on July 28, at 7:30 pm.
2. The Capital Improvement Planning Committee (CIP) will meet on July 20, at 6:00 pm.

Selectman Robert Leary Jr. - Budget Committee:

1. The Budget Committee will meet in August.

Selectman Kevin A. Lynch - Planning Board:

1. Selectman Kevin Lynch stepped out of the Planning Board meeting because he believed there was a conflict of interest.

Selectman John E. Pinciario - Conservation Commission:

1. Selectman John Pinciario had nothing to report.

Selectman Richard W. Lascelles - Heritage Commission:

1. The Historical Society will meet on July 14.

Agenda Topic: Adjourn the Public Portion of Meeting

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

Motion To Enter Non-Public Session (Roll Call Vote): (Selectman John Pinciario / None) Motioned to enter non-public session per RSA's cited below:

1. RSA 91-A:3, II(a) - Compensation of an Employee
2. RSA 91-A:3, II(a) - Compensation of an Employee
3. RSA 91-A:3, II(b) - Hiring of an Employee
4. RSA 91-A:3, II(c) - Reputation
5. RSA 91-A:3, II(c) - Reputation

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)

Entered Non-Public Session:

8:16 pm

Reconvene Public Session:

9:45pm

Motion Made To Adjourn:

Selectman Leary / Selectman Lynch) So moved

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman Leary / Selectman Lynch) moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:46pm

Roll Call:

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

Vote: (4-0-0)

The meeting adjourned at 9:46pm.

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