

Town of Litchfield, NH
Board of Selectmen Meeting
February 22, 2021
Litchfield Town Hall
6:30 pm

In Attendance:

Selectmen: Steven J. Webber, Chairman (Virtual), F. Robert Leary, Sr., Vice Chairman, Richard W. Lascelles, Kevin A. Lynch and Kimberly M. Queenan

Town Administrator: Troy Brown

Also in Attendance: Jayson Brennen (Virtual), Robert Terry (Virtual), Andrew Ruggles (Virtual), and Police Chief Ben Sargent (Virtual)

Absent: None

Memo: None

1. Call to Order:

- a. 5:30 pm - Paperwork Review
- b. 6:30 pm - Chairman Steven Webber called the meeting to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Review and Approval of Consent Items:

- a. A/P Manifest: 02/16/2021 - \$28,491.75, and 02/23/2021 - \$103,507.61
- b. P/R Manifest: 02/18/2021 - \$59,279.52, and 02/25/2021 - \$58,133.64
- c. Treasurer Reconciliation - January 2021
- d. Abatement - \$1,071.46
- e. Timber Tax - \$196.46
- f. Land Use Change Tax - \$16,050

3. Additional Items or Other Business:

- a. None

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman R. Leary / Selectman K. Lynch) Motion to accept the Review and Approval of Consent Items.

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

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes:

- a. **February 6, 2021. Meeting Minutes:**
- b. **February 8, 2021. Meeting Minutes:**

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman R. Leary / Selectman K. Lynch) Motion to postpone voting on the Meeting Minutes from February 6, and February 8, 2021.

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

5. Business:

a. **Jayson Brennen:**

Mr. Brennen stated that he, Andrew Ruggles, and Robert Terry were at the meeting to:

1. Provide the Board with an update on their conversations with the State.
2. Talk briefly about some of the research on the ownership of the property surrounding the Litchfield State Forest.
3. Present to the Board their brief ideas for expanding the trails and improving some existing trails.

1. **State Forest Trail Update** -

Mr. Terry commented that the State had closed down some of the trails because of illegal trail building, improper wetland crossings, improper signage and trail markings, and wildlife impact. He noted that going forward, they will be looking at how to reopen a trail. The State has informed them that to reopen a trail they need to do the following:

1. You must be part of the State's "Trail Volunteer Program."
2. For a private group to be part of the "Trail Volunteer Program," the group must be a Non-Profit 501(c) and carry a \$1,000,000 insurance policy.
3. Once accepted, you must submit a "Work Plan" to the State which details the group's plan for improvements.
4. From there, new trails may be proposed.
5. Determining if a town entity may submit a work plan and trail reopening

Mr. Brennen mentioned that the group is currently in a holding pattern. Chairman Webber asked for Mr. Brennen to keep the Board updated and offered the Selectmen's assistance. Mr. Brown said that he would contact the State and see if the town as an entity could apply and not be classified as the Trail Volunteer Group.

Mr. Brown commented that he wanted to make the residents aware that non-residents could have built the rogue trails. He pointed out that no one knows who created the rogue trails.

2. **Land Ownership Around Litchfield State Forest** -

Mr. Brennen stated that his group researched the land ownership that surrounded the Litchfield State Forest. He presented a map to the Board of Selectmen, and the map showed the Litchfield State Forest and the property that surrounds the LSF. The Town of Litchfield owns the property marked with a 'T,' and the property marked with a 'P' is owned by private ownership. Mr. Brennen then showed which properties were deeded to the Town of Litchfield as a result of Tax Liens and the properties granted to the Town of Litchfield with Covenants. The property that was granted to the Town has a covenant. The covenant is that the members of the public shall have access to the property for passive outdoor recreation.

Mr. Brennen noted that the deed to these properties allow for the creation of trails and bridges. There is a stipulation that even though the Town's property is owned, any improvements made to the property shall be reviewed by the Conservation Commission. Mr. Brennen will provide the map to the Town of Litchfield and request that the Town employees confirm or deny the information. Mr. Brown agreed and added that the Town needs to create a list of which groups are in charge of managing the properties.

3. **New Trail Concepts** -

Mr. Ruggles commented that he would show the Board what the group hoped to do regarding the trails. He mentioned that the group would like to create three trails:

1. Create a single-track trail on Lot 17-2. Mr. Ruggles noted that this property was deeded to the Town.
2. Restore connection of two dead-end trails on Lot 17-4. The idea is to create another loop trail to make up for the loss of the Calvin Loop Trail.
3. The third trail would divert an existing trail from the Pennichuck Water Works (PWW) Water Tower. The group would like to cut out some of the gradings and create a trail around the hill.

Mr. Ruggles showed a map of where the new trails would be located and how the proposed trails are in areas that are favorable new trails. He ended the presentation by stating that the trails would be created by making sure the new trails are:

1. Single-track, which are only a few feet wide.
2. Following the natural path to the best extent possible.
3. Built primarily using hand tools and clippers.
4. Not cutting down trees or excavation.
5. Having the least environmental impact possible.

Mr. Brennen asked the Town Administrator what the process is to create the trails properly. He added that Lot 17-5 and 16-9 do not require Conservation Commission input, but Lot 17-4 would require Conservation Commission input. The only other property in the area that requires Conservation Commission input is Lot 17-10. Mr. Brown stated that, based on the presentation, the Board could approve the layout of these trails and authorize the construction of them, subject to the Conservation Commission approval on Lot 17-4. (Trail Number Two).

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman R. Lascelles / Selectman R. Leary) Motion to approve the construction of trails one and three and approve the construction of trail two contingent on consultation with the Conservation Commission.

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

6. Public Input @ 7:02 pm:

- a. None

Public Input ended at 7:03 pm.

7. Business (continued):

b. Resignations:

1. Rachael Lang, Master Patrol Officer -

Town Administrator Troy Brown mentioned Chief Ben Sargent informed him that Master Patrol Officer Lang provided her resignation letter. Mr. Brown stated that she had been a tremendous Officer for the Litchfield Police Department. Mr. Brown mentioned that Master Patrol Officer Lang has an excellent opportunity to work as a law enforcement officer closer to home.

2. Richard Pentheny, LCTV Manager -

Mr. Brown commented that Mr. Pentheny moved out of Litchfield a few years ago, but he wanted to remain with LCTV. Mr. Pentheny acknowledged to Mr. Brown that he knew it was time to step down, so he has provided his letter of resignation.

3. Kim Queenan, Planning Board Member -

Mr. Brown noted that Ms. Queenan stepped up to fill the vacancy on the Board. Because Ms. Queenan filled the empty Selectman's seat, there is now a conflict with her serving on the Planning Board. She will now serve as the Selectman's Rep for the Planning Board.

Chairman Webber requested that Mr. Brown send a letter to each of the individuals and thank them for their service to the Town of Litchfield. Police Chief Ben Sargent mentioned that he was shocked by the resignation of Master Patrol Officer Lang. He added that Ms. Lang has served the Town of Litchfield for six-and-a-half years and has done a great job.

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman K. Lynch / Selectman R. Lascelles) motioned to accept the resignations

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

c. **Appointment:**

1. **Curtis Sampson, Planning Board Member (Term Expires 2022) -**

Mr. Brown mentioned that the Planning Board had come forward with Curtis Sampson's recommendation as a full-time member. Mr. Sampson currently serves as an alternate member of the Planning Board.

Discussion: Chairman S. Webber requested a motion to accept Mr. Sampson as a full-time member of the Planning Board. His term would expire in 2022.

Motion: (Selectman K. Lynch / Selectman K. Queenan) So moved.

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

d. **LCTV Management:**

Town Administrator Troy Brown mentioned that about two months, the Town was aware that Richard Pentheny would resign as LCTV Manager. Mr. Brown stated that the LCTV management staff, John Brunelle, and he had a meeting. The meeting was about the future of LCTV and how the Town will meet the needs of the LCTV Department. One of the subjects that were discussed was the contract renewal of the cable franchise agreement. The current cable franchise agreement is up this year.

The next subject was what the LCTV management would look like if Mr. Pentheny did resign. The people at the meeting agreed that IT Director John Brunelle should fill the position, and the LCTV Department should be under the IT Department. Mr. Brown stated that Russell Blanchette and Rob Fay would remain with LCTV.

Discussion: Selectman Lynch asked if Mr. Brunelle was looking for additional compensation. Mr. Brown noted that Mr. Brunelle was not looking for further compensation but just to make sure who is in charge of the Department.

Motion: (Selectman R. Leary / Selectman R. Lascelles) So moved.

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

e. **2022 Deliberative Session Plans:**

Town Administrator Troy Brown stated that the School Board had a conversation at their last meeting about planning for the 2022 Deliberative Sessions. Michelle Flynn contacted Mr. Brown and asked if the Selectmen would begin a discussion about having a combined Deliberative Session in 2022. He noted that he had received some positive feedback about combining the Deliberative Sessions, but he also received some concerned feedback. Because of Covid-19, the Deliberative Sessions, this year, had a small attendance, and the Warrant Articles were limited. An average year would have a lengthy Deliberative Sessions with several Warrant Articles, and the attendance would also be more significant.

No decision was made, but a decision needs to be made after the March 9 election.

8. **Items Removed From Consent:**

a. None

9. **Administrator's Report:**

Town Administrator Troy Brown mentioned that the Pat Jewett Award Ceremony is on March 1 and the ceremony will be virtual this year. Mr. Brown noted that Laura Gandia informed him that there was no selection for the Pat Jewett Award. Mr. Brown mentioned that the Voter Guide is out there, and he thanked Michelle Flynn for her work. He stated that the Voter Guide will be mailed out this week and can be found online. Mr. Brown commented that the Highway Department was doing a great job. He pointed out that the employees working for the Town of Litchfield have gained experience.

10. Selectmen's Report:

a. **Selectman Richard W. Lascelles - Heritage Commission:**

Selectman Lascelles mentioned that there are two Selectmen on the Heritage Commission. Selectman Lascelles is the Selectman's Representative, and Selectman Queenan is the Chair of the Commission. Mr. Brown mentioned that legal counsel highly recommended that the Board only have one Selectman per Committee. Chairman Webber stated that he believed things should stay status quo until after the March 9 election.

b. **Selectman Robert Leary Jr. - Budget Committee:**

Selectman Leary mentioned that he did not have anything regarding the Budget Committee. He commented that residents should shop around if they believe their oil charges are too high.

c. **Selectman Kevin A. Lynch - Conservation Commission:**

Nothing to report

d. **Selectman Kimberly M. Queenan - Planning Commission & NRPC:**

Selectman Queenan mentioned that the Planning Board meets next week on Tuesday, March 2 at 7 pm, and the Heritage Commission will meet on Tuesday, March 9 at 7 pm. She added that the Heritage Commission meeting would likely be postponed because of the election. The NRPC will meet on Wednesday, March 17.

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

Selectman Webber mentioned that the Rec Commission would meet tomorrow at 7:30 pm.

11. Other Business:

None

12. Non-Public Session:

Discussion: Chairman S. Webber requested that a motion be made to enter Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3, II(a) - Employee Compensation and RSA 91-A:3, II(c) - Reputation

Motion: (Selectman R. Lascelles / Selectman R. Leary) motion to go into Non-Public Session.

Roll-Call:

- a. Selectman S. Webber - Yes
- b. Selectman R. Leary - Yes
- c. Selectman R. Lascelles - Yes
- d. Selectman K. Lynch - Yes
- e. Selectman K. Queenan - Yes

Convened to Non-Public Session

7:35 pm

Reconvened Public Session

(Selectmen Leary / Selectman Lynch) motioned to seal the minutes indefinitely for reputation. The Board of Selectmen reconvened the public session at 8:20pm.

Roll-Call:

- a. Selectman S. Webber - Yes
- b. Selectman R. Leary - Yes
- c. Selectman R. Lascelles - Yes
- d. Selectman K. Lynch - Yes
- e. Selectman K. Queenan - Yes

13. Adjournment:

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectmen Leary / Selectman Lynch) moved to adjourn the public meeting at 8:20pm.

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

Respectfully Submitted,
Matthew Sullivan
BOS Recording Secretary

Approved by the Board of Selectmen:

Steven J. Webber, Chairman

F. Robert Leary, Sr., Vice Chairman

Richard W. Lascelles

Kevin A. Lynch

Kimberly M. Queenan