

Town of Litchfield, NH
Board of Selectmen Meeting
October 25, 2021

In Attendance:

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

Town Administrator: Troy Brown

In Attendance: Finance Manager Karen White; Scott McIntire, CPA from Melanson Heath (virtual); Jayson Brennen; and Chairman Matt Lepore.

1. Call to Order:

- a. 6:00 pm - Paperwork Review
- b. 6:30 pm - Chairman Steve Webber called the meeting to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Review and Approval of Consent Items:

- a. A/P Manifest: 10/19/21 - \$69,585.70 and 10/26/21 - \$70,820.13
- b. P/R Manifest: 10/21/21 - \$65,045.02 and 10/28/21 - \$65,759.82
- c. September Reconciliations - Town Clerk, Tax Collector, and Treasurer
- d. Purchase Order Approval - Minuteman Security \$12,749.93

Discussion: No Discussion

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

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

3. Request for Additional Items / Other Business:

- a. None

4. Business:

a. Meeting Minutes:

- i. October 11, 2021, Meeting Minutes

Discussion: No Discussion

Motion: (Selectman R. Leary / Selectman K. Lynch) Motion to accept the October 11 Meeting Minutes.

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

b. 2020 Audit Review:

Town Administrator Troy Brown introduced Scott McIntire from Melanson Heath and Company PC. Mr. McIntire introduced himself and mentioned that Erica, the previous auditor, left the company and started a new career. Mr. McIntire shared his screen with the Select Board and noted that the audit went very well.

Mr. McIntire mentioned that the auditors found that the books were in good working order and that the reconciliations were done on a timely basis. The audit also found that the Town of Litchfield did not disagree with applying the generally accepted accounting principles.

Mr. McIntire commented that in their opinion, the financial statements were clearly and fairly presented in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. He reviewed the Statement of Net Position with the Select Board and commented that a Town's Finance Statement focuses on the Net Pension Liability and the OPEB Liability. The Town of Litchfield has a Total Net Position of \$21,857,508.

Mr. McIntire stated that as of the end of Calendar Year 2020, the bulk of the funds are in the Unassigned Fund Balance, and the fund had a total of \$2,441,435. Last year, the Unassigned Fund Balance had a total of around \$2,200,000. The Total Fund Balance (Non-Spendable, Restricted, Committed, Assigned, and Unassigned) is \$3,105,019. Last year, the Total Fund Balance was around \$2,800,000.

Mr. McIntire reviewed the Statement of Fiduciary Net Position and the Required Supplementary Information General Fund. The excess of revenues and other sources over expenditures and other uses is \$322,587.

Selectman Lascelles asked what the auditors were talking about regarding Net Position: Restricted for other governments (pg. 19)? Mr. McIntire stated that this refers to the town's funds in a Capital Reserve Fund for the School District.

Selectman Lascelles asked if these financial statements were connected to ARPA? He explained that the Town of Litchfield received a bunch of money from the Federal Government because the Town was supposed to lose revenue during the pandemic. He added that the audit shows that the Town received more revenue than they expected to receive. Mr. McIntire stated that four categories are eligible uses for the funds. He added that the Town is required to use the funds in one of the four categories and report the use of the funds.

Mr. Brown commented that Mr. McIntire had mentioned the Town's Net Liability regarding the New Hampshire State Pension. Mr. Brown asked if that number was something that Mr. McIntire could calculate or was the number provided to him by the New Hampshire Retirement System. Mr. McIntire stated that the number is provided by the State of New Hampshire Retirement System (NHRS).

The Board thanked Mr. McIntire for his work and presenting the audit. The Board also thanked Finance Manager Karen White for her excellent work.

c. Jayson Brennen - Historic Town Hall / Center Improvements:

Mr. Brennen provided a presentation to the Select Board. The presentation was about improving the aesthetics of Old Town Hall. He commented that the area around Old Town Hall looked a little drab and thought the area could use more green space. He mentioned that the area needs some landscaping and some cleanup.

Mr. Brennen showed the Board black and white photographs of the area surrounding the Old Town Hall. He commented on the current issues of the area:

- i. Ugly Hump
- ii. Lots of Pavement
- iii. Dead Grass
- iv. Random Stones
- v. Limited Green Space
- vi. Dead Trees

Mr. Brennen suggested three options:

- i. Leave the Area As-Is

- ii. Make Some Improvements:
 - a. Remove the 12' x 60' of pavement (two parking spots)
 - b. Remove the dead trees
 - c. Add new trees
 - d. Remove stones
 - e. Maybe frame with granite and black chain

- iii. Expand Option Two Improvements:
 - a. Remove the 30' x 60' of pavement (five to six parking spots)
 - b. Remove the dead trees
 - c. Add new trees
 - d. Remove stones
 - e. Maybe frame with granite and black chain

Mr. Brennen stated that there are currently 40 parking spots in the lot, and if the Select Board chose Option Three, the parking lot would have 35 spots. Mr. Brennen noted that he has spoken with the Historical Society, and they support the plan. He believes the project could be started by next Spring, and the project could be done with volunteers.

Mr. Brennen mentioned that the Conservation Commission has been working across the street and cleaning the area up. He noted that if that area is opened up, they might place granite posts on that side of the street.

The Board agreed that they liked Option Three, and they discussed how the parking lot could be adjusted to have Handicap Parking.

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman R. Leary / Selectman R. Lascelles) I move to authorize Jayson Brennen to make the site improvements at the Historic Town Hall parking lot and lawn to beautify the Historic Town Center.

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

The Board thanked Mr. Brennen for coming to the meeting.

d. Appointment - Sam Terrill for Alternate Planning Board Member:

Sam Terrill introduced himself and stated that he lived at 187 Charles Bancroft Highway. Town Administrator Brown mentioned that Mr. Merrill met with the Planning Board, and they requested that the Select Board appoint him as an Alternate Member of the Planning Board.

Mr. Merrill stated he went to school at UMass - Lowell for Chemical and Nuclear Engineering. He moved to New Hampshire in 2019, and he works for BAE Systems as a Systems Engineer. Mr. Merrill commented that he moved to Litchfield less than a year ago, and he wants to get involved with the Town.

The Board informed Mr. Merrill that he needed to go to Town Hall and get sworn in by the Town Clerk / Tax Collector.

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman R. Lascelles / Selectman K. Lynch) I move to appoint Sam Terrill as an Alternate Planning Board member with a term to expire on March 31, 2024.

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

e. Appointment - Ralph Boehm as an NRPC Member:

The Board discussed whether this was a position for an Alternate or Full Member of the NRPC. Selectman Steve Webber mentioned that Mr. Boehm was trying for the position left open by Josh Smith. Mr. Boehm mentioned that he has been in town for 45 years, and for 22 of those years, he was part of the Select Board, Budget Committee, School Board, Rec Commission, and State Representative. He commented that as a State Representative, he would like to know what is happening in the region.

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman R. Lascelles / Selectman K. Queenan) I move to appoint Ralph Boehm as a Full Member of Nashua Regional Planning Commission with a term to expire on October 25, 2025

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

Mr. Brown stated that he would need to update the appointment form and he would contact Mr. Boehm when it is ready.

f. Old Election Trailer Assigned to Conservation Commission:

Town Administrator Troy Brown mentioned that Town Clerk Terri Briand was able to get a grant last year to purchase a new trailer. The trailer is used to store all the equipment for elections. Mr. Brown noted that the old trailer is down at the Old Fire Station not being used; the Conservation Committee has requested to take ownership of the trailer and use it to store their equipment. The trailer can also be used to transport the equipment to areas within the Town.

Mr. Brown commented that if the Town knows in advance that the Conservation Committee wants to move the trailer, the Highway Department would be willing to move it to a specific location.

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman R. Lascelles / Selectman K. Lynch) I move to authorize the Litchfield Conservation Commission to use the old election trailer for storage and transport of conservation tools and equipment.

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

g. Pennichuck Rate Case Update:

Town Administrator Troy Brown commented that the Select Board had met with Legal Counsel, and he thought that the Board would be able to talk about the update. Mr. Brown noted that Legal Counsel advised him not to talk about the case because they were still working on the settlement agreement. He added that the details of the agreement would be coming out soon.

h. Christmas in Litchfield:

Town Administrator Troy Brown mentioned that this was on the Select Board's agenda two weeks ago. The Board had several questions, and Mr. Brown contacted the organizers. The Board received an email from the organizers of Christmas in Litchfield, and they wrote that they do not have enough volunteers to cover a big

event. They added that Talent Hall is not large enough to safely have all the vendors and activities within the building.

The organizers would still like to use the Municipal Complex and most likely have the event on Saturday, December 4, from 6 pm until 7:30 pm. Mr. Brown noted that the group is thinking of using Sawmill Park's parking lot and having people walk to the Municipal Complex. The elderly and handicapped would be able to park at the complex parking lot.

Selectman Steve Webber commented that the first year of Christmas in Litchfield was a one-and-done event. Last year, people came to the event and came back to walk through the lighted complex.

i. Lions Trunk or Treat:

Town Administrator Troy Brown stated that he was approached by one of the members of the Lion's Club, and the member asked that Mr. Brown bring this request to the Select Board. The Lions Club would like permission to use the Municipal Complex parking lot for the Trunk or Treat event. The event will be on Sunday, October 31, from 6 pm until 8 pm.

Selectman Kim Queenan asked what the Trunk or Treat event was? The Board described sections in Town where walking house to house (3A) is not safe. Instead, the families come to a parking lot, and the children go from car to car collecting Halloween candy.

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman K. Lynch / Selectman R. Leary) I move to authorize the Litchfield Lions Club to sponsor a 'Trunk or Treat' event at the Municipal Complex on Halloween from 6 pm until 8 pm.

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

j. Budget Update:

Town Administrator Troy Brown commented that the Budget Committee meetings went well. He noted that the Town still has Warrant Articles to present to the Budget Committee. He added that the exchange of information and the exchange of questions was very open. Mr. Brown stated that he believed the Budget Committee was pleased with the budget that the Select Board presented to the Budget Committee.

Mr. Brown mentioned that the Budget Committee is not done; there are still items not completed. He provided the Rec Commission as an example. The Rec Commission still has not provided the Select Board or the Budget Committee with a contract for field maintenance.

Mr. Brown stated that the Town had received all of the rates for the insurance policies:

- i. Unemployment increased by \$196.
- ii. Worker's Compensation did not increase.
- iii. PLT Insurance increased by \$9,273.

Mr. Brown commented that the Budget Committee questioned the Fire Station heating fuel cost. After looking at the numbers again, the Town used the costs from when the building was still under construction. This resulted in a \$3,900 decrease in heating fuel costs.

The library saw a reduction of \$6,100.

The Debt is showing a \$42,000 increase, but that is the result of the Select Board's action at the October 11 meeting. Mr. Brown reminded the Board that they decided not to use all \$67,000 of Impact Fees and instead only used \$25,000.

The Budget Committee came up with an additional \$16,488 in adjustments. The Committee reserved the right to go back and look at the fuel costs in December. They were concerned that the Town's estimates could be below market by December.

Mr. Brown added that the State made some changes to the methodology to the Revenue Sharing and will result in an additional \$287,167 for the tax rate this year (2021). Instead of the State calculating based on their forecast, they will take a percentage of that amount and redistribute it throughout the cities and towns. The State has changed the formula so that they are working on the actual revenues received. He noted that this would result in a direct reduction of property taxes.

He added that this is the plan for the next couple of years, subject to change. The amount is pretty much locked in for 2021 and 2022, and the Town will set its tax rate in a couple of weeks. Mr. Brown noted that these revenues would be part of the tax rate.

The Town is currently \$62,010 below the Tax Cap.

k. Preliminary Discussion - 2022 Warrant Articles:

Town Administrator Troy Brown mentioned that he worked on the Warrant Articles today based on his knowledge of some items and the Capital Improvement Plan adopted one year ago. He noted that he had not shared this information with any Department Heads, Boards, or Committees.

Mr. Brown commented that the current Warrant Articles are just placeholders and just for the Select Board to hear for the first time, and they will start working on the Warrant Articles at the next meeting.

There is one placeholder for the Election of Officers.

Mr. Brown stated that he heard that the Planning Assistant was looking at two Zoning Amendments; there are two placeholders for the Zoning Amendments.

There is a placeholder for the Operating Budget.

There is a placeholder for a full-time employee at the Highway Department. The Town asks permission to hire a full-time employee and that the Town funds the position for six months. The Town asks for six months because it will take time to advertise, hire, and train after the March election.

There is a placeholder for the Human Services and Health Agencies. Mr. Brown has received all the requests, and he is ready to activate the Committee.

There is a placeholder for road improvements. Mr. Brown noted that the Capital Improvement Plan had identified that the Town should vote to raise to appropriate \$200,000 for road improvements through 2026.

There is a placeholder for the purchase and replacement of the Fire Department Tanker.

There is a placeholder for the purchase and replacement of the Fire Department Fire Engine.

There is a placeholder for the purchase and replacement of the backhoe. Mr. Brown noted that he informed the Budget Committee that the backhoe was as crucial to the Highway Department as a copy machine is to the office staff.

There is a placeholder for a plow truck lease-purchase. Mr. Brown commented that the CIP Plan was to replace the 2000 International with a new Chevrolet 5500.

There is a placeholder for a plow truck lease-purchase. Mr. Brown mentioned that the Fire Department gave the Highway Department a 2003 Ford F-350 a couple of years ago and was slated to be replaced in 2022 with a new Ford F-550.

There is a placeholder for a plow truck lease-purchase. Mr. Brown stated that the CIP Plan was to replace the 2012 Ford F-450 with a new Ford F550.

There is a placeholder for the Roy Memorial parking lot improvements. Mr. Brown said he would reach out to the Rec Commission to see where they are with the plan.

There is a placeholder for the Property Revaluation Expendable Trust Fund. The Expendable Trust fund was created last year and was funded with \$25,000. Mr. Brown stated that the plan is to fund the Expendable Trust Fund every year with \$25,000. When the Town has its next revaluation, it will have \$100,000 set aside to take on the expense.

There is a placeholder for the Public Works Expendable Trust Fund. The Trust Fund currently has a balance of \$20,843. Mr. Brown mentioned that his goal is to get the Public Works Expendable Trust Fund up to \$75,000. The idea is to use \$55,000 of the Unassigned Fund balance to accomplish the goal.

There is a placeholder for the Technology & Communication Expendable Trust Fund that currently has a balance of \$38,112. The idea is to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$12,000 in the Technology & Communications Expendable Trust Fund.

Mr. Brown stated that he would share the draft of the Warrant Articles with the Boards, Committees, and Department Heads. He will also ask for their input. Mr. Webber mentioned that the CIP Committee would meet on Monday, November 1, to discuss the Warrant Articles.

I. Resignation Acceptance - Rob Fay:

Town Administrator Troy Brown mentioned that Rob Fay sent in his resignation and will be effective on Saturday, October 30. Robert Fay has been the LCTV Program Manager since 1999. Mr. Brown thanked Mr. Fay for his years of volunteering and working for LCTV. He wished Mr. Fay all the best.

Mr. Webber commented that Mr. Fay still wants to volunteer some of his time at LCTV. Mr. Lascelles stated that Mr. Fay is a professional in the television industry and works for Channel 7. Mr. Lascelles added that the Town was fortunate to have Mr. Fay

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman R. Leary / Selectman R. Lascelles) Regretfully, I move to accept Robert Fay's resignation as LCTV Program Director and request the Town Administrator to send a letter of appreciation to him for his years of service to our community.

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

The Board thanked Mr. Fay for his years of service to LCTV and the community.

m. Other Business

i. None

n. Public Input @ 7:45:

i. No one present for Public Input

Public Input ended at 7:46 pm.

o. Town Administrator Report:

Town Administrator Troy Brown stated that he received an email from the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA). The email was regarding setting a time to set the Town's tax rate. Mr. Brown noted that the official informed him that they were moving on and being promoted from within. The official stated that they would be taking over Utility Assessments, and the Town of Litchfield will be assigned a new official.

Last year, the tax rate was \$18.58 and will be \$18.44 this year. This results in a 14 cent decrease.

Finance Manager Karen White will finalize the Tax Warrant and send an email to the Select Board when complete. Ms. White will then turn it over to the Tax Collector. Ms. Briand will have the printing company and get the tax bills out.

p. Selectmen Reports:

i. Selectman S. Webber - Budget Committee:

1. Emergency Management Team-

Selectman S. Webber mentioned that the Emergency Management Team is not in session.

2. Recreation Commission-

Selectman S. Webber commented that the Commission meets tomorrow at 7:30 pm.

3. School Facilities Improvement Committee-

Selectman S. Webber stated that the School District is starting the GMS Town Discussion.

4. Capital Improvement Planning Committee-

Selectman S. Webber said that the committee meets on Monday, November 1.

ii. Selectman R. Leary - Budget Committee:

Selectman R. Leary commented that the Budget Committee is off this week and will meet on Friday, November 4, and Monday, November 8, regarding the School Budget.

iii. Selectman R. Lascelles - Heritage Commission:

Selectman R, Lascelles commented that he was not able to attend the last Heritage Commission meeting. Mr. Lascelles mentioned that he, Ms. Queenan, and Mr. Brown participated in an event in the Town of Merrimac. He stated that the event was a photo-op but believed they made their point.

iv. Selectman K. Lynch - Conservation Commission:

Selectman K. Lynch stated that the Conservation Commission has not met since the last Select Board meeting.

v. Selectman K. Queenan - Planning Board & NRPC:

1. Planning Board-

Selectman K. Queenan mentioned that the Planning Board meets on the first and third Tuesday of the month. The next Planning Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 2, at 7 pm. The Planning Board continues to work on their Land-Use Laws and permitted uses in the current regions. She noted that the Board is focusing on all five of Litchfield's Commercial Regions. The five Commercial Regions are:

- i. Northern Commercial
- ii. Northern Commercial - Industrial
- iii. Southern Commercial
- iv. Southern Commercial - Industrial
- v. Highway Commercial District

The Planning Board is looking at anything that has to do with data warehousing. They are also looking at size limitations so the Town would not have to worry about an Amazon Warehouse in Town.

2. NRPC-

Ms. Queenan stated that the next Commissioner meeting would be on Wednesday, December 15, at 7 pm.

6. Items Removed From Consent:

- a. None

7. Non-Public:

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman R. Leary / Selectman K. Lynch) motioned to enter Non-Public, at 7:56 pm, under RSA 91-A:3 II(a) - Compensation of an Employee.

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

8. Reconvene:

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman K. Lynch / Selectman R. Lascelles) motioned to adjourn the Non-Public Session at 8:31 pm.

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

9. Adjournment:

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman R. Lascelles / Selectman K. Queenan) motioned to adjourn the Public Session and seal the Non-Public minutes indefinitely because it was determined that divulgence of the information likely

would adversely affect the reputation of any person other than a member of the Board at 8:32 pm.
(5-0-0) The motion carried.

Vote:

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