

**Litchfield Board of Finance  
Special Hybrid Meeting Minutes  
March 18, 2026 ~ 7:00 p.m.  
Litchfield Firehouse and Remote**

**1. Call to Order:** Chairman Sam Olmstead called the special hybrid meeting of the Board of Finance to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Regular members Elliott Fuessenich, Sam Olmstead, Stephan Krucker, Matt Dyer, Jennine Lupo, John Keilty and alternates Kristopher Wright and Patrick Allers

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Finance Director Amaechi Obi, First Selectman Denise Raap, Selectman Jeffrey Zullo, Town Treasurer Erich Marriott, Carol Bramley and former Board member Matt Tobin. There was no one on remote access.

**2. Approval of February 9th Regular Meeting Minutes**

**Motion:** John Keilty moved and M. Dyer seconded a motion to approve the 2/9/26 meeting minutes as presented. All voted aye and the motion carried. Chairman Olmstead publicly thanked Carlissa Bayette for stepping in to record the minutes for two months in Ann's absence.

**3. USA Hauling Contract Extension:** D. Raap explained we currently have a contract with USA until 2027. They offered an extension of 10 years added onto 2025, and the Selectmen approved. It will go from \$122/ton \$118/ton retroactively for last year, and next year it will be \$122/ton. The rates actually go down, saving us a lot of money, and it gives us ten years of security. M. Dyer noted that in 5 years we would be able to bid out, but only to NRRRA. D. Raap said the Town could pass an ordinance to join NRRRA if they provide a lower tip fee, and this would be the only way to get out of the contract. M. Dyer thought this would be a reasonable contract that avoids short-term thinking. S. Olmstead also thought this was a good deal. D. Raap added that we were awarded a \$100,000 contract to start a voluntary Pay-As-You-Throw program at our Recycling Center to reduce the amount of trash. **Motion:** E. Fuessenich moved and J. Keilty seconded a motion to approve this contract as presented and forward it to town meeting. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**4. Presentation of FY27 Selectmen's Budget:** S. Olmstead encouraged feedback to pass on to the Board of Selectmen and noted that the budget is not formally received by the Board of Finance until after the budget hearing. D. Raap thanked all for consideration in presenting only small increases if necessary. She then reviewed each department's proposal from the summary sheets. Town Clerk and most Public Works Departments showed reductions for which they were commended. Other notes, other than wage increases, include:

Board of Finance 1101: 27.32% increase is for the new auditor

Board of Selectmen 1102: Unpaid BOE invoices (\$50,000) were taken out and will be paid by the general fund.

Registrars 1107: have increased budget to cover more hours due to early voting mandate; more poll workers, 3 polling locations, etc. (29.24% increase)

Elections 1108: With more poll workers, meals, early voting, etc, it costs more to run an election (47.88%).

Finance 1201: Increase of 16.96% for previous part-time position working 2 days to add 3 more, making it a full-time position in order to help with the auditor and for grant writing. This will now be a five-day, full-time position.

Tax Assessment 1301: We went from a part-time Assessor without benefits to a full-time Assessor (39.20%). Data processing costs have also gone up.

Planning & Zoning 1401: We will have a new hire to replace the previous Land Use Official. Carol Bramley explained why we need more planning money. We have not had a certified planner for ten years. Regulations have been added haphazardly and we must keep up with new legislation regarding potential development. Review of major applications and updating regulations is essential. We have \$10,000 in the budget now but would need \$10,000 more for the next budget to cover necessary requirements. Planners have always been a 1099 contractor.

Wetlands 1402: Added \$1,000 for continuing education for commissioner training (25%).

Land Use Admin 1405: POCAD has to be completed by 2027, and they estimate \$100,000. They will apply to Seherr-Thoss for a 50-50 grant, take \$50,000 out of operating and put it into the general fund.

Buildings & Grounds 1701: Up 19.83% for electric for EV car charger bill. We will get this back on the revenue side.

Legal 1801: Took \$50,000 out for litigation and put it into a separate litigation line for use on a special settlement case. Our insurance carrier of 30 years ago has agreed to help us now with the cost of counsel, and we have hired a litigator. The line 1801 has increased by \$10,500 to cover increased attorney fees.

Municipal Liability 1802: Our CIRMA policy went up 7%.

Police 2101: This budget shows 3 resident troopers. They are also showing the cost of a constable, \$275,000, in case the public wants to add it into the budget. Adding a constable would be .2 mills increase. J. Lupo said a request was received at the state legislature for a police vehicle for the town of Bethlehem. This might be an idea for us if it passes for Bethlehem and we add a constable. M. Dyer thought this constable expenditure might be an emotional rather than a financial consideration for the public.

Fire Marshal 2201: Addition of 31.28% for shift of part-time employee to full-time status in this office. The addition of Pay-Per-Call has to be tracked and administered now, in addition to physicals and other administrative work.

Fire Protection 2202: Money put into the Pay-Per-Call line that does not get used in one year will remain in a non-lapsing account and will not drop off into the general fund. It is fully funded for 2027 at \$160,000. E. Fuessenich liked the idea of fully funding it each year. The idea of seeding it with fund balance was not entertained by the Selectmen. This is an operating expense.

PW Buildings 3105: Up 17.97%, representing service contracts, including hiring an outside cleaning firm instead of using employees.

OSHA 4401: Went up 50%, but there are more mandated tests now to remain in compliance.

Recreation 5201: 21% increase for part-time person to cover keeping the gym clean, safe and maintained

Fringe Benefits 8101: Health insurance went up 11.5% with the State Partnership Plan.

Board of Education 9101: Total BOE operating budget is up \$735,182 but there is no reflection yet of the ECS money that is coming back to us, which would shave off about .2%. It would be nice to have that figure (\$374,000?) before we set our mill rate.

There was general discussion about BOE enrollments and future savings, town development and police needs vs public feelings. At this point the proposed budget is at \$35,726,248 (last year actual \$31,834,108). This is a 4.7% change. D. Raap went over the projected revenue budget for 2027, with 4.7 percent increase. The Region 20 deficit of \$430,000 was discussed, and A. Obi and S. Olmstead will discuss it later as to how it will be reported.

**5. Approval of FY27 Capital Improvement Plan: Motion:** E. Fuessenich moved to approve the 26/27 Capital Budget in the amount of \$4,501,858, and J. Keilty seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**6. Region 20 Update:** S. Olmstead said the first meeting of the ad hoc Finance Board meeting is next Thursday, and he solicited questions from the BOF to ask at the meeting. J. Lupo asked if they are at capacity for their out-of-district tuition students, and Mr. Olmstead said he would ask. Committee member Matt Tobin said the invoices did not create a great narrative for what was over budget. He added the invoices for a total of \$2.2 million vs \$2.6 million that was claimed. He is also asking why they are shredding invoices that have been paid. BOS member J. Bongiorno will ask the BOS for permission to approach the school to discuss discrepancies in invoices we received, as there were a lot of duplications. There are about \$400,000 of expenses we do not have invoices for. He said we can also talk to King & King about our processes. D. Raap also asked about the \$255,000 for Region 6 unpaid invoices so they could continue their relationship with their vendors. Is that number part of the \$2.6 million?

**7. Monthly Financial Reports for February:** Amaechi Obi started with expenditures. So far we have spent \$27,148,280, or 83% of the budget, compared to 79% last year at this time. This includes encumbrances of \$1,085,836, with \$5,894,383 available. Under revenue, taxes collected so far are 98.2%, compared to 98.9% last year. Total revenue collected so far is 94.7%, compared to 96.4% last year. He is hoping the ECS payment for the second quarter will be coming soon. Investment income has been collected, but it was unclear whether that was through February. **Motion:** J. Keilty moved to accept the February financial reports as submitted, and M. Dyer seconded. All voted aye and the motion passed.

## **8. New Business**

**a. Financial Transfers:** None

**b. Correspondence:** None

**c. Payment of Bills**

**i. King & King 2/26/26 Invoice:** S. Olmstead said the scope of work did not include this filing because the previous auditor had not yet submitted it, so King & King did not include this cost in their proposal. They scrambled to get it in by the deadline. It is an extra \$481.25. **Motion:** E. Fuessenich moved to approve the invoice for \$481.25 for preparation of an additional filing. J. Keilty seconded, all voted aye, and the motion carried.

**d. Future Agenda Items:** None mentioned

**9. Adjourn: Motion:** J. Keilty moved and M. Dyer seconded a motion to adjourn at 9:04 p.m. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Ann D. Combs, Recording Secretary