

MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025 ~ 5:30 P.M.
IN-PERSON AT BANTAM ANNEX, 80 DOYLE RD., BANTAM, CT AND
REMOTE MEETING BY LIVE INTERNET VIDEO STREAM AND TELEPHONE

Call to Order First Selectman Denise Raap called the regular hybrid meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. Selectmen present were Dan Morosani, John Bongiorno, and First Selectman Denise Raap. Jeff Zullo was present via Zoom and Jodiann Tenney was absent.

Approval of Minutes:

- a) **Board of Selectmen, regular meeting, 05/06/2025 Motion:** J. Bongiorno motioned to approve the 05/06/2025 Board of Selectmen regular meeting minutes. D. Morosani seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

Public Requests/Comments none

Selectmen's Requests D. Raap reported that Sandy Beach has once again approved providing free passes to First Responders for this year. D. Raap noted that in order to receive the passes, fire companies are required to submit updated information. **Motion:** J. Bongiorno motioned to move new business items before interviews, appointments, and reappointments. D. Morosani seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

First Selectman's Update Report D. Raap announced that the 25th annual Dream Ride will pass through Litchfield on August 23. D. Raap also reported that the property closing for 77 West Street, future site for the new Litchfield Volunteer Ambulance building, took place on May 15, 2025. D. Raap noted that Public Works Week will be observed from May 18 through May 24 and extended a thank you to the department for their continued hard work. D. Raap shared that she met with Interim Resident Trooper Tom Schaefer, who will serve in the role until the State completes its interview process to fill the position permanently. D. Raap re-announced that Household Hazardous Waste Day will be held on Saturday, June 21, 2025, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Falls Village Public Works Garage. Tickets can be obtained at the First Selectman's Office. D. Raap presented and read the Citizen of the Month proclamation, honoring Jane Golding for her contributions.

New Business

- a) **BOS Recommendation for Bantam Fire Company Air Handler Unit Replacement Bid** J. Bongiorno stated that this item was discussed with the Capital Improvement Committee and was approved at their meeting. **Motion:** J. Zullo motioned that the Board of Selectmen approve the Bantam Fire Company Air Handler Unit Replacement to West State Mechanical, LLC recommended by Board of Fire Commissioners & EMS. J. Bongiorno seconded the motion. **Discussion:** J. Zullo asked whether Bantam Fire Company went to Seherr Thoss for grant money to apply toward the expense of replacing the air handler unit. J. Golding stated that the Fire Company did not pursue Seherr Thoss. **Vote:** All voted aye and the motion passed.
- b) **Planning & Zoning Legal Bills Totaling: \$4,880 Re: Peloquin - Affordable Housing, Ephatori LLC - Appeal, Village Green Redevelopment** **Motion:** J. Zullo motioned that the Board of Selectmen approve the Planning & Zoning legal bills totaling \$4,880. J. Bongiorno seconded the motion. **Discussion:** D. Morosani requested that for all legal bills attorneys provide a cumulative total of legal costs for the Town on each matter. **Vote:** All voted aye and the motion passed.

- c) **Approval of Waiver for Litchfield Volunteer Ambulance Planning & Zoning and Building Department Permit Fees** D. Raap stated that it is standard practice for the Town to waive permit fees for quasi-municipal agencies when they are undertaking projects that benefit the community. **Motion:** D. Morosani motioned that the Board of Selectmen waive the Planning & Zoning and Building Department permit fees for the Litchfield Volunteer Ambulance. J. Bongiorno seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.
- d) **Sec. 7-163e Public Hearing Call Re: 77 West Street Lease to Litchfield Volunteer Ambulance Motion:** J. Bongiorno motioned that the Board of Selectmen approve and sign the Section 7-163e public hearing call regarding 77 West Street Lease to Litchfield Volunteer Ambulance on June 3, 2025. D. Morosani seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.
- e) **Bond Anticipation Note and Future Bonding on Litchfield Volunteer Ambulance Building Construction** D. Raap explained that because LVA is a standalone nonprofit organization, a direct bond would be considered taxable, which is not the preferred option. J. Zullo presented the funding breakdown for the LVA construction project, which includes \$1.3 million in Town-supported construction funding, a \$500,000 USDA grant, approximately \$290,000 in LVA self-funding through grants and fundraising, and about \$100,000 in contingency, bringing the total project cost to \$2,165,000. He stated that bond counsel recommended the Town bond \$1,365,000 and provide the construction funds to LVA through a granting agreement. D. Raap noted that this arrangement would allow for a non-taxable municipal bond, which is more cost-effective for taxpayers. J. Zullo added that the interest rate on a non-taxable bond would be approximately 3.75%, compared to 4.95% for a taxable bond (plus around \$10,000 annually in additional fees), or 6.75% for a commercial loan over 25 years, which would add roughly \$20,000 per year. He outlined the next steps: bond counsel will prepare a resolution and grant agreement; the BOS will vote on the resolution at the June 3 meeting; the Board of Finance will review it on June 9; and the item will be included on the June 18 Town Meeting call. He emphasized the need to expedite the process so construction can begin on July 1, and noted that combining this bond with the upcoming capital improvements bond in a single prospectus would save taxpayers money. J. Bongiorno asked if the Town would regain ownership of the building if LVA were to disband, and D. Raap confirmed that it would. J. Zullo requested a waterfall projection chart for debt services, and D. Raap stated she would forward it to the BOS.
- f) **Public Hearing Call Re: Speed Camera Presentation Motion:** J. Bongiorno motioned that the Board of Selectmen sign the call for the public hearing regarding speed camera presentation on June 17 at 7 p.m. at Litchfield Intermediate School. D. Morosani seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.
- g) **Authorize Town Treasurer to Close 2 Bank Accounts** D. Raap stated there are two bank accounts associated with the Litchfield Board of Education that need to be closed, as the current treasurer, Alan Landau, is not a signer and the previous signers are no longer employees. **Motion:** J. Bongiorno motioned to authorize the Town Treasurer to close two bank accounts and move the funds back into the Town's general fund. J. Zullo seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

Interviews, Appointments & Reappointments

- a) **Reappoint Bill Deacon to the Park & Recreation Commission, term expiring 06/2029** **Motion:** J. Bongiorno motioned to reappoint Bill Deacon to the Park & Recreation Commission with a term ending 06/2029. D. Morosani seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

Liaison Reports/Commission-Committee Minutes: On TownofLitchfield.org website

Region 20 Update D. Raap reported that, according to the auditor, all three Apple laptops previously unaccounted for have been located within the school system. J. Bongiorno commented that the capital portion of the budget is heavily weighted toward technology due to past overspending on tech purchases, adding that contracts are already in place. He also raised concerns about the whereabouts of tablets previously owned by Litchfield Public Schools and Region 6. He mentioned a negative experience with the recent car show event but thanked Chris Escobar, Region 20 Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, for coming out to open the school to have access to the restrooms. J. Bongiorno expressed that he would like to see the backup data behind budget presentations, not just PowerPoint slides, citing a lack of trust after three years in which the BOS and Board of Education were given incorrect information. He urged caution in making further cuts to the educational process, stating that Superintendent Dr. Jeffery Villar has not yet had adequate time to fully review the system and that such a review cannot be reasonably completed in one month. However, he acknowledged that the current budget proposal is a step in the right direction. He also raised concerns about Region 20's Chief Financial Officer identifying errors in the audit. J. Zullo echoed these concerns, seeking clarification on why the auditor failed to identify or access duplicate entries and invoices. He stated that the BOS or Board of Finance should recommend to Region 20 that they consider bonding capital expenses in next year's budget, which currently projects \$1,650,000. D. Raap noted that the other three towns involved are not in favor of bonding capital and expressed concern that, following Region 20's first audit, bondholders might view the district as a higher risk, potentially resulting in unfavorable interest rates. J. Zullo provided the upcoming key dates in the Region20 budget approval process: a budget hearing on May 22, a district meeting on June 2, and a referendum on June 3. D. Raap stated that if the referendum fails, statutory procedures require the Town to use last year's assessment, along with its share of school debt service, to issue interim tax bills. She also noted that the process requires holding repeated referendums until a budget is approved.

Advanced Tech Update J. Bongiorno stated the gear for video conferencing and camera has been ordered. J. Bongiorno stated efforts are ongoing to coordinate with Frontier to install wifi uptown, with challenges related to the use of electrical poles, some of which are paid for by the borough and some by the town.

WPCA Liaison Update J. Bongiorno stated Woodard & Curran has submitted a comprehensive report that will be discussed at the next WPCA meeting. J. Bongiorno stated the inter-municipal agreement with Torrington is nearly approved; only a WPCA vote remains.

Sustainable Litchfield Update J. Zullo stated there is planning underway for next steps, including a meeting with town departments to assess their needs for upcoming actions.

Vacancies: The list of current appointed vacancies with term expirations is as follows:

Advanced Technology Commission: 2 alternate members 2/2026

Beautification Commission: 3 regular members 1-02/2026, 2-2/2028, 3 alternate members 2/2028

Cable TV Advisory Council: 1 member 6/2025

Conservation Commission: 1 alternate member 12/2025

Economic Development Commission: 1 regular member 6/2026, 2 alternate members 6/2026, 06/2027

Board of Ethics: 2 regular members 1-6/2025, 1-6/2027, 1 alternate member 6/2027

Inland Wetlands Commission: 1 regular member 6/2025, 2 alternate members 6/2027

Litchfield Arts Council: 3 regular members 8/2027

Litchfield Prevention Council: 2 regular members 6/2027, 6/2028, 4 alt. members 1-6/2026, 1-6/2027, 2-6/2028

Milton Historic District Commission: 1 regulars 1/2030, 1/2028; 3 alternates; 2-1/2027, 1-1/2025

Park & Recreation Commission: 1 alternate member 6/2025

Pension Commission: 1 alternate member 3/2030

Social Services Board: 1 regular member 02/2028

Sustainable Litchfield Committee: 1 alternate member 3/2026
Town Facilities Review Committee: 3 regular members 3/2026; 2 alternates 3/2026
Veterans' Advisory Committee: 1 regular member 8/2026; 1 alternate member 8/2027
Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA): 1 alternate member 1/2026
Western CT Coalition, CAC #22: 1 member 5/2025
Zoning Board of Appeals: 3 alternate members 3/2025

Tax Refunds

- a) **2 refunds totaling \$4,119.49 Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to approve the two tax refunds totaling \$4,119.49. J. Bongiorno seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

Old Business

- a) **Board of Ethics Questionnaire Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to table this agenda item. J. Bongiorno seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

Adjournment Motion: J. Bongiorno motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:17 p.m. D. Morosani seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.


Denise Raap, First Selectman

