

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026 ~ 5:30 P.M.**  
**IN-PERSON AT LITCHFIELD FIREHOUSE, 258 WEST ST, LITCHFIELD, CT AND**  
**REMOTE MEETING BY LIVE INTERNET VIDEO STREAM AND TELEPHONE**

**Call to Order** First Selectman Denise Raap called the hybrid meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. Selectmen present were John Bongiorno, Jodiann Tenney, Jeff Zullo, and First Selectman Denise Raap. Selectman Dan Morosani was absent. Also present were Assistant to the Finance Director Stacey Dionne, and Matt Tobin. Finance Director Amaechi Obi was present by live internet video stream.

**Approval of Minutes:**

- a) **Board of Selectmen, regular meeting, 02/03/2026 Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to approve the 02/03/2026 Board of Selectmen regular meeting minutes. J. Bongiorno seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed. J. Tenney abstained.

**Public Requests/Comments** Patricia Pieffer, a Litchfield resident, spoke regarding the speed cameras. She stressed the importance of developing a comprehensive municipal traffic plan. She further stated that the State requires either a Vision Zero plan or a Council of Governments plan.

**Selectmen's Requests** none

**First Selectman's Update Report** D. Raap reported that while she continues to advocate for increased Education Cost Sharing funding, Litchfield is budgeted to receive a \$374,000 increase in the Governor's proposed budget. She also noted a new scam circulating online involving a supposed Easter egg hunt at the Litchfield Firehouse where vendors are invited to register and sell products; she clarified that this event is not legitimate. She further reported that the ice skating rink at Community Field is up.

**Resignations**

- a) Barbara Carr from the Sustainable Litchfield Committee, alternate member, effective 02/04/2026, received and accepted.

**Interviews, Appointments & Reappointments**

- a) **Appoint Sam Olmstead to the Board of Education Ad Hoc Finance Committee Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to appoint Sam Olmstead to the Board of Education Ad Hoc Finance Committee. D. Raap seconded the motion. **Discussion:** J. Tenney expressed her respect for S. Olmstead and his willingness to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee but raised concern about a potential conflict of interest due to his wife being a teacher in the district. She stated she would have preferred John Keilty to begin serving immediately rather than after the budget season. J. Zullo acknowledged her concern; however, he noted that the Board of Finance selected a member and recommended that individual to the BOS for appointment, and he did not wish to go against that recommendation. He further noted that previous BOE members have had spouses employed by the school, and that the Ad Hoc Committee has no voting authority, its role is advisory only. J. Bongiorno added that S. Olmstead is consistently well-prepared, strong in data collection, and skilled in analysis, but expressed concern that he has been more aligned with pro school versus pro Town. **Withdrawal:** J. Zullo withdrew his motion and D. Raap her second. **Motion:** J. Tenney motioned that the Board of Selectmen appoint Sam Olmstead to the Board of Education Ad Hoc Finance Committee with a term ending 06/30/2026. J. Zullo seconded the motion. **Discussion:** J. Bongiorno requested that S. Olmstead reports back to the BOS. D. Raap added that

she would like the Board's concerns and affirmation on certain items to be communicated as well.  
**Vote:** All voted aye and the motion passed.

- b) **Reappoint Barbara Carr to the Sustainable Litchfield Committee, regular member, term ending 03/2028** Motion: J. Zullo motioned to appoint Barbara Carr to the Sustainable Litchfield Committee as a regular member with a term ending 03/2028. J. Tenney seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.
- c) **Reappoint Daniela Larsson to the Sustainable Litchfield Committee, regular member, term ending 03/2028**
- d) **Reappoint Carrie Szwed to the Sustainable Litchfield Committee, regular member, term ending 03/2028**
- e) **Reappoint Margaret Hunt to the Sustainable Litchfield Committee, regular member, term ending 03/2028**
- f) **Reappoint Jeff Zullo to the Sustainable Litchfield Committee, regular member, term ending 03/2028**
- g) **Reappoint Dean Birdsall to the Sustainable Litchfield Committee, regular member, term ending 03/2028**

**Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to reappoint Daniela Larsson, Carrie Szwed, Margaret Hunt, Jeff Zullo, and Dean Birdsall to the Sustainable Litchfield Committee as regular members with the term ending 03/2028. J. Tenney seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

**Liaison Reports/Commission-Committee Minutes:** On TownofLitchfieldct.gov website

#### **Region 20 Update**

- a) **CTDOT Walk Audit** D. Raap reported that a walk audit was conducted at Lakeview High School and that conversations with CTDOT are ongoing. J. Bongiorno stated that he believes many of the issues could be resolved by expanding the parking lot.

D. Raap reported that R20 has another budget meeting this Thursday. She noted that the budget presentation reflects an approximate \$963,964 increase for Litchfield. She added that, should the Governor's budget pass, the proposed \$374,000 increase in Education Cost Sharing could help offset the Board of Education's overall increase. J. Tenney stated that based on the online presentations, R20 appears to be in a stronger starting position than last year, with a projected surplus for this fiscal year. She added that Superintendent Dr. Villar is keeping the central office lean and focusing resources on instruction rather than administrative overhead.

J. Bongiorno stated that the R20 Ad Hoc Invoice Committee will need to meet again, as he does not believe the invoices provided will total the reported \$2.7 million deficit. J. Zullo recommended that the Ad Hoc Committee meet with Superintendent Dr. Vill and Chief Financial Officer Julia Cardillo to address these concerns, noting that issues with the previous budget must be resolved. D. Raap added that the Legislators have submitted a bill requesting a forensic audit of R20.

J. Bongiorno further stated that he expected to receive the invoice stream that led to the deficit but he stated that is not what was provided. J. Zullo asked whether other towns in the region are reviewing these invoices; J. Bongiorno responded that he does not believe they are. J. Tenney commented that at this point, the most productive outcome may be to establish assurances and procedures to prevent similar issues from occurring again. S. Dionne noted that the Finance Office has a folder of returned checks for Litchfield Public Schools due to duplicate payments. M. Tobin reported that by the end of the week he will total the non-duplicate and legitimate invoices. He added that the explanation that invoices could not be paid until the next fiscal year is not accurate, as some date back to the beginning of the fiscal year. He also noted that approximately 20% of the deficit involves All Star Transportation, a known contractual amount of \$1.7 million paid in ten installments, three of which were identified in the budget as over budget.

D. Raap noted that Region 6 still owes Litchfield money for fuel used. D. Raap concluded by requesting that the Ad Hoc Committee meet with the Superintendent within the next two weeks.

**Advanced Tech Update** J. Bongiorno reported that the ATC will be moving its meetings to the third Monday of each month. He noted that both the Northfield and Litchfield Firehouses have requested assistance with cleaning up their networks. He has been working with S. Dionne, who maintains a list of all Town technology, and with the Firehouses to develop a comprehensive technology spreadsheet.

J. Bongiorno also reported that he met with Senator Steven Harding regarding the WiFi-on-the-Green project and the challenges encountered with Eversource. He is compiling photographs showing how Thomaston was able to install new walk lights and additional infrastructure without being required to install the meters that PURA mandated for the Litchfield's project. He noted that the Thomaston project occurred after the exemption period had ended.

**WPCA Liaison Update** J. Bongiorno reported that the WPCA is working on its budget and revising its policy of relying on interest income and unpaid bills. He stated that they are also developing a capital budget and plan, and he is pleased with the progress being made. He noted the recent resignation of Ken Merz but highlighted his work in securing the necessary connections for insurance to cover the work to the tank that was involved in the explosion last summer. J. Bongiorno also reported that the UV project is nearing completion.

**Sustainable Litchfield Update** J. Zullo noted that a meeting with the EV charger contractor, ESC, has been scheduled to ensure there are no further issues with payment. S. Dionne reported that all back payments have been received.

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

Advanced Technology Commission: 2 alternate members 2/2026

Beautification Commission: 2 regular members 1-02/2026, 1-02/2027; 3 alternate members 2/2028

Cable TV Advisory Council: 1 member 6/2025

Conservation Commission: 1 regular member 12/2028, 1 alternate member 12/2025

Economic Development Commission: 1 alternate member 6/2027

Inland Wetlands Commission: 2 alternate members 6/2027

Litchfield Arts Council: 2 regular members 8/2027

Litchfield Prevention Council: 3 alternate members 1-6/2026, 1-6/2027, 1-6/2028

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

Pension Commission: 2 alternate member 1-3/2028, 1-3/2030

Sandy Beach Commission: 1 regular member 12/2028

Sustainable Litchfield Committee: 2 alternate members 3/2028

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 5/2027

Zoning Board of Appeals: 3 alternate members 3/2027

**Tax Refunds** none

**Transfers** none

**Old Business**

- a) **Speed Cameras Discussion** J. Tenney stated that she will review and edit the Vision Zero plan initiated by the Traffic Safety Community Action Group and plans to revisit the statutes, as there have been updates since her last review. She also clarified that the TSCAG never opposed the use

of speed cameras; rather, they felt it was too new, required additional information, and should not be used in isolation to address traffic concerns.

**Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to table the speed camera discussion to June. J. Bongiorno seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

- b) **USA Hauling Contract Extension Motion:** J. Bongiorno motioned that the Board of Selectmen accept USA Hauling's ten year contract extension with the changes that was asked for. J. Tenney seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.
- c) **Hawkers and Peddlers Ordinance** D. Raap reported that, after speaking with Town Counsel, the Board cannot impose a ban on solicitors. J. Bongiorno requested that the ordinance's permitted hours be adjusted to 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. J. Tenney requested that a complaint form be created for residents to report solicitors who are not complying with ordinance. D. Raap asked Board members to submit any changes they would like included so the revisions can be forwarded to Town Counsel for review.
- d) **Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Capital Improvement Projects** J. Tenney asked for an update on the Litchfield Volunteer Ambulance's vehicles. D. Raap noted that, if this request is approved, LVA would have three ambulances, model years 2023, 2025, and 2026. She stated that the current Sprinter would be sold, with the proceeds applied to the purchase of the 2026 ambulance, and that the 2017 box ambulance would be transferred to the Department of Public Works to be repurposed for their use. J. Bongiorno stated he voted no on this because of his concern about the long-term impact of having to replace these ambulances in consecutive years. J. Zullo added that, when looking ahead at future fire department requests, it would not be advisable to pair an ambulance replacement with a fire truck purchase.  
**Motion:** J. Zullo motioned that the Board of Selectmen approve the 2026/2027 Capital Improvement Projects budget in the amount of \$4,501,858, a net cost to the Town of \$2,890,390, and a potential bond of \$2,390,390 after \$500,000 pay-as-you-go Fund Balance. J. Tenney seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.
- e) **Bantam Annex Discussion** D. Raap reported that she is still waiting for a confirmed date for the presentation with the architectural firm. J. Tenney asked whether any analysis has been done on demolishing the building and constructing a new one, and whether that option would be less costly. J. Zullo stated that, during the 2018 referendum, the public made it clear they wished to keep the building, so the architectural firm was instructed to focus on renovation. He also noted that the current proposal does not give up the building but instead leases the under-utilized portion, potentially to the Housing Authority, which could pursue grants to renovate that area. He added that, if the Town does not wish to pursue that option, it is recommended to demolish that portion of the building, as it is an addition and not part of the original or historic structure. D. Raap stated that the matter needs to be voted on this summer, as the courthouse funding is being depleted.

### New Business

- a) **Selectmen Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Presentation** D. Raap reported that the budget presented is the budget presented to her with no changes. It has additions such as funding for Pay-Per-Call, Constable costs, an expanded Finance position for grant support, increased Registrar and Assessor salary costs, partial POCAD funding, a full-time Administrative Assistant for the Fire Marshal, a new litigation line, and the mortgage for the LVA building.

- b) **Homestead for Connecticut** J. Tenney expressed concern that primary residents may be affected because they were not aware of the change, and she recommended clear communication, such as a mailer, to ensure they are informed. It was agreed to add this to a future agenda.
- c) **Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Fund Resolution Motion:** J. Zullo motioned that the Board of Selectmen authorize the First Selectman to sign the resolution in regards to Mashatucket Pequot and Mohegan Fund for the Town of Litchfield. J. Tenney seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.
- d) **Litchfieldopoly America 250 Request** D. Raap noted that this request came from the Litchfield Rotary. On the previous Litchfieldopoly board, the Selectmen of that time were featured in the center, and the Rotary has requested to do the same again. **Motion:** J. Zullo motioned for the Board of Selectmen to authorize the Litchfieldopoly America 250 to utilize the Board of Selectmen's names. J. Tenney seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

**Correspondence**

- a) Jessica MacDonald Re: Speed Cameras, received, it was noted that this petition was intended to gather support for speed cameras. It was also noted that anyone may petition for a Town Meeting.

**Executive Session**

**Adjournment Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m. J. Bongiorno seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.



Denise Raap, First Selectman