

MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2026 ~ 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 hybrid meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. Selectmen present were Dan Morosani, John Bongiorno, Anne Dranginis, Jeff Zullo, and First Selectman Denise Raap. Also present was Legal Counsel Michael Rybak and Michael Rybak Jr., Assessor Penny Mudgett and Administrative Assistant in the Assessor's Office Haley Whipple. **Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to amend the agenda to change the date from 06/16/2026 to 07/07/2026 for approval of meeting minutes. J. Bongiorno seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

Approval of Minutes:

- a) **Board of Selectmen, regular meeting, 07/07/2026** **Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to approve the Board of Selectmen regular meeting minutes of 07/07/2026. J. Bongiorno seconded the motion. **Discussion:** J. Zullo noted the approval of the Joint meeting with the Borough of Litchfield 06/16/2026 meeting minutes mentioned Ed Fabbri as a member of the Traffic Safety Community Action Group. J. Zullo wanted to clarify that E. Fabbri was an advisor to the TSCAG. **Vote:** all voted aye and the motion passed, A. Dranginis abstained.

Public Requests/Comments none

Selectmen's Requests **Motion:** D. Morosani motioned to add under old business Police Staffing at Troop L. J. Zullo seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

First Selectman's Update Report D. Raap reported that Administrative Assistant Carlissa Bayette has transitioned to the Finance Office as Finance Assistant/Grant Coordinator. Her replacement, Alyssa Dyer, will begin August 10. Executive Administrator Nikky Yarrish has accepted a position with the Cheshire school system; her replacement, Lori Clinton, will begin August 17. D. Raap expressed appreciation to both C. Bayette and N. Yarrish for their service. She noted that the Town will roll out a voluntary pay-as-you-throw program, anticipated to start in November. The Board of Assessment Appeals is accepting motor-vehicle appeal applications, due in the Assessor's Office by August 20. Early voting began August 3 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Town Hall, with the Primary at regular polling locations on August 11. Connecticut Department of Transportation met July 30 regarding Routes 118 and 254; an update is expected August 25. She concluded by noting that the Town is proceeding with bonding and has maintained its AA+ rating.

Resignations

- a) Robert Kwalick from the Litchfield Arts Council, effective 07/08/2026, received and noted.
- b) Anne Dranginis from the Board of Ethics, effective 07/10/2026, received and noted.
- c) Deputy Fire Marshal Sam Kinkade from Active Deputy Fire Marshal, effective 07/22/2026, received and noted.
- d) Nikky Yarrish from the Local Emergency Preparedness Committee, effective 08/03/2026, received and noted.

Interviews, Appointments & Reappointments

- a) **Appoint Patrick Scully Jr. to Active Deputy Fire Marshal** **Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to appoint Patrick Scully Jr. as an Active Deputy Fire Marshal. D. Morosani seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

- b) **Reappoint Amy Fitzpatrick to the Social Services Board, regular board, term ending 02/2029 Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to reappoint Amy Fitzpatrick to the Social Services Board as a regular member with a term ending 02/2029. D. Morosani seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.
- c) **Reappoint Sandra Becker to the Litchfield Housing Authority, regular member, term ending 08/2031 Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to reappoint Sandra Becker to the Litchfield Housing Authority as a regular member with a term ending 08/2031. D. Morosani seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

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

Bantam Annex November Ballot Discussion D. Raap stated that the goal of placing the Bantam Annex question on the November ballot is to maximize voter participation. She noted that the Town Counsel recommended presenting, at a September Town Meeting, the four options developed by the architectural firm along with those proposed by the BOS. These could be voted on at the meeting or adjourned to referendum. M. Rybak clarified that agenda items would serve for discussion or an advisory poll, explaining that ballot questions must begin with "Shall" and end with "Yes" or "No," so multiple options cannot be presented. He added that it would not reach the November ballot because the Secretary of the State's submission deadline is September 4, 2026. D. Morosani expressed concern that holding a poll would delay action and attract only those most passionate about the project, noting that bonding for tens of millions of dollars affects all residents and should not hinge on a small turnout. D. Raap responded that this format allows debate and could be closed to referendum. J. Zullo asked whether a vote similar to the November ballot could be held; M. Rybak advised against it due to the cost of staffing three polling locations and determining voter eligibility. J. Bongiorno voiced concern over Bantam Planning & Zoning's restrictions and the building's high operating costs, stating he would prefer to see the property generate tax revenue but supported a Town Meeting that adjourns to referendum. M. Rybak explained that under state statute 7-7, the BOS may remove items from a Town Meeting vote and schedule an adjourned vote 7-14 days later. D. Raap noted that while Bantam Borough's newly adopted POCAD encourages affordable housing, current zoning prohibits it. J. Bongiorno added that development of the Bantam property could provide an additional emergency exit for the Bantam Fire Company and Bantam Falls. J. Zullo clarified that under 8-30g, the Town is not limited to four affordable housing units and expressed disappointment that local zoning forces a choice between major spending, demolition or use of the 8-30g. The Board agreed to hold a public hearing on September 29 to discuss and poll each option.

Speed Camera November Ballot Discussion J. Bongiorno noted that the State is discussing a possible moratorium on speed cameras. The Board agreed to postpone further discussion on the matter.

Homestead for Connecticut P. Mudgett noted that New Milford is currently the only town that has implemented this exemption. D. Raap explained that the purpose is to allow primary homeowners a reduced assessment against their market appraisal. H. Whipple stated that New Milford applies the exemption only to the house to ensure equity among homeowners and has two filing periods. She added that two additional assistants were hired to manage the workload. D. Raap noted that while Middlebury approved the exemption, it has not been implemented because the town did not approve additional staffing. The Assessor's Office estimated approximately 3,500 residential lots and expressed concern about varying zoning districts and maintaining equity. D. Morosani acknowledged the administrative burden but emphasized the importance of considering the program due to the Town's aging population and residents on fixed incomes sensitive to tax increases. He estimated a 15-20% annual tax discount. He added that, aside from administrative challenges, the exemption could encourage primary homeownership and strengthen community continuity. J. Zullo noted that New Milford's implementation cost was \$60,000 for 10,000 properties, suggesting Litchfield's cost would be lower with 3,500 properties. He

also observed that homestead exemptions are common in southern states. The Board agreed to conduct a statute review before further discussion.

Correspondence

- a) **Milton Public Hall Association Re: Notice of Tax Protest for Grand List of 10/01/2025 Tax Year.** P. Mudgett noted that the organization is classified as a 501(c)(4) and not a 501(c)(3), therefore it is not tax-exempt. She explained that historically the organization received the exemption because the Assessor's Office had mistakenly applied the 501(c)(3) status due to an oversight many years ago; however, the error was recently identified, resulting in the issuance of taxes.

Region 20 Update J. Bongiorno noted that work is underway on their parking lot and commended the contractor selected. D. Raap reported that Goshen and Morris have not yet provided input on forming a financial review committee for the final fiscal year of Litchfield Public Schools and Region 6. She noted that Warren has responded and expressed no interest. The Board requested that D. Raap obtain the invoice records for review.

Motion: J. Zullo motioned to move the agenda item, Bantam Lake Ordinance up in the agenda. D. Morosani seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

Bantam Lake Ordinance D. Raap noted that Morris held a Town Meeting and passed its ordinance regulating wakeboarding. The Bantam Lake Protective Association submitted the ordinance to CTDEEP, which responded with suggested revisions. Morris must now reconvene a Town Meeting to incorporate those changes. J. Zullo stated that South Bay on Bantam Lake has a complete exemption and that North Bay should have the same. M. Rybak Jr. explained that DEEP's recommendations consider both lake depth and distance from shore. He added that a boating and water-skiing ordinance passed in 1962 followed DEEP's 150-foot shoreline rule, but DEEP now recommends 200 feet. D. Raap reported she contacted Morris regarding enforcement and is working with the Morris First Selectman to reconvene the Bantam Lake Authority, which has funds available for enforcement but may lack capacity. D. Morosani asked whether variable-displacement boats could be banned from Litchfield waters; M. Rybak Jr. noted that enforcement would require training to distinguish boat types and that DEEP recommends Morris and Litchfield ordinances align. M. Rybak added that further review is needed to determine whether an outright ban is possible, citing challenges to Lake Waramaug's ban.

Advanced Tech Update J. Bongiorno reported that work is underway on regulations for AI, cell phones, PCs, and networks. He noted that he has begun developing a new cybersecurity plan. He also stated that several phone numbers associated with the Town of Litchfield are not being billed correctly and he is working to resolve the issue. Frontier has proposed installing fiber at three locations, Russell Street, Stoddard Road, and North Lake Street, at \$114.99 per month for five years. J. Bongiorno recommended distributing the phones currently in the First Selectman's Office to the Fire Companies and Litchfield Volunteer Ambulance.

WPCA Liaison Update none

Sustainable Litchfield Update none

Interlocal EMS Update

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

Advanced Technology Commission: 1 alternate member 04/2028

Beautification Commission: 2 regular members 1-02/2029, 1-02/2027; 3 alternate members 02/2028

Board of Ethics: 1 regular member 06/2029; 1 alternate members 06/2029
Cable TV Advisory Council: 1 member 6/2025
Conservation Commission: 1 regular member 12/2028, 1 alternate member 12/2028
Economic Development Commission: 1 alternate member 06/2027
Inland Wetlands Commission: 2 alternate members 06/2027
Litchfield Arts Council: 4 regular members 08/2027
Litchfield Prevention Council: 1 regular member 06/2026, 3 alternate members 1-06/2026, 1-06/2027, 1-06/2028
Milton Historic District Commission: 1 regulars 01/2030; 3 alternate members 2-01/2027, 1-01/2028
Park & Recreation Commission: 1 regular member 06/2030, 1 alternate member 06/2030
Pension Commission: 1 regular member 02/2028, 2 alternate member 1-03/2028, 1-03/2030
Sandy Beach Commission: 1 regular member 12/2028
Sustainable Litchfield Committee: 1 alternate members 03/2028
Veterans' Advisory Committee: 1 regular member 08/2026; 1 alternate member 08/2027
Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA): 1 alternate member 01/2031
Western CT Coalition, CAC #22: 1 member 05/2027
Zoning Board of Appeals: 3 alternate members 03/2027

Tax Refunds none

Transfers

- a) **Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget Transfer #8 for \$229,579 Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to approve Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget Transfer #8 for \$229,579 and move to the Board of Finance and Town Meeting for final approval. A. Dranginis seconded the motion. **Discussion:** J. Zullo noted that this is the end of year clean up. D. Raap reported that there is about a \$1,000,000 surplus. **Vote:** All voted aye and the motion passed.
- b) **Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget Transfer #1 for \$9,807.45 Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to approve Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget Transfer #1 for \$9,807.45 and moved to the Board of Finance. A. Dranginis seconded the motion. **Discussion:** J. Zullo noted this is ARPA interest to fund the remainder of the Frontier expense. **Vote:** All voted aye and the motion passed.

Old Business

- a) **Update on Intersection of Route 118 and 254** Discussed in First Selectman's update.
- b) **Police Staffing at Troop L** D. Morosani reported on his conversation with Lieutenant St. John at Troop L, noting that with the recent trooper assignments, the State will not be able to spare a Trooper to fill the third Resident Trooper position. D. Raap stated that current Resident Trooper Jim Holm will retire in January. D. Morosani added that the class expected to graduate in March looks promising for filling the third Resident Trooper spot, provided there are no unexpected retirements. He expressed interest in pursuing a referendum on reestablishing the Constable program, emphasizing the need for voter input. Both D. Morosani and J. Zullo supported hiring a consultant given the State's extensive policing regulations. A. Dranginis raised concerns about liability, training, and supervision associated with reinstating the Constable program. The Board tasked D. Morosani with securing a consultant and defining the scope of work.

New Business

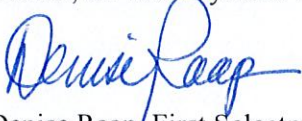
- a) **Town Meeting Discussion** tabled
- b) **Building Permit Fee Waiver for Bantam Fire Company Motion:** J. Bongiorno motioned to waive the building permit fees for Bantam Fire Company for installation of the Bantam Fire Alarm for \$330. J. Zullo seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.
- c) **Award of Bantam Fire Company Fire Alarm System Motion:** A. Dranginis motioned to award the Bantam Fire Company Fire Alarm System bid to Berkshire Alarm. J. Zullo seconded the

motion, all voted aye and the motion passed. **Discussion:** It was noted there was only 1 bidder and it was over the budget by \$1,495.02 and that overage will be covered by the Bantam Fire Company.

- d) **Award of East Litchfield Fire Department Radio System Motion:** A. Dranginis motioned to award the East Litchfield Fire Department Radio System bid to Goosetown Communications. J. Zullo seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

Executive Session Motion: J. Zullo motioned to move into executive session at 7:31 p.m. J. Bongiorno seconded the motion. 7:50 p.m. all members came out of executive session no motion no action.

Adjournment Motion: J. Zullo motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. J. Bongiorno seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.



Denise Raap, First Selectman