MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 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 5:30 p.m. Selectmen present were John Bongiorno, Anne Dranginis, Jeff Zullo, and Denise Raap. Dan Morosani joined the meeting at 5:32 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

A) **Board of Selectmen, regular meeting, 10/20/2026 Motion**: J. Zullo motioned to approve the Board of Selectmen, regular meeting minutes of 10/20/2026. A. Dranginis seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

Public Requests/Comments Ari Mergenthaler, a Litchfield resident, provided written and verbal testimony expressing concerns regarding the proposed Town acquisition of the Litchfield Community Greenway trail. She stated that prior Board discussions focused primarily on insurance and maintenance costs while overlooking other potential financial obligations, including outstanding debts, unfinished construction, commitments to neighboring property owners for privacy fencing and landscaping, compliance with approved plans, hazardous trees, and restoration of the safety guardrail system. She noted that the trail project originated in 1994 with the expectation of private donations but has relied heavily on government grants. Citing rising costs and the potential financial burden on taxpayers, Mergenthaler urged the Town not to accept the trail, noting that the proposed transfer would involve easements rather than actual land ownership. She recommended that the trail group retain responsibility for the project or dissolve and return the easements to the property owners.

Patricia Peiffer expressed concerns regarding the Connecticut DOT Route 202 traffic reconfiguration plan, questioning the reliability of the underlying traffic study. She noted that traffic counts were conducted for only two hours on a single day in September 2023 and excluded bicyclists, pedestrians, and commercial tractor-trailers, as well as consideration of local zoning regulations. P. Peiffer criticized the traffic modeling assumptions as speculative and cautioned that the proposed configuration could increase the frequency and severity of accidents. She also identified anticipated regulatory reviews, including historic preservation, environmental, and federal Section 4(f) reviews. P. Peiffer urged the Town to reconsider the plan, expressing concern that the project could result in significant expenditures without delivering the promised outcomes.

Michelle Marrin raised concerns regarding significant traffic safety hazards at the intersection of Routes 118 and 254, Fern Avenue, and Chestnut Hill Road. She cited excessive vehicle speeds, limited sightlines, and dangerous passing maneuvers that create substantial risks for motorists crossing Route 118. She suggested enhanced warning signage, including illuminated flashing speed indicators, and noted previous difficulties obtaining DOT maintenance of roadside sightlines.

D. Raap reported that the Town commissioned an engineering study in November 2024 and forwarded it to DOT in March 2025; review remains pending with engineer Greg Palmer due to state staffing shortages. J. Zullo and D. Morosani acknowledged the severity of the intersection, citing repeated serious collisions and dangerous roadway conditions.

Selectmen's Requests D. Raap requested adding Berkshire Alarm as agenda item E under new business. **Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to add Berkshire Alarm as agenda item E under new business. A. Dranginis

seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed. D. Raap also requested adding the Rodenticide Policy as agenda item C under old business. **Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to add the Rodenticide Policy as agenda item C under old business. A. Dranginis seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

First Selectman's Update Report D. Raap reported that the Pay-As-You-Throw waste disposal program is scheduled to launch on November 17. Official municipal bags will be available for purchase at Stop & Shop, Bantam Market, Ace Hardware, and Northfield General Store, with additional outreach underway to Walgreens and CVS. Bags will also be available at the Town Recycling Center. Program procedures and waste diversion guidelines have been published on the Town website and social media pages. She also noted the annual Veterans Day ceremony is scheduled for November 11 at 11:00 a.m. at the American Legion. An Interscholastic Athletic Conference forum will be held on November 5 at 7:00 p.m. at Litchfield Intermediate School to discuss the proposed realignment from the Berkshire League to the Naugatuck Valley League. D. Raap also acknowledged the passing of longtime community contributor and philanthropist Susan St. James and extended her condolences. As a final note she announced Executive Administrator Nikky Yarrish has returned to her municipal position and will be working a revised Monday-through-Thursday schedule.

Resignations

A) Barry Winnick, from the Board of Ethics as an alternate member, effective 10/26/2026, received and noted.
B) Jesse Nivolo, from the Board of Assessment Appeals, effective 10/27/2026, received and noted.

Interviews, Appointments & Reappointments

A) **Reappoint Barry Winnick to the Board of Ethics, as a regular member, term ending 6/1/2029 Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to reappoint Barry Winnick to the Board of Ethics, as a regular member, term ending 6/1/2029. A. Dranginis seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.
B) **Reappoint Timothy Benjamin to the Bantam Lake Authority, as a regular member, term ending 12/1/2029 Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to reappoint Timothy Benjamin to the Bantam Lake Authority as a regular member, term ending 12/1/2029. A. Dranginis seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

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

DOT Update D. Raap discussed remediation efforts at the Route 118 and Route 254 intersection, including a scheduled meeting with DOT Project Engineer Greg Palmer to address design deficiencies, particularly the hazardous climbing lane on Route 118 that creates confusion and unsafe turning and passing conditions. The Town will also pursue a state encroachment permit to install electronic speed-feedback radar signage within the state right-of-way.

The Board also reviewed the feasibility of undergrounding electric and communication utilities along Route 202 in conjunction with the anticipated DOT roadway project. D. Morosani and Borough official Bill Buckley discussed potential cost savings through Eversource utility relocation allowances, which could offset up to 50% of undergrounding costs. The project would require coordination among the Town, Borough, Historic District Commission, and local preservation organizations to pursue private funding over a two- to three-year design period. J. Zullo discussed incorporating historic-style light poles and integrated mast-arm signals. The 1993 Craig Miner Administration Traffic Study and 2021 Road Safety Audit will be shared with the Selectmen for review.

Region 20 Update none

Advanced Tech Update J. Bongiorno reviewed finalized drafts of the Acceptable Use Policy, Online AI Policy, and Municipal Cell Phone Policy for ratification. The policies address cybersecurity vulnerabilities and establish consistent standards for municipal technology use. He also discussed three technology RFPs covering a comprehensive IT infrastructure assessment, migration to a centralized Microsoft 365 environment, and managed IT services to provide ongoing technical support, network monitoring, and equipment lifecycle management. Updates were provided on the Town Green public wireless network, including ongoing troubleshooting with Ruckus, Frontier, and Verizon ahead of the anticipated January 9 transition. The investigation identified outdated firmware, incomplete network integration, and reduced wireless signal coverage. The Town owns the network equipment and licensing and is pursuing service credits for contractual deficiencies.

WPCA Liaison Update none

Sustainable Litchfield Update none

Interlocal EMS Update D. Morosani noted that they are evaluating operational and financial models for transitioning emergency medical services to a dedicated 24/7 paid staffing model. D. Raap reported attending a presentation by State Comptroller Sean Scanlon at the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities convention regarding statewide volunteer fire and EMS recruitment challenges. The Board discussed the differences in EMS and fire service funding, including insurance reimbursement revenues generated by EMS. Initial budget impact estimates are to be presented to the Board by January 2026.

Vacancies: The list of current appointed vacancies with term expirations is as follows:
Advanced Technology Commission: 2 alternate members 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 6/2027
Conservation Commission: 1 regular member 12/2027, 2 alternate members 12/2028
Economic Development Commission: 1 alternate member 06/2027
Inland Wetlands Commission: 2 alternate members 06/2027
Litchfield Arts Council: 2 regular members 08/2027
Litchfield Prevention Council: 2 regular members 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: 2 regular members 12/2027, 12/2028
Sustainable Litchfield Committee: 2 alternate members 03/2028
Veterans' Advisory Committee: 1 regular member 08/2026; 1 alternate member 08/2027
Waste Reduction Committee: 1 regular member 02/01/2029
Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA): 2 alternate members 01/2031
Western CT Coalition, CAC #22: 1 member 05/2027
Zoning Board of Appeals: 3 alternate members 03/2027

Tax Refunds

A) **4 refunds, totaling $5,330.39 Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to approve the four tax refunds totaling $5,330.39. A. Dranginis seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

Transfers none

Old Business

A) **Bantam Annex** The Board reviewed the deteriorating condition of the Bantam Annex, including significant mechanical deficiencies and increasing environmental remediation costs. Public Works Director Raz Alexe has issued an RFP for demolition and site restoration estimates. Potential alternatives to demolition include adaptive reuse for up to 14 affordable housing units and preservation of the historic Marcel Breuer-designed gymnasium through potential state grants. D. Raap also scheduled a November 24 meeting with the State Commissioner of Housing to discuss available funding opportunities.

J. Bongiorno reviewed potential relocation plans for existing services and programs, including modular office space behind Town Hall, use of the Litchfield Intermediate School gymnasium for Parks and Recreation, and alternative food pantry locations. Plans also include maintaining the Bantam Post Office through separate utility connections. Town Counsel Mike Rybak will assist with drafting referendum language. The Board discussed coordinating a public hearing with the Annual Town Meeting, anticipated in late January or early February, followed by a machine-ballot referendum. The initial question will focus on whether to demolish the Bantam Annex, with renovation or adaptive reuse options considered separately.

B) **Town Constables** D. Morosani presented a proposed implementation plan for reinstating town constables, contingent upon voter approval at a referendum. The plan includes funding for a law enforcement consultant, legal review, recruitment, and development of department policies and procedures. Initial costs of approximately $40,000–60,000 would be covered through unused appropriations for the vacant third Resident State Trooper position.

The Board discussed ongoing Connecticut State Police staffing shortages, the upcoming retirement of a daytime Resident Trooper, and limitations in maintaining consistent local patrol coverage. Various staffing models were reviewed, including a combination of full-time administrative and part-time patrol positions or three part-time constables, with consideration given to salary, benefits, and potential union obligations.

The Board also reviewed equipment and vehicle requirements, including a minimum fleet of three equipped cruisers, municipal vehicle leasing, and required law enforcement equipment. Proposed duties would prioritize traffic enforcement along Routes 118, 254, and 202, as well as enforcement of local ordinances, park regulations, and other municipal safety needs. D. Morosani will prepare a cost comparison of proposed staffing models. The Board will also establish proposed operating and initial capital expenditure limits for inclusion in the referendum.

C) **Rodenticide Policy** D. Raap shared a policy prohibiting the use of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides on all Town-owned properties and facilities, modeled after the Town of Winchester's policy. Public Works confirmed the department will transition from rodenticides to mechanical trapping systems. **Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to approve the Rodenticide Policy prohibiting the use of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides on all Town-owned properties and facilities. D. Morosani seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed. The policy will go to Town Meeting on November 12th for final approval.

New Business

A) **Moratorium on Data Centers** D. Raap shared that Planning and Zoning Commission Chair Carol Bramley reported that the Commission is drafting a regulatory moratorium on commercial hyperscale data centers in Litchfield. D. Raap discussed potential locations, including the Riverview industrial district and large parcels along Route 118, as well as concerns regarding electrical grid capacity and limited municipal tax benefits under existing state exemptions. D.

Morosani emphasized the importance of narrowly defining the moratorium to address large-scale data center facilities without restricting local technology businesses or artificial intelligence startups.

B) **Community Field Little League Dugout Project Motion:** J. Bongiorno motioned to approve the bid for the Community Field Dugout from Unlimited Services in the amount of $95,500. A. Dranginis seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

C) **Fixed Asset Review** CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA) identified an estimated $2 million discrepancy between the Town's historical capital asset records and the fixed asset ledgers maintained in the Munis accounting system. The variance may stem from unreconciled depreciation schedules dating back to 2002–2003. Although the discrepancy does not directly affect property taxes, unresolved audit findings could potentially impact the Town's bond rating. The Board of Finance will meet with CLA on November 9 to review a proposed 8,000–15,000 capital asset reconciliation. The Board of Selectmen took no formal action and recommended that the Board of Finance and Town Treasurer consult with municipal bond counsel regarding any potential impact on the Town's credit rating.

D) **Town Meeting Call Motion:** J. Zullo motioned to approve the Town Meeting Call for November 12th at 6 p.m. at the Litchfield Intermediate School. J. Bongiorno seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

E) **Berkshire Alarm Motion**: J. Zullo motioned to approve the Berkshire Alarm contract for the Bantam Fire Company. A. Dranginis seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

Correspondence none

Executive Session
All members of the BOS moved into executive session at 7:15 p.m. At 7:33 p.m. all members came out of executive session. **Motion**: J. Zullo motioned to approve the MOU agreement regarding the municipal Supervisors Union. J. Bongiorno seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

Adjournment Motion: J. Zullo motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 p.m. J. Bongiorno seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion passed.

Denise Raap, First Selectman