

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2021 ~ 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.
IN-PERSON AT LITCHFIELD FIREHOUSE, 258 WEST ST. AND
REMOTE MEETING BY LIVE INTERNET VIDEO STREAM AND TELEPHONE**

Call to Order: First Selectman Denise Raap called the special meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. Selectmen in attendance were Jonathan Tarrant, Jodiann Tenney, and Jeffrey Zullo. Thomas Waterhouse was absent. Attending via Zoom were John Morosani, Burke Gibney and Dirk Patterson.

Senior Burgess Gayle Carr called the Litchfield Board of Warden and Burgesses' meeting to order concurrently with the Selectmen's.

Public Hearing on American Rescue Plan Act Project Funding (in Conjunction with Borough of Litchfield's Public Hearing)

D. Raap began by explaining that the meeting's purpose is to solicit the public's ideas for use of the ARPA monies. It is a listening session, with the only feedback being whether or not the ideas are permissible.

Peter Bergamo, Marsh Road, said he bought Litchfield Hills Fitness in March, 2019, put money into upgrades, and then had to shut down for three months a year later for the pandemic. His wife is also sick and they spent all their finances. Now they are at 51% of membership with business still not bouncing back for them. They have had to creatively adjust services, took advantage of the PPP funds, but have lost employees and customers. He would like the Town to use some of the money to promote safety through the environment and to promote a local business that now has a video component so people can also use their services online.

J. Tenney said the committee wants to make sure everyone has an equal opportunity to apply. They are also working out the details to decide who gets the funding and how much to put aside. Applicants will need to provide P&L statements, tax returns, etc. The Town has \$911,000 and the Borough has \$178,000 that must be allocated by 2024. Next year both entities will again get the same amounts to disseminate.

John Morosani, Litchfield Broadband Commission, said they would like to develop a trial program for the center of Litchfield using the existing fiber optic connection at the Town Hall or Center School to develop a mesh network to allow participants to set up a high speed broadband network there. If this works, they can do it in other areas of town by using the connections at the firehouses. Working with Northwest Connect, the Town of Washington paid \$50,000 to install its high speed connection, and they are paying \$1200/month as a separate network connection. Litchfield may be able to piggyback on that connection, as we are already paying for our fiber connection. Secondly, he said they are investigating improvement to the HVAC system at the Oliver Wolcott Library. They are also looking for a backup generator and wifi access points outdoors in its parking lot. D. Raap pointed out that the library is in the Borough.

Francesca Kracht suggested allocating some of the funds for the Community Field, but D. Raap thought we could not use the money for infrastructure. Upon further question about the schools, D. Raap replied that the schools had their own ARPA monies.

Vita Muir, of Goshen, spoke about Litchfield Performing Arts, now based in Goshen. She operated in Litchfield for many years and spoke about the changes they've had to make to stay in business during

COVID. She has taken advantage of every grant opportunity, but revenues have been cut in half. She is now coming to Litchfield for help. She said her business address is at P. O. Box 69, Litchfield.

Mr. Johnson, Westleigh Condominiums, asked about the Bantam Annex, the Courthouse and Rose Haven for funding. D. Raap said infrastructure was not allowed, but an HVAC system for the Post Office in the Bantam Annex was allowed, at a cost of about \$50,000. J. Zullo said the other two buildings are privately owned and are in the process of being developed.

Cate Honan, Beach Street, asked for clarification on the stormwater management project and if it involved the sewer plant. She was told it was a Public Works project and not sewer. Ms Honan also promoted the Litchfield Historical Society for funding.

Peter Bergamo noted that people have been abusing the system by not seeking employment and collecting unemployment and felt that this money will help those who really need it.

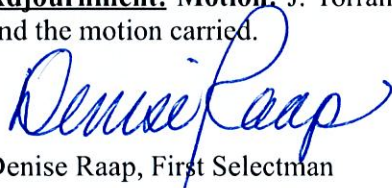
Erich Mariott, Grandview Drive, asked for clarification on proposed allocation of the funds as well as the timeline for allocation and spending. J. Zullo and D. Raap recapped the information for him.

Mike Kelly, North Lake Street, asked about having a pool of money for non-profits in town. Ms Raap said this is what we are doing, but applications must be made.

Roland Greenwood, Newton Road, asked how the information is getting out to everyone. D. Raap said the CCM Toolkit is on our website, and this hearing is the first step with public involvement.

Dan Martineau, Reder Road, complimented John Morosani and John Bongiorno for the work they did with broadband. He expressed interest in getting it out to the more rural areas. He also suggested we invest in non-profits dealing with mental health and in our first responders. D. Raap said it would cost about \$5 - \$7 million to set up our own municipal broadband utility, and she did not think the town would be committed to spending that kind of money now. Optimum has said on record that it will deliver fiber to all homes in town in 2022, and the Broadband Commission will be monitoring them. Regarding mental health, Greenwoods Counseling has reached out to the town and the NHCOCG. Mr. Martineau asked for consideration on moving the fiber from areas not using it to areas where it can be used, and J. Zullo said they are already working on that.

Adjournment: Motion: J. Tarrant moved to adjourn at 11:11 a.m. and J. Zullo seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.



Denise Raap, First Selectman