

Revised and approved 9/5/23

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2023 ~ 5:30 P.M.
IN-PERSON AT TOWN HALL ANNEX, 80 DOYLE RD., BANTAM, 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 with Selectmen Jon Torrant, Jeff Zullo, Jodiann Tenney and Christine Harding attending in person.

Approval of Minutes: **Motion:** Jon Torrant moved to approve the August 1, 2023 regular meeting minutes, and J. Zullo seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Public Requests/Comments: Gerry Perusse, 91 Litchfield Ponds Drive, was present representing the Litchfield Ponds Homeowners Association regarding the trash collection tipping fee. Gerry stated that he had discussed this with Denise already, and they were very shocked to get a letter from their trash hauler because they are residents, with 40 units and that they also pay taxes. He stated that the First Selectman's office was helpful in sending the ordinance that passed. What he was really present for was Denise had explained that because it was a commercial dumpster, tipping fees would apply. Mr. Perusse stated that a commercial dumpster was not mentioned in the Ordinance. Denise Raap explained that Eric Frederickson, from USA Hauling would consider it commercial, because they use a dumpster. She explained that in order not to have to pay the tipping fees, they would have to use the blue recycling bin and the trash receptacles. Mr. Perusse reiterated that they are residents that live in a community and that implementing the recycling bin and trash receptacle for each unit would be difficult and attract bears. They are not a commercial business. Denise asked if Mr. Perusse discussed this with USA Hauling at all, and he had not. Jeff Zullo reiterated the discussion and asked if it was just the determination of USA Hauling on their own as to who is commercial and who is residential. Denise Raap explained that dumpsters are not picked up with a residential truck. Further discussion resulted in Jeff Zullo stating that the Town needs to have a discussion about how they are being perceived by the residents. Discussion with Christine Harding and Jeff Zullo highlighted the inability for residential trucks to pick up dumpsters and the USA Hauling determination as to who is commercial. Denise asked if they could replace the dumpster with a few of the residential bins. Jon Torrant asked what should be done with Westleigh Condominiums or Tapping Reeve. Jon Torrant suggested that the residents get together and see if they can share a trash bin to avoid the commercial fees. Further discussion regarding the determination of who is residential and who is commercial is being determined by what type of truck picked up the trash. Mr. Perusse said that he had a simple suggestion, which is that the Town should reimburse them for the excess charges that Litchfield Pond's has incurred. More discussion followed about the viability of having containers shared by the residents to avoid the commercial rates for the residents. Denise Raap committed to contacting USA Hauling to discuss this issue with them including a suggestion that they can pick up all residential dumpsters on the same day. Jeff Zullo stated that this was an unintended consequence of the ordinance.

Selectmen's Requests: Christine Harding asked about Aquarion, and Denise said that she had discussed this issue with George Logan who was going to look into and get back to her. John Torrant asked what this was regarding, and Christine Harding explained that people who live on Torrington Rd. have had water trouble and that she had heard from people at Gagarin Place that they have also been having trouble with water, and she has seen Poland Springs delivering there. Denise Raap had reached out to George Logan on June 22, 2023, and he referred it to Ingrid. Denise has not heard back.

Jeff Zullo asked Jodiann Tenney to update the Selectmen on the Traffic Safety Committee meeting earlier in the day. Jodiann explained that at the meeting they reviewed the document as to the changes, citing a change in lighting and speed humps being put on West St. Jodiann explained that the Commissioner from the State Department of Transportation came and is committed to doing a traffic study. They will be back this fall during peak traffic time. The Traffic Committee had received a Seher-Thoss grant and ARPA funds. Now that the State is coming in, we don't need the \$100,000 for a Traffic Study, so we want to go back, as there are still plenty of improvements to be made. Jeff Zullo noted that working with the State DOT on this is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the Town, and emphasized traffic, safety and the importance of a cohesive plan. Jodiann stated that when the State comes in, we have to have them look at the whole plan. Whenever there is any discussion of the Town Green, she either meets with Gayle Carr or communicates with her.

Jeff Zullo stated that there was still an issue with the screening display at the solar array at the High School. What Planning and Zoning required has really not done anything to screen it. Jeff explained that he had a conversation with Carol Bramley, Chair of Planning and Zoning, and she suggested that the Town do an amended landscape plan, talk to NW Conservation again, look at native plants and develop a budget. There was some further discussion about native plants, hiring a Landscape Architect, etc. Jon Torrant mentioned that Steve Eisenhaure has told him on several occasions exactly what native plants should go there and stated that he is nominating Steve for the plan and he would talk with him tomorrow morning on it.

First Selectman's Update Report: Denise thanked Raz Alexe for the heavy lifting and stated that they just submitted a STEAP grant for \$500,000 for a street project from East Litchfield Rd. to Nasar Rd. that will cost a total of \$1.2 million for the project. We hope to find out in a month if the Town receives the grant.

Denise continued that the new AEDs had been delivered and were being installed by the Building and Grounds Department in buildings in the public view. An AED was installed in the Town Hall, and one will be installed in Public Works. Other locations are Community Field, At the Corner, DiFrancos Restaurant, our three schools, Oliver Wolcott Library, St. Anthony's, the Plumb Hill Playing Fields, the Litchfield Hills Rowing Club, and the Community Center. Christine Harding asked if one could be installed at Toast and Co.

Denise continued reporting that she had been working with the St. Michael's Food Pantry, and Aug. 19th will be their last Pop a Trunk. Then they are going to be working with the Town, providing volunteers and some of their financial resources to build up the Town of Litchfield's Food Pantry. With this we will be able to provide Litchfield residents with food assistance twice a month.

Additionally, Denise Raap mentioned that they need to work on how Region 20 will be taking on the Board of Education's electric bills. Denise explained that from July, 2024 forward the Town of Litchfield will not be responsible for them anymore and questioned how the transition would work. Jeff Zullo mentioned that he had read through the minutes of Region 20 and mentioned that Chris Leone is working on it and reiterated that they need to understand how they are going to transfer the schools on the lease as well as the Plumb Hill Playing Fields. Denise Raap, Jon Torrant and Jeff Zullo discussed whether or not Plumb Hills Playing Fields has already been subdivided from the property at the school. Jon Torrant agreed to look into this.

Denise mentioned the email link that was posted on the Town of Litchfield page as well as on social media letting people know how to get updated on the Region 20 progress.

Jodiann Tenney brought up the Traffic group and explained that Chris Leone took them up on the offer to submit an encroachment permit for a flashing light near Wamogo Road. This is intended to make the area of Route 202 near Wamogo a school zone. Jeff stated that this is a flashing light on the side of the road. Denise explained that this area does not meet the 7 or 9 MUTC criteria for a traffic light there. Chris is hoping that this is put in place for 7/1/2024.

Resignations

- a) **Todd Johnson from Traffic Safety Community Action Group, effective 8/8/23:** received and noted
- b) **Priscilla Jeffery from Litchfield Prevention Council, alternate member, effective 8/7/23:** received and noted

Interviews, Appointments & Reappointments

- a) **Appoint Priscilla Jeffery to Litchfield Prevention Council, regular member, term 6/2024.**
Motion: J. Zullo motioned to appoint Priscilla Jeffery to the Prevention Council as a regular member for term 6/2024, and Christine Harding seconded. All voted aye, and the motion carried.

Liaison Reports/Commission-Committee Minutes: Liaison reports are in the e-packet for the Selectmen to review.

Sustainable Litchfield Update: Jeff Zullo noted that they needed to get together to discuss the installation of the EV charging stations to make sure we get going on that and noted they have until November next year. Jeff Zullo explained that they had been approved for 6 EV chargers.

WPCA Liaison Update: Christine Harding had not attended the meeting, but read the meeting minutes and discussed with Raz. She stated that one thing she wanted to note is that many people are asking for help from WPCA. For example, Bantam Lake is saying that they need help and noted the septic systems are old around Bantam Lake and that people expect WPCA to fix it. Christine Harding explained that we cannot expect WPCA to fix Woodridge Lake or Bantam Lake problems. They also have a huge amount of their own issues they are needing to address. Raz Alexe discussed the solar array at WPCA and noted that the Board has been helpful in the project including noting that improper conductors were installed. It was fixed and the problem was solved. There was also discussion of the Tax Collector taking over the WPCA billing and collections, where Denise Raap noted that she had requested that Dave Wilson put together a formal proposal for the Board of Selectmen to consider, but the First Selectman had not as yet received anything. Christine Harding said that she has emailed Dave Wilson with no response.

Townwide First Responder Recruiting/Retention Discussion: Jeff Zullo noted that he had had some helpful information from Dan Morosani but thought that they would need to get some information from the Pension Commission's subcommittee along with the financial elements of total cost. They had presented increasing the pension, tax abatements; we had discussed a pay-for-call as well. Jeff Zullo stated that the Board of Finance, Town Treasurer and Pension Commission will have to work together with the Board of Selectmen to evaluate the options and have a dialog. Jeff stated his support for something, but mentioned that the Selectmen should know the impacts of any changes. Jeff and John are heading up this process and in discussion now.

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

Beautification Commission: 1 regular member 2/2025; 2 alternate members 2/2025

Broadband Commission: 1 alternate member 1/2025

Cable TV Advisory Council: 2 members, 1 BOE rep, both 6/2023

Capital Improvements Committee: 1 Citizen at Large 11/2023

Conservation Commission: 1 alternate member 12/2024
Economic Development Commission: 2 regulars 6/2025, 6/2026
Inland Wetlands Commission: 2 alternate members 6/2024
Litchfield Arts Council: 1 regular member 8/2024
Litchfield Housing Authority: 2 members 8/2023, 8/2024
Litchfield Prevention Council: 1 regular member 6/2024; 3 alt. members 6/2026; one alt. 6/2025
Milton Historic District Commission: 1 regular 1/2023; 3 alternates; 2-1/2024, 1-1/2025
Park & Recreation Commission: 1 alternate member 6/2025
Pension Commission: 1 alternate member 3/2025
Sandy Beach Commission: 1 regular member 12/2022
Social Services Board: 2 regular members 2/2024, 2/2025
Sustainable Litchfield Committee: 1 alternate 3/2024
Town Facilities Review Committee: 1 BOF Member 3/2026; 1 BOE Member 3/2026; 2- 3/2026; 1 alternate 3/2026
Traffic Safety Community Action Group: 1 regular member 1/2025
Veterans' Advisory Committee: 2 regular members 8/2023, 8/2025
Western CT Coalition, CAC #22 (formerly NW Regional Mental Health Board): 1 member 5/2023
Zoning Board of Appeals: 3 alternate members 3/2025

Tax Refunds: 4 Tax Refunds, Total of \$372.16. **Motion:** Jon Torrant made a motion to approve the tax refunds in the amount of \$372.16 that the Tax Collector submitted for approval, seconded by Jodiann Tenney. All voted aye, and the motion carried.

Transfers: None

Old Business

a) 956 Bantam Road/Bantam Terrace Woodman Proposal: Raz found documentation from 1985, and commented that they were expecting a survey to be finalized in September. **Motion:** Jeff Zullo made a motion that the Selectmen approve the professional services agreement with Berkshire Surveying in the amount of \$2650.00 plus \$140.00 per pin as required and hourly fees as needed. Jodiann Tenney seconded the motion. All voted aye, and the motion carried.

New Business

a) Adopt Small Cities Resolution for Bantam Falls Grant: **Motion:** Jeff Zullo made the motion to adopt this resolution. Jon Torrant seconded. All voted aye, and the motion carried. The resolution reads as follows:

WHEREAS, Federal monies are available under the Connecticut Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program, administered by the State of Connecticut, Department of Housing pursuant to Public Law 93 -3 83, as amended; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to Chapter 127c, and Part VI of Chapter 130 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Commissioner of Housing is authorized to disburse such Federal monies to local municipalities; and,

WHEREAS, it is desirable and in the public interest that the Town of Litchfield make application to the State for \$1,000,000.00 in order to undertake a Small Cities Community Development Program and to execute an Assistance Agreement therefore, should one be offered.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE Board of Selectmen:

1. That it is cognizant of the conditions and prerequisites for State Assistance imposed by Part VI of Chapter 130 of The Connecticut General Statutes; and,
2. That the filing of an application by the Town of Litchfield in an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000.00 is hereby approved, and that the First Selectman of the Town of Litchfield is hereby authorized and directed to file such Application with the Commissioner of the Department of Housing, to provide such additional information, to execute such other documents as may be required by the Commissioner, to execute an Assistance Agreement with the State of Connecticut for State financial assistance if such an Agreement is offered, to execute any amendments, rescissions, and revisions thereto, and to act as the authorized representative of the Town of Litchfield.

b) Extension of Lease Agreement for Sandy Beach: Denise Raap explained that this is not a new lease, but an extension as they work out some details. **Motion:** Jeff Zullo made a motion to approve the lease extension with the Town of Morris and White Memorial. Christine Harding seconded. All voted aye, and the motion carried.

c) Letter of Support for Land Trust Acquisition: Motion: Jodi Tenney made a motion to have the First Selectman write a letter of support to support the Land Trust's Acquisition of property on Fern Ave. Jon Torrant seconded. All voted aye, and the motion carried.

d) Award Bid for Moosehorn/Turner Road Project: Raz requested to approve the bid of \$1,340,694. **Motion:** Jeff Zullo made the motion to approve the Moosehorn/Turner Road Project under the LOCIP Program to B&W Paving & Landscaping, LLC in the amount of \$1,340,694, with the caveat that the State DOT doesn't come back and change it. Jon Torrant seconded. All voted aye, and the motion carried.

Correspondence

a) 7/31/23 Email from Anne Haas re Police Officers: This is a request to add another Trooper. Discussion encouraged people who would like to participate in a meeting to call the First Selectman's Office. Jodiann Tenney noted that not many people came out to the Budget meetings requesting any additional police officers. Jeff Zullo thought decisions should be based on data rather than how we feel about adding another police officer or not.

b) USPS Notice of Exercise of Renewal Option for 80 Doyle Road: Denise explained that the Town was asked to extend the lease with the Bantam Post Office from March, 2025 to Feb, 2030. Raz will change the amount from \$67,200 then to \$70,560 through the duration of the lease. **Motion:** Jeff Zullo made the motion to approve the USPS Notice of Exercise of Renewal Option for 80 Doyle Road, seconded by Jodiann Tenney. All voted aye, and the motion carried.

Adjournment: **Motion:** Denise Raap made a motion to adjourn at 6:49 p.m., seconded by Jon Torrant. All voted aye, and the motion carried.

Denise Raap, First Selectman