

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2024 ~ 5:30 P.M.  
IN PERSON AT TOWN OFFICE BUILDING, 74 WEST ST., LITCHFIELD  
AND REMOTE MEETING BY LIVE INTERNET VIDEO STREAM AND TELEPHONE**

**Call to Order:** First Selectman Denise Raap called the special hybrid meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. with Selectmen Dan Morosani, John Bongiorno, Jodiann Tenny, Jeffrey Zullo and Denise Raap present. There were about 10 people via Zoom.

**Discussion of Preliminary Site Plan for Region 20 Merger - tabled 2/6/24**

For the Center School, Raz Alexe presented the history of the property going back 220 years where six areas were merged to form the current property. There is a proposed plan with a WPCA easement that should be recorded before the merger. The Town will retain the road and sidewalk on Woodruff Lane, the park and areas in the front that abut the State right-of-way. In the back there are proposed access easements for two landlocked parcels, and should be recorded and retained by the Town in perpetuity. The parking lot will be retained for the market. We will own the teacher's parking lot and give them an easement. J. Zullo asked about how we go about referencing roof rights to the school to be able to keep the solar lease intact. Atty. Rybak said it would be noted on the site plan and have a separately recorded easement for solar panels on the roof and for access and utility service. The school will take the meters and the bills, and we will reserve the rent. Atty. Rybak asked and R. Alexe said he will look into the survey for the back lot to find out when it will be finalized by Berkshire Surveying.

For the High School/Intermediate School, R. Alexe said this was a massive survey with four sheets. It is a site plan superimposed over the original survey. Constitution Way was part of the land, which we need to maintain as a public right-of-way. The solar area will be an easement as a reserve on top of the land, including the two rain gardens. The Town will have rights over Plumb Hill for maintenance, although the school will plow. The Town will have an easement and aerial rights over the carport solar panels, and will also keep the ADA vista area for Plumb Hill Playing Fields next to the barrier. Finally, the Town owns all the way into the land in back of Plumb Hill on White Woods Road. This area will stay with the Town, contiguous to Constitution Way.

**Motion:** J. Zullo moved to approve the site plans for the transfer of Litchfield Center, Intermediate, and High Schools for the surveys, changes and easements noted to Region 20. D. Morosani seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried. R. Alexe will make the modifications, run it by the Town Attorney, and the Board will see them and forward them to the schools.

**Department Presentations**

**a) Oliver Wolcott Library - Ann Marie White:** Ms White presented her report showing that while OWL ranks #1 in adult use, they are #77 in Town support per capita out of 176 libraries. Average funding is lower at 41% compared to 60% average statewide. Demand in library use is increasing, especially in post-pandemic visits. Conversely, Town contribution has gone from 52% in 1996-2005 to 48% in 2006-2015 and 41% between 2016-2025. She then listed the programs, amenities and technology that is provided free to the community. Although they approved \$44,000 in the current year for fundraising expense, the actual will be higher, close to \$70,000, and they will need the same again next year. She ended by asking for an increase in budget support to respond to the community's need for library services. They are asking for \$18,952 more, or 4.9%. J. Tenney asked the reason for the 26% increase in salaries in 2022/23. Staff left in 2020, and now they are at full staff, with the use of a fundraising engagement consultant last year. J. Zullo gave praise to the OWL and asked why they did not ask for more. Ms. White

said they certainly could expand more services with more money. Mr. Zullo said we should look at a plan to get back to the 50% level of funding and felt the public would support it. J. Bongiorno asked how many people outside Litchfield visit the website, and she said it would be mostly Litchfield residents, as they would have to hold an OWL library card for services.

**b) Building Official - John Worthington:** J. Worthington said he has the need for an additional building inspector (\$46,800), no more than 20 hours/week. He would like to replace all the filing cabinets at \$5,000 for 10 cabinets. D. Raap said \$358,000 will be collected in building permit fees, having budgeted \$250,000. With the Rose Haven project, the courthouse project and the 19.8 megawatt Silicon Ranch project, he is concerned about having the time with the continued increase in construction. D. Morosani asked if he has looked at a drone service in lieu of purchasing one. J. Worthington said he has compared and found they would have to be there and look at what he and the contractor are looking at. For the file cabinets, he can digitize but still has to keep the original maps on file. R. Alexe suggested he pursue a grant from Seherr-Thoss to accomplish the digitizing, as it is expensive. Regarding hiring a subcontractor, J. Worthington said liability insurance is so expensive it would not be worth it. D. Raap will look into it. He is also asking for five extra hours/week for his assistant for administrative work. R. Alexe commended John for having the fastest response time compared to all the towns in the Farmington Valley. He also has the ability and knowledge to be flexible, understanding and to apply the best options in the field when asked questions. He is outstanding in his work.

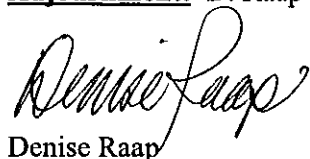
**c) Park and Recreation - Michael Lyn Cappello:** M. L. Cappello explained her operation with small increases proposed in the budget. She has a spend down plan for the Fund 22 as requested. She would like to see the Special Events line item restored to the budget. She is asking for a part-time facilities maintenance worker (20 hrs/week) to protect investments in capital projects. Public Works simply does not have the time to fulfill all the duties necessary. Upon question, she said she has \$69,000 in Fund 22, and will work to get it down to \$50,000 where the auditor suggested. This would be a union public works position assigned to Buildings & Grounds for Park and Rec. J. Zullo agreed this is a sound management practice to support this employee request, paid from Fund 22 to start.

**d) Litchfield Volunteer Ambulance - John Pudlinski:** John Campbell was on hand to discuss the Fire & EMS budget. D. Raap explained that originally the LVA budget had gone up 44%, but after discussions, it has been only increased by \$10,000 for a paramedic, or 3.5% increase. Mr. Campbell gave statistics on call numbers by the services. Increases were in firefighting gear, as each firefighter must have two sets. Total increase for all fire services is \$13,811, or 3.31%. The Fire Marshal has a salary increase and they must buy a new program for training and medical records at \$11,000.

**2024/25 Budget Review and Discussion:** Motion: J. Zullo moved to table the budget review until 2/15/23 at 4:30 at the Town Hall, in person only. J. Tenney seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Approve Recommended Capital Improvements Budget for 2024/2025:** All agreed to table this item to the next Selectmen's meeting on February 20, 2024.

**Adjournment:** D. Raap announced the meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.



Denise Raap  
First Selectman