

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2024 ~ 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 regular hybrid meeting to order at 5:36 p.m. Selectmen present were Jodiann Tenney, Jeffrey Zullo, John Bongiorno and Denise Raap, and Dan Morosani attended via Zoom.

Approval of Minutes

a) 2/15/24 Special Budget Meeting: Motion: J. Zullo moved and J. Bongiorno seconded a motion to approve the 2/15/24 special budget meeting minutes. All voted aye and the motion carried.

b) 2/20/24 Regular Meeting: Motion: J. Zullo moved and J. Bongiorno seconded a motion to approve the 2/20/24 regular hybrid meeting minutes, all voted aye and the motion carried.

Public Requests/Comments: None

Selectmen's Requests: J. Tenney said she had followed up on a joint meeting with the Traffic Group to gather public input on speed cameras, and it will be on the April 2nd Selectmen's meeting agenda. R. Alexe mentioned that there is a related pilot program taking place in West Hartford.

D. Morosani asked if the State Comptroller got back to us with numbers on tax revenue, and D. Raap said he and Rep. Karen Reddington-Hughes will both get back to her.

First Selectman's Update Report: D. Raap noted the meeting scheduled for Thursday with Region 20 and Litchfield to reconcile the debt figures that Litchfield will be paid upon the closing of Region 20. She said that Region 20 is paying off both Region 6 and Litchfield debt. The discrepancy is that after the merger was approved, the \$1,817,000 debt was the approved figure; but after that, the Litchfield Board of Education came back with capital requests of \$260,000, of which \$230,000 was bonded. That is also in the debt. Thursday's meeting will hopefully produce a compromise or some answer satisfactory to all so it can move forward with correct numbers. P&Z passed the site plan and the 8-24 last night for the EV chargers. Brett Seamans is presenting next at Bantam P&Z for the charger proposed for the Town Hall Annex property. Last week D. Raap walked around town with Sean Scanlon, State Comptroller, to discuss with small businesses and promote the benefits of the CT Savings Program for employers to let their employees sign up for this savings program at no expense to them. She then said the Executive Administrator position has been offered and accepted, and that person will start on April 8th.

Resignations

a) Melissa Lafferty from Economic Development Commission, alternate member, effective 2/26/24: received and noted

Interviews, Appointments & Reappointments

a) Appoint Melissa Lafferty to Economic Development Commission, regular member, term 6/2025:
Motion: J. Zullo moved to appoint Melissa Lafferty to the EDC as a regular member for a term through 6/2025. J. Tenney seconded, all voted aye and the motion passed.

b) Interview John Keilty for Economic Development Commission, Alternate Member, term 6/2025:
Mr. Keilty said he grew up in Litchfield and has moved back after working in Nashville, TN, in travel and

tourism. He feels Litchfield is one of the best places to live, and we could do more to leverage the natural beauty and promote the area and its arts and culture. **Motion:** J. Zullo moved to appoint John Keilty to the Economic Development Commission as an alternate member for a term through 6/2025. J. Tenney seconded. J. Zullo spoke about Chairman Tara Lynch's presentation at the last meeting and her strategy and proposed budget increase to move forward. He felt John would be a welcome addition to the group. Upon voting, all voted aye and the motion carried.

c) Appoint Jonathan Tarrant to Park & Recreation Commission, term 6/2025: Motion: J. Zullo moved to appoint Jonathan Tarrant to the Park & Recreation Commission as an alternate member for a term through 6/2025. J. Tenney seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

d) Appoint Alan Landau to Pension Commission, term 3/2025: Motion: J. Zullo moved and J. Tenney seconded a motion to appoint Alan Landau to the Pension Commission as an alternate member, for a term through 3/2025. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Liaison Reports/Commission-Committee Minutes: 2/8/24 Board of Fire & EMS

Sustainable Litchfield Update: No update

WPCA Liaison Update: No update

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

Beautification Commission: 2 regular member 2/2025, 2/2026; 2 alternate members 2/2025
Broadband Commission: 1 alternate member 1/2025
Cable TV Advisory Council: 2 members, 1 BOE rep, both 6/2025
Conservation Commission: 1 alternate member 12/2024
Economic Development Commission: 1 regular 6/2026
Inland Wetlands Commission: 2 alternate members 6/2024
Litchfield Prevention Council: 1 regular member; 6/2024, 2 alt. members 6/2026
Milton Historic District Commission: 2 regulars 1/2024, 1/2028; 3 alternates; 2-1/2024, 1-1/2025
Pension Commission: 1 alternate members 3/2025
Sandy Beach Commission: 1 regular member 12/2025
Social Services Board: 2 regular members 2/2024, 2/2025
Sustainable Litchfield Committee: 1 regular member 3/2026; 1 alternate member 3/2026
Town Facilities Review Committee: 1 BOF Member 3/2026; 1 BOE Member 3/2026; 2 alternates 3/2026
Veterans' Advisory Committee: 2 regular members 8/2023, 8/2025
Western CT Coalition, CAC #22 (formerly NW Regional Mental Health Board): 1 member 5/2025
Zoning Board of Appeals: 3 alternate members 3/2025

Tax Refunds: **Motion:** J. Zullo moved to approve 4 tax refunds in the amount of \$970.81, and J. Tenney seconded. All voted aye and the motion passed.

First Responders Recruitment and Retention: D. Morosani said he thought the Fire Commission would have to vote at its next regular meeting first, but he thought a request for a pay-per-call rubric is forthcoming. J. Zullo asked if there should be a line item put in the budget for this, and he thought the Fire Commission would ask the Selectmen directly for this. He did, however, suggest a place holder in the budget consisting of \$10 pay-per-call for this fiscal year, but it would have to be in the next fiscal year for payment in that fiscal year. So he amended the estimate to \$20 per call, limited to 100 calls at \$160,000 as a placeholder for the 7/1/24 - 6/30/25 budget. J. Zullo said it is highly unusual to approve a line item before we know what the plan is. It was agreed they not wait until the end of the fiscal year to collect the

data, and there should be an administrative plan. A. Obi suggested the Fire Commission come with a plan and documentation and present it to the Board of Finance for approval and then to the Board of Selectmen for approval by the end of this month. D. Morosani will ask the Fire Commission if they can be ready for the Board of Finance next Monday. J. Bongiorno suggested phasing it in for a better idea of the cost. J. Zullo reminded them that this is a two-phase program, as they will evaluate, update and change the pension and will also need to put \$25,000 in the Pension Commission budget tonight to fund the actuarial study in next year's budget. Pay-per-call will realize an immediate benefit, and on the back side there will be a benefit from the pension. D. Morosani will put his response data into an easily-read format. Matt Tobin suggested an interim plan for next year where we carry \$200,000 (amount per the plan) and multiply everyone's payout by that amount to conform to the amount carried in the budget. All agreed this would be easier to budget.

Old Business

a) Budget 2024/25: Motion: J. Zullo moved to revise the Economic Development Commission's budget to \$15,000 and J. Tenney seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Motion: J. Zullo moved to revise the Selectmen's budget up under the technology budget to include at the Annex and at the First Selectman's office a large 75" monitor screen and office equipment updates so that Zoom meetings could be viewed by all on the screen at a total cost of \$5,000. J. Tenney seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

Motion: J. Bongiorno moved to deny the \$10,000 for the Historical Society in an effort to move forward with a process for anybody to come forward to ask for money. J. Tenney seconded. J. Zullo recused himself from any discussion and vote on this item. J. Bongiorno explained he would prefer there be an application in place for entities to fill out to apply to the Town for budgeted money and explain why they want the money. In this case, hiring a student from Litchfield or Wamogo would limit them and the use of the funds. **Motion:** J. Zullo moved to call the question, and J. Bongiorno seconded. **Vote:** Upon voting on the question, J. Bongiorno and D. Morosani voted aye, and J. Tenney and D. Raap voted nay; J. Zullo abstained, so the motion was defeated.

Motion: J. Tenney moved to fund the Historical Society in the amount of \$2,500, not for students but to support programs that bring in tourism. J. Bongiorno seconded, all voted aye with one abstention by J. Zullo, and the motion carried.

Motion: J. Zullo moved to add \$25,000 to the Pension Commission line item under fringe benefits for the purpose of funding the actuarial study by Hooker & Holcombe on the fire and safety pension revision. J. Tenney seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

Motion: J. Zullo moved to approve the revision to \$2,000 in the Conservation Commission budget line item. J. Tenney seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

D. Raap noted the Town saved \$49,000 on the State Partnership Plan insurance, as the premium increased by only 2 percent.

Motion: J. Bongiorno moved to reduce the amount of Police overtime from \$75,000 to \$40,000. J. Zullo seconded. This reduces the total budget by \$35,000. Upon voting all voted aye and the motion carried.

Motion: J. Zullo moved that the Board of Selectmen approve the 2024/25 budget year operating budget in the amount of \$9,146,011, and J. Tenney seconded. This does not include the pay-per-call. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Motion: J. Zullo moved that the Board of Selectmen approve the total Town operating budget of \$31,316,975, a decrease of \$1,223,331, or -3.76%. This includes capital outlay, debt service of \$2,225,264 and the Board of Ed assessment for Region 20. J. Tenney seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

b) Request for Reprogramming of Small Cities Grant Money: Jim Simoncelli, Executive Director of the Litchfield Housing Authority, said that \$90,000 is the total predevelopment money he needs. He asked for \$25,000 from the Town, but he has already asked Seherr-Thoss for \$90,000, so it was decided to wait for the Seherr-Thoss decision first. **Motion:** J. Zullo moved to table this item until after a decision from Seherr-Thoss is made. J. Bongiorno seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

c) Award Firefighting Foam Removal/Disposal Contract - D. Rogers: D. Raap explained that there is a grant for the Town to be reimbursed for the removal of the PFAS foam. D. Rogers got three quotes and recommended the Cisco quote of \$7,781.25. **Motion:** J. Bongiorno moved to approve the firefighting foam disposal contract using Cisco, LLC. J. Zullo seconded the motion. D. Raap said it will come from Contingency but is reimbursable. There is about \$3 million, and hopefully we will get the grant submitted in time to get it reimbursed. Upon voting all voted aye and the motion passed.

d) Tri-Town Lease: D. Raap explained that the lease expired in 2016 and Tri-Town no longer wants to run the snack shack. We have to agree on a price, because they used to give us \$1,000/year, but they have not given us anything in the last two years. Park and Rec is talking about putting \$1 million into the fields, and we have to come up with a number that is appropriate for Tri-Town to pay to use the fields. J. Bongiorno felt the \$1,000 is a token amount, and we should ask for donor support for this rather than from the Tri-Town kids. Litchfield pays for the field maintenance, mows the fields, cleans up garbage, and maintains and cleans the bathrooms. J. Zullo pointed out that the \$1 million field upgrade will be paid through Litchfield taxpayers, probably with bonded money. Groups from outside the town are using the resources and getting a free ride. J. Bongiorno suggested having a non-profit take it over without cooking involved, which will help fund that non-profit. D. Raap will work on a draft lease. **Motion:** J. Zullo moved to table action on this until a future meeting, keeping the amount the same. J. Bongiorno seconded, all voted aye and the motion passed.

New Business

a) Award Bid for Northfield Fire Replacement Hoses: Ryan Crichton, Northfield Fire Chief, explained they got two bids. They would like to recommend Firematic Supply Co. even though they are \$2,400 more than the other new bidder. They do business with Firematic and all the departments have had a good, long time business relationship with them. The Town will supply \$50,000, and the fire company will pay the \$5,000 to have the CT vendor. **Motion:** J. Bongiorno moved to award the fire hose replacement bid to Firematic Supply Co. in the amount of \$54,112, of which the Town will pay \$50,000 and Northfield Fire will pay \$4,112. J. Zullo seconded, all voted aye and the motion passed.

Correspondence: None

Adjournment: **Motion:** J. Zullo moved to adjourn at 7:11 p.m. and J. Bongiorno seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Denise Raap, First Selectman