

REGULAR MEETING OF THE LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2015
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING - 5:30 P.M.

Call to Order: First Selectman Leo Paul, Jr. called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. with all Selectmen present: Jonathan Tarrant, Diane Knox, Paul Parsons, and Jeffrey Zullo.

Approval of Minutes: **Motion:** J. Tarrant moved to approve the regular March 17, 2015 minutes and D. Knox seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Public Requests/Comments: Chris Korn, owner of Village Grounds Maintenance, spoke on behalf of his company and Maple Ridge Lawn and introduced Forrest Turner, one of the owners of Maple Ridge. Mr. Paul handed out the package from Mr. Korn to each of the Selectmen containing a letter from Mr. Korn and letters of recommendation for award of the mowing and ground maintenance bid to them. Mr. Korn read the letter (attached) to the Board of Selectmen.

Selectmen's Requests: J. Tarrant recommends putting the Selectmen's contact information on the website so residents can contact them and keeping the volunteer committee changes updated.

Resignations: None

Interviews, Appointments & Reappointments: None

Liaison Reports/Commission-Committee Minutes: 3/16/15, 3/23/15, 3/30/15 Board of Finance special minutes; 2/24/15, 3/24/15 Conservation Commission minutes; 2/25/15 Economic Development Commission minutes; 3/12/15 WPCA minutes; 2/19/15 Fire & EMS Commission minutes; 2/17/15, 3/2/15 Planning and Zoning Commission minutes; 3/18/15 Board of Education minutes (draft)

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

Beautification Commission: 6 regular members: three 2/2016, one 2/2017, two 2/2018; 2 alternates 2/2016
Conservation Commission: 2 alternate members 12/2015
Economic Development Commission: 2 alternate members 6/2016
Litchfield Prevention Council: 3 alternate members: one 6/17, two 6/2016
Milton Historic District Commission: 1 regular member 1/2020; 3 alternate members 1/2015, 1/2015, 1/2019
Park & Recreation: 2 alternate members: 6/2017, 6/2018
Recycling Committee: 5 members: two 2/2016, one 2/2017, two 2/2018
Town Hall Building Committee: 1 member, 3/2018; one alternate 3/2018
Veteran's Advisory Committee: 2 regular members 8/2016, 8/2015; 2 alternate members 8/2015
Water Pollution Control Authority: 1 alternate member 1/2015
Zoning Board of Appeals: 2 alternate member 3/2015

Tax Refunds: **Motion:** P. Parsons moved to approve the 8 tax refunds, for a total of \$1,887.19. D. Knox seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

Old Business

a) **Budget Discussion – Operating and Capital:** Mr. Paul suggested the following adjustments to the proposed budget with cuts totaling \$100,000:

1. \$70,000 reduction in 3102 Public Works Operations
2. \$5,000 reduction in 8101 Fringe Benefits
3. \$15,000 reduction in Technology (savings from this year plus computers for Registrars from this year)
4. \$10,000 reduction from Contingency

With these cuts the budget now stands at a \$397,028 increase, or 4.60%. Mr. Paul would like to vote to present these cuts to the Board of Finance on April 13th. There is nowhere in Public Works to cut. The recommended cuts will cause some suffering, but we have done our best to comply with the Board of Finance Chairman's request.

Motion: J. Tarrant moved to send this revised budget to the Board of Finance, including the above cuts, now standing at \$9,034,384, representing a 4.6% increase. P. Parsons seconded the motion and said he thought Mr. Paul did his job in finding reductions and felt this should be within the Board of Finance's expectations. Mr. Tarrant agreed and supported the motion. Ms Knox asked for clarification on the dollar amount of the cuts. Mr. Zullo did not think the reduction was enough, saying they should get to the 3.6% level.

Amendment: Mr. Zullo moved to amend the motion to reduce the budget by an additional \$90,000 to bring it to \$8,943,384, or 3.6% increase. D. Knox seconded for discussion. She said the education budgets have risen and are becoming unsustainable, yet the Town projects are being cut back. Road infrastructure must be maintained. If it is let go too long, we will pay on the other end for a long time. Therefore she indicated she would vote to approve the budget as presented. J. Tarrant said the Board of Education is not cutting proportionately to their share of the budget. He does not see anywhere else for the Town to cut, so he was not in favor of the amendment. J. Zullo said the budget increases are becoming extremely high, and he has spoken to many who indicate that the budget is beyond their ability to pay. P. Parsons said history shows that the Selectmen's increases have been lower than the Board of Education's for many years. Trying to fund Public Works to the level it should be will require an increase in order to keep up with important road projects, and he thought the voters would understand this. Mr. Paul echoed this thought, saying we have been very tight with the Selectmen's budget in past years and need to get the rest of the money out of Capital and into operating as the proper way to manage the budget. We will be right back to austere budgets next year. Public Works must be funded at the proper level. There is now a spending freeze on for the remainder of the fiscal year. J. Zullo asked that we drive efficiency into our budget and document efficiency implementation. J. Healy said he had presented that documentation last year.

Vote: Voting on the amendment, J. Zullo voted aye and all other Selectmen voted nay; motion failed.

Vote: Voting on the original motion, all voted aye except J. Zullo, who voted nay, and the motion carried.

Mr. Paul thought the Capital Budget should be left alone as there are no items we can afford to adjust.

New Business

a) EDC Update and Support of Jail Renovation Project - David Dean: Mr. Dean was present as Chairman of the Economic Development Commission. They have met with Russell Barton, owner of the old jail, who has been having a difficult time in presenting his plan for a mixed use property. The building is a unique flagship building in Litchfield and is difficult to alter inside as the walls are very thick. He has adjusted the plans but is not amenable to the changes that are suggested by the Historic District Commission. The EDC wants Litchfield to be seen as a good place to do business but also wants the businesses to be economically viable. They are in full support of Mr. Barton's efforts and ask that the Board of Selectmen join them in supporting Mr. Barton's efforts and ask that other commissions work in concert with Mr. Barton to see that the renovation is what the citizens rightfully expect and that it projects a favorable business climate in Litchfield. Mr. Paul said he has seen pictures of the design and

thinks it will be a great improvement. J. Torrant said some of the people who are putting up roadblocks are the ones who had a chance to get the building when they were the Greater Litchfield Preservation Trust. Now someone is trying to make it into a viable economic project and they are interfering. P. Parsons thanked Mr. Dean for his efforts now, as he was surprised at the negative feedback, and is in support of Mr. Barton's efforts.

Motion: J. Zullo moved to endorse Mr. Barton's efforts to repurpose the jail building into an economically viable and attractive development for the Town of Litchfield. J. Torrant seconded. Mr. Paul said Mr. Dean's initiative is timely and phenomenal, as there could be unintended consequences of some actions. Upon voting all voted aye and the motion carried. Mr. Paul will write a letter to the Historic District Commission.

b) Award Bid for Pavement Markings – Parking Lots: **Motion:** J. Torrant moved to award the bid to low bidder CT Sealcoating, and D. Knox seconded. J. Zullo asked for the budget for the bid to be identified with the recommendation. Mr. Healy said this bid is within the budget. Upon voting all voted aye and the motion carried.

c) Award Bid for Pavement Markings – Center Lines: **Motion:** J. Torrant moved to award the contract to sole bidder Atlantic Pavement Marking. D. Knox seconded. J. Healy said it is within the budget. Upon voting all voted aye and the motion carried.

d) Award Bid for Refrigerant Recovery: **Motion:** J. Torrant moved to maintain the current vendor, Interstate Refrigerant Recover, Inc. for refrigerant recovery at the Litchfield Recycling Facility as recommended by Public Works Director Jack Healy. D. Knox seconded. Mr. Healy explained he did not receive a bid, so he contacted the current vendor who was happy to send a letter saying they would extend their contract for four years at the existing price of \$7/unit. Upon voting, all voted aye and the motion carried.

e) Award Bid for Mowing & Grounds Maintenance Services: L. Paul explained that this is the bid Mr. Korn was referring to under public comment, and the Board has been given a copy of his letter and the bids. The company recommended for award by Public Works Director Jack Healy is Haeley, LLC. J. Zullo asked if Haeley is a new vendor, and Mr. Healy said they have been plowing the Bantam Facility for about five years and have done some cleanup but have not done mowing. According to Mr. Korn, Haeley's prices are below market, and Mr. Paul questioned if he would be able to do the work at such low prices. D. Knox said a bid some years ago was an issue because the grounds were not maintained properly. Mr. Torrant felt that prices way out of line should not be considered. J. Zullo pointed out the line item for Center School fall cleanup where Haeley's prices were much lower, but also noted the A3 Bid Alternate B by Village Grounds was less.

Motion: J. Torrant moved to award the mowing and grounds maintenance bid for the next two years to Village Grounds Maintenance in conjunction with Maple Ridge Landscaping, based on the questionable numbers from Haeley, LLC, and the fact of having the problems of the last couple years that may or may not have been remedied with Jespersen Landscaping, and the fact that AgriCare seems to be higher than the norm on this bid. D. Knox seconded the motion. In discussion J. Healy said that he followed the Town's purchasing policy in finding a viable bid that falls within the scope of the work and within the budget, and would therefore recommend the low bidder. L. Paul added that the policy also states that they do not have to award to the low bidder. P. Parsons said we should support the local vendors if the prices are close, and with a vendor with good experience, he supports the motion. J. Healy clarified that Haeley LLC (Paul Adams) is also a Litchfield-based business and mows the green for the Borough. Upon question by J. Zullo, J. Healy said the estimated annual value of this contract is between \$30,000 and \$40,000, adjusted upward if additional duties are requested.

Vote: Upon voting, all voted aye and the motion carried.

f) Approve Use of Town Roads for Challenge Family Americas Triathlon 6/7/15: The Selectmen recalled the problems with trash left on the roads in years past and how they have improved since then. The roads will not be closed for any part of this race in Litchfield. Motion: J. Tarrant moved to approve the use of the town roads as outlined in the letter from The Challenge Family Americas Triathlon on June 7, 2015 from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. D. Knox seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

Correspondence

- a) 3/30/15 Letter from Thomas McDonnell re Budget: received and noted
- b) 5/25/15 Email from Kathy Matyas re Budget: received and noted
- c) 3/5/15 Email from Ed Miller re Budget Suggestion: received and noted

Adjournment: Motion: J. Tarrant moved to adjourn at 6:25 p.m. and P. Parsons seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.



Leo Paul, Jr., First Selectman

ARIL 7, 2015

To: The Board of Selectmen, Town of Litchfield

I am Chris Korn, representing Village Grounds Maintenance and Maple Ridge Lawn, bidding on the current grounds maintenance contracts.

We are established Litchfield companies, in businesses for 37 years, with experienced employees, the majority of whom live in Litchfield.

Ten years ago, due to the scope of the then all inclusive bid, we joined forces, enabling us to provide dedicated, reliable and quality service to the town.

During this time we have reclaimed previously neglected areas, enhanced the look of all facilities and improved the durability and quality of the athletic fields.

In addition we have recommended maintenance programs that have not only enhanced the look of these facilities, but also have lowered the maintenance costs each year.

Due to the established bidding procedure for semiannual contracts, the company holding the contract is continually exposed to low bids, since previous bids are public knowledge. Some of these bids are so low and below established norm that they should send up red flags. Such is the case with the current bids.

We are aware of the Boards attempt to hold costs down and in our present bid we have held our 2013 price. Additionally, we have offered a 5% discount off of our 2013 price if all facilities are awarded to us. This represents a less than 1% increase per year over a 12 year period.

Each year we have provided requested extra mowing at the school athletic fields and Community field at no charge.

In addition, we have provided needed maintenance such as watering, fertilizing, mulching and cutting back of beds at no cost when we were told there was not enough money in the budget to do so. By doing this we have protected the investment the town has made in the new plantings.

A few years ago, during the financial crisis, we chose not to take a structural increase in our contract in order to help the town keep costs down.

All of these extra services at no cost have easily saved the town over \$1000 each season.

Once again, we realize that the board is concerned with saving money in the budget. The difference between our bid and the lowest bid amounts to .0001% of the current proposed budget.

In view of this and our willingness to keep costs down over all these years while providing recognized, quality service, we hope the Board will consider us an asset to our town.

It is our hope that after considering all of these factors and reviewing our letters of recommendation, we will be given the opportunity to continue maintaining our town's facilities to the highest standards.

Thank you for your consideration,

