

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2012  
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING ~ 5:30 P.M.**

**Call to Order:** First Selectman Leo Paul, Jr. called the meeting to order with Selectmen P. Parsons, Diane Knox, Jeffrey Zullo and R. Christopher Blake also present.

**Approval of Minutes**

**a) Regular February 7, 2012: Motion:** J. Zullo moved to approve the regular 2/7/12 meeting minutes and C. Blake seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**b) Special February 15, 2012: Motion:** D. Knox moved to approve the special budget meeting of 2/15/12 and C. Blake seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Public Requests/Comments:** C. Blake introduced Tim, a member of the Boy Scouts, who is working on his merit badge for citizenship in the community.

**Selectmen's Requests:** L. Paul said that \$4.625 million of bonds was refunded today at a rate of 1.86%, which will realize a total savings over 15 years of \$442,426.00. Most of the savings in debt service will occur in years 2014 (\$138,666.00), and in 2015 (\$256,415.00). The average life of the refunded bonds drops from 8.3 years to 8.1 year and the average coupon of refunded bonds drops from 3.7% to 2.9%. Moody's has also reaffirmed our Aa2 rating. David T. Wilson, Treasurer, also noted that the bond par amount on the refund was \$4.555 million, meaning we refinanced less by paying off some of the principle in the process.

L. Paul announced he would be away for the 3/6/12 meeting and the consensus was to cancel the meeting, but they asked to be kept apprised of the budget progress. The Selectmen's operating budget will be discussed at the Board of Finance's 3/12/12 meeting, and all planned to attend. Tonight they will be discussing the Capital budget.

J. Zullo asked that the Board of Finance minutes be included in the liaison reports.

**Resignations:** None

**Interviews, Appointments & Reappointments**

**a) Appoint David T. Wilson to Pension Commission, alternate member, term expiration 3/2013: Motion:** C. Blake moved to appoint David T. Wilson as alternate member of the Pension Commission, with term expiration of 3/2013. J. Zullo seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

**b) Appoint Brenda C. Barnes to Pension Commission, alternate member, term expiration 3/2013: Motion:** C. Blake moved to appoint Brenda C. Barnes to the Pension Commission as an alternate member with term expiration of 3/2013. J. Zullo seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

**Liaison Reports/Commission-Committee Minutes:** 2/9/12 WPCA minutes; 2/8/12 Inland Wetlands minutes; 1/19/12 Sandy Beach minutes; 2/1/12 Board of Education minutes (draft)

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

Beautification Commission: 2 regular members 2/2012, 2/2014; 1 alternate 2/2013  
Bridge Committee: 1 member, P&Z Liaison  
Cable Television Advisory Council: One member 6/2013  
Economic Development Commission: One regular member 6/2013; 1 alternate 6/2013  
Inland Wetlands Commission: 1 regular member 6/2014  
Milton Historic District Commission: 2 alternate members 1/2012  
Park & Recreation: 1 regular member 6/2014; 2 alternate members: 6/2013, 6/2014  
Recycling Committee: 3 members, 2/2012, 2/2013, 2/2014  
Veteran's Advisory Committee: 1 regular member 8/2012; 2 alternate members 8/2012

Water Pollution Control Authority: 1 regular member 1/2013

**Tax Refunds: Motion:** P. Parsons moved to accept the two tax refunds, as presented by the Tax Collector, for a total of \$273.56, and D. Knox seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Transfers:** None

**Old Business**

**a) New Town Hall Discussion – prospective members included in packet:** Mr. Paul provided a list of prospective committee members including some former members and some new interested parties. D. Knox asked to add Rick Neller to the list of interested committee members, but L. Paul said he is not eligible because he is not a Litchfield resident. He felt at the last meeting that the Selectmen wished to put a committee together to begin working on the Town Hall. P. Parsons asked to discuss the charge of the committee before assigning members. The Town Hall Building Committee had completed its charge to determine municipal space needs, with land acquisition if necessary, and study of site location. Its final recommendation was presented to the Board of Selectmen in 2008 but was put on the shelf in 2009 because of the downturn in the economy. P. Parsons then said he thought the review of the Bantam School property should be kept separate as a different committee. Keeping the new building and the disposition of that property tied together could cause both to fail. He asked if the new committee should start where the other committee left off, and Mr. Paul said his intent was to continue what had been started with the members who wanted to continue to serve, or new people who have offered to serve. He felt that given the low bonding rates now (interest rate on recent bonding at 1.88%), it may be the time to start, eliminating the tower and scaling the plan back, tearing down the complete current town hall and building brand new from the ground up. The people could be moved off site until the project is completed. When the Court moves out of the Bantam School facility, we will not have the \$250,000 rent that kept the facility in the black. He felt the Town should not be landlords. J. Zullo said there is \$19,000 in available funds. The Board of Selectmen should establish a mission with a clearly-defined objective, tight time line, and budget. The new committee should start where the former committee left off and update with a more efficient design and cost analysis, holding public hearings to achieve project clarity. He felt the needs analysis was complete, but maybe with too much meeting space. Decisions on other Town buildings should be left to a future date. D. Knox said that if the project is scaled back and done in a reasonable time frame to take advantage of cheap money, the public should embrace it. L. Paul said he is not hearing as much negative feedback this time. P. Parsons added that at the time of the first committee's work, there were two other building projects – the School Building project and the Northfield Firehouse project. The timing is much better now. J. Zullo said that the new charge will be different from the former committee's in that it will call for the design to be more efficient and smaller, more cost competitive, including preliminary estimates from contractors and construction managers to analyze for overall cost and possibly some new concepts. After the public hearings the committee will decide if more work needs to be done. C. Blake said he has been reluctant to revisit this project and is unconvinced of the need, cost and public reception of a new town hall. He did, however, say that he is not against exploring it further as suggested. C. Blake asked that a resolution be drafted for the mission with duties of the committee so the Board can review and possibly adopt it and appoint members for the committee. He said much of the resolution could be salvaged, but the purpose would be more concise to pick up where the previous committee left off, reviewing and revising the previous committee's recommendation with the same site and including a time constraint, bringing it to the public for comment with a new recommendation brought to the Board of Selectmen. L. Paul said one step that did not happen last time should be for the architect to meet with the departments to discuss the conceptual plan. In discussion of a time line, Town Clerk Lisa Losee said in order to have this on the election ballot in November, it must be submitted to the State by September 21<sup>st</sup>. It was decided to plan on five months from March to August, since there will only be a refinement of the current work to date. P. Parsons said time is of the essence, so perhaps a special Selectmen's meeting could be held the week of March 12, 2012, perhaps the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup>. The draft resolution will be ready for that meeting, and the appointment of the committee can take place.

The Board decided to hold a special meeting to address the resolution and appointment on Wednesday, March 14, 2012 at 5:30 p.m.

**b) Discuss Potential Election Ordinance:** L. Paul referred to the information from CCM regarding towns that run a separate race for First Selectman and where the unsuccessful candidate does not gain a seat on

the Board of Selectmen. He also cited the special act of the House of Representatives in General Assembly approved in 1919 that allows Litchfield to have a five-member Board of Selectmen. He also referred to the email comments from Audrey Blondin supporting a change toward a separate race. L. Paul said the initial proposal was to have the Board of Selectmen race separate with at least 3 members from both parties running for the four available seats. The Secretary of State's office says there must be 10 people running for the five positions; 2 for the First Selectmen and 8 (4 of each party) for the Board of Selectmen. Atty. Mike Rybak explained the history and reasoning. Also, if the First Selectman's term becomes 4 years, the entire Board would also become 4 years. He advised considering all aspects of a change as it is not simple. **Motion:** J. Zullo moved to table further discussion on the potential election ordinance. D. Knox seconded. C. Blake said a motion was not needed because there is no action pending, so J. Zullo withdrew his motion.

**New Business**

**a) Approve Road Closure for "Girls Just Wanna Run 2012" Road Race – 5/6/12: Motion:** C. Blake moved to approve the road closure as above for North Shore Road and J. Zullo seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**b) Approve Road Closures for "Joanne McCormick Run" – 4/21/12: Motion:** C. Blake moved to approve the road closures in accordance with the memo 1/30/12 and J. Zullo seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Correspondence:** None

**Motion:** C. Blake moved to adjourn at 6:35 p.m and D. Knox seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Leo Paul, Jr., First Selectman