

REGULAR MEETING OF THE LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2014
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 three Selectmen in attendance: Jonathan Tarrant, Diane Knox and Paul Parsons. Jeffrey Zullo was away.

Approval of Minutes: Motion: J. Tarrant moved to adopt the regular meeting minutes of February 4, 2014, and D. Knox seconded. All voted aye except P. Parsons who abstained because of absence, and the motion carried.

Public Requests/Comments: None

Selectmen's Requests: Motion: P. Parsons moved to add to the agenda under New Business b) Budget Discussion, Meeting Schedule and Capital Budget, and D. Knox seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried. Mr. Paul then advised the Board that resumes have been received for Fire Marshal and the interviewing committee will begin reviewing in order to make a recommendation to the Selectmen. Members of the committee are Paul Parsons as Selectmen's representative, Paul Gibb as Acting Emergency Management Director, Aaron Lanthier from the Fire Commission, a paid fire marshal, and Mr. Paul. In addition to Fire Marshal, the Town is also looking for an Emergency Management Director in this position. Mr. Paul then advised the Board that he will be attending the COST Annual Meeting on Wednesday and will be testifying in Hartford on a bill regarding posting complete meeting information in the newspaper.

J. Tarrant asked about a promised technology plan that was due by the end of February. Motion: J. Tarrant moved to add under Old Business c) Review of Board of Education Computer and Technology Plan. P. Parsons seconded. Mr. Paul said there is not yet a plan available and suggested placing it on the next agenda. Mr. Tarrant noted it has been presented to the Board of Finance. Mr. Tarrant then withdrew his motion and Mr. Parsons his second. They will add this discussion for the first meeting in March and ask the Board of Education to be present.

Resignations: None

Interviews, Appointments & Reappointments: None

Liaison Reports/Commission-Committee Minutes: 2/10/14 Board of Finance minutes, 12/18/13 Board of Education minutes, 2/4/14 ZBA minutes, 11/20/13 and 1/29/14 Economic Development Commission minutes

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

Beautification Commission: 3 regular members 2/2015, 2/2014, 2/16; 2 alternates 2/2016
Conservation Commission: 1 member 12/2013; 2 alternate members 12/2015
Economic Development Commission: One regular member 6/2016; 2 alternates 6/2014, 6/2016
Inland Wetlands Commission: 1 alternate member 6/2014
Milton Historic District Commission: 3 alternate members 1/2015, 1/2015, 1/2014
Northwest Regional Mental Health Board, Catchment Area Council #22, at-large member 5/2015
Park & Recreation: 2 alternate members: 6/2017, 6/2014
Recycling Committee: 4 members, 2/2015, two 2/2016, 2/2014
Sandy Beach Commission: 1 regular member 12/2015

Town Hall Building Committee: 1 member, 3/2015

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: 1 regular member 3/2015

Old Business

a) **Update on School Building Project – J. Healy:** Mr. Healy said Peg Perusse has to spend about two more weeks working with the State to complete the list of items that are not reimbursable. Then the Board of Education has to vote to approve the project, and finally the State has six months to do its audit. Peg is doing this work as a volunteer as she was familiar with the work. The holdup since August is due in part to her having an illness in the family and being away. All change orders are completed, and once the forms are completed by Peg, they can move forward. Mr. Paul asked Mr. Healy to report at the next Selectmen's meeting with an update. He does not want to continue issuing notes on this project. Treasurer David T. Wilson was present and spoke about offering Ms Perusse some compensation to insure this work is done. D. Knox said she felt confident Jack Healy will insure this will be done. The item will be on the next agenda under Old Business.

b) **Town Cost Saving Ideas - Responses to Public Works Items:** Jack Healy reported his responses to the items on the list drawn up by Richard Dauphinais that pertained to Public Works cost savings ideas and also submitted his response in memo form dated 2/18/14. Mr. Paul then referred to non-Public Works questions on the list and answered those he could without research, and the rest will be addressed later after research. Mr. Dauphinais' questions and Mr. Paul's answers appear below.

Question: Did we accept bid for Bantam Post Office – how much and how long?

Answer: Yes we have accepted the bid for the Bantam Post Office. Mr. Paul will research the rest of the answer.

Question: Fire equipment - do we need it all?

Answer: The Fire Departments are constantly maintaining and evaluating equipment for use. They have to go through the Capital Committee that puts them through the wringer for purchase of large equipment. They are also regulated by OSHA and Fire Safety standards and must spend a lot of money to keep equipment up to date.

Question: Maybe we should try to cut next year's budget by 5%

Answer: Mr. Paul said that although he would love to cut the budget, the Town cannot. They always try to do everything possible to keep the budget to a 0% increase, and have always been less than 3% since he's been in office and have always passed the budget in one vote. While austerity can work for a while, the Town may need to invest more money as time goes on.

Question: Institute a two (2) year budget for the town.

Answer: It has been discussed in the past, but it just does not work. It may work for the State, but there would be too many budget adjustments over a two-year period that would require a Town Meeting.

Question: Assessor Accountability – How many properties have been checked for accuracy?

Answer: Mr. Paul said the accountability is in the revaluation we just had.

Question: Contribute more to pension plan of them [merit service volunteers]

Answer: We have increased the money put into both pension plans; the Board of Finance has put surplus into it. Unmarried merit service personnel can now name a beneficiary on their plan.

Question: No more percentage raises (flat rate)

Answer: The Town has union contracts to abide by, and during negotiations they try to negotiate the least obtrusive pay raises they can provide, keeping in mind good employees need to provide for their families.

Question: Offer a \$5,500 voucher to parents who may want to have their child go to another school.

Answer: This is an administration issue, but Mr. Paul did say that if they are given a \$5,500 voucher, the Town and Board of Education are responsible for funding tuition and transportation to that school.

Question: If we need a Town Hall, turn the Middle school into Town Hall and Town Hall into a Senior Center.

Answer: The Middle School is not available to us, as it is being used as a school.

Question: If something is to be done with merging with Wamogo, let's do it now – don't play games.

Answer: The merger is not in our hands; it's in the hands of Region 6. They are waiting for a consultant's report to decide if they still want to continue discussions.

Question: Can we as a community do something with the jail getting to be an eye sore?

Answer: Mr. Paul said the jail belongs to the State and he thinks there is currently an agreement with a private person.

Question: Have we received the \$7 million from the State for the schools renovation?

Answer: As discussed in Old Business a) above, we have not received all our reimbursements from the State, but we are working to bring that to a close.

P. Parsons asked Mr. Healy how Litchfield is doing with salt supplies. Mr. Healy replied we were out last week, and mixed salt and sand to stretch it. Over the weekend they received 100 tons of State salt, and then 400 tons from New Haven. Now after two storms, they have ordered another 400 tons. They had stored a 250-ton reserve in Bethlehem but have gone through it all. A large supply of sand is also dwindling as they use it. Each snow event uses about 100 tons of salt. The ice events use over 200 tons of salt.

New Business

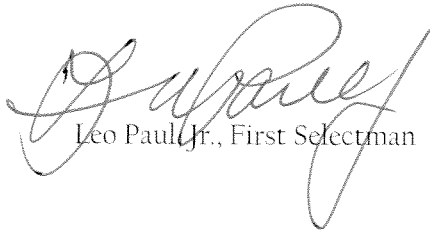
a) **Award Water Testing Bid for Municipal Parking Lot and Landfill Properties:** Mr. Healy explained that Hydro Technologies is holding their number and it is wise to have consistency in a laboratory. Since they are allowed to extend the contract for another two years, he recommended awarding the bid to them. **Motion:** P. Parsons moved to extend the bid of Hydro Technologies for the water testing for the municipal parking lot and landfill for two years. D. Knox seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

b) **Budget Discussion, Meeting Schedule and Capital Budget:** Mr. Paul passed out detail sheets on the Capital budget categories for the Board to review. There is a proposed adjustment to remove \$42,251 from the Technology area and transfer it into the Public Works area of Capital for software, recommending to the Board of Finance to use as pay-as-you-go. The requested operating budget increase is now at 2.9%. Money in the Capital budget for security items was discussed. Diane Knox detailed items that were recommended by the School Safety and Security Committee. Grant revenue expected has been reduced by 3%. David T. Wilson said that the Capital Committee 5-year plan is working. They are taking care of the needs of the Town and there is no fluff. The Capital Budget and Public Works budget will be discussed further at the special budget meeting on Tuesday, February 25th at 5:30 p.m., with a vote on both the Capital and the Operating Budgets. L. Paul said that with the revaluation the grand list has dropped, so the mil will have to be adjusted up. It should be a neutral event for most residents who had a decrease in the assessment. Those who had less decrease in their assessments are going to realize tax increases.

Correspondence

a) 2/10/14 DOT Request for Replacement of Signs with Flashers: Mr. Paul explained the letter from the DOT and asked to just sign the document as Legal Traffic Authority without holding a public hearing, and the Board fully agreed.

Motion: P. Parsons moved to adjourn at 6:45 p.m. and J. Tarrant seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.



Leo Paul Jr., First Selectman