

REGULAR MEETING OF THE LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2017
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING - 5:30 P.M.

Call to Order: First Selectman Leo Paul, Jr. called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. with all Selectmen present: Diane Knox, Jonathan Tarrant, Paul Parsons, and Jeffrey Zullo.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Paul pointed out a correction needed under New Business a), changing the amount of \$15,000 to \$1,500. Motion: J. Tarrant moved approval of the regular 12/20/16 meeting minutes with correction noted by Mr. Paul. D. Knox seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

Public Requests/Comments: None

Selectmen's Requests: Mr. Paul relayed some changes in the State's funding where the state has cut this year's Education Cost Sharing funding by \$558,000, or 3.2%. We have underfunded it by about 5 or 6%, but we should be in pretty good shape. He will send the Board an explanatory email. He also stated the State will levy a 2.5% spending cap this budget season, but he is hoping it will be removed. There is also some LOCIP funding they have cut. Any project we have not applied for thus far will not get funded. They will ask the legislature to make an adjustment so the funds will again be available. The Council of Small Towns (COST) will have its annual meeting next week, and Mr. Paul will serve as its President for the next two years. J. Tarrant said it was smart to underfund the ECS and noted there was no consistency in what was cut. He also asked for an update on the Jambs project. Mr. Paul said Morris approved the easement and now we can go back to DEEP to get the contract ready and see if the State will still have the STEAP grant money available. Mr. Paul then said he met with Jonathan Wilson of the Borough to draft up a charge for the new West St. committee. They will then send it to Mike Rybak for his review and wait for the Borough to approve theirs. J. Zullo said the 2.5% spending cap is not a bad thing as it controls spending and tax increases and forces efficiency. Mr. Paul agreed, but said the disagreement is with the process. P. Parsons noted there was a mistake in the EDC minutes where it incorrectly said Sportsmen's of Litchfield would be going out of business.

Resignations: None

Interviews, Appointments & Reappointments

a) Interview Michael Thomas for Planning and Zoning Vacancy, term 11/2017: Mr. Thomas said that P&Z will appoint him to fill a vacancy left by Susan Lowenthal. Mr. Paul said that although the Board of Selectmen does not have the authority to appoint him, they would like to meet him. Mr. Thomas said he has lived at 131 Campville Road in Northfield for 21 years. He is a retired police detective from Waterbury and worked for banks in corporate investigation. He is a Viet Nam veteran and does military final honors and volunteer work in his retirement. Regarding the POCAD update, he said he likes the town the way it is now. He is pro-business for the tax base, so the residents do not carry the entire burden.

Liaison Reports/Commission-Committee Minutes: 12/12/16 Board of Finance minutes; 12/13/16 Capital minutes; 10/26/16, 1/30/16, 12/14/16 & 12/20/16 EDC minutes; 10/13/16 & 11/10/16 Fire Commission minutes; 11/1/16 ZBA minutes; 12/14/16 Inland Wetlands minutes; 12/8/16 WPCA minutes; 12/13/16 Bridge Committee minutes; 12/7/16 Board of Education minutes

Green Team Update: No report

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

Bantam Lake Authority: 1 member 12/2016

Beautification Commission: 2 alternates 2/2019
Board of Ethics: 2 alternate members 6/2017, 6/2019
Cable TV Advisory Council: 1 member 6/2017
Capital Improvements Committee: 1 citizen at large
Conservation Commission: 1 regular members 12/2016; 2 alternate members 12/2018
Economic Development Commission: 2 alt. members 6/2018, 6/2017
Inland Wetlands: 1 regular member 2017; 2 alternate members 6/2017
Litchfield Prevention Council: 2 alternate members 6/2017, 6/2019
Milton Historic District Commission: 2 alternate members 1/2018, 1/2018
Northwest CT Convention & Visitors Bureau: 1 member 9/2018
Park & Recreation: 1 regular member; 2 alternate members: 6/2017, 6/2018
Pension Commission: 1 alternate member 3/2019
Recycling Committee: 5 members: two 2/2016, one 2/2017, two 2/2018
Social Services Board: 1 member 2/2017
Veteran's Advisory Committee: 2 regular members 8/2016, 8/2018; 2 alternate members 8/2018
Water Pollution Control Authority: 1 alternate member 1/2016
Zoning Board of Appeals: 1 regular member 3/2021; 2 alternate members 3/2020

Tax Refunds: **Motion:** P. Parsons moved to approve the 5 tax refunds as presented by the Tax Collector in the amount of \$5,161.37. J. Tarrant seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

Transfers: None

Old Business: None

New Business

a) **Award Bid for Two Island Beautifications – Route 63:** Len Fasano said that HLC has backed out of the bid, leaving one bidder, Martin Laviero at \$13,850.00. Beautification member Anna Heys said that a recent total in the account including donations in memory of Jeanne FitzGerald totaled \$16,140.00. This will be a similar improvement to the one done previously also by Martin Laviero. **Motion:** J. Zullo moved to award the bid for two island planters on Route 63 and South Street to Martin Laviero for \$13,850.00. D. Knox seconded the motion. Mr. Paul said he was sure Jeannie was smiling and recounted how she pushed him to get this job done just a few days before her passing. Upon voting all voted aye and the motion carried.

b) **Town Hall Project Discussion:** Mr. Paul discussed the history of the Facilities Committee's work and its conclusion that there is no room in school buildings for municipal offices. Therefore, they are now recommending to the Board of Selectmen to pursue the updated previous plan for a new town hall. David Wilson, Town Treasurer, participated in this discussion. The other option is renovating the town hall and annex building to code at \$2.5 million with no expansion. The Town will not be able to rent the annex, as it is zoned for residential only.

Diane Knox said it has been difficult to get a true read on the residents' opinions, but felt the new plan seems to meet the needs of the people. Based on those she has spoken to, she felt we should move forward on the new plan.

David Wilson pointed out the pro forma financing plans and graphs in the presentation packet and explained the current debt service with this project added in and assumed CIP of \$3million. In 2018 you would see .5 mill increase, but there would be decreases in the next three years, ratcheting up thereafter at a lower level, but never as high as in 2018.

J. Zullo said we need to know what additional revenues will be coming to the town such as from the new Stop & Shop and the old jail. He was concerned that the Town will be consistently be adding to the debt service for the next 6 to 7 years and will create a significant burden to the community by adding per capita debt. D. Wilson said he should consider the mill rate increase. Mr. Zullo suggested repairing and replacing items to keep the two current buildings operational, which would cost about \$1 million with no need to be brought to code. The full renovation at \$2.5 million is another option. He said another option was to look into using the courthouse in the center of town. The \$5.9 million new town hall would be a hard sell to the community.

Paul Parsons felt that the \$5.9 million new town hall could possibly be fit into the capital plan, as we have been catching up on capital projects. David Wilson said they are looking more at pay-as-you-go financing. They have been meeting with Public Works to find money sources from projects authorized but not issued rather than bonding new money.

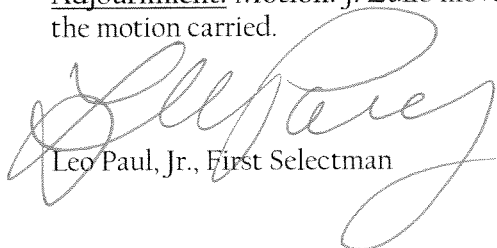
L. Paul said they can look at the courthouse but there are other considerations there such as grants and parking. Last he knew, the State had \$500,000 to bring the courthouse to code, but he does not know if the money is still there or if it would be enough. To repair the town hall and annex seems to be counterproductive and more costly in the long run.

J. Zullo said perhaps they should decide what to do with the annex first. We could bring it to a town meeting to close the facility, demolish the building and sell the property. The revenue will go to subsidize a new town hall. P. Parsons felt that no one thinks it wise to leave our employees at the Annex and pay for the upkeep of that building. Mr. Paul said he did not agree with Mr. Zullo's approach at all. Discussion followed on possible ideas and working with the Bantam Borough P&Z. P. Parsons said they should work with the Borough to get value from the property and said the exit strategy should be to no longer own the annex building and get all municipal offices together in one place. He would not hold up this new town hall project for working with the Borough on disposition of the facility. Mr. Paul said he would have a discussion with the Bantam officials. D. Knox said there has been many points made that should be explored further. She thought the Selectmen should set a special meeting to discuss further.

Motion: J. Zullo moved to table this discussion until a future special meeting dedicated to this topic, and D. Knox seconded. L. Paul said he would talk to Dick Sheldon about how he wants to proceed as we plan to abandon the building. He will also get some tax revenue numbers on Stop & Shop, the old jail and Toyota. He asked David T. Wilson and Fran Carpentier to be present, and possibly someone from the Board of Finance. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Correspondence: None

Adjournment: **Motion:** J. Zullo moved to adjourn at 7:15 p.m., and J. Torrant seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.



Leo Paul, Jr., First Selectman