

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2011
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING ~ 7:30 P.M.**

Call to Order: First Selectman Leo Paul, Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Also present were Selectmen William Dranginis, Diane Knox, Paul Parsons and R. Christopher Blake.

Approval of Minutes: **Motion:** W. Dranginis moved to approve the special August 2, 2011 meeting minutes and C. Blake seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Public Requests/Comments: None

Selectmen's Requests: W. Dranginis moved to add to Interviews, Appointments & Reappointments the following appointments to the Board of Ethics: Peter Losee 6/2014, J. Bryan Simmons 6/2014, William Neller 6/2013, Meredith Blake 6/2012, and alternates Francis Gorman 6/2013, and Gerald Gault 6/2014. C. Blake seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

Resignations: None

Interviews, Appointments & Reappointments

a) Interview Peter Losee for Board of Ethics, term expiration 6/2014: Peter Losee was unable to attend, but everyone knew him and wished to vote. **Motion:** W. Dranginis moved to appoint Mr. Losee as above, and C. Blake seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

b) Interview J. Bryan Simmons for Board of Ethics, term expiration 6/2014: Mr. Simmons has lived in the area for 31 years and in Litchfield for 15 years. He was employed for over 20 years by the Hartford Hospital as VP of Planning and Facilities. There he served on the Ethics Committee. **Motion:** W. Dranginis moved to appoint Mr. Simmons as above and C. Blake seconded, saying he has known him for quite a while and he would be a great addition to an important board. Upon voting all voted aye and the motion carried.

c) Interview William Neller for Board of Ethics, term expiration 6/2013: Mr. Neller said he wrote the handbook for employee practices for his employer and has run all the DOT drug testing. He was also the lead in establishing the Possum Queen event as a non-profit and establishing a board of directors and advisory board. **Motion:** W. Dranginis moved to appoint Mr. Neller as above and C. Blake seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

d) Interview Meredith Blake for Board of Ethics, term expiration 6/2012: Ms Blake said she grew up in Litchfield and is currently in her last year at UCONN Law School. She works at Litchfield Horticultural Center and has worked for the CT Legislature. She is very interested in the Board of Ethics and would welcome the opportunity to serve. **Motion:** D. Knox moved to appoint Ms Blake as above and W. Dranginis seconded. All voted aye, except C. Blake who abstained because of family relation to the candidate, and the motion carried.

e) Interview Francis Gorman for Board of Ethics, alternate board, term expiration 6/2013: Mr. Gorman was away and unable to attend. Mr. Paul pointed out that he currently serves on the Board of Education and is well known in the community. **Motion:** W. Dranginis moved to appoint Mr. Gorman as an alternate on the Board of Ethics with term expiration of 6/2013 and C. Blake seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

f) Interview Gerald Gault for Board of Ethics, alternate member, term expiration 6/2014: Mr. Gault has been a resident of Litchfield for 16 years, moving here from California. He was a real estate broker in the San Francisco Bay area and dealt with Ethics for the Board of Realtors. He also worked for Bell Systems where he worked with union negotiations and ethical issues. He is currently on the board at White Memorial Conservation Center, and has served on the board of the Oliver Wolcott Library. He feels Ethics is a very important board where he would contribute his apolitical views. He has no desire to run for any

office. **Motion:** D. Knox moved to appoint Mr. Gault as an alternate member on the Board of Ethics, term expiration of 6/2014. W. Dranginis seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

P. Parsons noted the new appointees were a good mix of local residents and those who have moved here from other areas with good experience. C. Blake said this should be a very good board and commended Mr. Paul for his recommendations.

Liaison Reports/Commission-Committee Minutes: Planning and Zoning 7/11/11 and 7/18/11 (draft) minutes; 6/7/11 Zoning Board of Appeals minutes; 7/7/11 Design Review Advisory Committee minutes; 7/31/11 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
Cable Television Advisory Council: One member 6/2013
Economic Development Commission: One alternate member 6/2013
Inland Wetlands Commission: 1 regular member 6/2014; 1 alternate member 6/2012
Milton Historic District Commission: 2 alternate members 1/2012
Park & Recreation: 2 alternate members: 6/2013, 6/2014
Pension Commission: 1 alternate member 3/2013
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
Zoning Board of Appeals: 2 alternate members 3/2015

Tax Refunds: None

Transfers

a) Transfer #5: \$19,977 – From 56-9501-58101 Capital & Nonrecurring to 60-9515-57814-0814 Knife Shop Road Bridge: L. Paul explained that the total costs for the Knife Shop Road Bridge project exceeded the previously approved budget by \$19,977, so the shortfall will be taken from the Capital and Nonrecurring fund. **Motion:** C. Blake moved Transfer #5 in accordance with the Director of Finance's memo of 8/5/11 in the amount of \$19,977. W. Dranginis seconded the motion. Mr. Paul noted this transfer will go on to the Board of Finance and Town Meeting. All voted aye and the motion carried.

b) Transfer #6: \$48,153 – Closing Out Various Capital Projects to 56-9501-47001-000 Capital & Nonrecurring: Mr. Paul explained this transfer closes out completed capital projects and moved the money into Capital and Nonrecurring. **Motion:** C. Blake moved Transfer #6 in accordance with the Director of Finance's memo of 8/5/11 in the amount of \$48,153. W. Dranginis seconded the motion. Mr. Paul said this transfer will also go on to the Board of Finance and Town Meeting. Upon voting all voted aye and the motion carried.

c) Transfer #9: \$54,930 – From 60-9515-57971-0971 Woodruff Street Bridge to 56-9501-47001-000 Capital & Nonrecurring: L. Paul explain this transfer moves remaining money from the Woodruff Street Bridge project back into the Capital and Nonrecurring fund. This transfer will also require Board of Finance and Town Meeting approval. **Motion:** C. Blake moved Transfer #9 in accordance with the Director of Finance's memo of 8/5/11 in the amount of \$54,930. W. Dranginis seconded. P. Parsons asked about Transfers #7 and #8, and Finance Director Karl Fisher said they had both been previously passed. Upon voting all voted aye and the motion passed.

d) Transfer #10: \$3,663.30 – From 56-9501-47000-000 Capital & Nonrecurring to 60-9514-57121-012 Camp Dutton Settlement: L. Paul explained this 20-year settlement for Camp Dutton Road residents had been funded from a Capital account and now will be funded from the Operating budget beginning fiscal 2012. These water bills are not a capital expense but were treated as such because of the long term. **Motion:** W. Dranginis moved Transfer #10 and P. Parsons seconded. All voted aye except C. Blake, who was involved in the original litigation of the settlement, and the motion carried.

e) **Transfer #11: \$238,390 - End of Year Departmental Adjustments:** Mr. Paul explained that these are departmental adjustments made at year end to balance the books. Money will come out of four areas: liability insurance, contingency, debt service – bond interest, and fringe benefits – medical. The funds will go into other departments with shortfalls. **Motion:** C. Blake moved Transfer #11 in accordance with the Director of Finance’s memo of 8/1/11 in the amount of \$238,390. D. Knox seconded the motion. K. Fisher explained details of the transfer. C. Blake noted that truing up less than 1% of the budget is commendable. This transfer will also need Board of Finance and Town Meeting approvals. Upon voting all voted aye and the motion carried.

Old Business

a) **Discuss and Take Appropriate Action if Necessary on Jail Offer from Department of Administrative Services – 8/10/11 Letter from Greater Litchfield Preservation Trust:** Perley Grimes was present from the Greater Litchfield Preservation Trust and referred to his letter of 8/10/11. Mr. Grimes said the Trust felt this was an important venture for the Town for two reasons. First, the old jail is a prominent building and the most important piece of commercial property in the center of Litchfield, so the control of the building should be in the hands of an entity that will improve and maintain it. Second, a study has shown the building is suited to office space. With the Town Hall needing to expand, an investment tax credit of 20% of the renovation cost would be available to a private citizen and could reduce a \$6 million project cost by \$1.2 million. With a partnership with the Town, the investor would receive \$100 of the tax credit; and if the Town had control, it could sell the credit for between \$800,000 and \$900,000 on the open market, thus reducing the overall project cost. The current Town Hall could be sold at a further reduction in project cost, with the skating rink area retained for parking.

The Trust has paid for three studies: asbestos, Phase I environmental, and lead testing. They will make results available to the Board of Selectmen when completed. Preliminary numbers for a possible lease-back arrangement show rent of \$28,000 per month. In answer to question from W. Dranginis, the only grant money now available would be a \$200,000 handicap access grant; no historical preservation money. Mr. Grimes also said the Trust would be willing to contribute about \$200,000 to the Town. He further suggesting applying to the Seherr-Thoss Foundation. P. Parsons commended the Trust for funding the testing and getting the word out to the general public.

W. Dranginis said that if there is a viable way to have the Town Hall there at a cost of less than \$5.9 million that the public would approve, he would be in favor. Mr. Paul answered that it would not be less with the \$120,000 purchase, \$50,000 annual maintenance cost (excluding outdoor maintenance or plowing), and a renovation cost of \$300 – \$400/sq. ft., or \$4 - \$6 million. These costs are without consideration of any environmental costs.

Motion: C. Blake moved to respond to the 7/8/11 DAS letter, declining to accept the offer as detailed in the letter. D. Knox seconded the motion. C. Blake felt the offer forces the Town to speculate too much regarding the economic feasibility, cost figures, risk with “as is” property, and environmental conditions that will remain unknown at the 8/22/11 response deadline. Also, as stated by the Town Attorney, once in the chain of title means always in the chain of title, which is a big risk. He added that this is the classic “pig in a poke,” or in this case, “a pig in a pokey.” Attorney Rybak then clarified that a no vote only declines the State’s offer for \$120,000 as is. It then moves through the statutory process to the market process. The market sets a price, and if there is a bid the State accepts, the Town would have 45 days to decide to match that offer. Regarding letting the initial 45 days elapse vs. voting no as this time, Mr. Paul said waiting will only serve to delay the process when it looks like there are other individuals interested in the property. C. Blake commended Mr. Grimes for great creative thinking and for all his work on behalf of the Trust, but he and Mr. Paul felt there were just too many unknowns at this point. There are no parties willing to invest and partner with the Town at this time. P. Parsons has heard from residents that there is no good reason to go forward with this purchase now. D. Knox felt the same and would prefer the building being purchased privately to support the tax base. **Vote:** All voted aye except W. Dranginis, who voted nay; motion carried.

New Business

a) **Request for Use of Roads for Military Heroes Race 9/11/11: Motion:** W. Dranginis moved to accept the request for use of roads for September 11, 2011 for the Military Heroes Walk/Run/Adventure Race. C. Blake seconded. Resident Trooper James Holm has reviewed the course and written a memo of approval dated 8/12/11. Upon voting, all voted aye and the motion carried.

b) Adopt Certificate of Appreciation – Sgt. Liam Dwyer, USMC: Motion: W. Dranginis moved to adopt the certificate of appreciation drafted as a result of James Blake’s presentation at the last meeting of his visit with Sgt. Liam Dwyer, USMC. C. Blake seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

c) Adopt Proclamation for United Way Day 9/12/11: Motion: W. Dranginis moved to adopt the proclamation for United Way Day on September 12, 2011. C. Blake seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion carried.

Correspondence: None

Motion: W. Dranginis moved to adjourn at 8:26 p.m. and C. Blake seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Leo Paul, Jr., First Selectman