

REGULAR MEETING OF THE LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2017  
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING - 5:30 P.M.

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

Approval of Minutes: **Motion:** D. Knox moved to approve the regular 2/7/17 meeting minutes and J. Tarrant seconded. All voted aye except P. Parsons, who abstained because of absence, and the motion carried.

Public Requests/Comments: None

Selectmen's Requests: **Motion:** J. Tarrant moved to add 5 tax refunds totaling \$2,243.85 to the agenda under Tax Refunds. D. Knox seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried. **Motion:** P. Parsons moved to add two letters under Correspondence: 1) 2/9/17 Letter to Ron Glander from Raz Alexe, and 2) 2/21/17 Letter from Aquarion to the Board of Selectmen. J. Tarrant seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried. Mr. Paul then handed out a chart showing the Governor's proposed budget and the impact on Litchfield if it goes through. Mr. Zullo asked the status of the West St. Revitalization Committee. Mr. Paul said he is waiting for the Bantam Warden to designate a member from the Borough Board to sit on the committee. Mr. Zullo noted the website is out of date in some areas and should be updated. He said he would not be at the March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, and P. Parsons said he may not be available either.

Resignations

a) Thomas G. Elliott from Recycling Committee, effective 2/16/17: received and noted

Interviews, Appointments & Reappointments: None

Liaison Reports/Commission-Committee Minutes: 12/1/16 Design Review Advisory Committee minutes; 1/19/17 Sandy Beach Commission minutes; 1/25/17 Economic Development Commission minutes; 2/8/17 Inland Wetlands minutes

Green Team Update: Mr. Zullo said they are working on the electric cable charging stations and would like the Board's input for sites. There will be grant money to apply for charging stations.

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

Bantam Lake Authority: 1 member 12/2016  
Beautification Commission: 1 regular member 2/2017; 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: 1 alternate member 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: 2 alternate members: 6/2017, 6/2018  
Pension Commission: 1 alternate member 3/2019

Recycling Committee: 1 regular member 2/2018; two alternates 2/2017, 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 1/2021  
Zoning Board of Appeals: 1 regular member 3/2021; 2 alternate members 3/2020

**Tax Refunds:** 5 Tax Refunds, Total of \$2,243.85: **Motion:** J. Tarrant moved to approve the five tax refunds in the amount of \$2,243.85, and D. Knox seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Transfers:** None

### Old Business

a) **Town Hall Project Discussion:** Mr. Paul said he and Paul Parsons met with the Bantam Borough Board, with a number of residents participating in the conversation. He asked them how they could work with us on the Bantam Annex site. They replied they would like it to be used for municipal use. Mr. Paul told them he has been working with the Housing Trust to see if there is potential for development. Mr. Parsons said the first concern with the Borough was the possible loss of their post office. The zoning officials said they would not consider changing the zoning designation from the current residential. Mr. Zullo noted that there seems to be a disconnect if we continue to use the building as municipal but it is zoned residential nonconforming, so shouldn't they change the zone to municipal? If we leave, it would go back to residential. Mr. Paul said they will again meet with the Borough on Tuesday, February 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. to again speak with them.

b) **Exclusive Service Area (ESA) Decision for Water (tabled from 2/7/17):** Mr. Paul pointed out the two areas on the map and the two companies, Torrington Water and Aquarion, who are eager for exclusive service area rights. Susan of Torrington Water said she would be okay if unassigned, but if it were assigned, it should be to Torrington Water. The letter from Chuck Firlotte, Aquarion, listed under Correspondence, asks for the exclusive service area in the northeast section of town. There is an area off Clark Road, the Hunters Chase area, that is serviced by Torrington Water and is automatically an exclusive service area for them. The three options are to assign to Aquarion, Torrington Water, or leave the areas unassigned. Zullo thought this is just another level of State bureaucracy and does not give a benefit to Litchfield. George Logan, State Senator and former engineer for Aquarion, said in answer to P. Parsons' question about expansion of the main, they cannot use customer money to expand the system, but any developers would pay for improvements to its project, and the private water company would take it over. He said it makes good sense to have one company to be the ESA provider, as everything would be in place for expansion and the cost of the expanded main would be spread out over all the customers.

**Motion:** J. Tarrant moved to assign the ESA that Aquarion has requested and leave the remaining portion of the town unassigned. D. Knox seconded and asked for clarification of the area as the blue area on the map, which was confirmed. All voted aye except J. Zullo, who voted nay. Mr. Paul declared the motion carried. [*J. Tarrant left the meeting at this point.*]

### New Business

a) **Award Bid for Northfield Firehouse Fire Alarm System Major Components Replacement:** L. Paul said they had already approved up to \$13,000, and now the bid came in at \$11,676 which includes the surge protectors. R. Alexe said the single bid came in lower than the budget, and it will cover extended warranties up to three years. He recommended the bid be awarded to Berkshire Alarm. **Motion:** D. Knox moved to approve the bid award to Berkshire Alarm for \$11,676 including four SLC surge protectors, Option I. P. Parsons seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried. Jack Hodges thanked the Board, Len, Raz, Fire Marshal and Building Inspector for helping with this project.

**b) Capital Budget Discussion:** David T. Wilson reviewed the results of the Capital Improvements Committee's work in compiling the 2017/18 proposed budget. The total requested is \$3,302,351. J. Zullo said the budget is too high and it bothers him that most of it will be borrowed and will impact long-term debt as unsustainable.

**Motion:** J. Zullo moved to reduce the budget to \$3 million, but said he was not the one to say where to reduce.

D. Wilson said the items in the budget are chosen very carefully, so he pressed Mr. Zullo to say what he would like removed from the budget. Raz Alexe said major roads is where the budget has increased and he reviewed them all. He offered the backhoe (\$140,000) as a potential reduction for this year. D. Wilson said if they do not take the State reimbursements this year, they may not be available next year. D. Knox felt that although she does not like to see the capital costs rising, it is fiscally prudent to take care of our infrastructure instead of deferring and spending more later. Mr. Paul agreed, saying any additional cuts will hurt us, either now or later be deferring projects. D. Wilson suggested J. Zullo see the Finance Director for more detail on how original requests were handled. Mr. Zullo said the increases, along with major state cuts, will increase taxes and render the economy unsustainable.

**Second:** Diane Knox seconded Mr. Zullo's motion made before the discussion. D. Knox and P. Parsons said they must not neglect the infrastructure and the roads. Upon voting, Mr. Zullo voted aye and the other two voted nay; motion failed.

**Motion:** Mr. Zullo moved to table this capital budget discussion until J. Tarrant is present for discussion. There was no second.

**Motion:** Mr. Zullo moved to reduce the capital budget to \$3,162,351 by reducing the \$140,000 loader from Public Works equipment. P. Parsons seconded. P. Parsons and L. Paul voted aye, and J. Zullo and D. Knox voted nay, so the motion failed. D. Knox said she voted nay because she did not want to vote for any reduction that may compromised the infrastructure.

**Motion:** P. Parsons moved to approve the capital budget as submitted of \$3,302,351 and D. Knox seconded. Upon voting all voted aye except J. Zullo, who voted nay, and the motion carried.

L. Paul said that if we follow what the Governor is proposing with cuts to the Educational Cost Sharing and the Teachers' Pension, \$1.6 million will be gone for Litchfield, which would mean a 1.6-mill increase in taxes. Even if the Governor's budget is dead on arrival at the legislature, we will lose something. Mr. Paul proposes moving forward with our budget, informing the residents what could happen with the possibility of a supplemental tax bill coming later. He said the towns should not be responsible for the underfunded state pensions. We have been very diligent with our budgets over the years and getting the fund balance at 13%. We have put more money into our pension plans than the actuarials have asked us to do. We are in the high 70's percent of funding. So this all seems like a punishment from the Governor for good management.

**c) Operating Budget Discussion:** Mr. Paul said this budget includes a full-time Finance Director. We have a zero percent increase in our Worker's Comp and a 2.5% increase in liability for insurance. Mr. Zullo asked about the full-time Finance Director position and Mr. Paul said he it is not to the benefit of the community to only have him here two half-days a week, and the added \$40,000 increase would add value. His salary would be \$115,000. Mr. Zullo was concerned about adding another fixed cost to the budget. Regarding the school maintenance agreement, Mr. Paul is waiting to hear if there will be a subsequent meeting with the school. The town has saved \$250,000 over the last four years doing the custodial work, and the schools have been cleaner than ever before. The Selectmen's budget stands at \$9,346,964, an

increase is 0.82%, or \$76,000 total increase. P. Parsons said he is very happy to have a tight budget come to them and not have to push back.

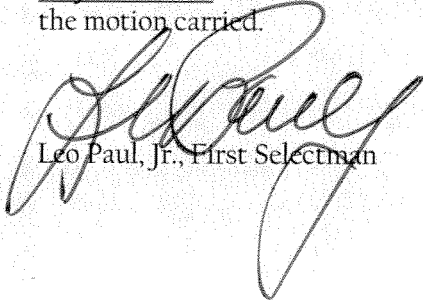
**Motion:** P. Parsons moved to recommend the Selectmen's operating budget at \$9,346,964. D. Knox seconded the motion. With question of debt service, P. Parsons said the cost of the debt service is not the Selectmen's to approve. Upon voting all voted aye except J. Zullo, who voted nay, and the motion carried.

Correspondence

a) 2/9/17 Letter to Ron Glander from Raz Alexe: received and noted

b) 2/21/17 Letter from Aquarion to the Board of Selectmen: received and noted

Adjournment: Motion: D. Knox moved to adjourn at 7:14 p.m. and P. Parsons seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.



Leo Paul, Jr., First Selectman