

Town of Litchfield

Selectmen's Meeting

November 14, 2011

Members present: Steve Perry, Chairman
John R. Brunelle, Vice Chairman
Frank A. Byron
George A. Lambert
Brent T. Lemire
Also present: Jason Hoch, Town Administrator

5:00 p.m. Review of Paperwork and Communications

7:00 p.m. Call to Order

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Review of items for consent

1. Minutes of October 24, 2011
2. Final Acceptance of Albuquerque Avenue Bike path
3. Veteran's Credit approvals

Approval of Consent Items

Selectman G. Lambert motioned to approve the items for consent. Selectman B. Lemire seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Request for items – Other Business

Selectman F. Byron would like to discuss the Emergency Shelter

PRIMEX Recognition of PRIME3 status

Mr. Phillip St. Cyr of Primex was present to congratulate the Town of Litchfield on behalf of Primex for its recent accomplishments in achieving the Prime Program Award. Mr. St. Cyr stated that the Town of Litchfield was in some very elite company; out of the 400 member Primex Pool there are probably about sixty municipalities, counties and school districts that have achieved the Prime Status award. In support of the Joint Loss Management Committee from our Town Administrator, Mr. Jason Hoch and headed by Chief O'Brion of the Committee, all of the members of the committee worked hard for this accomplishment. Mr. St. Cyr stated that he had a plaque to present to the committee and there is also a monetary reward on the cost of workers comp coverage, a reduction of 2 ½ % that is prorated on a monthly basis. Mr. St. Cyr wanted to move the completion date ahead to November 1st. Mr. St. Cyr explained that the program was comprised of the ten of

the best risk management practices that Primex recognizes that helps our members achieve lower losses in workers comp. The workers comp injuries are continuing to decline in the Town of Litchfield and because the Town participated in Primex's CAP program we have awarded several discounts. In 2010, the Town's loss ratio was .86, the average of the Primex pool was 1.0. Mr. St. Cyr stated that this year because of the Town's good performance it has dropped down to .85. Mr. St. Cyr presented the Town of Litchfield with the PRIME Program Award and had pictures taken of himself with Chief O'Brion, Administrative Assistant Andrea Baril, Lieutenant David Donnelly and Board of Selectmen Chair Steve Perry.

Public Input

None

Hearing re Cable Franchise Renewal

Franchise agreement updated to incorporate recommended changes from all parties. Notable points are \$60,000 initial capital payment as requested and 2% franchise fee (reduced from 5%). Retain ability to update fee annually, if increasing can go up to 1.5% increase each year.

Selectman Perry noted there was no public input.

Selectman B. Lemire motioned to accept the recommended changes. Selectman J. Brunelle seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Administrator Report

New Business

Storm Follow-up

A shelter was opened Monday through Thursday for showers and hot meals. On the first night, there were about 90 people and about 130 on each of the next two nights. Dr. Cutler was extremely helpful in mobilizing all of this. On Wednesday and Thursday night, the Litchfield Lions Club volunteered to host dinner. Mr. Hoch stated that we had a high level of involvement from particularly the Fire Department, Police Department and the Highway Department. Though the work has wound down for some departments, the Highway Department continues to work tcleaningup. Last week, the Highway Department had some assistance from some of our contractors who do some of our plowing, were doing clean-up work for us at a greatly discounted rate. We had a variety of different ways that we used to try to get messages and information out to people. Some sources were better than others. Administrator Hoch stated that he had a hard time trying to get updates to WMUR, despite his best efforts. The School was very helpful in letting us use their AlertNow network. We will get together either next week or the following week to get together to do some follow up and looking at lessons learned. We have been close to having our Emergency Plan finalized, but we keep having actual emergencies. Mr. Hoch stated that the public may not know this but on weekends all of our calls go through Hillsborough County dispatch. We learned early in the day on Sunday that calls were not able to be handled through Hillsborough County because of downed phone lines, so we were dispatching ourselves out of the PD. At about 7:00 pm, the PD had no phone service, and all data and phone service and all emergency phone calls were not reaching us. Mr. Hoch and both Chiefs were working together to identify possible workarounds.. There was a point that Sunday evening when most of the towns in this area and the towns that Hillsborough County coverswere without phone service. For the majority of this corner of the state, all dispatch calls were

being routed through Bedford. This was sorted out and calls were coming through the cell phone service we use as a backup in dispatch.

Later that night we lost phone and dispatch service in the Fire Department as well. Our backup is Londonderry which was operational. We are still tracking all of our costs associated with the storm separately. Our out of pocket cost is estimated to be \$30,000 to \$40,000. Assuming the FEMA Emergency Declaration is amended to include reimbursement for the $\frac{3}{4}$ of the eligible cost of the storm, Mr. Hoch's best estimate is that all of our out of pocket costs will be covered. Recall that the FEMA reimbursement approach includes payment for hours of use of sunk costs such as generators (the Town has already paid for the generator; we don't get reimbursed for fuel, but we get paid based on an hourly rate that is intended to incorporate fuel as well as "wear and tear" costs. FEMA has been through the Town a few times.

Administrator Hoch thanked the Board of Selectmen for lending a helping hand through this storm. Selectman Perry stated that Mr. Hoch's experience was immensely important for us. Selectman Perry would also like to thank the Fire Chief, Jack (Road Agent) getting the roads clear, Dr. Cutler for all the work she did at the schools getting the emergency shelter all situated and the Lions Club for preparing the meals. The Town worked fantastically together. Mr. Perry also thanked Mr. Brunelle for stepping up because Mr. Perry had a family emergency. Mr. Perry also thanked Mr. Hoch for keeping him updated through the whole process. Mr. Perry also stated that he wanted everyone to know that Mr. Hoch stayed overnight Sunday, showing his commitment to his job.

Selectman F. Byron stated that one of the things that helped out during the emergency shelter was the fact that we had a group of people in form of the Lions Club come down and provide meals and service the town. Selectman Byron motioned that the Litchfield Board of Selectmen send to the Lions Club a letter of thanks and congratulations on a job well done, for the services that they provided to the Town during the storm for providing meals for people who came to the shelter. Selectman B. Lemire seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0-0. Mr. Hoch will draft up a letter to send to the Lions Club.

Projected Expenses

Mr. Hoch has run a detailed projection of expenses through the end of the year. Generally, he tries to estimate on the high side so there are fewer surprises. As you might expect various circumstances have pushed some individual budgets higher and some lower. Mr. Hoch stated that overall he anticipated around 5% of the overall budget appropriation remaining, which to his thinking is a good and safe place to be – when it gets much closer than that at this time of year, it makes it much harder to deal with the unexpected. However, as we did last year, Mr. Hoch thinks we are in a position to consider using of some of those funds to address issues that have arisen during the year that may not have been seen as line items last year as well as an opportunity to shift some proposed items out of the recommended 2012 budgets into current year spending. Further, some of this savings is anticipated as lapsing to surplus and being redeployed in 2012 articles (solid waste). Mr. Hoch stated that we are trending to be in good shape.

Budget Status

Mr. Hoch stated that since we started the budget process, he has some budget edits that have accumulated given some of the information that has come through and his question is whether the Board would like him to take another look at the budget, have conversation with some of the department heads as needed and consider

the availability of other funds and provide some recommendations for adjustments beyond just the technical corrections. Selectman F. Byron made a motion that as the Board direct Mr. Hoch to go back through the budget and to utilize potential available funds, surplus from this year to offset some expenses in 2012 as well as recommend adjustments to prior approved budget items and bring back to the Board at a future date. Selectman J. Brunelle seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Mr. Hoch stated that he would like to make a onetime purchase of a second voting machine which would be \$4,735.00 for the machine and setup. The presidential primary is January 10th. Mr. Hoch is looking to the Board to proceed to get this voting machine. Selectman S. Perry motioned to allow Mr. Hoch to pursue the purchase of a second voting machine for the amount not to exceed \$4,735.00. Selectman J. Brunelle seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-1-0.

Administrator Hoch stated that we have not discussed any Cost of Living adjustments to wage scale. For reference, PD contract includes COLA based on CPI-W for Boston measured September to September. The value is 4%. Note that the Police contract caps max at 2%. Selectman S. Perry motioned to the Board to issue COLA to all Town employees of 2% for 2012 to match the Police Department. Selectman B. Lemire seconded the motion. Selectman S. Perry withdrew his motion. Selectman G. Lambert motioned the Board should adopt a 2% COLA for our employees based on a budget passing at Town Meeting effective the first week of April 2012. Selectman B. Lemire seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Expansion of AlertNow

Based on the feedback we had during the storm, the school's ability to contact people via the AlertNow system was well received. Last week Dr. Cutler set up a meeting with their rep to review the possibilities for the Town getting on board. Mr. Hoch has forwarded some background information about the product. While we can't integrate a new list into the school's system due to the various privacy requirements for the school, we can get our notification set up. The data is updated monthly with publicly published phone numbers and supplemented with a web portal for people to input their own information. We have some opportunities to supplement that as well (set up kiosk at Town Hall; table at Solid Waste Facility; reminder notice mailed with vehicle registration/tax bills, etc.). The rate is based on number of households in Town – 2010 census shows 2828 at a rate of \$1.91 per household - \$5,401.00. Also annual administration charge \$500 (half price due to school being a customer). This yields a carrying cost of approximately \$6,000.00 to provide this service. If the Board goes forward with this the system could be active within two weeks. If there is interest in pursuing this, Mr. Hoch believes we will have sufficient funds available to start December 1 and to cover the 2012 cost so that we would not need to incorporate into proposed budget until 2013. We would take this from the bottom line budget. Selectman S. Perry motioned to the Board to have the Town Administrator set up an AlertNow system using up to \$6,000.00 of year end funds. Selectman J. Brunelle seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Old Business

Personnel Manual

Administrator Hoch would like the Board to consider appointing ad hoc committee of 1 or 2 members to work with Administrator Hoch through open items to bring recommendation back to Board. Selectman G. Lambert

and Selectman F. Byron volunteered to be on the ad hoc committee.

Warrant Articles

1. *To see if the Town will vote to discontinue the elected office of Highway Agent, and to authorize the Selectmen to appoint the Highway Agent, which appointment shall be for a term of three years. The current Highway Agent shall continue to hold the office until the 2013 Annual Town Meeting election, at which time, the elected office shall terminate. If adopted, the authority of the Selectmen to appoint the Highway Agent shall continue in effect until changed by a majority vote at an annual or special town meeting.*

The Board discussed issues relating to terms and possible removal of a Road Agent in the future and preferred a term approach rather than an indefinite appointment based on merit and performance. It was requested that Town Administrator seek clarification from Town Counsel about circumstances that could allow a future Board to terminate a future appointed Road Agent.

2. *To see if the Town will convert the Highway Agent to a full-time position. And further to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,445 for the conversion of this position from part-time to full-time, with \$6,889 representing the wage cost and \$8556 representing the cost of associated benefits and taxes. The annual wage cost for a full-time Highway Agent is approximately \$46,550.*
3. *To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$70,000 for the purpose of improving the parking lot at the Fire Station and Old Town Hall. This project includes grinding, reshaping, installation of under drains and repaving.*
4. *To see if the Town will vote to set the term of the appointed Fire Chief for three years subject to the conditions and requirements of RSA 154:5.*
5. *To see if the Town will vote to establish a Cable Revolving Fund pursuant to RSA 31:95-h. The money received from cable franchise fees shall be allowed to accumulate from year to year, and shall not be considered to be part of the general fund unreserved fund balance. The treasurer shall have custody of all monies in the fund, and shall pay out the same only upon order of the Board of Selectmen (no further legislative body approval required). These funds may be expended only for cable access services for public, educational or governmental purposes as stated in RSA 31:95-h and no expenditure shall be made in such a way as to require the expenditure of other funds that have not been appropriated for that purpose. If adopted, such Revolving Fund would become active effective January 1, 2013.*
6. *To see if the Town will vote to establish a Public Works Expendable Trust Fund pursuant to RSA 31:19-a. Furthermore, to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000 for transfer into this fund from the unexpended fund balance as of December 31, 2011. and to appoint the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from the fund. This Fund can be used for payment of solid waste disposal fees in excess of the annual budgeted appropriation for that purpose as well as the replacement of capital equipment at the Solid Waste Facility with a value of greater than \$5000. In addition, this Fund can be used for payment of snow removal related costs, including wages, contracted service fees and purchase of salt and sand in excess of the annual budgeted appropriation for those purposes.*

This would have a net cost to 2012 general taxation of \$0.

The Town Administrator present this article as possibly two separate articles one for Solid Waste and one for Highway Department. It was the preference of the Board to combine the two funds into one fund and to recommend allocating \$20,000 from the unexpended fund balance for this purpose.

7. *To see if the Town will hire a Recreation Coordinator....{PENDING}*
8. *To see if the Town will vote to rescind the requirements for capital expenditures as approved in Article 5 in 1996. And further, to require that the Board of Selectmen adopt annually a purchasing policy that defines the conduct of purchasing activities for the Town of Litchfield. Such a policy should encourage maximum competition through fair and equal opportunity to those qualified and interested bidders, provide a uniform procedure for the procurement of material, equipment, supplies and services and ensure that the taxpayers are getting the best overall value for their dollars.*

The Board reviewed two alternatives for this article. One which rescinded the specific requirements of the 1996 article and returned the responsibility to the Board with a requirement of annually approving a purchasing policy and the other that included specific modifications to the 1996 article including changes to cost threshold, type of notice required and an exemption for state bid purchases. It was the preference of the Board to retain the first form for further consideration.

To see if the Town will vote to create an expendable trust fund under the provisions of RSA 31:19-a to be known as the Library Vacation Accrual Expendable Trust Fund and to authorize the Library Board of Trustees to serve as agents to expend from the funds, and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$8,378 for transfer into this fund from the unexpended fund balance as of December 31, 2011. This amount is shown on the Library's balance sheet as a liability. The intent of this article is to annually account for the cost of earned but unused vacation time so that expenses associated with employee resignations and retirements do not impact the current budget year. This would have a net cost to 2012 general taxation of \$0.

9.

The Town Administrator explained that the Library had requested the establishment of a trust fund for vacation accrual in the same manner as the Town had done in 2011.

10. *To see if the Town will vote to establish Police Vehicle Equipment Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of a equipping Police Cruisers and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$ 10,000 to be placed in this fund. The current lease for four cruisers will end in 2014 and it is expected that replacement equipment will be needed for new model vehicles.*

The Town Administrator explained that this article grew out of a conversation he had earlier with Selectman Byron. At the end of the current lease for Police cruisers, we know we have a cost of around \$8000 per vehicle for equipping. There may not be the ability to transfer equipment from the current vehicles to new vehicles since the Crown Victoria's now being used are no longer being made. The Police Chief and Town Administrator have been following developments in replacements. Some departments that have made the transition to Chevrolets and Chryslers and have been frustrated with the long term durability. Ford is introducing a Police version of the Taurus which may allow transitioning of some equipment and would have a lower relative price than a Crown Victoria would have. So, there are

many items yet to be determined about what exact direction we would be recommending in the future.

11. *To see if the Town will vote to authorize the selectmen to enter into a four year lease agreement for up to \$100,000 for the purpose of replacing computer servers and network storage serving all departments in Town Hall and the Police Station, and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the first year's payment for that purpose. This lease agreement contains an escape clause.*

This article was written to cover the request of the Budget Committee to move this item out of the proposed budget and into a warrant article.

Other Items

Received our “not to exceed” Health Insurance rates from LGC. The Blue Choice Program is increased at 4.1% and Matthew Thornton (which covers the majority of employees) is at 0.8%. Dental rates are expected to decrease an average of 3.7% (they re-rated each subgroup – single, 2 person, family).

Drug Take Back Day on October 29th brought in 28 pounds of unused prescription medication. Event earlier this year collected 21 pounds.

Cable Franchise Fee for third quarter \$30,839.46 (\$30,650 last quarter).

Reimbursement documentation filed with FEMA for Tropical Storm Irene – Eligible reimbursement of \$5,201.00 against approximately \$7,000 expenses allocated to storm.

Letter from Trustees of Trust Funds – provided full accounting of their holdings and advising a plan to issue checks on a quarterly basis. On our end, we don't anticipate any issues with that. The detailing of accounts is the result of a significant amount of work by the Trustees this year, especially John Poulis.

Selectman Committee and Community Reports

Selectman F. Byron stated that there is a Planning Board meeting Tuesday night there will be a Public Hearing on Impact Fees, also considering other items on their agenda.

Selectman F. Byron sent an e-mail out to the Board as a reminder that He will be away from December 11th through the 15th and will not be able to attend the Selectmen's meeting on December 12th.

Selectman J. Brunelle stated that the Budget Committee will be starting the School Budget on November 22, and they will be going twice a week.

Items Moved from Consent

no items moved

Other Business

None

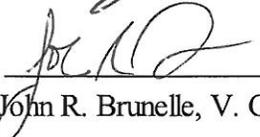
Selectman S. Perry motioned to the Board of Selectmen to adjourn the public portion of the meeting to go into Non Public session per RSA 91-A: 3 II (a) – Compensation of Public Employees and RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) for Tax Abatement. Selectman G. Lambert seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Lambert – yes, Mr. Lemire – yes, Mr. Brunelle – yes, Mr. Byron – yes and Mr. Perry – yes.
The public portion of the meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.



Steven D. Perry, Chairman

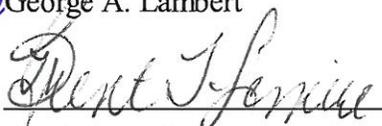


John R. Brunelle, V. Chairman

Frank A. Byron



George A. Lambert



Brent T. Lemire