

Town of Litchfield

Selectmen's Meeting/Workshop

April 23, 2012

Members present: John R. Brunelle, Chairman
Frank Byron
Brent Lemire
M. Patricia Jewett (arriving after start of meeting)

Also present: Jason Hoch, Town Administrator

Absent: Selectman G. Lambert (excused)

5:00 p.m. Paper work review

7:00 Call to order

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Selectman J. Brunelle stated to the public that this is not a normal Selectmen's meeting it is a Workshop to discuss the goals of the Selectmen and other Department Heads.

Review of items for consent:

1. Minutes of April 23, 2012
2. Elderly Exemptions (2)
3. Abatement of LUCT/LUCT Warrant (revised) Map 20, Lot 24

Approval of Consent Items

Selectman F. Byron Motioned that the Board approve the items listed under consent. Selectman B. Lemire seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0-0.

Request for Items – Other Business

No items for other business

Selectman P. Jewett is now present

Public Input

Mr. Joe Cabral, a resident of Litchfield who lives at 7 Brickyard Lane, expressed his concerns about the parking on Brickyard near the soccer fields. People are not acknowledging the no-parking signs that are posted and are still parking in areas posted as "no parking". Mr. Cabral stated that he calls the Police Department and people still park in the no parking zone and he believes that calling the Police is not valuable in resolving this problem. He stated that he has been calling for two years and believes that the signs mean nothing. Mr. Cabral stated that a copy of the soccer schedule should be given to the Police

Department so that the officer on duty can patrol that area. The other concern to Mr. Cabral occurred one evening as he was driving up Brickyard on his way home. He was traveling below the speed limit and had come upon Brickyard in the direction from Cummings. There were several cars parked along the no parking signs back as well as bushes; he almost hit a small child riding a bicycle because he could not see around the corner. Mr. Cabral stated that if he was traveling the speed limit he believes he would have hit the child. Mr. Cabral would like to see a guard rail put on around that corner two car lengths back from the sign to give drivers better vision coming north. Selectman F. Byron stated that we should ask the Chief to step up the patrol in that area and actively enforce the parking rules, and also have the Board or the Administrator send something to the Recreation Commission asking them to make sure the parents and people who use the field know that there shouldn't be parking in these areas. The corner of Nokomo and Brickyard is very dangerous.

Selectman F. Byron motioned the Board of Selectmen hereby request the Chief to review enforcement activities for no-parking on Brickyard as well as perform an evaluation of the parking situation on the corner of Nokomo and request the Town Administrator to send a letter to the Recreation Commission stating the concerns of the Selectmen in regards to the parking situation. Selectman J. Brunelle seconded the motion. Mr. Brunelle wanted to mention that he wants people to understand that the Police are not always getting there because they have other priorities they have to tend to. The motion carried 4-0-0.

Mr. Chris Pascucci, Litchfield resident who lives on 12 Colonial Drive, wanted to follow up with the board concerning a couple of the warrant articles from Election Day. One of the warrants was about the cost of living raise because during the days and weeks before the election it was stated this was going to pass because the people in the Town support our employees. As the article didn't pass and he wanted the Board to know that the people in Town do support the employees but he believes that it was the presentation of the Board that contributed to it not passing. Depending upon the economic times, political climate, etc. Mr Pascucci believes we can always find some way to give employees a raise but he believes it would have been helpful if the board had come up with some reason to provide for a raise allowing the people to understand and thus get the town's vote supporting it. Selectman Byron stated that it is his recollection that during the deliberative presentation last year the Board in fact, did present data that showed that the proposed cost of living increase was less than CPI. Mr. Pascucci believes that the general state of the economy means people are working harder and they are getting pay cuts, laid off, etc. Mr. Pascucci stated that what he meant when he made his statement is that the Board could pick a time and say the state of the economy is good and it is a good time to give a raise. Mr. Hoch stated the data used by the Board during the deliberative session, including that the US Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that Boston/Manchester area private sector wages increased 2.4% from September 2010 to September 2011 and asked Mr. Pascucci what other data he wants the Board to present. Mr. Pascucci stated you could pick any time and any year and pick a statistic out and say this is a good time to give a raise because of it. Mr. Pascucci thinks it wasn't tied to the general feeling of the economy. Mr. Hoch asked how do we give you different information; the Board used measureable local data rather than anecdotes. Mr. Pascucci stated that the point is that it failed. Selectman Brunelle stated that it did fail, we let it go to the voters thinking the voters would approve it, and you're right, it failed. Mr. Pascucci stated that to get this to pass, we need to do a better job at either matching it up with some data point or a different time. Selectman Byron stated that part of the reason it failed was due to lack of support from the Budget Committee. Mr. Pascucci stated that now that the election has happened it is a good idea to

review and see if mistakes were made, if any improvements could be made, speculate as to why certain thing failed and why certain things passed to learn going into next year, and this may be a good agenda item both for the governing bodies of the Town and to bring to the Budget Committee for review. The other point that Mr. Pascucci wanted to bring up was the Recreation Coordinator which failed 2 to 1. His question is given that the article failed and he has learned that because of the powers given by the voters in the past to the Recreation Commission, that they could have hired this position on their own without the voters or the Selectmen. If the voters didn't like something like bringing on a new position to the town is there anything a voter can do? Mr. Brunelle stated that once the budget is approved they can go hire. They cannot hire this year but they can after January 1. Mr. Brunelle stated that the Commission is doing a great job, better than any other in the past. The lack of volunteers in the Rec program does not stop all the other programs that are utilizing our facilities, these commission members are working hard to make sure the fields are appropriately scheduled and maintained. Mr. Pascucci stated that most people didn't even know that the Board could go ahead and hire someone on their own. Mr. Pascucci thinks that it would help if the Rec Commission meetings were televised. People don't see what goes on in the recreation commission, why aren't they televised? Mr. Byron stated that it costs money. Mr. Byron stated that one of the biggest issues is the sufficient number of volunteers necessary to do that. Russ stated that they can cover it if they are asked to but they have not been asked by the Recreation Commission. The Board of Selectmen is not the group that makes the decision of who gets televised and who does not. The committees themselves need to agree that they want to be televised. Administrator Hoch stated that he would follow up with the Recreation Commission and say that we had a request and ask that they consider it.

Workshop discussion

Mr. Brunelle stated that the Board is attempting to set some goals and proprieties for the upcoming year. What we have done is met with our Department heads via our Town Administrator. The Board has also put together a list of priorities as they feel are needed and so the Board will go through and review them. There are 33 items on this list Administrator Hoch read through the list (See [attached](#)). After reviewing the goals and priorities the Board decided that some of them could be put together. Mr. Brunelle stated that the one he is focused on is the 5/10 year plan, not only should it just be Fire Department, it should be the Police and Highway Department as well. Mr. Lemire stated that we didn't have anything that addresses the town wide vehicle structured replacement program that would take into account the depreciation and the use. Mr. Hoch stated that one thing we need to get in there is capital equipment replacement and hopefully figure out how to smooth over the tax impact. Mr. Brunelle stated that this should be done town wide. Mr. Brunelle stated that we obviously cannot do this list in a year but as a Board we can focus on half of them as a board and figure out what we think.

Selectman B. Lemire stated that there are several items that are not up to the Board to prepare, it should be up to the department head of each department to submit what they feel is important and then the Board to go over it with them. It is up to the Board to work with in concert with them. Selectman Brunelle stated that the idea is that these are the things we care about (all 33 items) but these are the things we are going to remove the road blocks to help each department get through some of them. We have to put some time certain parameters of when they are going to deliver on some of the requirements.

Selectman Lemire stated that there is a capital improvement plan that can certainly tie some of these

things to that. Mr. Byron stated that the Capital Improvement Plan should list for all departments what their capital needs are. Selectman Byron believes that the Board should lay out for the department heads a top level bullet points of what we want in a departmental plan from them; the time periods, what are the key things like organizational structure, capital organization, etc. and give that to the department heads with a date certain as to when we would like to have a first draft and then be able to review those in other work sessions with the department heads feeding back to them our thoughts on changes and items to be fortified. The individual departmental lists should then be consolidated into an overall town plan which the Selectmen would lay on top of a master document. Selectman Brunelle stated that we should put together a format for the master plan. Administrator Hoch stated that he had started some of this last year (late summer) so he has some of the templates the Board is looking for and will upload for the Board. Mr. Hoch will make the list public so the Board and public can link right to the list. Mr. Byron asked that Mr. Hoch combine some of these because there is some similarity in individual items and reword. Mr. Brunelle stated that when he proposed this session he wanted to get input from all of the members and department heads and we did get a fair amount and the next step is to define that template take these things and consolidate them, get them out to the appropriate department heads and have them fill in the blanks. Mr. Byron suggested the first draft be due in August. Mr. Brunelle stated that after Mr. Hoch consolidates the list, we should group them up by departments. Mr. Brunelle stated that as the Board we need to set what our concerns are or what we think we need to focus on and giving it to them broken down by their departments gives them the starting base. The draft will be up and the Board will review and if there are any concerns we need to get them to Mr. Hoch by next Monday which is the next meeting. Mr. Brunelle asked that as a Board is there anything specific just to us, anything we can do to work better as a Board? Mr. Byron stated that it would make sense that the Board of Selectmen reviews the selectmen's operating policies that have been approved in the past and see if they are still applicable today.

Items moved from consent

No items removed.

Other Business

Selectmen Brunelle stated that with regret Linda Langille has submitted her resignation as the Finance Manager and read he letter to the Board.

Dear Board and Jason,

This notice is a resignation as Finance HR Manager for the Town of Litchfield effective May 4, 2012. This was not an easy decision for me to make, but with much consideration I have accepted another position with another Town. I am grateful for the rewarding opportunity I had with the Town and enjoyed working with all department heads and employees. I wish nothing but the best for the Town of Litchfield.

Sincerely,
Linda

The Board stated that they wish nothing but the best for Linda; she has done a lot of hard work for the couple of years that she has been here and has been one of our prize employees. She will be greatly missed. Selectman B. Lemire motioned to the Board to accept the resignation with regrets and offer

her the best wishes of the Town and our thanks for a job well done. Selectman P. Jewett seconded the motion. Selectman Byron stated that Linda was the person who had dug us out of the hole that we were left with after the problems of the past Treasurer. Linda had to reconstruct the Towns books and played a key role by working through all the problems faced by the board to get things back to control. Linda did an outstanding job for this Town and as a Selectman and resident she will be sorely missed. The whole board agreed. The motion carried 4-0-0.

Mr. Hoch stated that we did update a job description back in November so there is a pretty accurate job description for the position. Mr. Hoch put together a job posting today, to get something out and in motion, to see what interest there is out there.

Selectman F. Byron motioned the Board of Selectmen authorize Mr. Hoch to move ahead as he deems appropriate with the placement of ads as well as the initial recruitment of any individuals who may be appropriate candidates. Selectman P. Jewett seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0-0.

Selectman B. Lemire motioned to adjourn the meeting. Selectman P. Jewett seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

[Goals list](#)

John R. Brunelle, Chairman

George A. Lambert, V. Chairman

Frank A. Byron

Brent T. Lemire

M. Patricia Jewett