

TOWN OF LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
BUDGET WORKSHOP  
September 30, 2013

Selectmen's Meeting/Workshop

Members Present: John R. Brunelle, Chairman  
Brent Lemire  
Kevin C. Bourque  
M. Patricia Jewett - Arrived late

Absent: Frank Byron, Vice Chairman - Excused

Also Present: Jason Hoch, Town Administrator

5:00 p.m. Paperwork review

6:00 p.m. Call to Order

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Review of Items for Consent:**

1. Minutes of September 14, 2013
2. Approval of Accounts Payable (\$127,518) and Payroll (\$44,518.86) Manifests

**Approval of Consent Items**

Selectman J. Brunelle reads aloud the items for consent

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to approve the items for consent

Selectman K. Bourque **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 3-0-0.**

**Public Input:**

Chris Pascucci 12 Colonial Drive, Litchfield discusses with the Board that he just learned no public input is held during a BOS Workshop meeting. However, his feeling is that it is a public posted meeting and the Board are servants of the Town and should always allow input from the public. Selectman J. Brunelle states that during a special posted meeting such as this, public input is not posted on the agenda however, he always allows anyone in attendance to speak. Mr. Pascucci states that he watched the last BOS meeting and listened to the discussion regarding wanting public input at the beginning as well as the end of a meeting. He mentions that he as well as others have requested this in the past and mentions that other Boards in Town allow a second Community input and feels the Board of Selectmen should as well. He feels this is something the Chairman can easily allow and asks the Board for their feelings on this matter. Selectman K. Bourque is asked if it is a plus or a minus to which he states a plus. Selectman B. Lemire is asked if it is a good idea, and that he allowed this when he was on the Budget Committee.

Selectman B. Lemire states that the Board did not allow this when he was on the Board, but it may have changed after. He states that he feels meetings become protracted, due to some individuals not keeping to brief public comments. He feels the Boards allow adequate public comment. He states that with technology today his constituents contact him by email, cellphone they do not need or desire to come to most meetings. Others wish to be on camera and have a microphone in front of them.

Selectman J. Brunelle states that he as Chairman, has no problem with public input and will always open a meeting for public input if someone wishes to speak.

Chris Pascucci asks for it to be put on the agenda

Selectman J. Brunelle states again that the public can always speak at a Board of Selectmen's meeting.

Mr. Pascucci states that as of now the Chairman will not allow on the agenda an area at the end for public input.

Selectman J. Brunelle states that if the Board would like to take action he would have no problem. It is on the agenda as of now, and if 20 people attend a meeting and wish to speak they will always be allowed.

Mr. Pascucci addresses Selectman B. Lemire and states that some may wish to contact him by email or phone however, other choose to come and face the Board to speak their concerns and feels it has nothing to do with being on camera, but facing the Board rather than being behind the scene cutting deals. It's about being transparent and having comments put on record.

Selectman J. Brunelle stops the dialogue at this point and states that if anyone from the public wishes to address the Board without coming to a meeting there are ways to do this. There is the Town Administrator, public emails, telephone and everything is public record, there are no backroom deals. He states that not one individual of this Board can in anyway make a backroom deal of any kind. He encourages the public to come to meetings, however states that most choose not to and conduct their business with members of this Board by other means.

Mr. Pascucci states he never made an accusation there was a backroom deal. He was responding to the comment regarding people coming to speak and it having nothing to do with ego or being on camera. It was about some wishing to address the entire Board at once and being transparent and having access and opportunity. He states that he now knows that even if it is not on the agenda he or anyone from the public can come to a meeting and know they will be able to speak and be heard.

Jason Guerrette 11 Perry Court, Litchfield states that he called Administrator J. Hoch and spoke with him regarding this meeting not being posted anywhere. He states that he always goes online to view the meeting agendas, not the one posted here at the Town Hall or at the Library. Selectman J. Brunelle states that it was a clerical error. However it is posted usually at more than the 2 sites they are required to by law.

Jason Guerrette states his concern is with the two sites that are being used, he feels the Library is not always open and is not a good place to have information posted.

Administrator J. Hoch states this is why it is posted in more than one place.

Mr. Guerrette is concerned with what the legal responsibility may be, which he feels may not be the most useful means. He wants to be on record stating and absolutely sure this meeting was posted in two places, the Library and Town Hall which is what Administrator J. Hoch told him

today.

Selectman J. Brunelle states that it is sent on Friday mornings to the School, Library, Town Hall and all other areas it is typically posted to. It was also announced at the last BOS meeting.

Administrator J. Hoch tells Mr. Guerrette that this was his error and he failed to add this meeting to the calendar when the Board added it to the agenda. It was a clerical error he was off on Friday and he apologizes to the Board and to anyone who this has inconvenienced in any way. He knows most check online first for their information, however he forgot to post it there, but it was posted in the two legal and obligated places.

Mr. Guerrette would like it to be consistent and posted in the same places, and states the legal sites are the Town Hall and the Library (feels this site is not the best).

Selectman J. Brunelle states that it is consistent, it was a mistake and not posted online this time, but was posted in the other sites.

### **Public input - Closed**

#### **Road Agent - 4311.10**

Also present: Jack Pinciaro, Road Agent

Bottom line change - increased by \$113 from \$31,578 to \$31,691

Administrator J. Hoch states this is the Administrative Budget for the Highway Department

**Seminars** - increase of \$100

J. Hoch states that in order to meet the 5% Budget goal asked for by the Board of Selectmen, this budget would need to be \$31,441, which would mean cutting Building Maintenance and Repair - (line 430) by \$250.

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to approve and forward to the Budget Committee a bottom line budget for **Road Agent-4311.10** in the amount of \$31,691.

Selectman K. Bourque **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 4-0-0.**

#### **Road Maintenance - 4312.10**

Also present: Jack Pinciaro, Road Agent

Bottom line change - increased by \$10,317 from \$580,537 to \$590,854

Administrator J. Hoch mentions to the Board that by time the Default Budget numbers were finalized the Town had been reimbursed for a February storm, which caused this \$10,000 change in the budget.

Selectman J. Brunelle asks Jason what is the typical run rate for line 120 Wages. While J. Hoch looks up that information. Selectman B. Lemire asks Mr. Pinciaro who are the 3 workers mentioned in this line

J. Pinciaro states himself, Les Blundon and Kevin (college student).

Selectman B. Lemire asks if the 30 hrs is a total or an average of all, and does the third person work during the winter months?

J. Pinciaro states that it is an average per person and that no he does not. However, there are two other drivers that come in to work during the winter months.

Selectman J. Brunelle discusses with the Board that this line of wages covers 3-5 workers for this dollar amount, this is a total amount divided amongst whom ever it takes to get the job done. Mr. Pinciario is asked how many hours he works. He states 38-40.

J. Hoch tells the Board that the answer to the run rate for last year, was not a full season with Kevin and it totaled \$81,040, two years ago it totalled \$80,584 and for 2010 the budget was over by \$5,000 and came in at \$65,000 (\$59,000 was budgeted). He states that in 2010 the amount is off due to the Town began the transition into its new way of doing business at the Highway Department, which was not hire contracted workers at \$70 an hour and keep and hire staff in house instead. Which has proven to show a savings.

**Culvert Replacements** - decreased by \$5,000

**Catch Basin Clean Out** - increased by \$4,000

Administrator J. Hoch states they tried to offset these two lines. The Department is trying to keep the clean out of the catch basins at  $\frac{1}{3}$  a year. It was lower last year due to the default, but this was added back to the budget this year to allow for the  $\frac{1}{3}$  to get back on track. He states this was mostly made up by decreasing the culvert replacement line by \$5,000. This year catch basins are more of a priority.

The Board discusses with Mr. Pinciario the costs of replacing a catch basin, which he states can be from \$700-\$2,000. J. Pinciario states they can repair/replace 15-20 a year. Jason reminds the Board that culvert replacement was the line that was changed.

**General Supplies** - increased by \$1,500

**Salt** - decreased by \$2,350 due to a good contract price on salt and a surplus from last year Mr Pinciario tells the Board the Town is trying to use less sand, because it was creating a problem with run off clogging the basins. Since staying ahead with the cleaning out of the basins things have improved.

**Asphalt/Cold Patch Purchase** - decreased by \$1,500

**Block Grant Road Improvements** - increased by \$667

**Equipment Purchase** - increased by \$3,000 due to trying to budget for a much needed plow/wing set.

Board of Selectmen discuss the aging plow and wing set (25 to 30 yrs.), as well as the possible purchase of a gravel roller for shoulder maintenance.

Administrator J. Hoch tells the Board that to achieve the 5% target budget, approximately \$35,000 would have to be removed from this proposed budget. This would mean taking the Equipment line to zero, remove Asphalt/Cold patch, also remove \$2,000 from Gravel, cutting Road Maintenance in half to \$12,500 as well as removing Pavement Striping and Rental from the budget.

Board discusses road repair for this coming year, and the use of the Highway Block Grant money. This is to be used to pave Mike Lane in 2014 which is estimated to be \$160,000.

Selectman J. Brunelle states that when this budget is presented to the Budget Committee they should be made aware that this is year two of the three year plan for road repairs, and that Mike Lane is a part of this plan.

There is a continued discussion regarding the run rate as far as wages are concerned for this year. Which includes money that was from a FEMA reimbursement.

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to approve and forward to the Budget Committee a bottom line budget for **Road Maintenance- 4312.10** in the amount of \$590,854.

Selectman K. Bourque **seconds** the motion

Selectman K. Bourque asks the Board if J. Pinciario is working 40 hrs would this not make him eligible for the Towns benefits package.

Board discusses that Mr. Pinciario has two roles within the Town one is hourly based and not considered full-time and the other is an elected position. This has been discussed and presented to the Budget Committee in the past and they felt it needed to be a warrant article and given to the voters to decide. The Board is in agreement that this should be presented as a warrant article.

Selectman asks for the Board to vote on the current motion. **Vote carries 4-0-0.**

Mr. Pinciario tells the Board that he feels the citizens should know that \$170,000 of this budget comes from a State payment known as the Highway Block Grant and not from the citizens.

Administrator J. Hoch and J. Pinciario discuss the "Road Plan" data with the Board. Jason mentions that a couple years ago a group from UNH came to evaluate the condition of all the roads in Litchfield and score each from 0-100. Mr. Pinciario took those numbers this year and rescored everything again and combined these scores into a category known as "newcon" short for new condition, with a new average score. So when a score is mentioned this is what Jason is referring to. Jason states that 48 is the lowest road score. Next they took the lower scored roads and made a column to indicate the roads that need to be reclaimed with a cost per foot attached to them, which shows in the cost column. He states that depending on the condition some roads are listed as overlays, because not every road needs to be reclaimed and this is much more cost effective. J. Hoch states that the goal for is for all roads to be at a score of 75 or better. Jason states that in order to achieve the goal of 75 on all the roads as of today, the treatments would be for approximately 16.71 miles at a cost of \$4.6 million. He further states that if the Town were to use only the Block Grant money given from the State in the amount of \$170,000 it would take 27- $\frac{1}{4}$  years to complete.

Administrator J. Hoch states that he decided to see what could be done with just the \$170,000 and states that the project continued out till 2025 with many roads still not being touched. So then they decided to take a look to see if the Town matched the Highway Block Grant amount of \$170,000 for a total of \$340,000 per year. Combined the mathematical part of the score, and along with all the lowest scored roads which needed reclaiming and half of the overlay roads, this would complete most all of the roads with a score of under 75 by the year 2025.

The Board discusses asking for a warrant article of \$170,000 for 2014 to complete 4 roads within the plan now. They also discussed bonding this road issue possibly over a 10 year period. There is also discussion that if the voters decided to agree to warrant or bond repair of the roads could the Town complete the work in a years time, or would it need to be a 2 or 3 year plan.

Jason states that this is not a one year and its done project, this is a project for each of the next 15 plus years in order to complete the necessary repair work on the Towns roads. They

discuss that so many of the Town's roads were built at the same time and are now 30-35 years old. The Board agrees to firm up these numbers and come up with a clear plan and present the taxpayers with a warrant article asking for a match to the Highway Block Grant in the amount of \$170,000 to repair 4 more additional roads in 2014 and also a 5 year projection of what road repairs would look like with a match each year, to show the ongoing approach that is needed. Selectman J. Brunelle states that he will help with graphics and taking video to help with a presentation to the voters.

Administrator J. Hoch discusses Storm Water Management with the Board of Selectmen. He recommends a non lapsing warrant article in the amount of \$30,000 to \$50,000 for Engineering. Jason states that a permit could be issued as early as next year, and the Town's requirements will take effect. Selectman J. Brunelle asks how he would fund a non lapsing warrant.

J. Hoch states that a standard appropriation can be made non lapsing and is written into the language of the warrant article.

Selectman J. Brunelle asks what if the voters say no.

Jason states that there would then be a real problem between Federal and State Law, and this would be an issue. He states that the Town is looking at approximately \$50,000 a year to fund this matter.

#### **The Board Thanked Jack Pinciario for coming to the meeting.**

#### **Parks and Recreation - 4520.10**

Also present: John Bryant, Chairman Recreation Committee

Bottom line change - decrease of \$3,642 from \$89,075 to \$87,903

**Wages** - increased by \$2,114 due to more custodian use because of events

**Electricity** - decreased by \$903

**Building Repairs & Maintenance** - increased by \$2,900 due to materials used for exterior painting done by the prison work program, and routine repairs and maintenance

Selectman B. Lemire asks if the use of Talent Hall has increased or decreased, and what is the activity that uses it the most.

John Bryant states that it has increased, and Basketball is held there from November to February. Pickleball is there consistently now, Playgroup, Softball, Soccer, different sporting events use the facility for tryouts. He states that July and August are the slow months because it is just too hot inside the building. However, a women's workout group use the outside grounds. There are also Comedy nights and a Winter Festival as well as other events held at Talent Hall.

Selectman K. Bourque mentions that he thought there was a problem with the roof at Talent Hall that needed repair.

J. Hoch states that it does need replacement, but that it is a separate warrant article

**Trash Container Service** - decreased by \$1,080 combined with Town's Waste Management contract

**Chemical Toilets** - increased by \$960

**Field Maintenance** - increased by \$1,000

Selectman J. Brunelle asks what the run rate is for the fields

J. Hoch states that so far this year it is \$30,000 with two payments of \$6,000 left bringing the total to \$42,000. This is before any seasonal shutdown occurs.

**Equipment Purchase** - decreased by \$3,500

**Program Expenses** - decreased by \$800

Jason states that in order to achieve the 5% target budget the exterior painting would need to be cut from the budget.

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to approve and forward to the Budget Committee a bottom line budget for **Parks & Recreation-4510.10** in the amount of \$87,903.

Selectman K. Bourque **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 4-0-0.**

**The Board thanked John Bryant for coming to the meeting**

#### **Mosquito - 4411.20**

Bottom line change - decreased by \$290 from \$30,240 to \$29,950

**Contracted Service line** - increased by \$330

**Printing** - decreased by \$200

**Public Notice** - decreased by \$90

Administrator J. Hoch states that in order to achieve the 5% target the printing and public notice lines of the budget had to be cut. Still there is no way of achieving this without cutting the contracted service line as well.

The Board discusses the printing and public notice issue and decides any need the District may have with costs of printing can be covered by Town Hall. If they have an event and notices need to go out to the public they can still go ahead and do what is necessary. Much of their work and public information is done with slides on the website or televised. Jason states that code red is used for any alerts that are need to be done.

The Board decides to not reduce the contracted service line.

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to approve and forward to the Budget Committee a bottom line budget for **Mosquito District-4411.20** in the amount of \$29,950.

Selectman P. Jewett **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 4-0-0.**

#### **Cemeteries - 4195.01**

Bottom line change - decreased by \$195 from \$9,503 to \$9,308

**Postage** - decreased by \$25

**General Supplies** - decreased by \$100

**Cemetery Groundskeeping** - decreased by \$70

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to approve and forward to the Budget Committee a bottom line budget for **Cemeteries-4195.01** in the amount of \$9,308  
Selectman P. Jewett **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 4-0-0.**

### **Personnel Administration - 4155.10**

Bottom line change - increased by \$38,542 from \$434,801 to \$473,343

Administrator J. Hoch discusses with the Board that this budget is still in need of changes due to the Health Trust Surplus for 2012, the information will be received later. He states that part of the money goes to gross appropriation and the part that is refunded to employees and retirees will be put in this budget. He states that this budget can be approved and then revisited once the final figures and rates are in.

**Short Term Disability** - increased by \$660

**Social Security Taxes** - increased by \$3,292

**Employee Retirement** - \$6,588

**Firefighter Retirement** - \$4,796

**Police Retirement** - \$28,847

Jason states that all these increases are due to wages and external costs that have been passed on to the Town. Retirement is the largest area of increase at about \$42,000. Selectman B. Lemire states that this is the first full year showing the employer percentage of the retirement increase also. Jason states that so far it looks like there will not be an increase in July of 2014. Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to approve and forward to the Budget Committee a bottom line budget for **Personnel Administration-4155.10** in the amount of \$473,343.

Selectman K. Bourque **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 4-0-0.**

### **Other Open Items**

**NHMA and Ambulance Collections** are deferred till the Board of Selectmen's next meeting

Jason states that he has sent a letter to NHMA and is waiting on a response.

He also mentions as far as Ambulance Billing he is checking into what other communities are doing with their collections and will report back with more information.

J. Hoch states to the Board that the question was asked at a previous meeting if there were any Health Insurance new options available thru Health Trust. A representative from Health Trust contacted Jason and they felt that November would be a good time to have Scott come in and discuss the possibility of other options that may be available. So Jason states he will schedule this for sometime in November with the Board.

Jason also mentions to the Board that in the summer the Board discussed the Wage Plan and the Board was going to take a further look and report back with feedback or comments they may have had. He states that it is time to decide if the Board would like to take further action on this matter, especially if there will be a dollar amount attached or something for a warrant. He will schedule this for the second Board meeting in October for further discussion, and would like the Board to look over the Wage Plan he has shared.

Selectman J. Brunelle states there is a Budget Committee meeting on October 3, 2013. There was also a meeting held on September 26th and all the budgets that were on the docket were presented to the Committee there was discussion and feedback, some details were sent back. But states that questions have been answered and process in moving forward.

J. Brunelle states there is a Budget Committee meeting this Thursday October 3, 2013 the topics to be discussed are Zoning Board, Planning Board, General Government, Cemeteries, Ambulance, Fire Department, Fire Station, Code Enforcement, Emergency Management, Health and Conservation.

He reminds the Board that he will not be able to attend the Meeting on October 10th however, Selectman B. Lemire will be filling in for him.

### **Other Business**

Administrator J. Hoch states that the Board approves and appoints the Municipal Prosecutor, and this appointment expires at the end of September. The contract is being processed and nothing has changed as far as pricing, conditions or terms. So he is looking for the Board to extend his appointment till October 15, so at the next meeting the Board can review the necessary paperwork.

Selectman J. Brunelle **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to extend the appointment of the Municipal Prosecutor until October 15, 2013.

Selectman B. Lemire **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 4-0-0.**

Selectman J. Brunelle asks that a recommendation from the Chief to continue the service.

### **Public Input**

Jason Guerrette 11 Perry Court, Litchfield states that his solution for the two legal places to post for a Town meeting should be online and here at the Town Hall. Board felt online is not considered a legal posting place, however Jason Guerrette states he read it is. Board will check into this.

He asks J. Hoch if he could provide him with the cost per catch basin repair, because he believes he could save the Town some money. Jason Hoch and the Board state that the amounts vary and recommend that he reach out to the Road Agent for this information, as he can provide and discuss this matter with Mr. Guerrette.

Mr. Guerrette also discusses the matter of creating a position for someone who is working 40 hrs and provide them with benefits. He states this is why a Road Agent was elected and not hired. They are in a supervisory position and have staff to go out and attend to what needs to be done, allowing this to not be a full time position. He believes it appears to be a conflict of interest to have someone elected be in charge of a Department and then be employed within that Department.

Jason Guerrette also states that he was very pleased to hear Selectman J. Brunelle state that no means no, unless of a catastrophic failure.

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to adjourn

Selectman K. Bourque **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 3-1-0.**

The next Board of Selectmen's meeting will be on October 14, 2013 at 6:00pm at Town Hall

*Approved October 14, 2013*