

TOWN OF LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN

March 10, 2014

Selectmen's Meeting

Members Present: John R. Brunelle, Chairman
Frank Byron, Vice Chairman
Brent Lemire
M. Patricia Jewett
Kevin C. Bourque

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 February 24, 2014
2. Accounts Payable Manifest (\$70,437.73)
3. Payroll Manifest (\$43,047.02)
4. ACH Authorization - School Payments March-May (\$2,283,812)
5. Veteran Tax Credit Applications (4)
6. Intent to Cut, Map 22, Lot 13

Approval of Consent Items

Selectman J. Brunelle reads aloud the items for consent

Selectman F. Byron asks for Item 1- Minutes for February 24, be removed from the consent items.

Selectman J. Brunelle states Item 1 was removed.

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to approve the Items for Consent.

Selectman K. Bourque **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 5-0-0.**

Request for Items - Other Business

Selectman F. Byron mentions he would like to discuss the Impact Fee Draft Policy

Conservation Commission Re: New England Cottontail

Joan McKibben, Chairman of the Conservation Commission would like to update the Board of Selectmen on upcoming events that will be taking place on Town owned Conservation Land. She states that Don Keirstead from the National Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), has approached the Town to be part of a project to enhance the habitat for the New England cottontail rabbit in order to save it from becoming an endangered species. This will be at no

expense to the Town. Joan states that the Muster Field (across from the Old Town Hall) has already been cut, and the Conservation Commission as well as the Historical Society are pleased with the results. She mentions that tomorrow NRCS will bring in equipment to begin cutting an area of approximately 7 acres at Moores Falls, from the Trolley tracks up to the knoll (they will not be cutting South of the path).

Selectman B. Lemire asks if they will be leaving the area from the Trolley tracks to the river untouched. Joan states that area will be left untouched, due to Horned Owls have been in the area.

Selectman B. Lemire asks if this is to improve an existing habitat or to make a new habitat. J. McKibbens states that the NE Cottontail was once in these areas and others in Town 10 years ago, so they are making new habitats that are more conducive for the rabbits to take up residence.

Selectman F. Byron mentions that the Town does not own this land, it is owned by the State of NH.

J. McKibbens states that is incorrect the Town of Litchfield does own the land at Moores Falls, however, the NH Fish and Game has an easement on the land. The land was given to the Town by a wetlands violation.

J. McKibbens mentions that NRCS will bring in plants and bushes such as Dogwood, Choke Berry, Raspberry and Blueberry as well as rabbits to the Moores Falls area once the habitat is stabilized.

Administrator Report

New Business

Road Repair

Administrator J. Hoch tells that Board that he shared an article from the Union Leader with the Board as well as Jack Pinciario regarding a company named Kasi Infrared, which is opening a new facility in Bedford later this year. They have a new infrared pothole pavement repair process which is suppose to be much more cost effective and longer lasting than traditional cold patching. J. Hoch states that he and Jack have been struggling with how to deal with Nesenkeag as it has fared poorly over this winter and the full rebuild of this road is not scheduled for a few years.

Jason tells the Board that Jack met with the company last week and identified about 7,300 square feet of road that they are going to try this approach on, it includes a shoulder section on Albuquerque in need of repair and a majority of Nesenkeag. He states that the price for this work is \$24,000 which is less than half of the expected cost of a paving patch on just a part of Nesenkeag that they have been contemplating. J. Hoch tells the Board that they are curious to see how this works, because there is a possibility that this approach could be helpful for some of the less extensive road repairs the Town has, as well as localized problem areas such as potholes and individual residential roads. It could be a great way to stretch some dollars further. Selectman J. Brunelle mentions that these roads were slated for repair this year, and this can be done for half of that budget.

J. Hoch states they needed to find a way to stabilize Nesenkeag due to the very poor condition this road is in, and the repaving of this is still a few years away. He states that something needs

to be done before there is no road left, the plan was to take a section down to the base coat in preparation for a few years when the work can be completed. However, now they hope to take this new patching approach and be able to do the whole stretch of road that is a problem, hopefully buying time from having to rebuild Nesenkeag.

Selectman J. Brunelle asks if the infrared is used to cure the patch.

Administrator J. Hoch states that yes this is used to cure and create a seamless patch that is suppose to be more durable than a traditional cold patch that tends to break apart.

The Board discusses if research has been done on this Company, and if there have been any references checked as to the quality of work they have completed. J. Hoch states that some research was done but not anything in depth, they mainly are known for their parking lot work. Municipalities would be new for this area. Jason also mentions that the Company guarantees their work for one year, where other methods and Company's have no warranty.

Board decides this may be a nice alternative and cost savings but would like to have

Administrator J. Hoch as well as Jack check into the Company's references and quality of work more before spending \$24,000.

Old Business

Mike Lane

Administrator J. Hoch states that the Road Agent and Engineer received and tabulated the bids for the Mike Lane road project. American Excavating will be receiving the contract, their bid was \$158,410.92. This was slightly less than the Engineer's estimate of \$159,214. Jason mentions to the Board that the Engineer's estimates for the past several projects have been extremely accurate, so when he and the Town are budgeting from his numbers, he has a high degree of comfort in the likelihood that project will be bid at or near that cost. J. Hoch also states that the Road Agent will be holding an informational meeting for residents closer to the time of construction, which he is anticipating will be around May/June.

Selectman J. Brunelle asks if the Town has graded or kept a record on, if a job came in over or under a proposed bid. Jason states that they have been pretty close and he does not recall any surprises. Selectman F. Byron mentions that the biggest project they have done was at the intersection of Page Road and Albuquerque, and there was a surprise however, it was not the company's fault.

Administrator J. Hoch also mentions that there were a total of four bidders for this project.

Public Input:

Other Items

Stormwater Planning

J. Hoch states that there is not much new to report to the Board. Timetable for the new permit is now expected to be late Fall. He mentions that some members in the region are looking at strategies to collaborate on administrative elements of the permit. Jason states that it is not exactly clear where this is going yet, and it probably will not be through the Nashua group since there are too many disparate interests. But it may be through a smaller collection of Towns.

Audit Preparation

Administrator J. Hoch tells the Board that the initial preparations are underway for the audit. There is no fixed date as of yet, they will begin with various imports and reviews of the Towns electronic files. Jason mentions that they share most files electronically now and he has set up shared Google Drive folders with the Auditors remotely. He will keep the Board posted on any documents that may need input from them.

The Board discusses when the audit may be completed and it is thought possibly in May/June.

Public Input

Chri Pascucci 12 Colonial Drive, thanks Selectman P. Jewett for her many years of service on behalf of the Town, and tells her he knows after this evening she may not be a Selectmen but will continue to be involved with the Town for many years to come.

Mr. Pascucci states that at the last Board of Selectmen's meeting, Selectman B. Lemire had a discussion regarding the State gas tax. He mentions that he had no problem with having a discussion, but was concerned when B. Lemire asked the Board to take a vote so he could report this back to Senator Donna Soucy. Chris states his concern was, is this the role or responsibility of the BOS to take such votes. He feels the BOS is elected to represent the Town here in Litchfield, and do not know how the citizens feel about the State raising their taxes, they never asked. Mr. Pascucci asks Selectman B. Lemire if he feels this is a role that the BOS should be taking.

Selectman B. Lemire states that yes he does, the Senator expressed that she was interested in hearing opinions from Towns. He feels his and the Boards concern was to try and protect Litchfields Revenue source (money coming into the Town from the State). Which is the reason he asked for the vote. He mentions that the Town receives Highway Block Grant money from the State to fix roads and it has been reduced over the years. The hope is the gas tax money would help fund this and raise money received by Towns such as Litchfield to help continue to fund roads to offset taxes on the Town and its citizens.

Chris Pascucci states this was an issue that should not of been discussed to this level, but because it was brought up he would like to explain his opinion on the matter. He feels it is a tax increase (18 cents) and because he drives quite a bit for business he will be paying more. He disagrees with the premiss and would ask many more questions, such as what is the State doing with the money they already receive, why are pot holes not being fixed now. He feels the Board made a vote, but had no idea what the Towns citizens think. He states the Board was elected to make decisions in Litchfield not for the State. He believes you can not trust that any money paid to the Government will be given back, and Donna Soucy does not need the Towns permission to raise taxes.

Selectman J. Brunelle stops Mr. Pascucci stating that his commentary regarding Senator Soucy is his opinion and has nothing to do with the BOS. He states that the Board's intent was only to help with funding from the State to help maintain the Towns roads and to help offset taxes in Litchfield. He tells Mr. Pascucci that his issues with the State and Senator Soucy are his own and he should address them to her.

Mr. Pascucci states that he feels it was outside the Board's role and responsibility and next time they should find a way to get input from the Citizens of this Town before voting again regarding

State matters.

Selectman F. Byron speaks from a State Representatives point of view and states that he believes the Bill going in front of the Legislature is for a .4 cent increase not .18 cents. He mentions that in regards to where the funds are spent, he states that there is a majority of the funds that do not go towards road repair. Funds are used for many aspects of the Government, such as hiring State Police for one example. Not all funds go to Towns, and it remains to be seen if this will gas tax will increase the Highway Block Grant funds. He mentions that the State is in a tough bind for money, there is only 9 million dollars in the rainy day fund. Selectman F. Byron states that he would not be surprised if an amendment gets attached either in the Senate or the House that would freeze the Highway Block Grant funds as they are today and any additional funds are used for other purposes.

Administrator J. Hoch shares a portion of the letter that was sent to Senator, stating that the Town will be looking forward to the opportunity to increase those funds, but would also seek protection in the event that new funding sources are not created, and our share is not reduced in order to cover shortfalls within the State budget. Jason and the Board state that this was the intent of the discussion and vote.

Selectman Reports

Selectman F. Byron states that the Planning Board is in the process of reviewing the Impact Fees, this will have a significant change in structure from the existing Impact Fees. This will be involving the Town and School as well as other Municipal organizations that use Impact Fees, such as roads. Which will be a change, due to the Town currently not applying them to the roads but the individual who has contracted with the Town. Selectman F. Byron brings this up because copies were shared with the Board, and he would strongly suggest that the entire Board read this information because it will be a huge change. He feels Board members should also attend the Planning Board meeting on March 18th where they should be prepared to discuss and ask questions and make comments. He already has concerns on the changes being made.

Selectman P. Jewett states that this is her last Board of Selectmen's meeting and she would like to say thank you to all her supporters over the past 27 years. She will definitely miss everyone, she says she misses it already. Pat mentions that she has had a lot of fun and met a lot of great people and has enjoyed every minute. She says that many people will volunteer if asked, you just have to ask them.

Selectman J. Brunelle and the Board all say a very big thank you to Pat for all she has done for the Town, and tell her she will be greatly missed. He also states that for anyone who wishes to personally thank her themselves she will be at the Polls tomorrow.

Selectman J. Brunelle also would like to remind everyone that the Polls are open tomorrow March 11th at Campbell High School from 7am until 7pm.

Board discusses Selectman coverage at the Polls.

Also Selectman J. Brunelle states that special care will need to be taken in watching the voting ballots, due to an incident regarding an invalid ballot.

Administrator J. Hoch mentions that the Town Clerk/Tax Collector has shared a change in the law which allows in any race where there is a 5% difference between the victor and next candidate, they do not have to wait to be sworn in. She can do so tomorrow evening at the polls.

Items moved from consent

Selectman J. Brunelle states that the minutes from February 24th were removed, there are now four signatures. He would like approval of the minutes

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to approve the minutes from February 24th.

Selectman P. Jewett **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 4-0-1.**

Other Business - None

Selectman F. Byron states that he has been a Selectman for 9 years, and in all this time he has served with P. Jewett. Also they served on the Conservation Committee together when she was the liaison. He mentions that he has always respected and appreciated her opinions, input thoughts and help. One thing he respects about Mrs Jewett more than anything is how she has helped members of this Community and has never once asked for any recognition. He states that she has used her own resources, money and time to help so many people, while asking nothing in return. He tells Pat that she is one of a kind and that he will miss her dearly. He would like her to hang around and help, and is sure she will be giving them thumbs up/thumbs down in the HLN. Thank you to Mrs Pat Jewett.

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

Selectman K. Bourque **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 5-0-0.**

The next Board of Selectmen's meeting will be on March 24, 2014 at 6:00pm at Town Hall

Approved March 24, 2014