

# TOWN OF LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN

## March 24, 2014

### Selectmen's Meeting

Members Present: John R. Brunelle, Chairman  
Frank A. Byron, Vice Chairman  
Brent T. Lemire  
Steven D. Perry  
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**

#### **Recognition of Pat Jewett's Service**

Selectman J. Brunelle states that a few esteemed people from Concord are here to recognize M. Patricia Jewett on her years of service to the Town of Litchfield.

Senator Donna Soucy states that what makes Litchfield special are it's people, and she is here this evening to celebrate one of these special people. One who has helped in so many ways from teaching, working with the Community to holding many elected positions as well as, being the first female Selectman in Litchfield. M. Patricia Jewett always has recognized where the needs are within the Community and stepped forward to help in so many ways. Such as providing backpacks for students, to helping manage State and Town Government. Senator D. Soucy states that she has brought a Resolution to honor M. Patricia Jewett on her long and faithful service to the Town of Litchfield. She states that Pat has dedicated her life to public service, and has been an active member within the Community since 1952. She has served as Town Treasurer, Welfare Director, School Board Member, on the National Regional Planning Commission, Conservation, Farmland and Budget Committees as well as a Selectman for 27 years. She has tirelessly worked on meetings and other Community responsibilities and donates so much of her time to help those less fortunate, and to always help better the Town of Litchfield and inspire others in the Community to do the same. Therefore, the New Hampshire Senate commends M. Patricia Jewett on her dedication to Public Service and extends its deepest appreciation for the numerous roles she has served in her Community for the past 60 years. Senator D. Soucy thanks her very much and presents this resolution on behalf of herself and the Senate Clerk and Senate President.

Mrs. Patricia Jewett thanks everyone and expresses that it is such an honor to receive this resolution. She states that she will miss all of this more than anyone can know. Pat mentions it would be a little easier if her husband Will was still here. But that she will have to go forward and

find something new to do with her time. She states it has been so much fun with a few headaches at times, but she likes a headache now and again, because then you could see progress being made after. Pat thanks everyone for all their help and support and expresses that she did not do it alone. She also hope others choose to volunteer.

Selectman F. Byron states that the Representatives from Litchfield: Rep. Ralph Bohem, Rep. Andrew Martel, Rep. George Lambert, and himself are here this evening with a Declaration from the House of Representatives. He states that the New Hampshire House of Representatives would like to let it be known on this this very special occasion that they publicly grant their hearty and sincere thanks to M. Patricia Jewett in recognition for her 27 years of service to the citizens of Litchfield. Representative F. Byron states that Patricia Jewett served Litchfield through several means such as; Trustee of the Trust Fund, Board of Selectmen, School Board, Conservation Commission, National Regional Solid Waste District, Welfare Officer, Community Council of Nashua, and Planning Board. She has been a driving force in Litchfield organizing many activities from Town Hall and roadside cleanup, Pearl Harbor Day celebrations, collecting and distributing food and school supplies to those less fortunate. She has worked with challenged youth regularly assisting with their Community projects. Pat Jewett embodies and exemplifies the best New Hampshire characteristics; hardworking, dedicated, frugal, and selfless always putting service to Community above self. Therefore be it declared that the New Hampshire House of Representatives by virtue of the Speakers signature inscribed below extends its highest accolades to M. Patricia Jewett on her decades of exemplary public service and contributions to the Town of Litchfield, signed Terry Norelli, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Patricia Jewett thanks everyone..

Selectman J. Brunelle reads a letter aloud: Dear Selectman Patricia Jewett, congratulations on your retirement from the Litchfield Board of Selectmen. I commend your dedication and professionalism during your tenure as Selectman. I join in with your family, friends and colleagues in recognition of this important milestone. Thank you for your tireless work on behalf of the citizens of New Hampshire. I applaud your service on the School Board, Conservation Commission, and Planning Board. As a teacher your leadership and generosity of spirit are inspiring. I wish you all the best as you begin this new chapter in your life. Sincerely Kelly Ayotte (one of her former students).

Pat states that Senator Ayotte attended Bi-Centennial School where she taught, years ago and was a super student. Pat mentions this is so very nice and once again thanks everyone very much.

### **Election of Officers**

Selectman J. Brunelle welcomes Selectman Steve Perry back as a member of the Board. J. Brunelle states every year they need to re-vote the Chairman and Vice Chairman to the Board of Selectmen and would like to take nominations at this time.

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to nominate John Brunelle as Chairman.

Selectman S. Perry **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 5-0-0.**

Selectman K. Bourque **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to nominate Frank Byron as Vice Chairman

Selectman B. Lemire **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 4-0-1.**

### **Committee Assignments**

Selectman J. Brunelle states that the Board also needs to designate official committee assignments and asks for volunteers.

Planning Board - Selectman K. Bourque, Selectman S. Perry offers to assist if help is needed.

Budget Committee - Selectman F. Byron

Capital Improvement Committee - Selectman J. Brunelle

Selectman F. Byron states that members will have to be appointed at a later date.

Conservation Committee - Selectman J. Brunelle

Recreation Committee - Selectman S. Perry

Regional Hazardous Waste - Administrator J. Hoch and Dave Mellen

Administrator J. Hoch states that this Committee does not require a Selectman

Selectman J. Brunelle **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to accept the appointments as discussed.

Selectman B. Lemire **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 5-0-0.**

### **Review of Items for Consent:**

1. Minutes of March 10, 2014
2. Accounts Payable Manifest (\$50,452,03)
3. Payroll Manifest (\$49,836.60)
4. Reappointment of Joan McKibben to Conservation Commission
5. Reappointment of Tom Levesque to Conservation Commission
6. Reappointment of Al Raccio to Mosquito Control District
7. Appointment of Eric Cushing to Zoning Board of Adjustment (Alternate)
8. Appointment of John Devereaux to Zoning Board of Adjustment
9. Reappointment of Patricia Textor as Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector
10. Reappointment of Russ Blanchette to Planning Board
11. Reappointment of Michael Croteau to Planning Board
12. Land Use Change Tax Warrants - Map 10, Lot 77-2, 77-3, 77-4
13. Elderly Exemption Approvals (4)
14. Elderly Exemption Denial (1)
15. Abatement Denial - Map 16, Lot 16
16. Abatement Approval - Map 10, Lot 15
17. Abatement Approval - Map 14, Lot 193
18. Abatement Approval - Map 10, Lot 77-1
19. Abatement Approval - Map 10, Lot 77-5
20. Veterans Tax Credit Application (2)
21. Litchfield Lions Road Toll at Solid Waste Facility - May 17

22. Intent to Excavate - Continental Paving, Map 21, Lot 18
23. Reappointment of John Bryant to Recreation Commission
24. Reappointment of Sandra Vance to Recreation Commission

### **Approval of Consent Items**

Selectman John 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 5-0-0.**

### **Request for Items - Other Business**

Selectman K. Bourque would like to have a discussion regarding the liaisons to the Department Heads.

Selectman F. Byron would like to discuss the maintenance to the Town Hall.

### **Administrator Report**

#### **New Business**

#### **Default Budget**

Administrator J. Hoch tells the Board that due to the Budget not passing on election day, he has been working with Department Heads to compile a worksheet showing line item details for Default Budget revisions. These adjustments are based on areas from the Selectmen's Proposed Budget, Budget Committees Proposed Budget and the Default Budget. He states this is the same mathematical Default Budget number the Board and he calculated based on last year's budget and the Proposed Budget. Jason tells the Board that this is still a work in progress as he is still receiving numbers from Departments, there are three months of figures from this years Budget to work with. He has shared this worksheet with the Board and is looking for their input and asks if they wish to go thru this line by line or highlight areas this evening.

Selectman J. Brunelle states that the Board has looked over this and suggests they discuss highlights this evening, and continue to revisit.

#### **4130.10 Executive**

Line 130 - Selectman Salaries -\$6,000 Jason mentions deferring the salaries for 2014 and reinstating them next year. Also he calculated Line 110 - unpaid leave for himself -\$1,683/week (+approximately \$300/wk in tax/benefit costs).

Selectman J. Brunelle states to Jason that the \$6,000 dollars for Selectmen's salaries which is deferred, is just moved into another line item not removed. Jason states correct, it would be restored next year.

#### **4130.30 Town Meeting**

Line 346 Optech Programing +\$1,916 Town meeting coding more expensive.

#### **4150.20 Information**

Line 341 - Telephone & Data -\$1,500 Jason mentions adjusted telecom service based on several months of combined billing this year.

#### **4152.10 Assessing**

Line 312 - Assessing Services -\$2,863 Jason mentions it was planned to increase this slightly to

level fund for 2014/2015. This goes to previous default number and recaptures end of year 2013 savings. Barring additional savings this year, next year will be \$48,500 (as a contractual obligation).

#### **4155 Personnel Administration**

Line 210 - Health Insurance +\$2,295 Jason states that the Budget Committee's Proposed Budget did not include known amounts needed to gross appropriate surplus returns.

Selectman J. Brunelle asks with the Schools contract budget passing, he knows the Town is pooled with them as of today, but this change should not impact the Town until 2015. J. Hoch states that is correct it will impact the Town with the July 2015 renewal. Administrator J. Hoch and the Board discuss that with the renewal coming this July they will be taking a closer look at alternatives to the Town's policy, possibly adjusting co-pays and deductibles. Jason states he is waiting for final figures from Health Trust, globally they are expecting the rate to go down slightly (1.1%).

#### **Police**

Line 149 - Overtime Training -\$9,000 removed training progression. Jason states that this was a range of supplemental training the Chief had recommended and added item in the proposed budget. Expect that it will return in 2015, as these are important areas of training.

Line 681 - Ammunition Supplies -\$1,210 Jason states that inventory was taken and reduced to minimum needed for recertifications and training. This will deplete stock and anticipate the budget number will be back to the \$4,700-\$5,000 range in 2015.

Line 740 - Equipment Purchase -\$8,040 Jason states this will defer the replacement of duty firearms and tasers. The plan had been to replace ½ of the Tasers this year and ½ next, this will mean replacing all in 2015. Jason mentions that this may have to be revisited later in the year if there are failures, remember that the Department can no longer get parts for the current tasers. He also mentions that firearms will be requested again next year. Again, may have to visit replacement of some sights or other parts later this year, remember as well that we were seeking to avoid investing in more expensive parts this year.

Line 760 - Cruiser replacement -\$26,500 Jason states that there is no provision for replacing the two cruisers that were planned for this year. He tells the Board he has retained \$14,000 in Vehicle Repair. These two vehicles do need to be replaced as they face mounting repair costs. Jason has asked the Chief to not authorize repairs for these vehicles estimated in excess of \$1,000, until he, the Board and Chief can review. He wants to make sure that everyone understands and can see decision points to spend on repair costs in excess of the vehicle cost. Selectman F. Byron asks if the Board could get copies of what the current mileage is on these vehicles. Jason states certainly he will ask the Chief.

Line 811 - Training -\$2,850 reduced other discretionary training, but expect it to return in 2015. Jason also mentions that he received notice last week that Sargent Costa will be leaving the Department to take a position with the State Police. He had been with the Department for 10 years. Jason states there may be a little savings here, depending on if the Chief promotes from within for this Supervisory position and if a patrolman is added right away or later on.

Selectman J. Brunelle states why would they fill the Supervisory position first and not just replace the Patrolman to help with coverage first and possibly leave the Supervisory position open for a time. Jason states that the departments are set up now, where the Supervisory positions cover

certain shifts and duties throughout the day or evening with different responsibilities. So filling this role first provides coverage within the Department, where it is easier to replace a Patrol position later. He states that the Supervisor will also be out on the roads.

The Board discusses will this cause overtime to be used, and cost more than hiring an Officer. Also Selectman F. Byron would like to discuss the possibility of establishing a hiring lag, and work on something that would make sense for the Town. J. Hoch states that the Chief has suggested such a lag for Patrolmen, but also monitoring the expense. He also mentions that sometimes it can be a conscience decision to not replace an Officer; sometimes it just takes time to find the right Officer, as was the case with Officer Ivason. The Board discusses contract issues, overtime and salaries regarding the Department. It is decided that the Chief ultimately has to make these decisions, but the Board would like the Chief to report back as to what a delay in hiring will save and what the impact of this would be.

Selectman F. Byron asks if Jason incorporated into the cost, increases from the Police Union contract approval. Jason states no that is not added in, because it is entirely raised through the article. Next year it will need to be included.

#### **4220 Police Support**

Line 122/140 - Coverage/Overtime -\$4,733 Jason states this regards the two dispatchers (front window service). Adjusting to prioritize covering the dayshift; move uncovered shifts to evening and turning over to County. This may mean that during some periods, counter service will not be available at the dispatch window after 3:00pm.

#### **4220.10 Fire**

Line 128 - Saturday/Sunday coverage - \$7,329 Jason states this will discontinue weekend coverage effective April 5th. Duty Officer would be available at station for permits during scheduled hour on weekends. No issue arose during closure last Summer. As stated during Budget discussions, this is the time that more call members are available and in the Community, and the expectation would remain that there would be adequate response to any call. Jason states that the Department responded to two calls during the first 9 weekends of 2014 during the 9-12 coverage hours. Those two calls that did occur during this time frame had at least two additional Firefighters responded to each call in addition to the duty crew. There have been 25 other calls on those same weekends outside of the "duty hours". All of which were responded to by non-duty personnel.

Line 670 - Books & Periodicals -\$500 delay purchase of new code books (will be proposed again for 2015).

Line 680 - Uniforms -\$400 Jason states that the Chief has declined the contractual allowance for uniforms for one year.

Line 811- Seminars -\$750 Only one person will attend the National Fire Academy trainings this year.

Jason states there are a small dollar changes to a few other lines.

Jason also tells the Board that as another alternative, which he has not added in as of yet, the Chief has offered to reduce his hours which are currently based on 24/week to 20/week; which would save approximately \$120.

#### **4311.10 Road Agent**

Line 310 - Consulting Engineer -\$2,000 Jason states reduce provision for additional design work.

He mentions that the upcoming projects in road plans for next year do not have a need for drainage designs (as Mike did this year). This lagged a year. But depending on road work that is planned for 2016, this may need to be returned in 2015 Budget.

Line 430 - Building Maintenance & Repair -\$1,000 Jason states reduced provision for building improvements, but retains (\$2,500 for routine items).

#### **4312.10 Road Maintenance**

Jason tells the Board that he and the Road Agent came up with some areas for saving that are as follows;

Line 571 - Tree Removal -\$1,000 reduce preventive cutting

Line 572 - Road Sweeping -\$1,000 reduce some areas that are discretionary (actual 2013 \$7,560)

Line 573 - Road Maintenance -\$10,000 Jason states that they still plan on using \$25,000 towards routine maintenance/patches that was budgeted. Additional \$10,000 to come via balance in Block Grant line after Mike Lane is completed. Based on bids, expecting slightly over \$10,000 remaining in Block Grant line.

Line 575 - Culvert Replacements -\$2,500 will make emergency replacements only

Selectman J. Brunelle states that a few culverts were already replaced, but if anything fails this year, where will the money come from. Jason states from the Culvert line, which has no money in it at this time. Some work is done in house, others things have been done by outside resources, they are not planning on anything being done.

Line 577 - Catch Basin Cleanouts - \$2,000 reduce some areas that are discretionary. Expect return to \$12,000 in 2015 (or potential change in program with EPA permit).

Line 686 - Sand -\$2,150

Line 686 - Salt - Jason states this budget has already been overspent with this Winter. Unlike last year there are no storms that are eligible for FEMA assistance. He tells the Board this is why the Public Works Trust Fund was set up, so keep unchanged but take overages of at least \$7,000-\$10,000 so far from this Trust Fund. Jason states this is as a last resort.

Jason also states that as another alternative discussed is to close the bike path for Winter (i.e. no winter maintenance). Would need to confirm numbers and eligibility (there is a responsibility to maintain "sidewalks").

Selectman S. Perry asks if the Town can do that where Federal money was used.

J. Hoch states that they know there is a responsibility to maintain sidewalks, other things would need to be checked into. Board discusses other options such as for the Summer, not mow areas of Albuquerque, or reduce number of cuttings done in areas, possibility of not hiring a part-time person and have a regular duty-crew member do the work. Board agrees to have Jason check into these as possible options and the savings.

Jason mentions another alternative was to reduce pavement striping and advisory pavement markings (Jack does not agree with reducing striping, but is looking at whether templates & equipment to do our own stop lines will be cheaper).

#### **4321.10 Solid Waste**

Line 695 - Recyclables Direct Disposal - \$2,000 Jason states that Dave recommends moving freon disposal to NRRRA. Cost is slightly less; charges are processed through NRRRA revenues so not needed as a gross appropriation. Jason states this will be an accounting change.

Line 696 - Electronics Direct Disposal - -\$4,930 move remaining electronics disposal to NRRRA also. Jason states that the cost has a different basis; should be approximately the same, depending on types of electronics received. This is also just an accounting change.

Line 761- Equipment Lease +6,978 for the Skid Steer. Jason states that right now the full amount is calculated in, however there is a possibility of \$5,000 being offset by NH the Beautiful.

Jason states as another alternative that is not calculated into the budget at this time. Dave is exploring a program with NRRRA for wood recycling (now processed through Construction & Demo Debris). Cost per ton is less. He is not sure if this will end up being workable, so not counting on any savings yet.

#### **4411 Health Officer**

Line 128 - Health Officer Salary -\$1,391 Jason states that the Health Officer has offered to defer his stipend this year. Has suggested revisiting job description and department budget to incorporate into Building Official responsibilities. Jason reminds the Board of a conversation last year regarding trying to combine this Department with the Fire for inspection services. This is still being pursued. However, the Fire Academy does not run these certification classes often and Kevin missed the window last year; and the next one will not be until the Fall of this year. Selectman J. Brunelle asks Jason is Kevin has any certifications at all, he thought he did, and are there any tasks that he can currently.

J. Hoch states that he does not have any Inspector certifications only those for Building/Building Codes and currently cannot do any tasks relating to Fire Inspector.

Selectman J. Brunelle asks what is the time frame for Kevin to complete the certification process and are there other training spots that offer this course.

J. Hoch states that his certification should be by the end of the year. There are other spots that offer the course; however, if it is not the NH Fire Academy it would be a lot more money and that would defeat the savings that is trying to be achieved.

#### **4520.10 Parks**

Line 750 - Furniture & Fixtures -\$750 defer purchases until 2015. Jason states there may be additional areas that can be decreased, he has not had conversations with all involved as of yet.

#### **4550.20 Library**

Line 960 - Library Appropriation -\$14,279 Jason states this is for the 2012/2013 appropriation, plus their actual health insurance that is required. He states that a change in health insurance needs allows for largest part of savings here.

#### **4611.20 Conservation**

Line 430 - Property Management -\$750 Jason states this amount is taken from Property Management and is eligible for use from the Conservation Fund with passage of the Article this year. (Recall that the expanded uses include: "acquire, maintain, improve, protect". Other items in their budget seem less clearly linked to those purposes). Jason states he was hesitant to move any other funds without first having a conversation with Legal Counsel.

Administrator J. Hoch tells the Board that he has a few general comments at this point. He states that he has opted not to recommend any major adjustments to public service hours at this time. In most cases, these would simply concentrate the workload onto other times. Moreover, he is concerned about the burden of hourly cuts falling disproportionately on the non-union

employees (who are likely facing another year without any wage adjustments, despite the Board's efforts to revise the wage scale). Also any drop below 40 hours on a regular schedule would shift these employees from full-time to part-time, based on the Town's personnel policy and cut their eligibility for those benefits offered only to full-time employees. To that end, Jason states that some have offered other wage and/or hour givebacks as alternatives rather than subjecting whole Departments to across the board cuts. He adds that if there is an interest in considering closures for additional savings, he would recommend closing the Administrative Offices & Town Clerk/Tax Collector's office for a week (at the same time). This could have a cost savings by classifying it as unpaid (employees may opt to withdraw those days as an earned time buyout - impacting the buyout fund, but not current year Operating Budget), but would not have the regularly scheduled reduction that would likely cause other benefit eligibility problems.

Jason also states that another area that he alluded to before is Individual Warrant Articles (i.e. not "Special" Articles), can have appropriations reassigned for other purposes if necessary. He mentions the 4 individual articles were the Police Contract (which most of these funds are committed to the contract agreements), other were the repainting of the Old Town Hall, Talent Hall roof replacement, and the Human Service agencies appropriation. Jason states that while this is technically an available option, he did not consider it in his first list. Due to the fact that two of these the Old Town Hall and Talent Hall roof, were the biggest "yes" vote recipients at 1213 and 1357 respectively.

Selectman J. Brunelle states that even if this is considered he feels it is just delaying work that needs to be done.

Administrator J. Hoch tells the Board that there is still one more possible (probably unpopular) option, which is a Special Meeting. He states that the language of the budget article does automatically allow for one special meeting to take up the issues of a revised operating budget only. So, if a point is reached where you have a revised budget that you would like the voters to reconsider, that possibility does exist. Jason mentions that for what it's worth, the question on this year's ballot about holding a special meeting just to consider the cost items of the Police Contract, if it had not passed. Did pass with a vote of 929-671.

Selectman J. Brunelle states that the Board just reviewed Administrators J. Hoch's and the Department Heads recommendations and would like to know if there are any other questions or items to discuss.

The Board discusses what the closing of the Town Offices for one week would entail and would like to know more about what type of impact to employees and savings would be expected if this was done. Jason states that if the Board wishes he will research it more and come up with some figures. The Board agrees to have J. Hoch research the possibility more and report back with solid savings amounts. There is discussion regarding, by defeating the Operating Budget is the Town sending a message they want services cut, but that voters have expressed that they were confused with some items on the ballot. The Board states they feel if services can be maintained and other areas can be effectively cut, this would be a more agreed upon approach, and next year the Board will have to do a better job of explaining the information on the ballot. Selectman F. Byron highlights the topics Jason has just discussed as items he had also flagged

and also includes the possibility of the Animal Control Officer being subbed out from Hudson or Londonderry on an as needed basis. He also suggests that the Board and Jason take a look at the Planning Board budget and address the use of the Circuit Rider. He states that while the Circuit Rider is important to the Planning Board he feels it is important to review how often that person is needed to attend meetings. Selectman F. Byron feels that  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{3}$  of this time could possibly be cut, (for example if there are not applications). Currently they budgeted for 23 hours a month.

Selectman S. Perry states that he believes there is a contract that is signed each year for those hours.

Selectman B. Lemire believes that the RSA only permits the Planning Board authority to reduce these hours.

Selectman F. Byron states that he feels this is correct, but it can still be discussed and recommended to the Planning Board. Also that the NRPC contract is up as much as 23 hours. He mentions that Jason should be allowed to move forward with these changes and compile them into a draft type budget. He recommends that increases, salaries and vacations are not deferred at this time, with the exception of the Selectmen's stipends. Then revisit the information and figures at the next meeting to see where this brings the budget. He also cautions the Board that they need to be below the budget, due to the fact that there are always surprises during the course of the year.

Selectman S. Perry states that he would also like to see the total dollar amount that is being pushed off until next year, because he feels it is one thing to defer this year, but another to burden the Town next year.

Selectman F. Byron also mentions that regarding the non special warrant articles, he feels those should just wait until later in the year and see how things play out. For example the painting of Old Town Hall can be pushed off till the Fall and see what happens with the Budget until that time.

Selectman J. Brunelle states that the proposed budget adjustments that Jason has stated today, the Board would like him to come back with a report. Which will include what is being deferred.

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to move forward with the outlined budget recommendations.

Selectman F. Byron **seconds** the motion, but then would like to **amend** the motion.

He would like to amend the motion to add back into the budget the stipend for the Health Officer Jason suggested be deferred, with the exception of only the Selectmen's stipends being deferred.

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

Selectman J. Brunelle asks the Board to vote on the main **motion. Vote carries 5-0-0.**

### **Public Input**

Chris Pascucci 12 Colonial Drive, states that he would like to address a few things said this evening. He mentions that Selectman B. Lemire stated that the Default Budget came into play and the Proposed Budget people were confused about. Chris states to B. Lemire that he would appreciate it if he did not go down that path, he feels the voters were not confused when they voted in the Police Contract along with raises and voted down additional spending items. He

feels they were not confused and were generous and were very clear with their votes, and finds it insulting to suggest otherwise. He also mentions that the Board discussed cutting services, he states he is not advocating for or against this. His point is that the Board does not ask, they had the chance with an advisory warrant and choose not to even ask the voters. Mr. Pascucci states that Selectman K. Bourque mentioned that once services are cut it is difficult to get them back, he disagrees with this and feels it is the opposite (easier to give back). He states that Selectman J. Brunelle referred to the "majority" on numerous occasions, he hopes that he understands that the majority did speak on Election Day. Chris mentions again he felt the voters were generous with raises which shows they are willing to spend money when they feel it is needed and they are asked. He mentions that the Board (which did not include Selectman S. Perry) approved a Pay Plan, however the money was not in the budget or the default budget, so now there is a Pay Plan with no way to fund it. He feels this should have gone out on a Warrant Article, and the voters probably would of voted for it. He mentions to Selectman S. Perry that on Candidates Night he told the public he felt it should of gone on a Warrant, Mr. Pascucci is hoping that he will be true to his word and suggest putting it on a Warrant next year to have it properly funded. Chris mentions to the Board that at a previous meeting the Board decided to vote and join the Local Government Center with a price of over \$6,000. He states this was approved before the budget was approved, and would like to know if the Town can get that money back. He states that Selectman F. Bryon is a State Representative, and Selectman B. Lemire is on the Board of the Local Government Center and is sure they can get the information to know if this money can be given back to the Town.

Tom Schofield 6 Parker Circle, He states that he feels the Board has been sent a pretty powerful message from the voters about the Budget. He mentions that this years budget over last years in terms of "no votes" was by a difference of about 4 over the majority. This year he states the budget was lost by 64 times that. He mentions that 32% more people came out to vote this year, which equals about 387 people. Out of those 387 he states that there were only 67 more yes votes. He feels this was a powerful message and hopes the Board gets that. He states that the Board probably thousands of man hours to give the Budget Committee a "crappy" budget that they sent forward to the voters. He hopes the Board takes a good long hard look at this and understands it is a message against the Board of Selectmen. He feels that the first good step is that Selectman F. Byron will be the liaison to the Budget Committee, he felt Selectman J. Brunelle was too passionate and way too close and felt it came across terribly on television. Tom suggests that this Board take a page from the School Board on how to present a budget to the Budget Committee, even though theirs failed with the voters; it was their first as a team under new leadership. He also mentions that is nice the Board offered to forgo their salaries but believes it should never of come down to that. He states that the Board should be able to present a budget to the people and Budget Committee that they can support. Mr. Schofield tells the Board that every week he sees Jason G. and Chris come in and get disrespected by the Board by shuffling papers or playing on their computers and rolling their eyes. He states that the message has been sent and hope the messenger and receiver are on the same frequency.

Jason Guerrette 11 Perry Court, states that the voters did not elect him to sit on the Board. They elected Selectman S. Perry, and he takes that message from the voters and feels it is his own fault. He understands that if he wants to participate he needs to understand that and move on. Mr. Guerrette states that he knows the Board gave back their stipends, but he would like to know where it goes. Jason Hoch states that it goes back to all the other places within the Budget where cuts were made. Mr. Guerrette mentions that the other thing he would like to discuss is the electric rate, he is not sure if the Board is aware that the rates have skyrocketed and are projected to continue to do so. Administrator J. Hoch states that the Town is locked into a 9 month contract. Mr. Guerrette states that the Town can still increase savings by lowering the kilowatt usage at all Town facilities. Mr. Guerrette mentions that there was talk about confused voters, and talk from the Board about recouping monies from Warrant Articles that passed if they chose to. He states that those articles were passed as zero dollars to the voters, now the Board is implying there is money from those articles to spend, this is what confuses voters. So he tells the Board while they may understand the technicalities of that the voter does not. He feels this causes mistrust and confusion.

Jason would also like to know if all public boards are meeting as of now. Selectman J. Brunelle states yes, except for possibly the Zoning Board. He states that he was looking for meeting minutes, and noticed that not everyone has meeting minutes. If a Board is meeting publically there has to be minutes. Selectman J. Brunelle asks where is he looking. Mr. Guerrette states online at the Town website. J. Brunelle states that the the official place for the minutes is in the Town Clerks office (he agrees that they should be online). Jason G. states that the Boards have 144 hours to get the regular meeting minutes ready for public inspection. He mentions that it would be nice for them to be available electronically and much more convenient for the public. Selectman J. Brunelle totally agrees, however not every Board makes them available for online, and the official site is the Town Clerks office. Mr. Guerrette states that the non-public minutes should be posted within 72 hours (if not sealed) and he has never seen those. Selectman J. Brunelle states they are available in the Town Clerks office.

Tom Schofield address the Board again. He states that over the last couple of weeks he had a series of email exchanges with the Chairman of the Board (Selectman J. Brunelle) regarding some issue he was concerned about. He states they were pretty direct questions that he was probably uncomfortable to answer. However, when he did receive an answer he mentions that they were received typed in red ink. Which he states was pretty childish.

Selectman J. Brunelle tells Mr. Schofield that he chose red italic so he could see it and he always types with color (usually green), and if he wants to share what the comments were that is fine but to criticize his choice of ink is unnecessary. Again Mr. Schofield states that he feels that the Chairman of the Board using red bold ink is childish.

Carol Bessette tells the Board that she trying to watch the meeting at home on her television to catch up on the Budget information, and once again she can't there is no picture. She states that this has been going on for years, and wishes that the Board could get to the bottom of this problem. Carol states that there are people who wish to not attend meeting and watch from the comfort and convenience of their homes, but cannot. She states that Comcast needs to fix this

issue. Selectman J. Brunelle mentions that there was a switcher problem that was causing the feed not to go live, this has been replaced about two weeks ago. Then last week when they tried to go live they were told that Comcast was not broadcasting channel 22. The Cable Committee is trying to resolve the issue. Carol asks if the Board has looked into compensation for the problems this has been causing. Selectman J. Brunelle states that the Town does not pay Comcast for their services, they broadcast for the Town out of generosity. Carol asks the Board if someone from Comcast has been invited to come explain what the issue is.

Selectman F. Byron suggests that the Board send a letter to Comcast explaining the continuous problems, and that the Town has not had any success in fixing the issues.

J. Hoch states that the Cable Committee and Comcast are already scheduled to meet and try and work together this Friday on the issues. So he would like to see what they find before taking any further action. The Board agrees it is an issue with the Cable Committee and Comcast, however, if it is not resolved they would like a member of the Cable Committee or their representative to come to the next BOS meeting and discuss the problems. They also would like the Committee to discuss their budget review as well.

Carol had one more question for the Board, she states that by closing half of the Town Offices and they will still be receiving a paycheck, where will the savings be.

J. Hoch states that it would be an accounting shift in savings, and would be a line item savings.

Selectman J. Brunelle closes the Public Input portion. But states that in regards to the Boards that are posting minutes to their meetings electronically, there are some that are consistent and do a great job; such as the BOS, Planning Board and Budget Committee. However, the Conservation, Zoning and Recreation Committee are very sporadic, and he has never seen a copy of minutes for the Cable Committee. He states that once a week a task is completed posting what is available online to the Town website. It is each Board/Committee's responsibility to make sure the legal copy is in the Town Clerks office. He will send a letter to all the Boards asking them to make more of an effort in regards to supplying their minutes so they can be shared electronically.

Selectman J. Brunelle mentions that as far as the citizens comments regarding him being unprofessional as a Chairman of the BOS. He states that although he is offended by this comment, he is entitled to his comment. John mentions that he had no intention of being unprofessional, he never gave a thought to the color of his font, and uses color quite often in his emails. He states that he spent three days responding to this person's email and provided every little detail that he could, and the Board looked at and reviewed the letter. If the Board feels he was unprofessional in any way he would like to hear from the Board. Selectman J. Brunelle states he put a lot of time and thought into that email, and to be criticized for a color of font used, he feels that person is unprofessional. But states he will choose his colors more wisely from now on.

## **Old Business**

### **Town Administrator Contract Amendment**

Administrator J. Hoch states that given the other items he and the Board have been considering with the Default Budget, the renewal of his contract has been a low priority item at his time.

However, since it is slated to expire on April 1, he is recommending extending the existing terms for another two months. This should give everyone time to revisit the terms of the contract renewal.

Jason states that it is a very simple agreement that reads as follows:

AMENDMENT TO EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT

The agreement of March 12, 2012 between the Litchfield Board of Selectmen (Employer) and Jason Hoch (Employee) for services as Town Administrator is hereby amended to extend the termination date from April 1, 2014 to June 1, 2014. All other provisions of the agreement remain unchanged.

Selectman J. Brunelle states the Board has approved the renewal of Jason Hoch's contract as Town Administrator, this will just give time to revisit the terms.

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to accept the amendment to extend the existing contract terms of the Town Administrator Jason Hoch as mentioned.

Selectman S. Perry **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 5-0-0.**

**Police Detail Billed Rate to \$59.75**

J. Hoch states that as part of the approval of the Police Union contract, there was a plan to increase the billed rate for Police Details to \$59.75 effective April 1. This is the mechanism that will cover the expense associated with the 457(b) matching program that is in the contract.

Selectman J. Brunelle **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to increase the billed rate for Police Details to \$59.75.

Selectman F. Byron **seconds** the motion. Selectman F. Byron asks if the Board accepted the Police Policy. Administrator J. Hoch states yes. **Vote carries 5-0-0.**

**Police Department Burglary Investigations**

J. Hoch wanted to update the Board stating that at the peak of last summer, there were 29 open burglary cases. He states that by great citizen input and some terrific police work Chief O'Brion reports that with the arrival of lab analysis data last week, the number of open cases has been reduced to zero (0).

**Other Items**

**Police Department Resignation**

Administrator J. Hoch states that Sargent Costa from the Police Department has handed in his resignation, effective April 2, 2014. He will be taking a position with the State Police.

Selectman S. Perry leaves meeting at 7:55

Administrator J. Hoch asks the Board if they have any questions on any of the informational items that he has shared. Which the Board states they do not at this time. J. Hoch mentions that there was a long list of reappointments, but in regards to a few including the Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer he is waiting on background checks to be completed by the State as the BOS policy requests. Jason states that the Town has been consistent with the revised policy

regarding these background checks.

### **Selectman Reports - None**

### **Items moved from consent - None**

### **Other Business**

Selectman K. Bourque states that in the past the Board had liaison's to the Department Heads. He mentions that during discussions he has had with current Department heads, he has gathered that some wish to have another contact person besides Administrator J. Hoch. He states not because they feel he is not doing a good job, there just might be issues that they are not comfortable discussing with J. Hoch and would like another person available. He has spoken to Selectman F. Byron regarding this and is wondering why the Board got away from this practice. And would like to discuss this matter.

Selectman S. Perry returns to the meeting 7:58

The Board discusses this and states that liaison's were used before because the Town did not have a Town Administrator. Also that this is about the day to day management and running of the Town which is the Administrator's job, the Boards job is more regarding policy. That the Department Heads can and do have the opportunity to speak to any Board member at any time regarding issues they may have. The members of this Board are out speaking with Department Heads regularly, some have more of a direct relationship that others, but anyone at anytime can contact a member from this Board. The Board states they have no issues with having a quarterly meeting with Department Heads which took place before, however these meetings ended due to the fact that no one wished to be recorded.

Selectman B. Lemire leaves the meeting 8:07

Most felt it appeared they were complaining and were not comfortable speaking freely while being recorded. The Board states that now due to meetings being recorded for some time and most people being more comfortable, possibly there should be a discussion regarding bringing back quarterly meetings as a way to open up communication with Department Heads

Selectman B. Lemire returns to the meeting 8:09

Selectman K. Bourque states that he feels they should be doing this as a whole not individually that the whole Board needs to know what is going on with all the Departments in Town not just a select few. He states quarterly meetings should not be thought of as "complaint" sessions, just an area where everyone could be kept up to date on the ideas and functions of the Departments. Administrator J. Hoch states he has no problems with meetings, but states Department Heads may have a stronger opinion regarding this. The Board decides that this will be something they discuss at the next Department Head meeting and get everyones input.

Selectman F. Byron wanted to discuss the Maintenance of the Town Hall. He states that if you look around this room there is an issue with the door and floor from water issues that have occurred. Also in the front of the building there is an issue with the door and jam rusting away. He feels they are starting to see the metal jams starting to fail and mentions this needs to be addressed before something that may be a fairly easy fix ends up costing much more money. He would like Kevin to take a look at some of these issues and possibly address them now rather than later. Selectman F. Byron is not throwing stones at anyone there are just maintenance issues that need to be addressed while they are small before becoming major issues.

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to adjourn  
Selectman K. Bourque **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 5-0-0.**

Selectman J. Brunelle states that there is a re-count on Article 22, on Tuesday March 25 at 6:pm here at Town Hall which is open to the public.

The next Board of Selectmen's meeting will be on April 14, 2014 at 6:00pm at Town Hall

Approved April 14, 2014