

# TOWN OF LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN

## July 13, 2015

### Selectmen's Meeting

Members Present: Steven D. Perry, Chairman  
John R. Brunelle, Vice Chairman  
Frank A. Byron  
Kevin C. Bourque

Absent: Brent T. Lemire - 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 June 22, 2015
2. Approval of Account Payable Manifest (\$184,897.05)
3. Approval of Payroll Manifest (\$52,619.53)
4. Stop Sign Installation - Ledgewood Drive

### **Approval of Consent Items**

Selectman S. Perry reads aloud the Items for Consent

Selectman F. Byron **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to approve the Items for Consent

Selectman J. Brunelle **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 4-0-0.**

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

Selectman F. Byron would like to discuss stop signs

Selectman S. Perry would like to discuss emails sent from the Public to the Selectmen

### **Fire Department Swearing In - Lieutenant Brian Schofield and Firefighters Chris Patti and Nicholas Perault**

Fire Chief Fraitzl states that he is honored to acknowledge the swearing in of three members to the Litchfield Fire Department. He states that Chris Patti and Nicholas Perault have completed their probationary period and all requirements and certifications necessary.

Nicholas Perault is a second generation Firefighter. He studied Fire Science at Lake Region Community Technical College and has completed his FF2 and Advanced EMT certifications.

Chris Patti has completed his FF1 certification.

Town Administrator Jason Hoch proceeds to swear in the two members. Badges are handed to

their family members to pin on the newest members to the Litchfield Fire Department. Chief Fraitzl proceeds to acknowledge the swearing in of Brian Schofield who has been a member of the Department since 2005. He is also a second generation Firefighter. He is being promoted to Lieutenant, with the retirement of Captain Croteau and will be assuming the leadership of Company 1. Brian has his FF2, Advanced EMT, Fire Officer 2, Fire Instructor I certifications, he is currently a full-time firefighter with Londonderry. Town Administrator Jason Hoch swears in Brian Schofield and a badge and lapel pins are given to family members to pin on the new Lieutenant of the Litchfield Fire Department.

## **Administrator Report**

### **New Business**

#### **Fire Chief - Re: Fire Department Coordination with Wage Schedule**

Town Administrator J. Hoch tells the Board that since implementing the Wage Plan for the Towns 98 employees, which included all but the "call" employees on the Department. He and Fire Chief Fraitzl have been discussing how to integrate the Fire Departments "call" employees into the Town Wage Plan. They have come up with a solution that makes sense and can be implemented without a change to the current call company budget item and fits with the Towns pay schedule.

Chief Fraitzl states that since 2013 when an incentive plan was put into place to recognize individuals who choose to accelerate and take advanced level certifications it has been a challenge to implement this into the Wage Plan. He mentions that during the Town's Audit it was brought to his attention that certain positions did not have documented wage scales. So the proposal places positions within the grades that are currently in the Town Wage Plan. He outlines this for the Board

- Probationary FF (new hires) without experience Grade 2
- Non-Probationary FF with certifications in FF1 Grade 5
- Lieutenants Grade 7
- Specialty Positions: Mechanic position/Fire Prevention Grade 8
- Deputy Chief Grade 10

So for the incentive part of the proposal the Chief states as an example; FF1 is a required certification so the Town pays the NH Fire Academy and the individual is paid for his time while attending class there would be no incentive paid for this. However, for FF2 it is an additional 80-90 hrs, EMT additional 100, Advanced EMT and Paramedics are many more additional hours. So for those individuals who choose to advance in levels of certification achievements, upon completion the incentive would be an additional pay raise of .25 - .50 cents.

Chief Fraitzl also mentions that there are some advanced driver training certifications which would include a .50 cent incentive raise. Lieutenants and Officers are eligible for Instructor and Officer certification as well as Leadership programs and upon completion would include an incentive raise of .50-\$1.00. He states that Firefighters would not be eligible for Officer certifications and Officers are not eligible for driver operator or FF2 certifications because they are required as part of their position.

Chief Fraitzl states that the Budget now has the average hourly rate at \$17.50. So this proposal with these changes which he and Jason have presented, would put the hourly rate less than

\$17.23. So there would be no increase to the call budget line this year and this would incorporate the Department into the Town Wage plan and document all positions/grades for the Auditors. This would have an effective date of the first pay period in August.

Board and the Chief clarify a few certifications within the grades.

Selectman F. Byron asks what the total cost is to the Town for these amenities. Chief states that it is all based on call wages and volume, which is why he used the average hourly pay rate the same as when budgeting.

Selectman K. Bourque mentions is this based on the staff that the Department currently has, or are any new hires included.

Chief Fraitzl states that he has included for the 5 positions that are currently vacant.

Selectman J. Brunelle **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to approve the Wage Scale Plan for the Fire Department as discussed with an effective date for the first pay period in August. Selectman F. Byron **seconds** the motion.

Selectman F. Byron mentions to Jason will this be merged with the Town or kept separate. He states that if it is not referenced that this is part of the Town's Plan the wage scales/grades can all be thrown off.

J. Hoch states that it will be kept separate as an appendix to the Towns for now, but referenced that they are tied together. He states that when the Town's plan is updated this will have to be as well

Chief states that the Grades are set the same as the Town's, but with the incentives are added in, there are two separate components. **Vote 3-0-1.**

## **Public Input - None**

### **Assessing Contract**

J. Hoch mentions that he has been reviewing for the upcoming budget season, and would like to make the Board aware that the current contract the Town has with Avitar expires at the end of the year. So a successor agreement needs to be in place for the next 5 year certification cycle. Jason would like to know if the Board's preference is to obtain a proposal from Avitar or to do a full RFP for all potential firms. He states that he does not see a lot has changed in the market for contract assessors and the Board has been pleased with Avitar's work. This is a large ticket item regardless who is chosen, but his recommendation would be to explore a renewal with Avitar.

Selectman F. Byron would like to know what the Purchasing Policy states

J. Hoch states that it would be well over the threshold, but mentions that the BOS always has the ability to use their discretion and waive accordingly.

Selectman S. Perry and K. Bourque feel this would not be right

Selectman F. Byron states that if Avitar feels they have a claim (no competition) on the services they could possibly come back with a contract significantly higher.

Selectman J. Brunelle states let Jason get a contract proposal from Avitar and if the Board feels it is too high, then RFP others.

J. Hoch mentions that if the Town changes from Avitar there would be additional cost add ons from a new company (software, revaluation services, pickups etc.). He also states that Avitar

was suppose to leave Utility Assessing and has not, the Town would need to know this within the next 5 years in order to plan. Jason reminds the Board of Pennichucks challenges to the evaluations this last cycle. Also Fairpoint continues to take legal action against the Town every time they send out their tax bill. Eversouce has also had issues.

Board agrees to allow Administrator J. Hoch to have a discussion with Avitar on a contract proposal and report back at the Board's next meeting.

## **Old Business**

### **Pipeline Update**

Administrator J. Hoch states that Coalition members met with Congresswoman Kuster at her office in Concord. They discussed impacts, concerns and potential strategies with her.

Jason states that next are a couple of FERC scoping meetings to be held on:

July 29, 2015, Wednesday at 6:30pm at the Nashua Radisson and

July 30, 2015, Thursday at 6:30pm at the Milford Town Hall

He expects a range of topics will be discussed by the Coalition. Jason mentions that if any Board member would like to attend and would like to give some suggestions of other points to make, please let him know. It is his understanding that preference is given to elected officials at the beginning of these meetings to offer comment. Comments will likely be limited to around 3 minutes. Written testimony is equally considered and is open until the end of August, and he expects that the Board/Town would want to submit something by then.

Administrator J. Hoch mentions that the Coalition through Senator Shaheen's office has followed up with FERC and is concerned with the area being proposed for this pipeline and how few Scoping sessions are being held. Also, how little information is being given. So they are proposing

- 1.) Be postponed and scheduled no sooner than one month after complete Resource Reports are provided. Holding the sessions now is akin to expecting legislators to comment on a pending bill with thousands of "to be determined" in it;
- 2.) Be held in every town with above ground infrastructure, any town with a lateral, and only in towns that are due to be directly impacted by the pipeline (not Nashua);
- 3.) Be held so that the maximum travel distance is 30 minutes from any impacted community
- 4.) Avoid July and August, which are the most popular vacation times for our residents.

Jason states that he has a meeting with the Coalition on Thursday and will continue to update the Board. He also mentions that prior to the two hearings at the end of the month, he would like to offer the opportunity for residents to come back for another meeting. To offer additional information on the Scoping meetings, this might help them coordinate and prepare on how best to get their messages out. Jason states he will check dates and report back to the Board.

### **Town Administrator Transition**

J. Hoch states that the job posted to the NHMA website and the Municipal Manager's list serv and closes on July 17, 2015. He mentions there has been a good response to the position.

Jason has had meetings or extended conversations with 5-6 credible candidates and has received applications from some very qualified candidates. He tells the Board one candidate applied after watching some of the BOS meetings posted on the web.

Administrator J. Hoch states that he will share material and offer his recommendations on 5 candidates by Monday 7/20, he will include all applications and resumes for the Board to review just in case they disagree with his choices. He would like to know if the Board feels they need to meet and validate which candidates they would like to continue the process with, or do they wish for him to proceed in setting up the interviews.

Board agrees it is their decision on which candidates they move forward with and agree to meet on Monday July 20 @ 6:00pm to review Jason's recommendations and all applications.

Selectman F. Byron would like to know if any candidates have expressed an expectation of confidentiality with their current employment situations. So that the Board is aware under 91a what the requirements are in case the press or public ask questions.

J. Hoch states that all candidates are confidential, until the Board decides otherwise during the process and informs the candidate. It is a personnel issue and is protected under 91a there is no public requirement for disclosure in New Hampshire (unlike Massachusetts).

Board discusses available dates to have interviews with the candidates, however due to vacations this becomes an issue to try and get everything completed before Jason leaves his position at the end of August.

Jason also recommends that the Staff be involved in the interview process at some point because they will be working with this individual on a daily basis, and it should be a good fit for all. He mentions that once the Board narrows it down the Staff and Board could hold interviews in two rooms switching off with the candidates.

Board decided to meet 7/20 @6:00pm to review Jason's recommendations and all applications, they will narrow it to 3-4 candidates to move forward with interviews. They decided to schedule dates to be available for future interviews, they agree on July 23rd after 2:30pm and August 1st after 11:00am.

## **Other Items**

### **New Laws**

Administrator J. Hoch mentions that last year there were issues and questions regarding HB-133 Recount Notifications. Our Town Clerk urged clarification in the law regarding notifications for ballot question recounts. A House Bill was introduced and State Representative F. Byron helped to move it though, however the law died in end of session amendment moves last session. Representative F Byron reintroduced the Bill in the House and Senator Soucy reintroduced it in the Senate. Jason mentions that he and Terri joined them to testify as 2 Bills on this moved forward. The House Bill became the last one standing and was signed by the Governor and became law on June 30

**159:1 Recount; Deadline. Amend RSA 40:4-c, I to read as follows:**

**I. If any 10 voters of a town shall, before the expiration of 7 days from the date of an annual meeting or special meeting, apply in writing to the town clerk for a recount of the ballots given in at said meeting on any question, affecting said town only, legally appearing on the official Australian or nonpartisan ballot used at said meeting, said clerk shall appoint a time and place for the recount not earlier than 5 days nor later than 10 days after the receipt of said application. *The clerk shall give notice by mail of the recount to the***

*first-named voter who applied for a recount on a question and to any other person who requested notice in writing, at least 3 days prior to the day appointed for the recount of ballots. Notice of the time and place of the recount shall be posted in 2 public places at least 24 hours prior to the recount. The applicants for such recount shall pay to the town clerk[, for the use of the town,] a fee of \$10 for conducting the recount.*

**159:2 School District Elections; Recount. Amend RSA 671:32, III to read as follows:**

### **Primex Premium Holiday**

J. Hoch tells the Board he received notification from Primex that the Town will be receiving premium holidays (return of surplus) for participation in Workers Compensation and Unemployment Programs. Jason states that Workers Compensation net effect, considering what has already been paid this year will have a carry over of \$4,730.13 as holiday in the 2016 Budget. Unemployment Compensation will have a net effect, because it is more than the Town pays for the year, so there will be a carry over of \$5,949.43 as holiday in the 2016 Budget. He states it may even cover some for 2017.

### **Selectman Reports**

Selectman S. Perry states that the Planning Board has been on vacation. The land on Cutler/Page meeting is scheduled for Wednesday.

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

### **Other Business -**

Selectman F. Byron mentions that there was a stop sign in the items for consent for the Boards approval. He states that every year or two the Board should ask Police Chief O'Brion to supply the Board with a list of all stop signs in Town and have the Board approve them all at once. He states by doing them individually if one falls through the cracks and is not approved by the Board of Selectmen any violations given have to be argued to be thrown out. J. Hoch states that he will take care of this issue for the next meeting.

Selectman S. Perry states that the Board received an email yesterday, and for public record he would like to mention that he will always respond to any emails and will copy any response to the Members of the Board.

Selectman K. Bourque **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to adjourn  
Selectman J. Brunelle **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 4-0-0.**

The next Board of Selectmen's meeting will be on July 27, 2015 at 6:00pm at Town Hall

*Approved July 27, 2015*