

## TOWN OF LITCHFIELD

Selectmen's Meeting

February 1, 2010

The Board of Selectmen held a meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Conference Room.

Members present: Frank A. Byron, Chairman  
Andrew M. Santom, Vice Chairman  
M. Patricia Jewett  
George A. Lambert  
Steven D. Perry

5:30 p.m. Review of paperwork and Communications

Also present for public session: Linda Langille, Office Manager

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

### CONSENT ITEMS/ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**Consent:** 1. Minutes. **Any Other business:** 1. Keys 2. AG Form to sign. 3. Letter to Library Trustees.

### PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

### AVITAR & STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Loren Martin, Avitar (Assessor) and Greg Heyn, State of N.H. Department of Revenue, came forward to talk about the reassessment. Mr. Heyn will be monitoring the Town for accuracy of assessment, also considered auditing. Mr. Heyn handed out a packet to each member. He went over what he would be looking for in his monitoring of records such as permits, procedures, current use files, exemptions, charity, etc. Mr. Heyn went on to explain the assessed value, sales and percentile of confidence.

It was explained that even though the assessments go down, the Town still has to collect the same amount of money to operate and this needs to be explained to the taxpayers that they would still be paying the same amount of taxes. Houses drop in price but the tax rate goes up so the tax bills would stay the same. The first tax bill is based on the old assessment and ½ the tax rate so they are not going to see the changes until the second bill. Again, even though the houses have gone down, this is not going to cut the tax bills because the budget has not changed. It does not mean that the Town is spending more money, it just means bringing it back into line based on

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the economy. It was also noted that the new tax rate established by DRA comes out for the second tax bill. Talk ensued. Mr. Heyn further stated that he is here to help the Town and to verify the accuracy of the data...making sure the analysis is not faltered by having bad data. Mr. Heyn said that he would provide a report to the Board but it would not be available until May 2011. "If there is a problem, you will hear about it first before anything is written down". Mr. Byron asked how does it get handle and what is in the report to fix the problem.

Mr. Heyn: If there are areas that are dusty, I would work with the Town to improve the areas. There is nothing that is critical where you would be shut down. The report goes to the assessing standards board and at the end of the year they compile all the information for the towns that went through reassessments, assessment reviews and that gives the State an idea of where towns might be weak in and if legislation has to be passed to get some things corrected, etc.

Mrs. Martin: If your statistics were outside the range, say I did a lousy job and you are at 125% market value, the DRA could petition the Board of Tax and Land Appeals to do the assessments again.

Mr. Lambert asked if the Town would have to pay for that if Avitar is wrong.

Mrs. Martin: If I am wrong, no...we do stand behind our work; we are not a fly by night revaluation company. If there is any kind of issue, we stand behind our work, but that is what could happen if they petition you.

Mr. Heyn indicated that what they are trying to do is to make sure there is fair and equitable taxation in the State and making sure every town is abiding by the regulations.

Mr. Lambert talked about educating the taxpayers as to the impact of the reassessment. Mrs. Martin said that it would be indicated in the letter they send out and she suggested holding an informational meeting. She will prepare a handout to be provided to taxpayers for the Town Meeting in March. Mr. Heyn said that he would be able to attend the informational meeting. With this, Mr. Heyn left the meeting.

### NONPUBLIC SESSION

At 7:53 p.m. Mr. Lambert **MOTIONED** to go into nonpublic session per RSA91-A:3II(e) matters of litigation with Loren Martin (Avitar) regarding a pending appeal. Mr. Santom seconded. Roll call: F. Byron, yes; A. Santom, yes; M.P. Jewett, yes; G. Lambert, yes; S. Perry, yes. Motion carried 5-0-0.

At 8:05 p.m. A **MOTION** was made to come out of nonpublic session. It was seconded. Roll call: F. Byron, yes; A. Santom, yes; M.P. Jewett, yes; G. Lambert, yes; S. Perry, yes. Motion carried 5-0-0.

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A **MOTION** was made to keep the minutes nonpublic. It was seconded. Motion carried 5-0-0.

### STREET LIGHTING

Mr. John Poulos came forward to discuss the EOL program. In order to take advantage of the program, the Town has to pay \$11,500 in depreciation and at the end of the first year of the program, there would be a \$6,000 savings. This was discussed.

As to the 16 lights added to the list for 2006, Mr. Poulos explained that they were in service for a lot longer than 2006 so the depreciation was cut in half. Also, there are three (3) lights to be taken off Litchfield's list: One is located on Old Derry Road and two are located on Pine Avenue. The Town will get reimbursed for the last two years and could put that money towards the depreciation value. The total cost to move to the Rate EOL program is \$11,500 depreciation, and has to pay for two mercury lights at \$1,000 plus \$500 for a detail; so the total is \$13,000. Mr. Poulos indicated that there is a possibility of applying for grant money to do the switch over. The requirement for going to the Rate EOL program is that all lights will be high pressure sodium or metal halite. Mr. Lambert suggested just changing over the two mercury lights and not doing the Rate EOL program. Talk ensued.

Mr. Poulos mentioned that the police department recommends two new lights be installed: One at Jeff Lane and one at Brick Yard.

Mr. Lambert **MOTIONED** that we authorize the initiation of the upgrades of those two lights that need to be upgraded now not to exceed \$1,800. Mr. Santom seconded. Vote: Messrs. Byron and Perry voted no. Motion carried 3-2-0. Mr. Poulos will find out what the depreciation would be for the next year as of January 1<sup>st</sup> and find out what the rebate amount is going to be and bring the information back to the Board. Also, he will find out if they will finance the payoff of the depreciation over twenty-four (24) months and also check on available grants.

### RENTAL CARS

Mr. John Poulos provided information on his research regarding lease to buy pricing, straight 3-year lease pricing, maintenance costs, etc. Included in his research is what is being spent as a municipality for mileage people to drive their car to do bank runs, seminars. etc. This was discussed.

It was said that there is a police cruiser available that could be used by the employees for errands and there would be substantial savings. It was suggested that the Selectmen test drive the police car. This was discussed. The Dog Officer uses his own vehicle. Mr. Perry will do research on all the scenarios: insurance coverage on personal vehicles, rental, police cruiser, evaluate and then make a recommendation as to what is the best scenario for the Town. Mr. Perry wants to make sure the Town is providing employees with a good vehicle. It was also suggested by Mr. Santom

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to utilize the Brinks' services for pickup. He will check on the process for Brinks and Wells Fargo pickup and the cost.

### 2009 SPENDING

There were additional bills that were paid for 2009 in the amount of \$2,000. The remaining money in the 2009 budget is \$57,000.

### PSNH ENERGY AUDIT

Mr. Lambert needs to get with Kevin Lynch.

### SNOW REMOVAL - LIBRARY

Mr. Lambert said he spoke with the Road Agent who stated that he does not have the ability to do the shoveling at the Library as requested by the Director at \$65.00 an hour. This was discussed. Chairman Byron prepared a draft letter to be forwarded to the Library Trustees explaining costs for maintenance, mowing, etc.

Mr. Lambert: If they have not allocated money in their budget...they can tell us what that will be and we will find a way to come up with the funds so they can get the walkways shoveled.

The amount of money expended to mow at the library is \$1,000. The matter with snow shoveling is still unresolved. Mr. Lambert suggested sending the letter to the Trustees and he will follow-up with them this week.

### EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Mrs. Langille said that the School District would be able to teach employees on February 25 and 26, 2010 at Campbell High School. The cost is \$841.00 for Word and Excel training and includes two teachers.

Mr. Santom **MOTIONED** to approve the expense of \$841 for training. Mr. Perry seconded. Talk ensued as to the number of employees to send to the class. Mrs. Langille said she is trying to keep the class to a limited enrollment in order to get more individualized training of the staff. Motion carried 5-0-0. Talk went on as to closing the office(s). Mr. Santom **MOTIONED** to approve the limited manning of the Selectmen's office for that day. Mr. Perry seconded. Motion carried 5-0-0.

### CONSENT ITEMS

Mr. Byron **MOTIONED** to approve with consent prior meeting minutes (January 11, 15, 18 and

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25, 2010). All were in favor 5-0-0.

### EMPLOYEE HEALTH PLAN

Mrs. Langille said that she has set up a meeting with Local Government Center to provide education to the employees on the health plans as to benefits, requirements, etc.

### COMMITTEE/DISTRICT REPORTS

**Planning Board** - There will not be a meeting tomorrow night. The next scheduled meeting is February 16, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Conference Room. Mr. Bruce Mayberry will be at the meeting to explain the impact fee standards.

**School Board** - The Board will be meeting candidates for the Superintendent's position on Wednesday at Campbell High School Library from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

**School Deliberative Session** - School Deliberative Session is Saturday, February 6, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. at Campbell High School.

### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**1.Keys** - Mr. Perry told the Board that he should have the installation by the end of this week. Mr. Byron pointed out the staff, Selectmen, Fire, Police et al will need keys as soon as possible once the installation is complete. Talk went on as to changing the alarm code as people leave employment, keeping a record of key holders, etc.

**2. AG Form Release** - The Board is in receipt of a letter from Town Counsel on a release form for the Board's signature. In Mr. Byron's opinion the form releases the AG's office from any further claims for the thefts of money by Mr. Seymour. The form states that *to the extent the payment is made on behalf of itself and its officers, agents, employees...Litchfield releases and discharges National Union AIU holdings of and from any and all liability claims, actions or suit damages Litchfield may have in connection with the government policy number; however, any claim in excess of that amount is specifically reserved.* This means Litchfield can go back for additional amounts if that is what we still desire. Mr. Lambert **MOTIONED** to authorize the Chairman to sign the form on behalf of the Board. Mrs. Jewett seconded. Motion carried 5-0-0.

**3. Letter to Library** - The letter clarifies who is responsible for maintenance, plowing, mowing, etc. As to mowing, Mr. Byron **MOTIONED** that the Board accepts the letter as drafted by the Chair for delivery to the Library Trustees. Mr. Santom seconded. There is \$3,000 in government building for lawn care of which some of the money was to go to the Road Agent's budget. If he is not going mow the Library, then money needs to go to the Library for mowing. Motion carried 5-0-0.

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**4. Public Hearing** - It was agreed to hold a public hearing on the petition article #14 delegating the formation of the default budget to the Budget Committee. This is required by RSA 40:14-b,II(b) and 40:14, IV. The Hearing will be held on Tuesday, February 16, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall Meeting Room.

Mr. Santom **MOTIONED** to set the hearing on February 16, 2010, at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Lambert seconded. Motion carried 5-0-0.

**5. HLN Insert** - The Board discussed inserting a flyer into the HLN for the warrant article information. Mr. Santom will take care of this action item.

There being no further business, Chairman Byron **ENTERTAINED A MOTION** to adjourn. Mrs. Jewett **SO MOVED**. Mr. Perry seconded. Motion carried 5-0-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

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Frank A. Byron, Chairman

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M. Patricia Jewett

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George A. Lambert

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Steven D. Perry

Lorraine Dogopoulos  
Selectmen's Secretary