Town of Litchfield, NH
Board of Selectmen
Conference Room - Town Hall
September 14, 2026

Date Approved ____/____/ 2026

In Attendance:

Selectmen:	John R. Brunelle, Chair; G. Stephen Gannon; F. Robert Leary; and Dianne Plansky
Town Administrator:	Kim Kleiner
Finance Director:	Karen White
Also in Attendance:	Sean Flynn
Absent:	Steve D. Perry; Joe Stapleton; and Rick Charbonneau

I. Call to Order:

6:30 p.m. - Chair John Brunelle opened the meeting and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Brunelle addressed concerns regarding multiple conversations occurring simultaneously during Board meetings. He acknowledged that it was his responsibility to control the discussion better and asked Board members to help by speaking one at a time. He noted that although Board members may be able to follow multiple conversations, the public, particularly those listening to the meeting broadcast, may find the discussion difficult to understand.

II. Review and Approval of Consent Items:

A. Payroll – 09/10/26 - $73,370.96; and 09/17/26 - $77,270.11
B. A/P Manifest – 09/08/26 - $145,215.04; 09/15/26 - $39,090.86
C. Tax Collector Reconciliation - August 2026
D. Town Clerk Reconciliation - August 2026.

Motion: **(Selectman R. Leary / Selectman D. Plansky)** So moved.
Vote: (4-0-0) The motion carried.

III. Request for Additional Items / Other Business:

Ms. Kleiner discussed the Ambulance and Dispatch contract with the Town of Londonderry. She reported that the municipalities were working with legal counsel to complete housekeeping changes to the agreement. No substantial financial or contractual terms were being changed. Because the agreement is an intermunicipal agreement requiring approval by the Attorney General's Office, the agreement must be signed once finalized.

Ms. Kleiner requested authorization for the Chair, Fire Chief, and Town Administrator to sign the agreement once finalized, provided no substantial changes or changes to the terms are made.

Motion: **(Selectman D. Plansky / Selectman S. Gannon)** So moved.
Vote: (4-0-0) The motion carried.

IV. Business:

A. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. August 24, 2026 – Public
b. August 24, 2026 – Non-Public
c. September 3, 2026 – Public - Tabled
d. September 3, 2026 – Non-Public 1 - Tabled
e. September 3, 2026 – Non-Public 2 - Tabled

Motion: **(Selectman R. Leary / Selectman D. Plansky)** Moved to approve the August 24, 2026, Public minutes.
Vote: (4-0-0) The motion carried.

Motion: **(Selectman D. Plansky / Selectman R. Leary)** Moved to approve the August 24, 2026, Non-Public minutes.
Vote: (4-0-0) The motion carried.

B. Appointment – Planning Board Full Member – Sean Flynn
Planning_Board_Application

The Board considered the appointment of Sean Flynn as a full member of the Planning Board. Mr. Flynn stated that he wanted to become more involved in the Town and serve the community. He previously served on the Capital Improvement Program Committee for more than one year and explained that a change in his work schedule now allows him to participate more fully in Town meetings.

Board members welcomed Mr. Flynn and discussed his appointment. Ms. Kleiner noted that the term expiration date still needed confirmation from the Elections Office. Mr. Flynn may attend the Planning Board meeting scheduled for the following evening but will not be eligible to vote until his appointment is formally completed and he is sworn in.

Motion: **(Selectman R. Leary / Selectman D. Plansky)** Moved to appoint Sean Flynn as a full member of the Planning Board.
Vote: (4-0-0) The motion carried.

C. 250th Committee Payment Requests
250th Donations & Expenses - Donations
250th Noel's donation refund
250th Darcy Donahue approval
250th Darcy Donahue approval

Joe Stapleton appeared before the Board regarding payment requests submitted by the 250th Committee. The Board discussed three requests, including two reimbursements involving Darcy and a **$250** refund for a donation.

The Board reviewed the requests and determined that **$757.64** was due to Darcy.

Motion: **(Selectman S. Gannon / Selectman J. Brunelle)** Moved to approve the reimbursement to Darcy of $757.64.
Vote: (4-0-0) The motion carried.

The Board then considered a **$250** refund to the Noel Tree Farm Fund.

Motion: **(Selectman S. Gannon / Selectman J. Brunelle)** Moved to refund Noel's Tree Farm $250.00.
Vote: (4-0-0) The motion carried.

Mr. Stapleton reported that one additional reimbursement for Darcy would be presented at the following meeting. He stated that he would provide the Board with an updated spreadsheet showing expenditures and the remaining

balance in the fund.

Mr. Stapleton also discussed providing the Board with a spreadsheet identifying donors and the amounts received. He recommended that the Board formally accept the donated funds as a matter of public record and as a way to thank the donors. He clarified that no individual donation exceeded the **$10,000** threshold requiring additional Board action and a public hearing.

The Board discussed donor recognition and noted that various items, including signs and shirts, had been distributed to donors. Board members thanked Mr. Stapleton and the 250th Committee for their work and accomplishments.

D. Resource Fair

Bobby Jacques, of 18 Locke Mille Drive, appeared before the Board to discuss the proposed Resource Fair and potential dates. The Board considered January 23, 2027, and February 13, 2027. Discussion focused on selecting a date with favorable weather and enough time for advertising and community participation.

Mr. Jacques reported that approximately 700 people attended the prior year's event despite extremely cold weather. He stated that approximately 32 different groups were expected to participate and that additional organizations had expressed interest. Meals on Wheels and other community organizations were expected to participate.

Ms. Kleiner discussed the potential January 23 date in relation to other Town and school activities. LMS was scheduled to hold its winter play at 2:00 p.m. that day. The Town Deliberative Session was scheduled for January 30, while the School District Deliberative Session was scheduled for February 6. Members discussed the benefit of holding the Resource Fair before the Town Deliberative Session so residents could obtain information and ask questions regarding warrant articles and other Town matters.

The Board agreed that January 23 would allow residents to learn about Town services and proposed matters and would allow sufficient time for advertising.

Motion: **(Selectman R. Leary / Selectman J. Brunelle)** Moved to approve holding the Resource Fair on January 23, 2027.

Vote: (4-0-0) The motion carried.

Mr. Jacques stated that a save-the-date announcement would be prepared and provided to the Board for review before distribution. The Board thanked Mr. Jacques for his work organizing the event.

V. <u>Public Input @ 6:53:</u>

A. No one came forward

Public input closed at 6:54 p.m.

VI. <u>Business (Continued)</u>:

E. Litchfield Estate Bond (Housekeeping Cleanup)

<u>Letter from K. Daigle - Litchfield Estates</u>

Mr. Brunelle discussed a project-related bond. He clarified that although the bond for Litchfield Estates had previously been established, the Board had not formally addressed releasing the related permitting restriction. He described the issue as a housekeeping item following previous discussions with the project representatives.

The Board had received confirmation from Patriot regarding the bond and a request to release the restriction. Ken

Daigle, the Building Inspector, had also provided a report concerning the project's conditions and had been conducting

regular inspections and meetings with the project representatives. The Board noted that the reports were positive and that the bond remained in place to protect the Town.

Mr. Brunelle suggested that the Board approve the release of the restriction and authorize the applicable permits to proceed, effective September.

The Board discussed whether the project had satisfied the criteria established by the Conservation Commission, Planning Board, and Building Inspector. Ms. Kleiner also discussed the project's next phase and the possibility that additional Planning Board or Zoning Board approvals could be required because of setback requirements and ownership considerations.

Motion: **(Selectman D. Plansky / Selectman S. Gannon)** So moved.
Vote: (4-0-0) The motion carried.

F. CBH Sidewalks Maintenance
<u>Moore's Falls Driveway permit</u>
<u>Letter from Conservation - Corning Farm Sidewalk</u>
<u>Municipal Sidewalk Agreement</u>
<u>Plans for Moore's Falls West side CBH</u>

Ms. Kleiner discussed documents received regarding the proposed sidewalk installation at Moore Falls. She reported speaking with Ms. McKibben, who was not aware of the authorization requirements for driveway permits, and forwarding the documents to the Conservation Commission, which was already aware of the project. The parties have been in ongoing discussions regarding the sidewalk installation.

Ms. Kleiner understood that the project requires the Town to sign a municipal sidewalk agreement before work can proceed. The agreement is the same standard form previously used for the sidewalk on the opposite side of the road.

The Board discussed whether an easement would be required. The Town's legal counsel advised that the Select Board does not have authority to grant an easement and that any required easement would need to be authorized through a warrant article.

Mr. Charbonneau clarified that the proposed sidewalk is entirely within the State right-of-way and that the Town is not granting an easement for this portion of the project. Legal counsel has already reviewed any easement issues associated with the previously completed sidewalk on the opposite side of the road, and they may require action at Town Meeting.

Mr. Charbonneau also stated that the agreement is a standard State agreement. Ms. Kleiner noted that the agreement included winter maintenance responsibilities. She mentioned that if the Town agrees to maintain the sidewalk during the winter, it would be responsible for fulfilling that obligation. Legal counsel is working on a maintenance plan that will establish what the Town will maintain and will submit it to the Department of Transportation (DOT), as required. Attorney Morgan Hollis has also offered to assist with the maintenance plan.

The proposed sidewalk will be approximately six feet wide. The Board discussed whether the Highway Department's equipment could clear the sidewalk. The Road Agent, Kevin Brown, and the Technical Review Committee had previously indicated that a 72-inch width was necessary for the Highway Department's existing equipment. It was stated that the proposed width should allow the Town's equipment to maintain the sidewalk.

Mr. Brunelle also discussed the driveway permit requirement. Mr. Charbonneau explained that any work involving a connection to a state road requires a state driveway permit, even when modifying an existing driveway. The permit documents were presented to the Board for authorization.

Mr. Brunelle asked if someone would move to authorize the Chair to sign, on behalf of the Town, the two documents related to the sidewalk and driveway permit.

Motion: **(Selectman S. Gannon / Selectman R. Leary)** So moved.
Vote: (4-0-0) The motion carried.

The Board noted that additional work may be required regarding the warrant article and sidewalk maintenance plan. Attorney Morgan is assisting with the warrant process. The Board also discussed the possibility.

Motion: **(Selectman R. Leary / Selectman D. Plansky)** Moved to approve the consent items.
Vote: (4-0-0) The motion carried.

Ms. Kleiner stated that Attorney Spector-Morgan is assisting with the warrant process and assisted with the maintenance plan.

G. Proposed 2027 Budget – Approval to Budget Committee

Ms. Kleiner reported that, following the Board's budget review, the proposed 2027 budget was **$4,709 over the cap**. She distributed a list of the Board's changes to the various boards, commissions, and department heads to determine whether they had any concerns. The budget was scheduled to be presented to the Budget Committee on Wednesday.

Ms. Kleiner reported that the Town had not yet received final information regarding HealthTrust or other outstanding costs. The public hearing for HealthTrust was scheduled for September 24, with final invoices generally becoming available approximately one to two weeks afterward. The Board agreed that the budget was in a good position to move forward.

The Board discussed reducing the General Government Buildings budget to bring the proposed budget under the cap.

The Board considered General Government Buildings account 4194.10, line 430, General Building Maintenance and Repair. The line had been proposed at **$9,580**. Mr. Brunelle discussed reducing the line by **$4,710**, with the Town's expendable trust fund available to address additional building maintenance needs.

Ms. White noted that approximately **$65,851** was currently available in the Building Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund. The Board discussed the fund's purpose, the Town's aging buildings, historical maintenance spending, and several significant building issues that may require attention. Members also discussed potentially placing a future warrant article before voters to add funds to the account.

Motion: **(Selectman J. Brunelle / Selectman S. Gannon)** Moved to reduce line 430 by $4,710.
Vote: (4-0-0) The motion carried.

The Board discussed the possibility of additional adjustments during the remainder of the budget process and noted that the Budget Committee would have an opportunity to review the budget and consider warrant articles. Members agreed that continued collaboration with the Budget Committee would be necessary as additional information regarding expenses becomes available.

Motion: **(Selectman J. Brunelle / Selectman S. Gannon)** Moved to forward the proposed 2027 budget to the Budget Committee for review.
Vote: (4-0-0) The motion carried.

VII. Public Input @ 7:14:

A. Illan Kessler

Illan Kessler addressed the Board regarding the Circumferential Highway Exploratory Committee (CHEC) and its

exploration of potentially purchasing property identified as Industrial Drive. Mr. Kessler stated that he and others in the community oppose the potential purchase of the property and construction of a road connecting Charles Bancroft Highway to Route 102.

The Board clarified that no active proposal or agreement currently exists to purchase the property or construct a road through it. The CHEC Committee is serving in an advisory and exploratory capacity to evaluate the property and determine potential uses if the State decides to sell it. The State had approached the Town regarding the property, and the Town asked the Committee to evaluate whether the property would be appropriate for municipal purchase and, if so, what potential uses might exist.

Mr. Kessler read a letter into the record requesting that the Town not purchase the property or construct a road through it. He stated that a road through the property could negatively affect his family's farm, including its trees, soil structure, drainage, wildlife habitat, aesthetics, and overall character. He expressed concern that construction could create conditions conducive to Phytophthora, or root rot fungus, and potentially threaten the farm's trees.

Mr. Kessler also described the farm's contributions to the community, including maintaining culverts, preserving wildlife habitat, removing trash and debris, maintaining roads and paths for public access and emergency services, paying for police details, addressing trees near power lines, purchasing materials locally, and employing local community members. He said constructing a road through the property would conflict with Litchfield's agricultural character and the goals of the Town's Master Plan and Conservation Commission.

The Board explained that any Town purchase would require further consideration, including determining a potential use for the property, identifying funding, and potentially placing a warrant article before voters. The Board emphasized that the CHEC Committee does not have authority to commit the Town to purchasing the property or constructing a road. The Board thanked Kessler for presenting his concerns and submitting his letter for the record.

Mr. Gannon discussed the Town's limited authority over the state-owned land and the need to determine whether pursuing the property would be in the Town's best interest. The Town would have the opportunity to make the first bid, but it currently lacks authority to purchase the property. If the Town declines the property, it would be offered to the State Housing Authority. If the State Housing Authority declines, the property would be sold through a public bidding process.

Mr. Gannon then noted that any decision to acquire the property would require a plan for its future use and, ultimately, the Board is currently evaluating the potential value of the land, possible uses, acquisition options, and whether pursuing the property is in the Town’s best interest.

The CHEC Committee previously requested that three additional properties be included in its consideration because they provide access to the land behind the property without requiring access from another location. The State returned those properties to the Town's consideration. The Town has 60 days to indicate whether it is interested in acquiring them.

The Board reported that it remains in communication with the Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding the property. Mr. Gannon discussed the possibility that the State Housing Authority may have other properties better suited to its needs, particularly because portions of the property contain wetlands and lack sewer and water infrastructure.

Ms. Plansky acknowledged that the 60-day timeframe makes it difficult to determine whether the Town should acquire the properties. Members emphasized the importance of public input and encouraged residents to attend upcoming meetings on the matter.

Mr. Kessler agreed that the State Housing Authority may have other properties better suited to its purposes. He also noted that if the Town declines the property, the Town will have less control over its eventual use. The Board discussed the possibility of the Town acquiring the property and subsequently determining an appropriate use.

The Board also discussed residents who could potentially be displaced by changes involving the properties. Ms. Kleiner noted that individuals who have lived in Litchfield for many years are members of the community regardless of whether they own property. The Board acknowledged that assistance for affected residents is an ongoing concern and indicated that some matters involving the properties should be discussed separately.

Public input was closed at 7:30 p.m.

VIII. <u>Town Administrator Report:</u>

Town Administrator Kim Kleiner provided the following updates:

Health Trust Public Hearing TAs/TMs on Rates - September 24, 2026

Ms. Kleiner reminded the Board of the upcoming public hearing scheduled for September 24.

Ambulance/Dispatch Contract with Londonderry

Ms. Kleiner said that the Town is also working on the Ambulance and Dispatch contracts with Londonderry.

NHMA Guidance

Ms. Kleiner noted that the New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA) released 15 guidance documents concerning legislation passed during the most recent legislative session. Topics include land-use changes and changes affecting the drafting of warrant articles. She distributed the information and related links to the Department Heads and Boards and Commissions. The NHMA also released its final legislative bulletin, which it will provide to the Board.

Town Engineer

Ms. Kleiner continues to work on the Town Engineer position.

RFPs

Ms. Kleiner is reviewing a couple of requests for proposals received from the Recreation Commission. Additional work is underway concerning tennis courts, Talent Hall projects, and other matters transitioning from the budget process into implementation. The Recreation Commission is working on an extension to the contract with Alliance.

Road Evaluation

Ms. Kleiner reported that work continues on the road-related evaluation and that the report is expected in January or February.

IX. <u>Selectmen's Reports:</u>

A. <u>Selectman R. Leary:</u>

a. **<u>Recreation Commission</u>**

Mr. O'Leary reported that he had no additional Recreation Commission information following the recent election and meeting.

B. <u>Selectman D. Plansky:</u>

a. **<u>Planning Board:</u>**

Ms. Plansky said that the Planning Board held a productive meeting. Discussion included Stormwater Management and reducing road size in new developments. The Board considered whether narrower roads would require sidewalks, which could offset the pavement reduction. Members indicated that the Town had rejected the approach of requiring sidewalks in all subdivisions.

b. **Heritage Commission:**

Ms. Plansky said the Heritage Commission could not hold its previous meeting because it lacked a quorum. Its next meeting is scheduled for Thursday at 6:00 p.m. in the conference room.

c. **Circumferential Highway Exploratory Committee (CHEC):**

Ms. Plansky reported that a September meeting would not be held because of other demands. Members have nevertheless continued working on the matter and will provide additional information as it becomes available.

C. Selectman S. Gannon:

a. **Conservation Commission:**

Mr. Gannon reported to the Conservation Commission that repairs were completed on the fence at Moore's Falls that was damaged during the previous winter. Finnegan Fence donated a post for the repair. The Board thanked the company for its contribution.

b. **Energy Committee:**

Mr. Gannon discussed the Energy Commission and noted that it needs members. Volunteer vacancies also remain for the Zoning and Energy Committees.

D. Selectman J. Brunelle:

a. **FIC:**

Mr. Brunelle stated that the School Facility Committee has not yet met while awaiting the engineering firm's participation. The Committee is scheduled to meet Thursday at the Fire Department.

X. Other:

A. None

XI. Adjournment:

Motion: **(Selectman D. Plansky/Selectman R. Leary)** Moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:39 p.m.
Discussion: None
Vote: (4-0-0) The motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Matthew Sullivan
Select Board Recording Secretary