

Town of Lincoln  
Selectboard Regular Meeting  
July 16, 2024

{Draft} Meeting Minutes

[https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/BmHfEYAY7BIEBDWnZg1QA5Ro4KLBS72zyTt\\_Wd0B0w3Zt9akK9TjhyenXMcpaHem.6A\\_xPiuxjBO4ONzz](https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/BmHfEYAY7BIEBDWnZg1QA5Ro4KLBS72zyTt_Wd0B0w3Zt9akK9TjhyenXMcpaHem.6A_xPiuxjBO4ONzz)

Vote format: YES/NO/Vacant, Absent, Abstention, Recusal

Called to order at 6:32 PM by Tim McGowan, Chair

Present: Tim McGowan, Joe Martell, Victor Atkins, Amanda Allen, Conor McDonough

Other town officials present: Kristyn Brady, Selectboard Assistant; Van Talmage, Treasurer; Sally Ober, Clerk; Josiah Jackson, Planning Commission Chair; Nicole Lee, Development Review Board Chair; Steve Halnon, Development Review Board; James Needham, Development Review Board; Ken Stockman; Development Review Board; Katie Manaras, Conservation Commission Chair

Guests: Brian McDonough, Walter S. Burnham Foundation Committee Chair; Paul Forlenza, Lincoln Village Trust

Public present: Alan Pistorius, Lawrence Martell, Brian Bates (Zoom), Serena Fox (Zoom), Sandra Lee, David Venman

Public Comment

Alan Pistorius from Mill Rd shared that road conditions have deteriorated since it was refurbished with what he assumed to be recycled asphalt, maybe in May, and brought in baseball-sized pieces of rock that he has to drive over slowly to avoid damage to the undercarriage of his vehicle. He requested that the Selectboard or Highway Department look at it and suggested perhaps a layer of road gravel would help. Tim committed to taking a look and getting back to him.

Agenda

**MOTION** by Tim, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Joe to approve the agenda as written.

**PASSED** 5/0/0

Updates and Reports

Planning Commission Quarterly Update

- Josiah Jackson shared what their relatively new Board has accomplished since March. They have a rough timeline for the Town Plan rewrite and bylaw updates, and they hope to encourage more of the public to show up to their meetings.
- New zoning regs from December 2023, created with the help of ACRPC and a grant from the state to encourage more housing development in certain areas, are now in place. There are also interim regs in place that don't align exactly with the existing zoning regulations. The PC has voted to recommend that the Selectboard make language updates to the interim regs and extend

them for one year. Their plan is to focus first on the Town Plan, which will more effectively drive the update of the interim regulations. The deadline to complete the plan is February 2026, at which point they would turn their attention to the regs.

- Van Talmage emphasized the importance of the Town Plan and the boundaries it sets. He would be interested in participating in that process. Katie Manaras shared that she believes the existing Town Plan is a great start and there are some parts that may benefit from becoming more binding. Paul Forlenza shared that it has been difficult in the past to execute the Town Plan in a way that makes it more than a static document. Katie thinks the implementation chapter is important and could be improved to spur action. Jo shared that some towns will do what is required by statute and that's it, but Lincoln's focus should be on creating a more visionary roadmap.
- Katie shared that PC will be coming back to the Board for a resolution of support for their pursuit of grant funding for the planning process.
- There was discussion of what exactly was changed when the zoning bylaws were updated. Kristyn will share the detailed list that came from the Addison County Regional Planning Commission.

#### Development Review Board Quarterly Update

- Nicole Lee shared that there has been consistent questioning of what their board does and if they are focusing on the right things. She makes a point of addressing these things in the moment at their meetings. She reiterated that they are volunteers and all bring different expertise to the table. The workload is consistent and members all come prepared. Their mission is to uphold the zoning regulations and Vermont statutes to the best of their ability. She emphasized how important it is that those regs reflect the values of the town. The DRB interprets and enforces the rules, but doesn't make them. She tries to be really clear about their process and the thinking behind their decisions. She reminds people that everything can be appealed.
- She shared that townwide communication is a challenge, and this may be a topic for a joint committee meeting.
- The DRB just closed the evidentiary portion of the hearing on the Lincoln General Store's request for a conditional use permit for a creemee stand. She gave this as an example of where better communication could help: The decision might seem quick to someone just learning about the application, but the DRB has been doing their work on it for about a month.
- Sally Ober asked if the public is allowed to participate in a DRB meeting or if it's only interested parties who can speak. Nicole clarified that the public can observe and she asks if they'd like to be included as an interested party, which requires providing contact information and being willing to respond as the case moves forward.

#### Conservation Commission Quarterly Update

- Katie Manaras shared the committee's new mission statement: To protect and enhance Lincoln's natural and cultural resources for their inherent value and their contribution to quality of life for all inhabitants. LCC and volunteers promote public understanding and appreciation of nature; advocate for, celebrate, and steward Town lands; create educational events, spaces, and tools; engage in the civic life of the Town, including Town planning and policy development; build climate resilience based on new science and Indigenous wisdom.
- They are advisory to the Selectboard – “the nature nerds” of Lincoln. They recently organized the annual Green Up Day event and collaborated with the Library Board on a Volunteer Fair with that this year. They have hosted bird walks this spring in Willard's Woods and had strong participation. They organize invasive species removal workdays in June with a stellar group of volunteers.
- She wanted to ask the highway supervisor about the timing of roadside mowing, because it relates to the spread of invasives. Katie will provide Tim with the best possible window for when it should get mowed so it doesn't spread seeds. She shared that Lincoln has such beneficial control

of the invasive problem because we don't have state roads and we're in a more manageable place with it.

- A new pollinator garden was opened last year, thanks to the leadership and gardening work of Lisa Nading and Christine Birong Smith. Katie asked for official SB approval to hold an event in the garden and use sidewalk chalk in the Town Office parking lot.
- They're also interested in supporting the PC with the Town Plan, particularly in the sections relating to forestry, water quality, and flood planning. Communication with the town feels like less of an issue for LCC, but Katie agrees that it's essential for the planning work. She shared that there are professional facilitators that may or may not be worth the investment to turn people out for more public participation. Sally remembered that the last Town Plan process included some public information sessions with food provided at Burnham Hall. Katie agreed that the more effort put in at the beginning, the more it pays off in the quality of conversation and end product. She wondered if some of the grant funding for planning would support any of that.
- There was discussion of how to make the Willard's Woods gate more accessible for motorized wheelchairs. They are allowed, according to MALT, but there is a question about how to get folks through the gate. Right now it has a key, but they just voted to change this to a combination lock, so they can give that combo out as a short-term solution. Katie and Tim will reach out to the concerned resident.
- There was discussion of a proposed 5K fun run hosted by Lincoln Sports that would go through Willard's Woods. Katie will work with the Town Office and contractor to ensure that mowing happens right before. Kristyn will share a Daily Traffic Control Plan form with Brian Bates at Lincoln Sports.

**MOTION** by Tim, 2nd by Amanda to authorize the use of the Town Office parking lot for the Conservation Commission's first Perennial Pollinator Party on July 27, 2024.

**PASSED** 5/0/0

#### Walter S. Burnham Foundation Committee Quarterly Update

- Brian McDonough shared an update on two ongoing ARPA-funded projects at Burnham Hall. Construction on the elevator project has been delayed this summer and the air handling project is in the planning process and should be underway by the end of the year. There is nothing needed from the SB at this time.
- The Burnham Presents Music Series has been a major success and the second starts in September.
- Brian made an appeal to the young people in the community to consider joining the Burnham Board. The facility is a town asset and could be used more.

#### Lincoln Village Trust Quarterly Update

- Paul Forlenza congratulated the Board on bringing these groups together for quarterly updates. It has been a need for a long time.
- The Lincoln Village Trust is now officially a federal nonprofit. Paul shared the list of officers. They meet once a month. for now. Their first focus was the General Store, and while they didn't reach their fundraising goal, the group did help to facilitate the private sale. Next, they applied for village preservation trust funding and didn't get it. Now, they are investigating municipal water systems and talking to various groups about whether there is an existing need in Lincoln. They are contemplating developing a map of existing septic systems and water sources in the village center – they'd need that before they can do anything else. David Venman shared some context in that the capacity of the water system is what limits development in the village center, particularly the installation of a public restroom, an expansion of the General Store, or opening a daycare at the church.

- Paul asked about a past engineering study that investigated turning the Quaker St/River Rd/Gove Hill Y into a T intersection. Doing this would expand village parking and overall safety, so they'd be interested in looking at it, if the Selectboard/Town Office can share.
- They are still deciding how to use funding for their mission of supporting Lincoln. They will establish criteria for how to spend funds raised, whether it's by the trust or passed through to other groups.

#### Town Clerk Quarterly Update

- Sally Ober shared that there have been two convenings of the Board of Civil Authority on reappraisal appeals. She and Assistant Clerk Caroline Seigfried have been working on getting about 80 survey maps scanned by an outside contractor. This helps update the online land record database and money comes from the records restoration fund.
- There was discussion of the Selectboard's role in the August 13 primary election, as part of the Board of Civil Authority. Absentee ballots have gone out and will start to trickle in. She reiterated that she relies on the Selectboard to respond to requests for participation in certain election activities.
- She shared a goal of helping with the transition and onboarding of the new town administrator. Redefining and clarifying roles and responsibilities will be a big part of that. She also mentioned the transition to a new treasurer and assessor and her past support of the folks in those roles.

The Zoning Administrator update was tabled until Steve Gutowski can join a future meeting.

#### Treasurer Update

- Van Talmage shared that we're past the end of the fiscal year and there are surpluses in both the General Fund and Highway Fund. There are no urgent needs at this time. He will supply a final budget status report after closing the books on the year. He will provide a monthly budget report to the Highway Supervisor so he can track that department's spending.
- Sally asked the Selectboard to think about how the audit process might be affected by the hire of a new treasurer.

#### Highway Update

- Joe Martell shared that Highway Supervisor Will Mathis and the team have been grading and working to complete the Gove Hill Rd ditching, but they had some equipment issues that slowed things down. Part-timer Gary Smith has been pitching in a lot. Kristyn will update the website to reflect that the partial closure to through traffic will continue until further notice.
- Tim shared that the new team has a complete shift in attitude. They get along and work together well. There has been great feedback from the town, as well. He's glad that feedback of what's wrong continues to come in, too.
- There was discussion of a drainage issue affecting a private home on West River Rd. Lawrence Martell shared that culverts are getting plugged and water coming off Atkins Road is coming right into his garage. He has asked about it in the past and is asking again what can be done. Tim said that Will, Wayne, and Joe will take a look at it and respond to Lawrence.
- Joe will also work with Will on the Mill Rd feedback.
- Conor asked if there is a schedule set for harvesting from the sand pit. Will has been updated on how the pit operates and will stick to the previous schedule of working there in September.

#### Grants Update

- Amanda shared again that the mini grant for an energy efficiency informational event came in. Two agreements for VTrans grants are ready to sign. Kristyn created a spreadsheet to track grant status and new opportunities.

## Current Business and Authorizations

### FY25 Tax Rates

- The Municipal Tax Rate (based on the budget passed at the March 2024 Town Meeting) is 0.4945, the Homestead Education Tax Rate (set by the state) is 1.2648, and the Non-Homestead Education Tax Rate (set by the state) is 1.2018, resulting in 1.7593 for the Residential rate and 1.6963 for the Non-residential rate.

**MOTION** by Tim, 2nd by Conor to set the tax rates for FY25 as proposed by the Treasurer.

- In FY24, the Municipal Tax Rate was 0.8479, the Homestead Education Tax Rate was 1.6368, and the Non-Homestead Education Tax Rate was 1.5857, resulting in 2.4847 for the Residential rate and 2.4336 for the Non-residential rate.
- In FY23, the Municipal Tax Rate was 0.7739, the Homestead Education Tax Rate was 1.4873, and the Non-Homestead Education Tax Rate was 1.4635, resulting in 2.2612 for the Residential rate and 2.2374 for the Non-residential rate.
- Tim shared the following comments:

We as a Board have done our part in managing our municipal expenses. We made hard choices, prioritized what was needed, and kept in mind the realities of household costs for Lincoln residents. We offered and the town accepted a budget that kept the budget, and therefore the total taxes to be raised, relatively flat, with an increase of just \$1,755. Our school board worked hard to keep the school budget in line – even with our break from the supervisory union, they kept their increase to just 6%.

Despite these efforts, there will be an increase in property taxes based on decisions made in Montpelier. Reports said there would be an average 13.8% increase for Vermonters. When the new rates are applied to my own home, it comes out to an increase of 18.7% over the previous year and a total increase of 28.6% in two years. This is unsustainable and many individuals are going to feel this pain.

I would like to propose that we as the Board invite our local representatives, Mari and Caleb, to come to a warned meeting and explain their decisions to impose such increases on taxpayers. I also recommend that anyone in town come to that meeting and/or call your representatives to ask what they are going to do to help stem the property tax increases and work to reduce them to a reasonable level.

**PASSED** 4/0/1 (Victor abstained)

**MOTION** by Tim, 2nd by Amanda, to invite our state representatives to join a future meeting and speak to this increase and what they are going to do to control costs for Lincoln residents.

**PASSED** 5/0/0

### Catering Permit Application #46325

- Applicant: Bobcat Cafe
- Event/Venue: Wedding reception at Burnham Hall
- Date: August 2, 2024

Acting as the Local Liquor Control Board:

**MOTION** by Tim, 2nd by Amanda to approve the Department of Liquor and Lottery Request to Cater Permit Application #46325.

**PASSED** 5/0/0

### Catering Permit Application #46061

- Applicant: Monkey Hospitality
- Event/Venue: Staff party for Beta employees at a private residence in Lincoln
- Date: August 2, 2024 (end time is 10pm)

Acting as the Local Liquor Control Board:

**MOTION** by Tim, 2nd by Victor to approve the Department of Liquor and Lottery Request to Cater Permit Application #46061.

- Victor asked how many vehicles would be involved for a party with 800 attending and is there anything the SB needs to do about traffic. Conor responded that it's an annual event and even having lived in the center of town, he didn't know it was happening last year until it was over, but emphasized that there should be a nature of respect to neighbors on that road. The Board is open to public comment about the experience this year. Kristyn will notify the fire department about the size and scale of this event.

**PASSED** 4/0/1 (Amanda abstained)

### Accounts Payable & Payroll Warrants

**MOTION** by Tim, 2nd by Victor to approve **AP 25-03 for \$27,055.64.**

Includes \$12,675 for county taxes; \$5,179.95 for gravel; and \$888.41 for a portion of the Sugar Bush Hill Bridge hydrology study.

**PASSED** 5/0/0

**MOTION** by Tim, 2nd by Joe to approve **PR 25-01 for \$6,379.20** [pay period ending 6-30-24] and **PR 25-02 for \$5,408.82** [pay period ending 7-6-24.]

**PASSED** 5/0/0

### Previous Meeting Minutes

**MOTION** by Tim, 2nd by Joe to approve as amended the meeting minutes for the 6/4/2024 regular meeting.

Details related to the town administrator job offer, including the full name of the candidate, Patricia Waugh, and salary proposed, \$100,000 annually, were originally omitted in error.

**PASSED** 5/0/0

**MOTION** by Conor, 2nd by Amanda to approve the meeting minutes for the 6/27/2024 special meeting.

**PASSED** 4/0/1 (Tim abstained)

**MOTION** by Tim, 2nd by Victor to approve the meeting minutes for the 7/2/2024 regular meeting.

**PASSED** 3/0/2 (Conor and Amanda abstained)

### New Business

- There was discussion of the trade-in options for town vehicles. Joe secured a trade-in offer of \$35,000 for the pickup. The original purchase price was \$59,000. Joe will work with Van to find out what we owe. To buy a small dump truck outright would be \$96,000 – Joe will get info on the interest rate. Tim asked if this is something we want to put our efforts into to get it done. Joe clarified that the dump truck would be more useful for small ditch work and projects where the

electrical lines are down low. Conor asked if this would eventually be a cost-saving measure. Tim feels that, yes, it will be more efficient and save man hours, but there would be an upfront cost.

- There was discussion of replacing the grizzly, the machine that helps distribute the stone and sand as it's loaded. With the corrosion from salt, it's on its last legs. Past Boards have discussed replacing it, and Tim believes it's time to take action. Joe has a proposal from Sargents Certified Welding for \$14,793 for a new one. They built Bristol's with the same structure.

**MOTION** by Conor, 2nd by Victor to approve the purchase of the new grizzly built as proposed by Sargents Certified Welding for \$14,793.

**PASSED** 5/0/0

- There was discussion of the priority list for when the new Town Administrator starts on July 22. Kristyn will email Trish with the SB copied to invite her to arrive at the office Monday at 9am. Amanda and Kristyn will touch base this week on an agenda and what food to provide. Conor would like to have her work on clarifying roles and responsibilities as a long-term project. Amanda would like to have her think about a communications plan and how to move that forward. Tim wants her to focus on hiring. Victor would like to give her space to get organized in her new role and bring her own priorities forward.
- PT highway maintenance worker Gary Smith is staying on and is looking for an hourly pay increase. Kristyn and Amanda asked that Trish come up with a standard process for requesting raises. All agreed he's deserving but want it to be a transparent, equitable process, given that others have requested increases, as well.
- Tim had a 30-day check-in with Will and he's happy and doing a great job.
- The cost of uniforms for each highway employee is \$29/week. Will and Gary got measured, but Tim thinks we should do the same for seasonal workers so they feel an equal part of the team. The decision will be warned for the next meeting. They can be measured right away.

**MOTION** by Conor, 2nd by Victor to approve getting PT-temporary highway department staff measured for uniforms in preparation for warned item in next meeting

**PASSED** 5/0/0

- Kristyn will add the sale of the garage doors to the next meeting agenda.

#### Appointments & Employment

**MOTION** by Tim, 2nd by Victor to appoint Dave Erickson to the Conservation Commission.

**PASSED** 5/0/0

The Selectboard thanked Ned Lawson for his service and wished him all the best.

**MOTION** by Tim, 2nd by Victor to enter executive session regarding the appointment, employment, or evaluation of a public officer or employee. 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3)

**PASSED** 5/0/0

Entered executive session at 9:28 PM.

Exited executive session at 9:51 PM.

There was discussion of an application for the FT highway maintenance worker role. The Board determined that it will hold a special meeting to interview Daniel Cram on July 23, 2024 at 6:30 pm.

**MOTION** by Tim, 2nd by Joe to adjourn.  
**PASSED** 5/0/0

Respectfully submitted: Kristyn Brady