

Town of Lincoln
Regular Selectboard Meeting
January 2, 2024

{Draft} Meeting Minutes

ZOOM MEETING RECORDING LINK, incorporated, and made part of these minutes:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/vl0Ma4Ah3vwFN0Iq1BDjV315uyefdSt7X-MNGK0RhGKLpa2cQz84CQY0Usv-JAvM.XKV7C1NavgonRMR9>

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

Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM by Bay Jackson, Chair

Present: Tim McGowan, Conor McDonough, Bill Finger (1 vacant)
Also present: Van Talmage, Treasurer; Sally Ober, Clerk
Public present: Paul Forlenza, Kudd Rood, Matt LaPointe online

Public Comment

Kudd Rood was interested to hear about the bridge project. Paul Forlenza asked when will ARPA fund approvals take place, and Bay assured him it would be on the agenda for the next meeting. Conor shared the ARPA request tracking document. Paul also shared that a rep from Lincoln School District needs to know where to get the application for funds. Conor will send her the MOU. Bill publicly thanked Brian Bates and Sally Baldwin for cleaning up trash dumped in South Lincoln.

Review Agenda

MOTION by Bay, 2nd by Bill to approve the written agenda with one addition: Discuss Bridge 47 repair as part of Highway Dept update.

PASSED (including added item) 4/0/1

Updates and Reports

Highway Department

- Bridge 47 Project
 - SB approved Parent Construction proposal this summer, but flooding kept the contractors busy. They are ready to start the work, depending on weather and river height, ASAP. The timeline would be one to two weeks, and the financial plan looks good.
 - They'll be placing temporary supports under the beams and rebuilding bad supports. Staging will be done at the Town Garage.
 - There was a question about if any work would be done on the decking or all below, with disruption to access being the concern. Bill clarified that it's the footings that need replacing.
 - Tim Parent is a bridge expert and has completed work in Lincoln before. He's confident he will be able to access what he needs to do the repairs.
 - Their plan is to close the bridge to cars—daytime pedestrian access would be allowed—during working hours and allow vehicle access in the evenings. They may ask residents to park their cars on the other side of the bridge for access during the day.
 - Kudd Rood asked about where it would be safe to park on the side of W River Rd, particularly in January when there could be plowing.

- Bill will share email addresses and phone numbers of the affected residents with the contractor so they may coordinate directly. SB assistant will help to verify this contact info. Perhaps Tim Parent can address resident concerns by setting up a meeting with all involved.
- Traffic Calming Study – funder deadline is Jan. 3
 - Applied for a \$10K planning grant and they gave us \$30K. It was the only response to the Selectboard's RFP for this idea. Our response is due tomorrow.
 - The proposal was for passive traffic calming measures that can mainly be done with paint on road. The focus would be on pedestrian safety in the center of town.
 - Context: We already had a study done on creating a new sidewalk to the school, but the recommended plan was too expensive and got shelved.
 - Engineers would do their work and then the cost to carry out their recommendations would be on the town or could come from a VTrans grant.

MOTION by Bill, 2nd by Conor to approve accepting \$28,900 grant funding to cover engineer study proposal.

PASSED 4/0/1

- Other Highway Dept Updates
 - Dave is working on grants preliminary work, reporting on culvert and drainage work, and checked town vehicles for damage after rain and snow and everything is good.
 - Postmaster in Bristol said their driver couldn't access sections of County Rd, Cobb Hill Rd, and York Hill Rd that were "impassable" or weren't graded. With the wild swings in weather from mud conditions to frozen ground, Dave doesn't want to make it worse. Bay would like to troubleshoot this with Dave and maybe patch some sections so mail delivery can resume.
 - Bill mentioned that he clarified the TH-36/39 confusion for Matt LaPointe over email, and Matt confirmed via Zoom that his questions were answered. Bay reminded Matt to keep checking the agenda for this issue.

Treasurer Update

- FY25 Budget Update
 - The treasurer and members of the Selectboard have been through the highway budget and general fund, but the resulting tax rate is too high.
 - Van requests a budget special meeting of the full SB on Thursday at 5:30. Sally can join or SB can pose their questions for her after. Agenda will go up tomorrow.
 - Sally requested that a draft budget be shared with town staff who may have insight into certain line items. Tim plans to send draft out to staff after the 4th.
 - The SB will make adjustments and review budget again before the next regular meeting on the 16th. There will be some time for changes between that meeting and printing on the 24th.
 - Paul Forlenza requested the current draft for review.
 - Van will send the working spreadsheet (not just PDF) to Bay.

Current Business and Authorizations

Transfer Station Contract

- Wade Acker no longer wants to take tires at our transfer station for financial reasons. As an alternative to having a pile out there all the time, Bill suggested making discounted tire collection available once a year on Green Up Day and budget for that, rather than put the burden on transfer station operator.
- The per bag charge for trash will go up one dollar.
- Certificate of insurance was received today.
- New business: Transfer station certification expires June 30, so we need to reapply.

MOTION by Bill, 2nd by Conor to approve the 2024 transfer station contract with Acker Waste Management with the removal of the tire provision (addendum A, #5).

PASSED 4/0/1

Cost of Living Adjustment Increase

- Benchmarking: Federal increase (Social Security) was 3.2%, state was up to 2.2%, and municipal retirement system was adjusted 1.1% for 2024. Last year's COLA for Town of Lincoln staff was 5% to make up for COVID year.
- Paul Forlenza noted that in the past the town has used the state increase as a guideline, but sometimes went slightly over.
- 3% would add \$12K to budget. 2% would add around \$9K.
- With such a small difference, Paul would go with 3%. Bay likes that it's in keeping with the federal baseline.

MOTION by Bill, 2nd by Bay to approve the 3% COLA increase and keep employee health contribution the same.

FAILED 1/3/1

MOTION by Bay, 2nd by Tim to approve the 3% COLA increase.

PASSED 4/0/1

Employee Health Contribution Rate

- The options are keeping the rate at 8% or increasing the rate to 10%. Insurance premiums went up 13% over the previous year.
- Van forecasted the impact using Sally as an example: Her cost difference is as high as \$700, and a 3% COLA increase would only cover half of that. He suggested considering that there are other open staff positions this might affect.
- Bill would like to see year-over-year totals for premiums and the contribution rate.
- Bay added that in the past it has been helpful to have a working spreadsheet with formulas set up, so you can plug in these kinds of changes and see the impact to our bottom line. She believes one of the first questions the public will ask if they are shown a higher budget is how much the town is paying for employee health insurance. Van said he can bring a spreadsheet to the SB special meeting on Thursday.
- Clarification: The change to the employee health contribution rate will not occur in payroll until July 1, the start of FY 2025. The 8% rate still stands for Jan 1-June 30.
- Discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

Review and Approval of Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrants

MOTION by Bill, 2nd by Bay to approve **AP-24/27 for \$28,215.17 [includes \$7K for plowing support and \$7K for auditors]**
PASSED 4/0/1

MOTION by Bill, 2nd by Bay to approve **PR-24/26 for \$5,089.06**
PASSED 4/0/1

MOTION by Bill, 2nd by Bay to approve **PR-24/27 for \$3,564.48**
***PASSED** 4/0/1

***Additional 4 hours holiday time to be paid out to Dave Cavoretto at next pay period.**
Notify Ashley.

Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

MOTION by Bill, 2nd by Bay to approve **SB meeting minutes for 12/19/23 regular meeting**
PASSED 4/0/1

Appointments and Employment

Update appointed officials list (2023-24)

- There are many vacant seats and positions that need to be confirmed – those discussed were:
 - Energy coordinator seat is vacant, to answer the question from ACRPC
 - Bay and Kristyn will go over the status doc and make some phone calls.
 - Kristyn will post a list of all vacant appointed positions to FPF and work on summarizing each role somewhere on website.
 - It was suggested that we give out list of open positions at Town Meeting so every voter can indicate interest. Perhaps put a sign-up sheet in polling place and announce at the meeting where voters can find the sign-up sheets.

New Business

- Put Town Meeting planning on agenda for next meeting.
- Decide on Town Administrator article.
- Research cost to contract with an assessor.
- All official requests for funding should go to lincolntownreport@gmail.com.
- Put law enforcement on the ballot again. Find out what can a contract with the sheriff look like and have Michael Elmore back to talk about it. Or invite him to be a guest speaker at town meeting. Conor mentioned that the town should vote every year just to get a pulse on what residents value in regards to public safety.

MOTION by Bill, 2nd by Bay to adjourn at 8:27 PM
PASSED 4/0/1

Respectfully submitted: Kristyn Brady