

NOTICE  
Town of Lowell  
SELECT BOARD MEETING  
THE LOWELL SELECTBOARD WILL MEET ON  
Tuesday October 8, 2024, AT 5:30 P.M.  
AT THE TOWN OFFICE BUILDING.

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**AGENDA:**

- Additions & Deletions
- Sign Orders
- Review minutes from September 24, 2024
- Road Commissioner updates
- Other Business

Selectboard:  
Wayne Richardson-Chm  
Darren Pion  
Jennifer Blay

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*MINUTES*  
SELECTBOARD MEETING  
TOWN OF LOWELL  
Meeting held on October 8, 2024.

**Board members present:**

Wayne Richardson- Chm, Darren Pion, Jennifer Blay  
Christy M. Pion -Town Clerk/Selectboard Clerk/Ass't Treasurer  
Rebecca DiZazzo-Treasurer/Ass't Clerk  
Marie Busch-Asst.Clerk/Asst. Treasurer

**Note: All meetings are recorded on a handheld recording device.**

**Meeting called to order at 5:35 p.m.**

**GUEST:**

- Audra Pitts- Newport Daily Express
- Mary Klemme-Resident
- David DiZazzo-Resident & LBC Pastor
- Dawn Nick-Resident
- Billy Jo Nick-Resident
- Ume Klemme-Resident
- Gerry Nick Resident & New Fire Chief
- Reginald Pion-Resident
- Brenda Wesolow-Resident
- Mark Higley- Representative/Lister/Resident
- Ben Willey-Resident
- Chad Falconer-Resident
- Dotty Spoerl-Resident/Auditor
- Alex Sicotte-Resident
- Tiah Kneeland-Resident
- Billy Henn-Resident
- Ashley Callahan-ACO & Resident
- Sam Douglass- Running For State Senate
- Sonja Blodgett-Resident

## Additions and Deletions:

### Several residents from the Town came to the meeting to discuss their concerns about who will be taking over the roads since Calvin's unexpected passing.

• Wayne called the meeting to order and had everyone present announce who they were before discussions took place. After everyone was accounted for, Wayne asked who would like to go first. Ben Willey Spoke up and said he would. Ben asked everyone to take a moment and just remember Calvin and the person that he was, and for all that he had done for our town. Reginald Pion had voiced many concerns and opinions during the beginning of the meeting. Some of the questions were about why hasn't the Board appointed a new Road Commissioner. The Board has taken on the role of the Road Commissioner with Wayne Richardson, Board Chair, as the point person for the group and will do so until March Town Meeting. They offered the job to long time Road Crew member Christopher Pion, but at the time he stated that he didn't want the job, and didn't want to have to deal with re-election at Town Meeting. The Board stated that they would like to give him time in hopes that he might change his mind. There were concerns of needing to have a Special Town Meeting voiced several times during the meeting, and Board member Jenn Blay stated your concern has been noted. There was a concern that not all the town trucks would be utilized this winter, but the Board assured everyone that they have this covered for all the trucks and none would be sitting unused. There were concerns of the roads not being graded, Darren stated that he would run the grader when needed and that he had already graded the worst road in town, the rest would be done in the coming week. Jenn spoke up reiterating that the Board made this decision the day after Calvin passed, knowing that they needed to make a quick but rational and temporary decision for what would be best for right now. They didn't make this decision lightly as they would like to put someone in this role and would like to see someone elected at the next meeting if that is what the Town's People decide. Jenn stated that she didn't feel it would be right to just go to a person that ran 3 years ago the day after Calvin died and say hey do you want his job, as she really cared for Calvin and everyone in this room, and as a Board they were thinking lets table this for a bit and give everyone sometime to process. Jenn stated that she would like to start fresh and would like to hear from everyone and know their opinions and concerns so that they can better serve the people and what they want. Gerry had made a comment that the fire department had selected an interim Chief until the next Fire Department meeting and made the decision to elect a person at that meeting. He also stated that he thought that the Board would just give it to the next person in line who would be Chris until town meeting. The Board stated again they had offered the job to Chris after Calvin died and again that morning and he still refused it. Darren stated that if the town's people decide they need to appoint someone, they need to know how many town's appoint the Selectboard to do the job and hire a Road foreman. Darren named many towns like Albany, Irasburg, Troy, Newport Center, Westfield, and many others as most towns do not elect Road Commissioners anymore. Darren stated that he feels that our town should be implementing the new way of having the Board be the Road Commissioner and hire a Road Foreman to do the job and have the Board be in charge of where the money gets spent that way if the person hired isn't doing a good job than they can fire him and hire someone who will do the job. Christy spoke up and read that in the Road Commissioner statue it states that "If it chooses, the Selectboard may appoint one or two members of the Selectboard to serve as Road Commissioner," with that being said they do not have to appoint and outside person. Jenn asked about another statue that said something about forty days, and Christy stated yes if the Town wants to petition to change the Road Commissioner job from elected to appointed they would need to petition 40 days prior to town meeting or put an article in the warning to change how it is done the same way the Clerk and Treasurer positions were changed. Ben asked if when the Board made the decision to appoint Wayne as the Point of Contact if he excluded himself from the vote, Wayne stated no, but the decision was unanimous anyway. Jenn restated that the minutes from that meeting are available to listen to if there are any other questions on it. Jenn also stated that Wayne had offered not to be paid for doing the job and that none of them are being paid for doing it, they are all volunteering their time. They were hoping that Chris would continue doing the job and that Wayne would continue plowing under him like he did with Calvin and would not be paid for any more than what he would normally do in the winter months. The Board was hoping not to fulfill a position but to have people that were interested in the job come forward and give it some time to find the right person with the right qualifications. Ben stated that he feels that the Board should wait until town meeting to give people time to decide whether they want to make the switch from their current job to this one. Wayne stated that that is exactly how the Board feels as well. Dawn Nick had a concern that people should have been informed of the emergency meeting so that they didn't have to wait for the minutes to be posted or come listen to the minutes after the fact. Jenn asked how this would have been done as they had just had the meeting the Wednesday after Calvin passed, and it had to be done quickly and how do you get it out to people in that short of a time. Dorothy Spoerl complimented the Board for doing what they did in such a short time but would like to see going forward warning a meeting as quickly as possible so that people can be a part of the decision making even if they don't appoint or elect someone at that point and time at least going forward the towns people would know what their options are and have the Board appoint someone and have the time to think about the options for the upcoming Town meeting. Jenn stated that it is nice to hear the concerns as the Board does not want to make a decision without the towns people and was glad to see so many people at the meeting. She also said they didn't want to say here's a person and wanted to be thoughtful about it and make a decision as a town. The Board was thinking how can we move forward as winter is coming. Ume Klemme, re-asked if

nothing was getting done at this point, and the Darren answered no, everything is still being taken care of as we still have Chris and we have Mike Dingee, and Wayne has been going to the garage every morning to discuss with Chris what needs to be done just as Calvin did. He stated that the sand pile had been finished after Calvin passed, the garage has been cleaned out and they are working on getting the plow frames on and sanders put in the trucks for winter. Tiah Kneeland asked if Chris had given his notice this morning as that was what she had heard. Christy stated that she had not received a notice from Chris. Darren stated that he had spoken to Chris this morning and that he didn't accept Chris's verbal notice and asked him to give it some more time before making a final decision. Darren also stated that he wouldn't accept his resignation unless it is in writing, and that he has enough respect for Chris to know he is grieving and that he needs time to grieve before making any decisions. Darren stated everyone wants us to throw somebody in it, but we threw ourselves in it, we are all losing money doing it, but I can guarantee you if it snows tomorrow those trucks will run, I'm in the drug testing pool and have a CDL and can run those trucks just as good as anyone and will guarantee the roads will get plowed. Jenn also stated that none of the Board members want the job but if someone does please come forward and talk to us about it. We need to know who's available and who is interested, we won't know unless you come forward. Jenn also stated that we could post it as a job, but we lose money doing it as it takes a lot of money to put it in the paper, and we could waste a lot of time doing interviews and still not find the right person and if you are interested come to a meeting we meet every other Tuesday. There was a lot more discussion on what the job is and what is demanded of it and why the Board wants to wait until Town Meeting to make an official decision with the town's people. More discussion of the Board's decision was discussed with repeated questions from late arrivals to the meeting. (Full details of this discussion are available in the town office in audio recorded form.) There will be further discussion about this in future meetings.

- Some people came forward during the meeting and offered their services to help with the roads. One being Mark Higley, Town Lister, who had ran the grader in the past and also Chad Falconer, Town Resident, who has a CDL and 20 years of trucking experience and has worked for the town of Stowe in the past plowing roads in the winter.
- Darren did let everyone know that we have now put up our sign but does not have power to it yet. The purpose of the sign is so that people will know what is going on and when events are happening. Wayne has done all the work to get the sign put up and hasn't charged a dime to do it.
- Audra Pitts, Newport Daily Express, shared with everyone at the meeting that she brought copies of the paper with the articles from all the recent meetings and events for everyone to view or take if they want one, as she has been at all the meetings including the emergency meeting. She also stated that there are extra copies at the Newport Daily office. If anyone wants extra copies, just give her a call at the office and tell her you're from Lowell and she will bring them to you.
- Another question was asked about posting agenda's to other websites other than the town website. Christy stated that it gets posted at the Store, Town Office, and Post Office, which are the only 3 places it has to be posted, but in the future she may be able to post it to the #WeAreLowellJayWestfieldTroyAreaStrong for Facebook users and Frontporch Forum for other users.
- Darren apologized to Wayne for doing all the talking during the meeting, he felt that he may have stepped on his toes a little, Wayne told him it was all good.
- Dorothy Spoerl asked the Board if they had a policy for when a town employee is out on medical leave. The Board answered yes that we had just adopted it on September 24, 2024 but hadn't officially signed the updated policy as it just happened during last meeting. She also wanted to know if it included a cleared for work letter from the doctor, at this time no, but will be added to the policy before final signature.

### **Sam Douglas:**

- Sam Douglas, candidate for State Senate, joined the meeting to introduce himself to the town and to tell us a little about himself. He lives in North Troy and is currently running for State Senator against Katherine Sims being that Bobby Starr has retired. He spoke a lot about the current issues and what he would like to see happen in our future. He left his information in case we had any questions for him and would love to hear from people on what they would like to see happen in the near future. He also touched a little on his thoughts of North Country Hospital's possible closing and how this may affect people in the future.
- Jenn asked Sam about Campaign signs and what the legality of placing them are as there were signs at the town gazebo that had been taken down and placed inside the gazebo. She later found out that Alden had asked Gerry to place them in the gazebo as it is illegal to solicit on town property. Sam didn't know all the rules for town property. Christy reiterated that no solicitation of signs are allowed on town property as town officials we have to remove them. Only on voting day people may stand at the end of the driveway of town property with signs but not near the building where voting is being held. Jenn asked if there was a policy put in place to keep this consistent. The Board decided they would talk more about this in a future meeting.

### **Sign Orders:**

- Financials for the Treasurer were approved and signed by the Board.

## Minutes from September 24, 2024

- Minutes from September 24, 2024, were approved and signed by the Board unanimously.

### Road Commissioner Updates:

- The Board is continuing to work diligently to make sure the roads are good, and things are getting ready for winter.
- Update on Grader, tire issue, oil leak and skipping problem need to be looked into.
- Appointment has been made for CV truck to have warranty work done.
- Oil and oil filters has been ordered for Grader and Trucks.

### Other Business:

- Gerry Nick, Fire Chief, asked if Alden had contacted the Town about the VFSA dues and if they had been paid. Becky Answered yes it had been paid. Gerry was relieved as he wanted to be able to apply for a death benefit for Calvin's family.
- Question was asked by Sonja Blodgett on the current progress of the bridge. The Board answered that it is right on schedule and that they were pouring the cement this week coming and that it would need 15 days to cure before moving forward.
- Question was asked about the Solar Project, the Board stated that they are waiting on more information before making any final decision.
- Dorothy told the Board about a hole that needs to be tended to on the Mines Rd.
- The Board discussed whether or not they wanted to write a letter of support. Jenn discussed the email that asked for the support from all the Towns. The Board decided to write a letter and tell the hospital of their concerns of not having all the details and are not able to write a full letter of support.
- Jenn shared a letter of response for Mary Rising with the other Board members. The Board were all in agreement with what was said in the response letter.
- After the meeting, the Board will have Christy put both the Hospital letter and the letter to Mary Rising on Town letterhead and send them out.
- There was a discussion about an issue in the listers office of one lister not wanting to share their responsibilities. The Board would like to invite the listers to a meeting and discuss how to remedy the situation.
- Jenn had discussed an email that she had received from FEMA about another grant being offered for the recent flooding but was told that after the paperwork is all done that it would not be worth the time and effort it would take doing it for what little bit of money was spent this time around.
- Dorothy brought to the Boards attention of a letter that was posted on the event board at the post office. It was signed anonymously and had information to come to the selectboard meeting tonight as it said in the letter that the Board is doing things not in the best interest of the town with the roads issues and appointing a road commissioner. The Board decided to write a letter of response on their own behalf to explain what was really going on and why they made that decision.
- Christy shared with Wayne the letter for reappointment of the Health officers that need to be done in November. Jenn asked if Wayne had to be the one to make the decision of appointment, Christy answered yes he does. Wayne stated that he will include the rest of the Board to help make this decision. More on this discussion will take place in a future meeting.
- Jenn would like to make future agendas during the meeting for the next meeting. She would like job descriptions, Listers, and pay changes to be on the next agenda.
- Wayne is going to produce a list description for the road foreman and the expectations. The other Board members are in agreement so that they can present this at Town meeting.

### Board Warrants:

➤ **General Order # 22** \$ 17,577.66  
➤ **Payroll Order # 21** \$ 8,901.64

\$ 26,479.30

Signed for the Treasurer to draw checks totaling -

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted by Christy M. Pion**

**Next meeting date: October 22, 2024, at the Town Office Building.**

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Wayne Richardson – Chair

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Christy M. Pion–Selectboard Clerk

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Darren Pion-Select Person

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Jennifer Blay-Select Person