

**Ludlow Select Board
REGULAR MEETING**

**Monday, January 6, 2025
6:00PM**

**HEALD AUDITORIUM
AGENDA**

Meeting ID: 963 5236 4337

Passcode: 411479

One tap mobile

+13126266799, 963 5236 4337#,,,,*411479# US (Chicago)

+16469313860, 963 5236 4337#,,,,*411479# US

Dial by your location

<https://zoom.us/j/abJ1grh212>

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brett Sanderson, Chairman
Scott Baitz

Justin Hyjek
Noah Schmidt

George Tucker, Jr.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Justin Hyjek

STAFF PRESENT:

Brendan McNamara

Ben Whalen

OTHERS PRESENT:

Joanna Bombadil
Nick Gilberti
Alan Couch

Logan Nicoll
Pat Pullinen

Sherry Tucker
Marcia Wemple

1. Call to order

- A. Brett Sanderson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Justin Hyjek was absent... He led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Consideration of any Changes, Additions or Removals to the Agenda

- A. There were none.

3. Approve Minutes from Previous Meeting

- A. Brett Sanderson advised that the minutes are from the meeting on November 4, 2024, November 19 2024 and December 11, 2024.
- B. **MOTION by George Tucker, Jr. and seconded by Noah Schmidt to accept the minutes from November 4, 2024, November 19 2024 and December 11, 2024 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

4. Comments from Citizens

- A. There were none.

5. Department Heads' Reports

- A. November 2024
 - a. Noah Schmidt noted that he likes the way the Ambulance Department lists this year's calls and last year's calls. He noticed a big spike in November and suggested that he would like to see more detail as to the cause of the spike in November. He asked if it could have been with the addition of Mount Holly.
 - b. Brendan McNamara said we did take on Mount Holly last year, and they do have a substantial number of calls.
- B. December, 2024
 - a. No comments

6. Approval of Requests/Licenses/Permits

- A. Brendan McNamara advised this is for the 1st and 3rd class Restaurant/Bar liquor license renewals for Little Mexico. Chief Billings has no issues and recommends renewal be approved.
- B. **MOTION by Scott Baitz and seconded by George Tucker, Jr. to approve 1st and 3rd Class liquor licenses for Little Mexico (Tortilla Restaurant Group, LLC.) Motion passed unanimously.**

7. Discussion Regarding Speed Limit Reduction on South Hill Cross Road

- A. Brendan McNamara advised that this has been discussed at previous meetings. There was an unfortunate accident where a dog was hit and killed by a truck. He said there is a process for lowering road speed limits. It is currently 35 MPH. Logan Nicoll from the MARC (Mount Ascutney Regional Planning Commission) performed a traffic survey in September.
- B. Logan Nicoll said that he performed the survey from September 7 through September 12, 2024. MARC only has a limited number of traffic counters and he would like to have left it up for 2 weeks. He will be able to redo it this coming summer. He said that most of the speeds from the survey were less than 30 MPH. The 85% was 27 MPH westbound and 29 MPH eastbound. He explained that 2 tubes are laid across the road and speed is determined by pressure.
- C. Scott Baitz asked if they would be able to tell the weight.
- D. Logan Nicoll said they are able to pretty accurately determine the length between the wheel bases.
- E. Marcia Wemple said that she lives on the street and it was her dog. She said an HB Energy truck was “barreling down the road” while the driver was on his phone. He said he was lost. She said he didn’t use his horn and the blood mark was 12 feet long. The man stopped because she screamed and the neighbors came out. South Hill Cross Road is not a paved road. There are lots of people walking, children playing and other dogs and animals. The speeding is “excessive.” We all want it lowered. We need help to get the speed limit reduced. She said there was a tractor-trailer this summer that knocked out the power. FEDEX, UPS trucks are all speeding.
- F. Brett Sanderson said we can have MARC do another survey, but the state sets the limits for back roads and even if lowered, we do not have enough police officers to enforce it. We can’t justify it.
- G. Marcia Wemple said there was no posted limit. The signs went up after the incident.
- H. George Tucker, Jr. said this board is sympathetic, but the survey indicated that the average speed limit was 22 MPH.
- I. Marcia Wemple said she sees it every day.
- J. Noah Schmidt said sometimes when you are standing still, vehicles’ speeds seem much faster than 35MPH.
- K. Marcia Wemple said you can’t see around the bend. She said even the locals speed. People are walking all of the time. The cones by my driveway were removed by the police. There are about 8 houses on the road. She said that another truck, “flying up the road” recently hit another dog.
- L. Scott Baitz asked how many roads in Ludlow are 25 MPH.
- M. Brett Sanderson said only in the Village.
- N. Brendan McNamara said by State Statute, the speed limit on back roads is 35 MPH. If the road is not posted, the speed limit is 50 MPH. He said that he sees Marcia Wemple’s concern, but he also sees both sides. His recommendation to the board is to do another traffic study. We have to go by the facts. The second study should be for a longer period of time. If we

- change one road, we will have to change all of them. The speed limit was not posted at the time of the incident.
- O. Logan Nicoll said the tubes work better on flat surfaces. He asked if he should try to place them more toward the bottom of the hill. He suggested that if people see the tubes, they may be slowing down.
 - P. Scott Baitz said if the road is not posted, it is 50 MPH.
 - Q. Brendan McNamara said there are statutes as to where speed limit signs should be posted. We will do another study.
 - R. Logan Nicoll explained that it was a busy season last year and he will definitely try for 2 weeks this summer. He will talk to Marcia Wemple about the location.
 - S. Brendan McNamara said in the meantime, he will try to have more police presence and make it part of the police route, but, we do have a limited number of officers.
 - T. Scott Baitz asked if traffic is different now than in the summer.
 - U. Marcia Wemple said yes.
 - V. Logan Nicoll said radar is not as accurate. He said there are different techniques for slowing traffic: leave trees closer to the road, put signs closer to the road, narrow lanes and loose gravel. He said the second study will help if we can leave it for a full two weeks. He said the data may support 30 MPH, but not 25 MPH.

8. Discussion Regarding the High School Building

- A. Brendan McNamara said that last year, the Expeditionary School requested that we extend their lease another year - through 2025. We need to review the lease this year. What is the town's intent for the future use of the building? How does the town want to move forward with the building? There have been some suggestions. This will be on the agenda for the next few meetings and we need to have group discussions. They are paying \$6,000.00 per year rent and the rest of the costs for the building are being paid by the town.
- C. Pat Pullinen thanked the town and community for supporting the school for the last 5 years. This is the first year we are able to collect tuition and we now have 13 students. Our intent is to stay and we are willing to negotiate a lease and grow the school. We are recruiting and have interest. It is a matter of time. We are in a better financial state and better able to pay the utilities. We would prefer a 2 or 3 year lease. At this point, we are up in the air for next year.
- D. Noah Schmidt asked how much space they are using.
- E. Pat Pullinen said on the 2nd floor, they have a Math, Library, Spanish, English, Social Studies, Science, Health, Art, office and are using the old Band room for lunch.
- F. Scott Baitz asked Brendan McNamara about input for other uses.
- G. Brendan McNamara said that he hasn't received many, but no one says the school has to go. Part of the building is not occupied and the town needs to cover the expenses. How can we use other parts of the building? He said that housing is not possible because of the close proximity to the Elementary School. Viable uses would be preschool or daycare.
- H. Scott Baitz asked the approximate costs to run the building.

- I. Brendan McNamara said about \$85,000.00/year (less the \$6,000.00 rent.) We need to come up with a new lease.
- J. George Tucker, Jr. said 7% of the total costs are covered by the lease. He asked Pat Pullinen if the school has a plan for growth for the next 2 to 3 years. Is there a target goal for the number of students? Would they be able to use the entire building in 5 years?
- K. Pat Pullinen said he will be happy to talk with Brendan McNamara. He said that the school has taken students from the Two Rivers Supervisory Union and offset TRSU's budget by \$180,000+ per year. He will be happy to negotiate; they are not looking for a free ride.
- L. Brendan McNamara said he will get together with Pat Pullinen and put this on the February agenda.
- M. Noah Schmidt asked what the costs would be if there were no tenants.
- N. Brendan McNamara said currently, electricity is \$16,500.00 per year.
- O. Scott Baitz said an empty building is a doomed building.
- P. Brendan McNamara said upward of \$60,000.00, but with disuse, things will start to crumble.
- Q. Noah Schmidt said a school makes the most sense.
- R. Brendan McNamara said they could consider offices for EMS. He said it will not be easy to find other uses.
- S. Noah Schmidt said Okemo Valley TV would be a good fit.
- T. Brett Sanderson said we will come back to this next month.

9. FY26 Budget Discussion/Approval

- A. Brendan McNamara said that he went over the budget and we are in a good spot. There is one still moving piece.

Expenses	\$7,241,208.40	up \$397,816.40
Amount to be raised in taxes	\$4,993,595.40	up \$248,776.40

This is a 5.3% increase over last year. Last year was 6.4% over the previous year. He said it is a good budget. He said the board will meet toward the end of the week and it will not change much. He wants to warn it by their next meeting, including Articles, (fire truck is one.) The board will vote to approve the budget. We have done our due diligence.

10. Municipal Manager Updates

- A. Winter - So Far
 - a. Brendan McNamara said with the snow, the crews did a good job over the holidays. Ambulance, Fire and Police were busy and everything went smoothly. Sand and Salt have taken a hit over the last 2 weeks.
- B. Mid-Year Fiscal Department Meetings
 - a. Brendan McNamara advised that he will be meeting this week with department heads to go over projections. Staff is doing a good job. He wants to play offense - 6 months - 12 months; 1 year to 2 years. He wants to get out in front of things.
- C. Town/Village Merger

- a. Brendan McNamara advised that he sent a 2nd draft of the charter to the boards. We should schedule a joint boards' meeting in 2 to 3 weeks. If we ratify it, it will go to town vote the Tuesday after Town Meeting.
- D. 1% Local Options Tax
 - a. Brendan McNamara said the committee has had one public meeting and will continue. The last meeting went very well and how it will benefit the town was discussed. It will help the town defray the costs of major capital expenses. He said people need to talk to other community members. He hopes to also put this on the ballot for the Tuesday after town meeting.

11. Other Business

- A. Noah Schmidt asked about the bathroom at the transfer station.
- B. Brendan McNamara said they are still waiting on the plumbing and they are finishing up the electrical work
- C. Justin Hyjek noted that some of the water lines in Ludlow were installed as far back as 1898 and we are now dealing with blow outs. It would be beneficial to understand the aging process of the water system and start upgrades.

12. Possible Items for Next Meeting - February 3, 2025

- A. Budget and High School Building

13. Sign Warrant Orders

- A. Brendan McNamara noted that Warrant Orders have been signed.

14. Possible Executive Session/Personnel/Contracts/Legal Issues

- A. Brendan McNamara said that an Executive Session is needed for Personnel matters.
- B. MOTION by George Tucker, Jr. and seconded Scott Baitz to enter into Executive Session for Personnel matters. Motion passed unanimously.**
- C. Board entered into Executive Session at 6:56 p.m.
- D. MOTION by Scott Baitz and seconded by Noah Schmidt to exit Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously**
- E. Board exited Executive Session at 7:30 p.m. No action taken.

15. Adjourn

- A. MOTION by George Tucker, Jr. and seconded by Noah Schmidt to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.
- B. Meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

Brett Sanderson, Chairman

Noah Schmidt

Scott Baitz

George Tucker, Jr.

Justin Hyjek