

Conway Finance Committee  
Minutes  
Monday March 11, 2013 7:00 PM  
Town Office

**Members Present:** James Cabral, Jim Bosman, Tanya Campbell, Andrea Llamas, Roy Cohen, Robert Stone. Others present: Diane Poland, Ron Sweet, and Selectboard.

**Next Meetings**

Monday March 18 7 PM Special Town Meeting at Grammar School followed by Budget Hearing with SB at the School to discuss Board of Health

Monday March 25 7 PM Budget Hearing with SB at Town Office to discuss Schools, Buildings, and Fire Department.

Monday April 1 Likely Fin Com Meeting

Monday April 15 Likely Fin Com Meeting

Thursday April 18 Warrant Articles Deadline

Monday April 22 – Likely date for final joint meeting with SB to finalize warrant.

Monday May 13<sup>th</sup> 7:30 PM Annual Town Meeting

**Planning Board**

Regarding the \$3500 FY14 budget request – Diane Poland indicated that research into the situation of the alternative uses of the existing town garage facility may involve some costs. This is regarding the re-purposing of the current garage building into a Safety Complex housing Fire, Ambulance and Police Departments. Jim suggested that we level-budget at \$2500 and we have \$40K in Reserve fund and if any of the costs go over the \$2500, she can request funds from the Reserve account. James asked about the costs for the Master Plan. Diane indicated there is \$6K in a separate budget for the Master Plan and that is how that will be funded. Jim asked what is the relationship between the master plan and the Recreation and Open Space Plan. Diane explained that the Master Plan is about economic and other needs and is broad. The Open Space and Recreation Plan fits into the Master Plan. John O'Rourke expressed support for the Planning Board's \$3500 budget request stating that the Planning Board will have a lot on their plate in FY14 and he thinks the money will be spent.

**Highway Department Operating Budget**

Andrea asked about the logic of the change in staffing. Working superintendant and three employees would be the staffing plan. Ron Sweet indicated that he is going to be a working supervisor, and there would be some part-time help in the summer, included at 10 weeks 40 hrs/week \$12/hour. There is also \$3,840 for the clerk. For winter, Ron plans to have two people available for temporary help to plow snow. There is also a savings regards to benefits, by eliminating a position.

The overall budget request is level however, and the decrease in salary and wage expense is offset by increases in many other accounts. Ron outlined his priorities in terms of road improvements. Number one is Ron wants to improve Whately Road from the waterfall beyond Cricket Hill to the Whately line, using Chapter 90 monies. \$270K was Chapter 90 last year. The Whately Road project will eat up what is left of this year's Ch.90 and the FY14 Ch.90 funds. Next, Ron considers upper end of Reeds Bridge .7 and Graves Road 1.7 to be the worse shape of the town's unpaved roads. His plan is to put fabric and gravel down, at an estimated cost of \$185K. This would also help prepare the roadbed for eventual paving. Poland Road would be addressed next (in FY15).

Jim asked about the \$20K in hired equipment. Ron explained that even if we fund the replacement backhoe, the town probably won't actually get it until partway through the construction season so he would use that money to rent a backhoe for the project work. And if it doesn't get spent on that, he could use some of the undspent funds towards the Reeds Bridge/Graves Road project. Ron increased many sub-accounts with an eye towards using the funds towards road maintenance. Ron decreased the

winter roads diesel budget based on the utilization he is seeing. Andrea asked if we have an inventory of the roads. She said she can give Ron a template to use to start building such an inventory. Roy asked about oil and stone on Whately Road. Ron said he is not a fan of that product. It is a 3-6 year life. Blacktop if you do it right, you will get 15+ years of use from it. It does not make economic sense to do oil and stone. Oil and stone is really just to seal it. It just follows the uneven existing surface.

Ron would use the funds from various accounts to start working on the Reeds Bridge/Graves Road since the Ch.90 funds would be allocated to the Whately Road project. James suggested maybe increasing the operating budget to fund catch-up work on substandard roads. Jim noted that as it stands, we have some very large budget increases this year and it is nice that Ron is coming in with a level-budgeted request. 20 miles of dirt roads. Andrea asked if we have the classification for the various roads. Depending on the classifications, TIP eligible roads can get funding from the Federal Government. This is another source of funding for road projects besides Ch. 90. James asked about the escalation of costs for road work. Ron explained that anything associated with oil can go up drastically (blacktop).

### **Highway Capital Budget**

Jim asked about the increase from \$55K to \$65K on vehicle maintenance. Ron said the vehicles have to be maintained. But he said the 1998 Ford dump truck is the oldest truck and actually it is in the best shape and it will still outlast the 2008 by a long shot. The newer vehicles have complicated wiring that gets damaged by salt. The newer trucks have salt spinners in front of the wheels which may be detrimental to the trucks. Having a wash bay would also help. The 2008 Kodiak Dump Truck is very expensive to maintain and he wants to do something about it next. The Cab and Chassis for the old Ambulance is going to be transferred to the Highway Department, and that could be used for to replace the Kodiak. Ron would recommend purchasing used trucks, not new, because they are more reliable and can be maintained in-house. A new truck like the '07 would be \$180K, but if we could get a used 1998 truck for \$20K and put \$50K into it to fix it up for a total of \$70K and then he would be able to maintain it in-house. Andrea suggested putting the 2008 Kodiak Dump Truck on the replacement schedule for 2015, and pushing the 1998 Ford out several years. Ron said as long as the frame doesn't get rusty, the 1998 Ford it can be kept going. Ron would prefer a mini-excavator to replace the backhoe. But it would require a trailer. Estimated cost \$80K (compared with \$115K for the backhoe).

Tanya noted that the Road Machine Earnings account balance is \$19K, and that we are looking to end the use of this account. Ron proposed to use the current balance of the road machinery earnings to purchase something to maintain the sidewalks. He got a verbal quote for \$20K for a small articulated tractor, and we could rent the necessary snowblower and sweeper attachments, or we could purchase the attachments for \$10K. Several present indicated that keeping the sidewalks open is a safety issue with kids having to walk in the roads to get to the bus when the sidewalks are blocked with snow. Andrea asked Ron to get three written quotes and Jim asked Ron to submit updated requests for the mini-excavator and the sidewalks tractor.

Adjourned at 8:15 PM.