

Conway Finance Committee
Minutes
Monday April 22, 2013 7:00 PM
Town Office

Members Present: Jim Bosman, Tanya Campbell, Roy Cohen, James Cabral, (Robert Stone and Andrea Llamas absent). Seleboard. Janet Chayes. Eve Endicot.

Next Meetings

Thursday April 25th – 6:00 PM

Monday May 13th 7:30 PM Annual Town Meeting

CPA Hearing with Janet Chayes and Eve Endicot

Article being placed on warrant to call for a vote next year for increasing the surcharge from 1.5% to 3% with exemption for first \$100K of value. This exemption applies to all types of property residential, business, etc. There was a change in the way the exemption is done when they revised the CPA law last year, to allow the exemption for all types of properties. James asked about how the exemption is applied and Janet responded that each parcel gets the exemption. So if you have several small parcels instead of one big parcel, you will get more exemption. According to Janet, there are 118 people who would pay less. Most people would pay between \$11 and \$50 more per year. 246 people would pay between \$11 and \$30 more. 12 residents would see increase between \$100-\$173. The hydroelectric plant has a significant contribution. The state has historically given the 100% match to towns like ours that are doing the 3% surcharge. There is no guarantee that we would get the 100% match, it is likely. Communities with the lowest equalized property valuations and lowest populations make out best in the match. Conway is ranked high in terms of the chances of getting the 100% match (there is a link on the Comm Pres Coalition website that shows the rankings).
Fin Com voted 4-0 to recommend the article.

Article 2

SB agreed with the 2.25 % salary/wage increase recommended by Fin Com.

Part-time clerical resource. Currently still have a placeholder for 18 hours per week. Amanda had proposed 6 hours a week. John is concerned that nobody would take it for those limited hours and we would also want to assign the website work to this individual. Roy asked about the grant-writing role that Amanda would have and there was general agreement that she would do higher order tasks. Jim also noted that for example putting the Annual Report together should not fall to Amanda. Rick propped a compromise of 12 hrs per week. The other SB members agreed to this. Fin Com voted 4-0 to recommend the Town Admin Dept 150 with 12 hours a week. New total appears to be \$74,895 but Amanda will confirm.

Legal \$15K SB wanted to keep that amount and Fin Com voted 4-0 to recommend it.

James raised the question of the columns that are displayed on Article 2. Requested, Fin Com/Seleboard Recommended. Discussion followed about what has been done in the past, the role of the SB (Rick quoted MGL stating it is the SB's warrant) and the role of Fin Com as separate from SB. Jim pointed out that in past years, the SB and the requested # have been in synch, but this year with the school numbers, the school requests and SB desires may not synch up. Sounded like there would be four columns on the warrant: Requested, SB Recommendation, and Fin Com Recommendation.

Grammar School – Jim explained using the \$7421 eRate funding source to offset the \$12K for personal computing devices to bring down the assessment. Rick noted that \$1700 bid for mowing at the school vs \$5500 was included in their budget for mowing. So their budget could come down by \$3800 if the \$5500 was not for any other purpose other than mowing. Fin Com recommended the \$1,544,217 which is the amount adjusted for the eRate funding. But mowing is still up in the air and we will know more on Thursday.

Frontier School – Why can't the school district come up with multi-year budget projection for budget

and assessments? Roy concerned that we don't want bad publicity for the school district which would negatively impact the perception of the quality of education in the district. This could affect peoples choices in terms of where they want to live and educate their students. Jim was unhappy that the Fin Com was not invited to the four-town meeting to discuss the Frontier Budget. John responded that he had sent Jim an email the day of the meeting, asking him to call him. James suggested that in the future, such communications go to the entire Fin Com in case Jim is unable to respond. Fin Com voted 4-0 to recommend a number \$989,074 based on a budget increase of 2.5% increase. John noted that we may hear from Frontier by Thursday this week with a revised operating budget figure. James pointed to the \$30K pickup truck as an indication that the school is not serious about trying to be economical.

250TH \$10K - Michelle Harris is on the 250th committee and she wrote their report for the Annual Town Report. But we have no backup for the request for the \$10K. Fin Com will postpone a vote on this until Thursday pending details to be requested from Michelle Harris by Amanda.

\$5,500 Website. Fin Com recommended the article 4-0, but John raised a question of whether or not the funding source of FCAT can be used. John asked for clarification on that this week.

IT Article. Roy stated that a device for a few thousand dollars would solve some of the current issues. To improve the town's computer technology, and an estimate of \$1K per month for the offsite solution enabled by the new fiberoptic service. Rick Bean supported the \$23K original request because of the work that Jan and Craig put in and he wanted to support that. Jim Moore abstained. John O'Rourke supported "the concept". It was not clear what dollar amount is actually going to appear on the warrant for this article. Fin Com recommended 4-0 at \$15K.

Tax Lien Forclosures \$10K recommended.

Pulse Oximeter \$4,995 recommended.

Mini-Excavator with Trailer \$80K recommended.

Tractor with Snowblower and Sweeper \$24,200 recommended.

\$175K for new town garage. Behind the salt shed. Garage Committee wants to go forward with plans and permitting. They still have \$11K left from some prior votes. Article language will be made more specific. Fin Com recommended 4-0.

Library, Verizon, Ambulance operations and transfer to Ambulance Stabilization all recommended.

Community Pres Appropriations – Fin Com no recommendation.

Community Pres Surcharge Increase – Fin Com recommended 4-0

Paper Compactor \$24K – Fin Com recommended 4-0. There was a question of if this article has to make mention of the grant money that is going to offset some of this.

Digital Bulletin Board \$17K – Fin Com does not recommend. 0-4. Sounds like the SB doesn't support it either, but they are still going to put it on the warrant.

Frontier Capital - Fin Com voted 4-0 for the safety and electrical, 0-4 no for the Pickup Truck, and 2-2 split on the van.

Stabilization Funds recommended as follows:

Capital - \$120K

Garage - \$90K

General - \$60K

School - \$25K (reduced from \$50K placeholder)

However, if the Digital Bulletin Board is approved, we would reduce the Garage amount by \$17K. .

Adjourned at 10:10 pm