

Minutes
CONWAY SELECTBOARD
Town Office, 32 Main Street
January 11, 2016, 7:00 p.m.

Select Board members present: John O'Rourke, Chair; Jim Moore, Clerk; Robert Baker

Others present: Tom Hutcheson, Town Administrator; Liz Jacobson-Carroll, Assistant to the TA; Ben Tillona, FCAT; Joe Strzegowski, Tami Borton, Mike Kurkulonis

Minutes

- **On a motion from John O'Rourke to accept the minutes of December 28, 2015, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**
- **On a motion from John O'Rourke to accept the minutes of December 31, 2015, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Warrants

On a motion from John O'Rourke to sign the vendor warrant for \$29,744.24, the payroll warrant 16-14A for \$539.00, payroll warrant 16-15 for \$83,333.95, the payroll deduction warrant 16-14A for \$62.06, and the payroll deduction warrant 16-15 for \$22,063.11, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.

Meetings Attended by Selectboard Members

None.

Citizens' Concerns

None.

New Business

- *Planning Board proposal for both planning and general bylaw revisions concerning used car businesses*
Joe Strzegowski described several revisions of proposal 32.5 that would require a special permit of anyone with more than one unregistered vehicle on any or all of their properties. Tami Borton noted that it is a clarification of a general bylaw, and that the issuing of these permits should fall under the jurisdiction of the Planning Board. Joe Strzegowski noted that it is currently in both the zoning and the general bylaws, and suggested that the Select Board come up with general policies to cover various types of situations (dependent on size of property, neighborhood, etc.) Permits would be issued to individuals; if an individual sells a business, the new owner would have to apply for the special permit upon purchasing the business, he added.
- *Close and approve warrant for February 8, 2016 special Town Meeting*
 - *Noise, Earth Removal, and Related Disturbances Bylaw for Large Scale Industrial & Commercial Facilities*
Joe Strzegowski said that the geologists with whom they consulted didn't have a problem with the bylaw as drafted. Robert Baker raised concern that the advance notification of specific trucking companies required by Article 10 might be cumbersome, as truckers change day to day. Joe Strzegowski indicated that the Board of Health is working on a blasting bylaw. The Select Board requested that notice be sent to the newsletter. Joe Strzegowski also indicated that there is a model bylaw for roads and truck carrying capacity, likely written when the Select Board also served as the Planning Board, hence the confusion. The Select Board members noted their preference for it to be a zoning bylaw not a general bylaw. Select Board members requested that it be run by Town Counsel. [Referring to the previous agenda item, Robert Baker pointed out that the Planning Board would have to communicate to the Select Board at the end of each year whether or not those businesses requesting used car dealer licenses have met the conditions stated in the bylaw.] It was determined that the bylaw would be submitted by the Planning Board, and recommended by the Select Board. Joe Strzegowski reiterated that the Planning Board is not in favor of the pipeline; it is merely preparing to protect the town for the possibility that it will be built.
 - *Discussion regarding the Town's responsibility to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide \$3000 for a study regarding the Frontier Regional School District, or take any other action relative thereto.*

Tom Hutcheson made known that the proposal would include consideration of information technology services, custodial staff, and other areas of potential regionalization, and would not necessarily include the elementary school.

- **On a motion from John O'Rourke to approve Article 2, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**
- **On a motion from John O'Rourke to approve Article 3, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**
- *Set Monday, March 7, 2016 as date for Town Caucus*

Tom Hutcheson indicated that Town Clerk Virginia Knowlton requested the date.

 - **On a motion from John O'Rourke to set Monday, March 7, 2016 as the date for the Town Caucus, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**
- *Authorize Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative to buy heating oil and diesel for the Town*

John O'Rourke reminded those present that the Town has been buying heating oil and diesel from LPVEC for several years, and getting a good price. Robert Baker said that even earlier, the Town purchased fuel from the COG. Upon hearing from Tom Hutcheson that the Town currently purchases propane from the COG, Robert Baker suggested that Tom Hutcheson ask LPVEC about providing propane, too.

 - **On a motion from John O'Rourke to sign the authorization to designate the LPVEC as the agent to negotiate the purchase of heating oil and diesel for the Town, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**
 - **On a motion from John O'Rourke to approve the Notice to Buy order to purchase heating oil and diesel from LPVEC, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**
- *New Ambulance Director – hiring process and committee*

Tom Hutcheson explained that Jodey Benson has given notice. While her EMT certification will expire in April, she will stay on as director through June in order to train her replacement. Tom Hutcheson reported that there will be an internal candidate for the position, and that Jodey Benson will join him on the hiring committee. Robert Baker offered to represent both the Select Board and Fire Department on the hiring committee.
- *Massachusetts Municipal Association resolutions for the annual business meeting: fiscal partnership and environmental partnership*

Tom Hutcheson reported that the MMA has both stated its approval of cities and towns partnering with the state to improve fiscal outcomes, and proposed a resolution regarding partnership on environmental matters. He indicated his approval of MMA's goal of helping cities and towns put past antagonism with the state behind them. Further, he explained that MMA would like a Select Board representative to vote accordingly at the annual MMA meeting later this month.

 - **On a motion from John O'Rourke to vote to support MMA's two partnerships with the state, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**
- *Sign state contract for the Council on Aging to receive state funds*
 - **On a motion to approve the annual contract with the state for Conway's Council on Aging, in which the COA will receive \$39,000 in 2016, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**
- *Open warrant for 2016 annual Town Meeting*
 - **On a motion from John O'Rourke to open the warrant for the 2016 annual Town Meeting, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**
- *Employee Recognition: Gemma Vanderheld for 15 years of service, Margaret Burch for 10 years of service*
 - **On a motion from John O'Rourke to sign the recognition letters, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**
- *Appointment to the 250th Anniversary Committee for a term ending 6/30/18: Adam Reed*
 - **On a motion from John O'Rourke to appoint Adam Reed to the 250th Anniversary Committee for a term ending 6/30/18, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**
- *Appointment to the position of Election Officer-Alternate: individuals on list from Town Clerk - Tabled*

Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting None.

Town Administrator Update

- Committees
 - I have forwarded the capital requests received to the Capital Improvement Planning Committee, which is scheduled to have its recommendations to you by February 26th. When the process is fully in gear, the CIPC will submit the capital article for the warrant; that is meant to be their best recommendation to the town on what the town needs to spend. The finance committee figures out how to finance that, then recommends to the town how to do so. Our CIPC is starting late, so we are not quite there yet, but that is what we are moving toward.
 - I have also forwarded my budget memo to you to the Finance Committee and Capital Improvement Planning Committee. I will note that the CIPC's role is to propose necessary spending rather than making financial policy decisions, but I thought that I would share the memo in the interests of transparency.
 - The Personnel Committee will be reviewing the draft classification and compensation plan with our consultant next week, and I hope we will have a recommendation for you soon after that. The consultant's recommendations come with a set of policies which support the process.
 - I filed the motion to intervene in FERC's pipeline proceedings on December 29. I have learned that with the new electronic filing system, there is no need to file a certificate of service or provide other filers with the Town's motion; despite this, I have received a number of other motions to intervene. In other pipeline news, MCAP is urging towns that are not Berkshire Gas ratepayer towns to consider financially supporting the case for any ratepayer towns that step forward by the deadline but do not have the financial resources to finance this entire proceeding on their own.
 - Mike Kurkulonis would like your approval for an April 30 kick-off to the Cal Ripken season; he will be in soon to speak to this. A 9:30 parade from the fire house to the ball field, with all towns and teams represented—perhaps 30+ teams of different age groups walking in uniform. Then opening ceremonials, including a small cannon being fired off. Then scheduled games throughout the whole day in Conway and some of the other towns. Conway's field would be the main focus and would have concessions. We would need to stop and direct traffic on 116; perhaps the police could lead the parade; a fire truck could also lead and perhaps end the parade. They would need power down to the ball field; portable rest rooms or have a door open at the Town hall for rest rooms; the use of the Park and Rec. building for concessions (Cal Ripken may have their own grills but if not, they'd like to use Parks and Rec's)--usually just burgers dogs, with waters and soda. It would be nice if the Select Board attended.

Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting

- Mike Kurkulonis explained that the Cal Ripkin organization has long wanted Conway to host the kick off celebration, which would include a parade, a ceremony, and concessions; on its behalf, he asked the Select Board for permission. Noting that the organization "takes care of everything," he asked that the Town provide a police officer to direct traffic and fire trucks for the parade, and asked for permission to use power at the field and to bring in port-a-potties. John O'Rourke asked about Parks, Recreation & Trails committee members involvement, then recommended that Mike Kurkulonis be in touch with them. Mike Kurkulonis offered that the organization will highlight the sponsors and names of all of the teams, and that he is planning to schedule approximately 30 full games throughout the day.
 - **On a motion from John O'Rourke to approve the Cal Ripkin kickoff to take place here in Conway, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Town Administrator Update, continued

- Sue Bridge of the Energy Committee and I submitted the annual Green Communities report, which Rick Bean had managed before. I would like to commend Sue for her hard work with a very steep learning curve and a lot of time spent going through files in order to do what needed to be done.
- For the developing relationship between Parks and Rec and Conway Youth, 1) Dave Beudet will propose and discuss the creation of a revolving account with Rec Committee this week and if they agree, put it forward at town meeting, and 2) Dave will propose and discuss the addition of \$2500 in next year's Rec Committee budget to use for a youth sports coordinator(s). After baseball is up and running, CYS will meet with Parks and Recreation to start discussions on a possible transition with a goal of fall 2016.
- **Departments**
 - The audit for FY2014 has been finalized. There were no significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. I've put copies of the management letter in your folders for your reference.

- I have replaced the MIA/POW flag and secured the American flag in Memorial Park.

Old Business

- *FY 2017 Town Budget – preliminary findings*

Tom Hutcheson drew Select Board members attention to the chart comparing FY 2008 – FY 2016 property tax rates in the region, referred to the Proposition 2^{1/2} absolute cap of \$25, and noted that the Pioneer Valley did not experience as dramatic a dip in property values as did the rest of the country. He contended that if property values don't rise considerably, towns will be at their maximum capacity in just a few years. Referring to his 1-7-16 budget memo, he explained further that with minimal free cash and relatively stable town spending, taxes will rise. He anticipates an increase of 3% - 4% in the operating budget, he said, and proposed that there are number of capital items that it would be in the Town's best interest to fund. He contended that the Town is at a crossroads; it must decide if it is happy with the level of service it is receiving, or it can continue its recent trend of improving services.

Before summarizing operating budget increases, he asked Select Board members to recognize that the spending increases he is proposing are minimal relative to current spending. The big change, he said, is that the Town will have to raise and appropriate funds, rather than simply transferring funds from a "free cash" account. In a few years, the Town will have reached the levy limit, and will have to consider an override for capital expenses.

Tom Hutcheson reported that, in addition to the normal 3-4% rise in operating expenses, the budget reflects the following: Highway Department expenses are going up by \$18,000 (not \$30,000). In order to bring staff wages into line with average/competitive wages in area towns, the payroll budget is proposed to rise approximately \$32,000. A new, separate budget line for information technology will enable us to maintain the adequate system we have recently achieved. He will have a budget ready for Select Board review in approximately 5 weeks.

Concerns of the Selectmen

None.

Mail

None.

Announcements

None.

Documents and Other Exhibits Used at the Meeting

- Memo from Town Administrator to Select Board regarding FY17 budget/initial considerations, 1/7/16
- Comparison of regional tax rates table
- Special Town Meeting Warrant, February 8, 2016 (2 versions)
- Page from The Beacon, January 2016, regarding resolutions to be considered by MMA on 1/23/16

Next Meeting

- Scheduled for Tuesday, January 19th, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Office, 32 Main Street
- **On a motion from John O'Rourke, seconded by Jim Moore and approved unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Moore