

Minutes
CONWAY SELECTBOARD
Town Office, 32 Main Street
February 1, 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

Minutes

- January 25, 2016 – Tabled

Meetings Attended by Selectboard Members

- Robert Baker, Fire Chief, has held weekly or bi-weekly meetings within the Fire Department regarding the upcoming replacement of the fire truck, and said that he anticipates proposing a purchase in the near future, ideally for under \$500,000.
- Jim Moore attended a presentation on the health effects of compressor stations and natural gas infrastructure held at Frontier Regional HS; he reported that carcinogens travel from the point of fracking along the pipeline, and are then released at blowdown sites, such as that which may be located in Conway.
- John O'Rourke attended FRCOG finance and council meetings, and reported that budget figures are forthcoming.

Citizens' Concerns

None.

Old Business

FY 2017 Town Budget

Hutcheson noted that without raising free cash or re-funding stabilization accounts, Conway will soon be bumping up against its levy limit. He indicated that both the Grammar School and Frontier Regional HS budgets, which he expects will increase, should be available for the Select Board review later in February. He is waiting for the Franklin County Technical School budget, which will include an increase in transportation costs, bringing that line item up to \$16,000.

The Building Maintenance function and Highway and Town Administrator Clerical Help

Tom Hutcheson proposed moving building maintenance back to the Highway Department and adding a few hours of clerical help to both the Highway Department and Town Administrator budgets. He indicated that the building maintenance function deserves more attention that it currently receives, particularly as the Capital Improvement Planning Committee begins to incorporate building expenses into its planning. The increases in clerical help would enable the Highway Assistant to cover the clerical end of building maintenance tasks, and enable the Assistant to the Town Administrator to take on additional work relating to budget preparation and follow up, preparing warrants for routine expenses, improving the Website, and further assisting committees, and would eliminate the current two-business-day delay in her ability to respond to requests made when she is out of the office. The total cost of this re-organization would be \$7,145 or \$8,315, depending on whether the Highway clerical position is increased from the current 3.5 hours to either 6.5 or 8 hours, he said, noting his recommendation for the latter.

In response to a question from Robert Baker, Tom Hutcheson indicated his understanding that the removal of the building maintenance function from the Highway Department occurred at the time that the current Superintendent was hired. Hutcheson noted that the request to add \$1/hour to the wage of the current is based on the earlier agreement, when the previous Superintendent took on the building function years earlier. Robert Baker noted the value of having an individual responsible for addressing building maintenance issues available in town on weekends.

Human Resources study initial findings

Tom Hutcheson indicated that consultant Don Jacobs, who will address the Select Board later in the month, has come up with salary ranges for 6 different pay grades for Town employees based on easily distinguished levels of responsibility. Jacobs will propose a method for calculating and providing compensation, taking into account factors, including longevity, performance, etc.. Tom Hutcheson indicated that the Personnel Committee is split regarding their preference for regular step or merit-based increases, and noted that Don Jacobs recommends compensation be somewhat market-based. While that would demand a higher level of administration attention, he explained that the Assistant Treasurer/Collector would take on additional Human Resources functions, and that this would not require additional funding. Hutcheson recommended that Select Board members review his brief and speak with Shelburne officials, who have recently implemented similar suggestions from Don Jacobs.

New Business

Appoint alternate member(s) of the Agricultural Commission: Susan Schroder, for a term ending 6/30/16

- **On a motion from John O'Rourke, based on the recommendation of the co-chairs of the Agricultural Commission to appoint Susan Schroder as an alternate member of the Agricultural Commission for a term ending 6/30/16, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Tom Hutcheson noted that despite her significant involvement with the Commission since June, Susan Schroder is not interested in being a full member, and that she will vote at meetings only when there would otherwise not be a quorum.

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

Town Administrator Update

Departments

- The Highway Superintendent and Dana Goodfield took the inoperable pickup truck to auction today, with a \$4,000 minimum, substantially larger than the \$3,000 we decided to forego in insurance benefits.
- I have written Rep. Kulik's aide regarding the North Poland Road bridge that is in sub-standard condition, and requested an earmark for the project. The timing is somewhat delicate, as we do have some Chapter 90 money reserved for an engineering study, but we don't want to spend that before we know funding will be available, as we want to be sure the engineering plans don't expire. I expect to be talking with his aide Paul Dunphy about it soon. I also noted to him that Charlemont has had three bridges closed in the last four months, so the overall problem is clearly substantial and needs state attention.
- There had been a question about having certified mechanics work on our trucks for insurance. I asked our insurer, who assures us that they are not concerned about that. [In response to questions from Robert Baker, Tom Hutcheson indicated that he will call the insurer again to inquire about required certification, if any, for mechanics working on brakes specifically.]
- We will need to budget an additional \$2,500 for a triennial end-of-year audit, a requirement of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. [Discussion included the possibility of rolling FY15 audit into the FY16 audit, and the fact that the Town budget, not the School budget, includes the cost of the audit. Hutcheson expects the school district business manager to recommend a FY15 audit, he said, noting that he will ask the Town accountant if the cost of it can be folded into the Town audit line, or if the approval of a separate article will be necessary.]

Concerns of the Selectmen

Robert Baker requested the attendance of the Highway Superintendent at a Select Board meeting, indicating that he had anticipated him doing so that night. Hutcheson said he would pass on any questions, and that the best time to meet with the Superintendent will be in a couple of weeks. He noted that the road discussed at an earlier meeting is crumbling not due to the use of gravel, but because of base issues. Also, the Superintendent is moving away from the use of round gravel toward that of crushed gravel that will more easily settle into the road, he said. Tom Hutcheson asked the Select Board if they want the Superintendent to budget separately for road salt to be made available to townspeople. Robert Baker said that the Select Board could develop a policy limiting the amount of free salt available to residents, and that all of the salt should come out of one budget line. Tom Hutcheson said that the Town's policy of several years has been that, due to the high cost, salt is not available to residents. John O'Rourke noted that unless the Superintendent indicates there is a problem with the way things are being done now, the Select Board should not change things, as the proposed change would be difficult to administer.

Mail

- The Select Board received a letter from FRCOG Building Inspector regarding the financing of their program; because a substantial number of tasks performed by the inspectors are not paid through the state, Town assessments are going up. John O'Rourke noted that they are re-organizing in order to provide significantly broader services for a small increase in cost.
- Jim Moore brought up an earlier letter expressing disappointment that the Town turned away a group of peaceful protestors who had planned to sleep in the church. Robert Baker explained that upon hearing about the group's plans, he discussed building codes with the FRCOG inspector, then explained them (and state law) to the church official coordinating the plans. He noted that it was not until 2pm on Friday that he learned of the plans to host 100 people overnight on Saturday; the timing precluded him from scheduling a visit by the inspector and then granting the necessary special permit.

Announcements

None.

Documents and Other Exhibits Used at the Meeting

- Funding Department Changes, February 1, 2016, from Tom Hutcheson
- Human Resources Policies, February 1, 2016, from Tom Hutcheson

Next Meeting

- *Scheduled for February 8, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. at the Conway Grammar School, 24 Fournier Road*
- **At 7:50 p.m., on a motion from John O'Rourke to go into Executive Session, to be held under Reason #3, to discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body, Jim Moore voted in favor, Robert Baker voted in favor, John O'Rourke voted in favor.**
- **On a motion from John O'Rourke to adjourn out of Executive Session at 8:10, Jim Moore voted in favor, Robert Baker voted in favor, and John O'Rourke voted in favor.**
- **On a motion from John O'Rourke to adjourn open session at 8:11, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Moore