

Minutes
CONWAY SELECTBOARD
Town Office, 32 Main Street
February 22, 2016, 6:30 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; Domenic Poli, The Recorder; Nelson Shifflett; Stine Feick; Don Jacobs; Meg Burch; Joe Strzegowski, Danielle Lochhead, Jack Lochhead

Minutes

- **On a motion from John O'Rourke to accept the minutes of February 16, 2016, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Warrants

- **On a motion from John O'Rourke to sign the vendor warrant for \$114,104.32, the payroll warrant for \$95,719.02, and the payroll deduction warrant for \$25,261.68, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Meetings Attended by Selectboard Members

None.

Citizens' Concerns

- *Nelson Shifflett – use of United Congregational Church for sleepovers*
Nelson Shifflett raised a concern regarding the recent refusal to allow a group of activists to sleep in the UCC church by Fire Chief and Selectman Robert Baker, indicating that the matter may not have been considered in a timely manner, and stating that the Select Board had neglected to represent the majority of people in the Town. John O'Rourke suggested that Nelson Shifflett discuss his concerns with the Fire Chief directly.
- Stine Feick, of Shelburne Falls Road (between Wilder Road and Hart Road), expressed her concern regarding the plowing of the west side of the road. Robert Baker indicated that this may be due to the use of a wing on the plow truck; Jim Moore confirmed that the sides of the roads were sometimes not plowed adequately. Stine Feike noted that the Highway Superintendent has not returned her calls. Also, she thanked the department for putting up the sign telling residents to keep out of salt shed.

Old Business

- *Human Resources–report from consultant*
Before presenting his draft report, Don Jacobs noted his appreciation for the cooperation of members of the Town staff, especially the Town Administrator. While summarizing his report, he noted that he conducted a market study in order to develop a fair/equitable/competitive compensation schedule for Town staff. He accomplished his three objectives: to develop consistent job descriptions (by approving this plan, the Select Board is effectively adopting this format going forward, he said); developing a classification plan reflecting the knowledge and skills of each job description; and developing a compensation plan keyed to the classification plan. He recommended that positions and employees be compensated within 10 percent of the market average, while noting that the general government salaries of Conway employees are approximately 4% below the competitive market average. He explained that the pay ranges are suggestive, not definitive, and indicated that they reflect market data, the current salaries of Town employees, and the longevity of the particular employees. He reviewed the characteristics of each level of the job classification chart, including the minimum levels of education and prior work experience required, the level of supervision under which the employee works, the degree to which the employee supervises others, and the degree to which the employee serves as a spokesperson for the Town. He noted that the classification plan should match the organizational chart; whenever there is a management change, it needs to be reviewed within the context of the classification plan to ensure consistency. He summarized his method for calculating the suggested salary ranges and the benchmark hourly pay for each position. He noted that an easy way of maintaining the structure of the pay ranges is to make market adjustments based on a survey of a

few randomly chosen positions each year (rather than applying an across-the-range percentage rate adjustment.) Further, he recommended establishing three pay ranges: hiring, market equity, and growth, and adopting a policy to hire employee within the appropriate hiring range, with the understanding that the hiring board has the authority to go outside the range. He does not recommend step increases, he said, as they are often too costly to towns. He said that the Town should make its rating manual a public document, fully explain the plan to new employees, and state their objective to pay new employees within the competitive range within a specific number of years. He encouraged the Select Board to approve the proposed process to develop the grade levels and the salary ranges. Finally, he encouraged the Select Board to treat stipend positions separately, and to convert those for critical positions to a (more rational) hourly rate of pay.

- *Pipeline issues:*
 - *Request of Tennessee Gas Company to DPU to allow access to various properties, and other issues*

Meg Burch summarized DPU notices 16-01 and 16-03 as they pertain to Conway and the landowners who have denied the company access to their properties. Discussion included the company's apparent suggestions that efforts to deny access are futile, that eminent domain will prevail, and that the DPU should override towns' Boards of Health. Jim Moore referred to the investment of a Spanish company in the project, and more generally to the outsized influence of multi-national corporations in national and local affairs. Meg Burch referred to DPU's public comment session regarding the survey access issue to be held on March 30 at Greenfield Middle School. She indicated that whether or not a Town board will comment still needs to be discussed; the documents have not yet been discussed at a Board of Health meeting, she added. She then recommend that Town boards and committees offer support to landowners named in the reports, citing a situation where TGP in one place in the report indicates that no drilling will be done within 75 feet of a well or a structure, yet it appears to have plans to do so on at least one Conway property (unless it is planning to drill below the house.) Reference was made to another landowner who has asked Kinder Morgan to purchase his property, as it will be ruined and worthless to him if the company acts on its plan. Meg Burch noted that she has requested these matters be on the next Board of Health agenda; Joe Strzegowski indicated that the Planning Board has not developed plans for further action.
- *Town Meeting warrant: items so far*

Tom Hutcheson indicated that, thus far, he anticipates receiving requests to be included in the annual Town Meeting warrant from the Wastewater Committee and the Parks, Recreation and Trails Committee. Further, while the Town Bylaw doesn't indicate that non-Conway residents can't be appointed to committees, he suggested that Select Board members consider making it so, or requiring special dispensation to do otherwise.

New Business

- *Housing Committee – report on progress on senior housing project –[tabled, as no member was present]*
- *Wastewater Committee update and proposal for a leach field*

Joe Strzegowski summarized the Committee's research into putting a community leaching field on each side of the South River, on property owned by Jack Lochhead, with bottomless sand-filter technology. Discussion included the need for pumping of the system, the desire for discreet mounding, and the use of the hill by townfolk for sledding Jack Lochhead noted that he is looking for help with the development of a more permanent conservation restriction on the 230-acre property, which is currently in Chapter 61, possibly exempting a portion of the property near the road for future building. He noted that his concern is not about getting money from the Town, but that he would like to have an agreement with the Select Board that he can conserve most of the rest of the property. He would like an additional agreement stating that if the digging process requires taking the land out of Chapter 61, he not be hit with a big tax bill. He noted that a lien on the property, resulting from a 2005-10 landowner improvement grant, may preclude any work on the property being done before 2010. Joe Strzegowski indicated that the Wastewater Committee and the Housing Committee will make a joint presentation at Town Meeting, as the proposed property will be able to accommodate construction on the Rose property. Discussion included reference to each field being capable of handling 90 bedrooms, the goal of enabling business

development in the center of Town, that approximately 33 homes or businesses on each side of the river could be accommodated, and that the consultant will soon propose a piping layout. Further discussion covered betterment fees, enterprise funds, and the possibility of applying for income-based grants based on that of downtown residents versus that of the entire community.

- *Appointment to the Agricultural Commission, for term ending 6/30/16: Susan Schroder (previously an alternate member)*
 - **On a motion from John O'Rourke to appoint Susan Schroder (recently appointed as an alternate member) to the Agricultural Commission for a term ending 6/30/16, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Hutcheson suggests that the Select Board may want to develop a policy regarding the appointment of married couples to any single committee. He will bring written options to the next meeting.

- *Re-structuring Fire Chief pay to include hourly pay for call-outs*

Hutcheson proposed paying the Fire Chief an hourly rate for time spent on calls, in addition to an annual stipend, in order for the position to be compensated equitably and similarly to that of the Ambulance Director.

 - **On a motion to accept the recommendation of the Town Administrator to allow the Fire Chief to be treated equitably regarding call-out pay with the Ambulance Director, Robert Baker recused himself, John O'Rourke voted in favor, and Jim Moore voted in favor.**

Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting

None.

Town Administrator Update

- *Committees:* The Wastewater Committee has invited a number of people to their next meeting, on March 9th at 7:00 PM. There will be a presentation by a consultant/builder regarding possible funding for the downtown wastewater proposal. The Committee is hoping to move forward with the completion of their feasibility study and hope to present their report at Town Meeting in May.
- *Departments:* MIIA has announced it will be giving credit for attending certain meetings of the Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts, as well as points for having a STAM-certified administrator. Conway will reap net gain, reduced insurance cost.
- *Budget:*
 - I have asked Marti Barrett if she can come in March 21 or March 28 for a budget meeting. This would cover both the Grammar School and Frontier.
 - I have completed a budget for FY 2017. Please look at it for next week, when we are slated to meet with the Finance Committee. Please let me know if you see any errors that need to be corrected. I plan to put it on the website tomorrow.
 - Ron Sweet will attend the next meeting to present the Highway Department budget.
- *Other*
 - We have had some interest expressed by Verizon in providing cell service to the village center of Conway. They have hired a firm, NB+C, to identify possible sites for a new cell tower. (Current service is provided by AT&T, from the water tower at Orchard Equipment.) Planning a 100 foot pole with transfer on top of it then drive around town to see where they can get service, Thursday around 11:00.
 - The FRCOG's River Corridor Management Project—the other South River project, also managed by Kimberly MacPhee—would like a second joint meeting between the Conway and Ashfield Select Boards, probably either March 15th or the 29th. Waiting to hear back from Ashfield. McPhee needs another check in meeting before the end of March in order for funding to continue.

Concerns of the Selectmen

None.

Mail

- A letter from the Chair of the 250th Anniversary Celebration Committee seeking Select Board member recipes for the event-related cookbook. [Moore agreed to provide a recipe.]

Announcements

None.

Documents and Other Exhibits Used at the Meeting

- Classification and Compensation Study, Final Report Summary, from D.I. Jacobs Consulting, 2/2016, and related materials
- Materials pertaining to Tennessee Gas Company's request to DPU to allow access to various properties, including list of landowners, and DPU Notice 16.01.
- Email from Joe Strzegowski regarding an upcoming Wastewater Committee meeting and proposal
- Memo from Town Administrator regarding the re-structuring of the fire chief pay
- Email from Kate French asking for Select Board members contributions to 250th Anniversary Celebration cookbook.

Next Meeting

- *Scheduled for Monday, February 29, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall, 5 Academy Hill Road*
- **At 9:45 p.m., on a motion from John O'Rourke to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Moore