

**Minutes**  
CONWAY SELECTBOARD  
Town Office, 32 Main Street  
February 29, 2016, 7:00 p.m.

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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; Ron Sweet, Brice Hereford, Jim Bosman, Roy Cohen, Sheila Harrington, Zachary Howard, Tom Donovan.

*Minutes* None.

*Warrants* None.

*Meetings Attended by Selectboard Members*

- Robert Baker attended Representative Kulik's presentation on the future of renewable energy in Massachusetts on 2/27/16.

*Citizens' Concerns* None.

*Old Business*

- *Town Meeting warrant: items so far*  
Tom Hutcheson mentioned several "non-money items" including Parks, Recreation & Trails Committee requesting the formation of a revolving account; bylaws regarding the Right To Farm and the membership of family members on a single committee; the authorization of the Select Board to close roads in emergencies; a request enabling the Festival of the Hills Committee and the Festival of the Hills Scholarship Board to become a private organization; the establishment of a PEG access/cable fund as recommended by the MA DOR; and the Wastewater Committee's summary of work to date.

Referring to his "Town of Conway Fiscal Year 2017 Budget, February 22, 2016" document, Tom Hutcheson reviewed several "money items" pertaining to: the financing of a pumper truck for the Fire Department; the growth of stabilization funds for various purposes; a request for \$30k, up from \$10k, from the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Committee; the Highway Superintendent's request for concrete pads and lifts; and a request for \$10k from the Assessor's office to fund the overlay. He referred to his own request for \$10k to fund a conceptual design for a Town Hall renovation, noted that there will be a presentation by VisualGov at Town Meeting, and indicated that there will be first-time requests from two committees. In response to a question from Robert Baker, he indicated that Community Preservation Funds cannot be used for Town Hall renovation as those are for use toward restoration projects only.

- *Human Resources: discussion of study and recommendations*  
In response to a question from John O'Rourke, Tom Hutcheson indicated that while the 2 members of the Personnel Committee differ in their approach to the issues, he recommends bringing employees to market minimum wages, and that doing so is less expensive than he anticipated. In response to John O'Rourke's inquiry regarding the need for an Executive Session with the Personnel Committee, Tom Hutcheson indicated that committee members accepted the data presented by DIJ Consulting and referred future decisions, which they believe are policy decisions, to the Select Board. He will invite the members of the committee to the 3/14/16 Select Board meeting.
- *Policy on family members on the same committee: discussion*

Tom Hutcheson reported that Town Counsel sees no legal issue with family members serving on any single committee simultaneously, and presented his paper "Family Members On Committees Initial Considerations for a Policy Discussion, February 23, 2016". Discussion included the pros and cons of the four options he presented.

- **On a motion to accept recommendation #3 (to prohibit the practice in general, but allow exceptions under extraordinary circumstances) as proposed, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**
- *Energy Committee: update, request to sign letter to Legislature regarding net metering and other*  
Brice Hereford, referring to the proposed cap on net metering and the impending expiration on the solar energy credit, reported on the Committee's work on the Solarize Massachusetts program (in conjunction with Shelburne and Colrain) and the Town Solar Farm project. He asked the Select Board to sign a letter requesting the elimination of the cap on net metering, the maintenance of a fair value for solar renewable energy credits, and the creation of a new solar incentive program to reach solar goals after 1600 megawatts. He noted that the Solar Farm RFQ is due on March 11<sup>th</sup>, and indicated that Sue Bridge is working with Tom Hutcheson to determine whether Energy Committee projects can be included in the Town's Community Compact application. Finally Brice Hereford described early discussions of the development of a microgrid in Conway.
- *Proposal to meet with School Committee and Superintendent*  
Tom Hutcheson asked if the Select Board and the Finance Committee would be willing to meet with the Superintendent of Conway Grammar School at a single meeting, as she has suggested. Tom Hutcheson will convey their willingness to do so.
- *Community Compact: long-range planning and IT best practices*  
Tom Hutcheson indicated that he has recently determined two clear paths to pursue under the Community Compact Program: long range planning and the compilation of IT Best Practices.

#### *New Business*

- *Letter to Governor regarding the Massachusetts Broadband Institute's work on internet access to the Town.*  
Tom Hutcheson described the letter, a copy of that sent by the Buckland Select Board, which asks the Governor to reject a recently announced "pause" in the MBI last mile build out to the ten identified partially served communities, including Conway.
  - **On a motion from John O'Rourke to sign the letter to Governor Baker, seconded by Jim Moore, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

#### *JOINT MEETING: Finance Committee, 7:30 p.m.: FY 2016 Town budget*

- *Highway Department, Town Administrator*  
Tom Hutcheson described his request for funding to move the Building Maintenance function, which the Town Administrator has been overseeing, to the Highway Department, and to provide additional clerical support to both the Town Administrator (+3.5 hours/week) and Highway Superintendent (+8 hours/week for both Highway and Building Maintenance functions.) While responding to questions, he indicated that Liz Jacobson-Carroll, who has been working 16 hours as Assistant to the Town Administrator and 3.5 hours in the Highway Department, would work 19.5 hours as ATA (remaining ineligible for benefits) and a new hire would work 8 hours assisting the Highway Superintendent. Discussion included pros and cons of Robert Baker's suggestion to hire someone with handyman skills.

In response to questions regarding other elements of the Highway Department, Ron Sweet described the increase in the cost of salt, contending that he would rather include the expense in his budget this year than rely on overages as he was instructed to do last year, and explained that hard pack cannot be purchased with Chapter 90 funds. Further, he described his purchasing strategy and his 5-year replacement plan for trucks, and indicated that the fleet is now in relatively good shape. He said that his capital request for pads and lifts would provide a safer and better working environment for his crew, and that the outdoor devices are not fixed, and thus could be moved to a new Town garage.

- *Information Technology*  
Tom Hutcheson described his proposal for an IT budget, noting that he is in the process of bringing a remarkably inadequate system into compliance with modern standards. Roy Cohen of Network Advantage is networking

Town Office and Town Hall through a router, and installing storage and back up. They will soon turn their attention, perhaps with support from the Community Compact, to four other areas: maintenance, software and subscriptions, equipment and supplies, and technical support. Discussion topics included the Town website, the IT needs of the Fire Department, the competitive bid process used prior to hiring Network Advantage, the low cost relative to the impact of increased efficiency across departments, and the proper protection of critical data.

The **JOINT SESSION** was adjourned at 8:50 PM.

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

*Town Administrator Update*

*Concerns of the Selectmen*

- Robert Baker noted that he has asked a local carpenter for advice regarding the restoration of the Town Hall cupola, indicating his interest in applying for Community Preservation Act funding for the project.

*Mail*

- A letter from a resident regarding the pooling of water on her property near the road has been referred to the Town Administrator and Highway Superintendent
- John O'Rourke read aloud a letter from GW Murphy complementing the work of the Highway Department since Ron Sweet's appointment as Superintendent

*Announcements*      None.

*Documents and Other Exhibits Used at the Meeting*

*Next Meeting*

- *Scheduled for March 7, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Office, 32 Main Street*
- *On a motion from John O'Rourke, seconded by Jim Moore, the meeting was adjourned at 9PM*

*Executive Session to be held under Reason #3 or Reason #7- Tabled*

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Moore