

Minutes
CONWAY SELECT BOARD
Town Office, 32 Main Street
Monday, October 3, 2016 7:00 p.m.

Select Board present: John O'Rourke (Chair), Robert Baker, Bob Armstrong

Others present: Gemma Vanderheld (Ambulance Director); Chris Herrmann (Assistant Ambulance Director); Michelle Turre (Open Space Committee); Gary Totman; Joe Zinan (FCAT); Tom Hutcheson (Town Administrator)

John O'Rourke called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes

On a motion from John O'Rourke to approve the minutes of September 19, 2016, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.

On a motion from John O'Rourke to approve the minutes of September 26, 2016, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.

Warrants

On a motion from John O'Rourke to approve the vendor warrant of \$386,984.87, the payroll warrant of \$95,536.53, and the payroll deduction warrant of \$24,933.36, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.

Meetings Attended by Select Board Members

John O'Rourke attended a meeting of the Hampshire County Selectman's Association, where he heard about USDA rural development programs; he brought back related informational materials.

Bob Armstrong attended a meeting of the Energy Committee, also attended by members of the Finance Committee and Planning Board, at which the Energy Committee presented a plan for installing a photovoltaic array for municipal and possibly community-shared solar energy.

John O'Rourke reported on a recent Massachusetts Municipal Association "legislative breakfast" in Amherst, and reported that the MMA has taken positions on two ballot questions, opposing both raising the cap on the number of charter schools and the proposed law regarding the legalization of marijuana.

Citizens' concerns

None.

Robert Baker spoke for a resident in asking about the temperature requirements for the façade to be put on the Town Hall; Tom Hutcheson reported that the contractor is aware of the issue.

New Business

Ambulance Department: proposal for pre-payment of EMS training

This item was moved up in the agenda. Gemma Vanderheld and perhaps Chris Herrmann proposed that the Town pre-pay for EMS training and continuing education rather than reimbursing the EMT, as the costs are prohibitively steep for volunteers. They agreed with the Select Board that this should be accompanied by a policy requiring re-payment if the employee does not continue EMS service with the Town for at least one year. John O'Rourke asked Tom Hutcheson to work with the Ambulance Department to try to get reserve funds through the Finance Committee for this year, and with Town Counsel to come up with a workable form for prospective employees to sign obligating them to pay back any funds if they do not continue to work for the Town (similar to what is being considered for Highway employees).

On a motion from John O'Rourke to approve the Town providing fees up front for classes and licensing based on a contract or obligation to repay for EMTs, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.

Old Business

Open Space Committee proposal for preferring low-input agriculture on Town land

This agenda item was combined with:

Sign agreement with Gary Totman for agricultural use of the Rose Property

Michelle Turre read an e-mail from Kimberly Noake MacPhee at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments stating various concerns about using the land in the floodplain lowering area. Gary Totman said he had mowed the rest of the field earlier that day, and asked what seed they had used, and whether they seeded under the blown hay. [Tom Hutcheson later gave him the list of seeds used.] Gary Totman said he would like to hay the lowered area, though he would use a seed drill rather than till it. He discussed the longer-term treatment of the land, and said he would be planting orchard grass. He planned two cuttings per year, unless there was sufficient growth for a third. He doesn't have manure now that John Wholley's cows are gone, so he has to use artificial fertilizer. It is possible that some weeds would come up and he would spray some broadleaf pesticide. Robert Baker noted the fireworks next June; Gary Totman said he had spoken with Tom Hutcheson about it and didn't think it would be a problem; the timing is good. Hutcheson proposed amending the agreement to say that future planting of the lowered area was contingent upon further approval, and provided a new printing of the agreement with that included. Tom Hutcheson will follow up with Kimberly about future use of the lowered area.

On a motion by John O'Rourke to sign the revised Agreement with Gary Totman for Agricultural Use of the Rose Property, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.

Approve rate of \$25/hour for hourly pay for Fire Chief call-outs

Robert Baker recused himself from the discussion. Tom Hutcheson said that he was proposing that the Fire Chief receive call-out pay as well as the regular stipend. The Fire Chief has a number of responsibilities, and Conway is lucky to still have an all-volunteer force. The added cost is estimated to be between \$2,000 and \$3,000 per year, which is not a great deal, and would make the position more attractive to future potential Chiefs.

On a motion by John O'Rourke to approve paying the Fire Chief \$25/hr. for call-outs, seconded by Bob Armstrong, the vote was two in favor, none opposed, with Robert Baker recused.

New Business

Recognition of resident John Heffernan for national education award

John O'Rourke read the proposed letter of commendation for John Heffernan, and proposed sending him in letter in recognition of his outstanding work.

On a motion by John O'Rourke to sign a letter of commendation for John Heffernan, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.

Sign agreement with Michael Rainville for engineering services for Highway Garage repair

Robert Baker asked that the agreement be amended to be between Michael Rainville and the Town, rather than the Highway Superintendent. Tom Hutcheson made that change. Robert Baker asked why the agreement did not include a raising of the doors for Fire vehicles. Tom Hutcheson said he would check with the Highway Superintendent, and that future work was possible.

On a motion by John O'Rourke to sign the Agreement with Michael Rainville for engineering services for repair to the Highway Garage, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.

Items Not Anticipated 48 hours in Advance of the Meeting

The Open Space Committee's proposed contract with Laurie Sanders was not ready.

Rebecca Stone, the Assistant to the Town Administrator, has resigned, having accepted an unexpected offer from the town in which she currently works part time. Tom Hutcheson has asked the next most highly ranked employee, Lisa Turowsky, whether she would still be interested, which she is; he will pursue the steps necessary to hire her, and if all goes well, bring her to the next Select Board meeting for an offer of employment.

Town Administrator Update

Committees

The Energy Committee is exploring cooperating with a new office at UMass to have them assist in the Town's "Mass. Energy Insight" computer application, as it is very involved and not entirely suitable for a volunteer committee to manage.

The 250th Committee would like to invite a descendent of Marshall Field to the 250th Anniversary as a guest of honor, and have prepared a draft of a letter for the Select Board to send. I expect to have that ready for your next meeting.

Departments

The Highway superintendent, his assistant, and I have been coordinating on hiring a new laborer; we are almost ready to post an ad.

The revised Community Development Strategy is set for review on Wednesday evening at the Town Hall. I've gotten two comments already, and it would be great to have a number of people show up.

Projects

The South River project is awaiting final sign-off by the engineer (Weston and Sampson), and then the Conservation Commission. After that, there will still be a final clean-up of the area, to be completed no later than November 1.

The Town Hall insulation project is on hold while we supply some information to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). Apparently state agencies are supposed to notify the MHC when funds are used in historic districts, and this has not been a part of the Green Communities program, so Conway is once again setting a precedent, though this time in a direction we did not anticipate.

The Highway superintendent and I met with the engineer for the Delabarre Ave. project, who is preparing an appeal to FEMA for grant funding. At the very least, we'll know whether it will be eligible in the future; at best, it could be funded this year, though this is unlikely.

The Energy Committee hosted a meeting with several committee and board representatives to outline an ownership proposal for their proposed community solar project; preliminary indications are that a town-owned project would be very worthwhile. Many communities choose to have a private company own and maintain such projects, but according to their consultant, there is a substantial financial benefit to Town ownership, even accounting for operation and maintenance. With this preliminary understanding, the Energy Committee will be having a larger meeting of multiple boards, including the Select Board, to explain the proposal.

Other

I got a letter from Lynn Carey, the new Superintendent of Frontier Regional High School, proposing re-purposing moneys previously allocated, and thus requiring a Town Meeting vote.

Concerns of the Selectmen None.

Mail

Robert Baker invited the Select board to the dedication of the FRCOG's meeting room to Bill Allen, former County roads engineer, among other positions, on Thursday, October 27, at 2 p.m.

Announcements None.

Next Meeting

Scheduled for **Monday, October 17, 2016** at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Office, 32 Main Street

Executive Session None held.

Adjournment

On a motion at 8:19 p.m. from John O'Rourke to adjourn, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert Baker, Clerk