

*Minutes*  
CONWAY SELECT BOARD  
Town Hall, 5 Academy Hill Road  
Monday, October 16, 2017 6 p.m.

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*Select Board present:* Bob Armstrong; Robert Baker; John O'Rourke, Chair

*Others present:* Tom Hutcheson, Town Administrator; Lisa Turowsky, Assistant to the Town Administrator; Alyssa Tan, FCAT; Roy Cohen, Finance Committee; Beth Girshman, Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Representative; Janice Warner, Treasurer

**John O'Rourke called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.**

*Minutes*

*October 2, 2017*

- **On a motion from Robert Baker that the Select Board approve the minutes from October 2<sup>nd</sup>, seconded by Bob Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

*Warrants*

- **On a motion from John O'Rourke to approve the FY 2018 vendor warrant of \$125,854.01; the FY 2018 payroll warrant of \$ 106,107.86; and the FY 2018 payroll deduction warrant of \$27,653.82, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

*Meetings Attended by Select Board Members*

Bob Armstrong, Robert Baker, John O'Rourke all attended FRCOG 20<sup>th</sup>-anniversary celebration; the All-Committee Meeting; and the Planning Board hearing re: temporary moratorium of retail marijuana establishments, at which there was a good discussion.

In addition to the above, John O'Rourke attended MMA long-range planning meeting at which priorities for legislation were discussed, in particular Ch. 90 funding, SPED reimbursements, charter school and school transportation reimbursements; the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust's meeting; and the Massachusetts Selectman's Association Fall conference where September revenue figures were very encouraging.

Bob Armstrong also met with Ron Sweet re: his maintenance plan for dirt roads; and attended the Massachusetts Selectman's Association Fall conference.

*Citizens' concerns*

Last meeting there were concerns about roads. John O'Rourke has traveled gravel roads, particularly Boyden and Graves Roads, and he thinks they're in fine shape; he saw nothing that would be detrimental to walkers or animals. Robert Baker also took a look at roads and opined that big chunk of rock that Brian brought in to last meeting was immediately after road crew did some work on the roads. Bob Armstrong said that sometimes there is work in progress.

**Old Business**

6:05 JOINT MEETING with the BOARD OF ASSESSORS: Tax Classification Hearing. Assessors still have not heard back from DOR so the hearing must be *continued until October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 5:30 p.m.* unless it is further delayed by DOR.

**New Business**

Report on Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership: Beth Girshman

Beth Girshman reported on recent meetings and a legislative hearing on the bill that funds the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership project. It's been in process but not much has happened. Still don't know if state is going to fund it; or if federal government will fund it. Beth Girshman has been to three meetings. US Forest Service has sent representatives but they have recently changed leadership. FAQ was discussed; it's a

conservation/sustainable forestry effort rather than an economic effort. The project has “a lot of space in it” for various kinds of projects. The Land Trust is interested primarily in conservation. There was an article in the Greenfield Recorder about wood pellet manufacturing but that’s not the major focus. Beth Girshman doesn’t think the wood pellet plant is going to happen. Robert Baker says some people in town are concerned they’re going to lose their rights to use their land. Beth Girshman said, if the bill passes through the state Select Board would have to decide whether Conway is going to opt in. There could be adverse taxation consequences and costs to municipalities. Industrialized logging may also result which is a concern. Beth Girshman is personally neutral on this project; she doesn’t see how this project would lead to anything different from what is currently happening with the Land Trust. Steve Kulik is a big supporter, as is Adam Hinds, perhaps because of tourism/recreation potential. Engineered timber using lower-grade lumber might be a possible outcome.

Special Town Meeting 10/30/17

Discussion/recommendations on articles with Finance Committee representative Roy Cohen.

Article 2: 5-0 in favor

Article 3: 5-0 in favor

Article 4: 5-0 in favor

Article 5: 4 in favor, 1 abstention (bills from prior year)

Article 6: 5-0 in favor

Article 7: no formal vote was taken. Committee didn’t understand the background for the Article; Roy Cohen is trying to find out what the concerns of the Select Board are. Having a 3-3 tie shows that they’re divided on something, they’re a conservative group. It’s not a bad thing for the Town. But it’s also not a bad thing to have an odd number which would keep ties from happening. Roy Cohen said he’s ambivalent about Article 7; he wishes that members of the public would come to meetings to provide a broader perspective. John O’Rourke explained the article was put forth because the committee was having trouble making quorum. Going to five members would change the quorum from four to three, making the committee’s job easier. Roy questioned whether Town Meeting cares how the Finance Committee feels. Timeliness has been an issue with the current configuration.

Consider request from Treasurer/Collector to authorize short-term borrowing

Janice Warner was here to talk about short-term borrowing from general stabilization. The Treasurer’s office is preparing for a month without any significant revenue. Fiscal year to date shows an operating shortfall. \$121,765 is balance for the next month. About \$400,000 is needed for operating expenses for a month. Janice Warner has asked for \$400,000 from general stabilization, to be returned by December. Looking for a 60-day loan. She presented a document for Select Board’s signature to send to DOR. Discussed preliminary tax bills and the issues with those.

- **On a motion from John O’Rourke on recommendation of the Treasurer that the Select Board approve the temporary loan of \$400,000 from stabilization account for operating expenses, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Appointments to Cultural Council: Michelle Sanger, Danielle Thompson

- **On a motion from John O’Rourke to appoint Michelle Sanger to the Cultural Council for a term ending 6/30/2020, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.**
- **On a motion from John O’Rourke to appoint Danielle Thompson to the Cultural Council for a term ending 6/30/2020, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Consider joining communities forming Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District.

Tom Hutcheson stated there will be a representative from Deerfield at the October 30<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Select Board to talk more about this effort. There is a small grant that would pay for the first year of the towns’

participation. The project would monitor disease levels and provide a remedy (larvicide) that centers on catch basins to substantially decrease mosquito population. There is going to be a meeting this week that will produce more information. Carolyn Shores Ness gave a presentation at a recent Select Board annual conference. Robert Baker raised a concern about how much Conway would have to pay to participate when there are so few catch basins in town. Select Board would like to get more information before acting.

Consider a written agreement for utility payments at 41 Ashfield Road in return for meeting and training space.

It came up that the Town pays utilities for the fireman's association building. Tom Hutcheson sent a letter to Chris Hermann and Ron Hawkes proposing to formalize the existing agreement by putting it in writing for the sake of transparency.

*Items not anticipated within 48 hours: None.*

*Town Administrator update*

### **Committees**

In case this information didn't come up under the Finance Committee agenda item, the Finance Committee has elected Alan Singer their chair. Roy is continuing as the representative to the Capital improvements Planning Committee, and Bob Stone is continuing as representative to the Personnel Committee. The Finance Committee also approved matching money for the hazard mitigation grant, and I was able to get the signed commitment to Kimberly MacPhee at the FRCOG in time for the submittal deadline.

The Capital Improvements Planning Committee is slated to meet Wednesday night. I hope to have the final version of the long-term financial plan by then, but will present what I have in draft form if the final version is not available.

### **Departments**

Warrants for the Special Town Meeting on October 30<sup>th</sup> were mailed; Select Board members should have received them.

Regarding a question about the cost of repairing the grader, it was substantially less than expected; a second repair shop discovered that the slippage problem was electrical rather than directly related to the transmission.

The front of the Fournier property is being cleared of tornado-damaged trees. Thanks to quick action by our Highway Supervisor, the contractor has agreed to take down three ash trees we had identified as problematic near the school at no additional cost, so we may be able to pass over that article at Town Meeting.

I am working with Ginny and Lee to update addresses for the Local Update of Census Addresses, which is the first step for the Federal Government in creating its baseline for the next ten-year census.

We are still moving forward on the FEMA grant for Delabarre Avenue. It is technically submitted by MEMA to FEMA, but the submission website has been problematic. Although MEMA's internal deadline was today, we have been working on a temporary solution that should solve the problem.

The members of the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust met last week and brought down the deductible for referrals to specialists. We are still trying to get information from HCGIT about the health insurance landscape to have a solid case to make to our employees. There will be a defined timeline and detailed process for decision-making once we decide to move forward.

A relatively new organization, Rural Commonwealth, formed by two current and former Select Board members of Charlemont, has just published a report on western Franklin County business. The report is available at [www.ruralcommonwealth.org](http://www.ruralcommonwealth.org).

*Concerns of the Selectmen:*

Rag Shag Parade preparations are being coordinated with Heidi Flanders.

*Mail:*

Letter from Frontier Regional School Committee re: joint meeting with the four town Select Boards and Finance Committees to discuss Frontier Regional's bond proposal on 10/24 at 6 p.m.

Invitation from Cooperative Public Health Service to their annual meeting on 10/26 from 5:30-8:30 at Shelburne Falls Eagles Club.

Thank-you note from Jane Recore re: cable removal by Comcast

*Announcements*

The latest Open Meeting Law revisions were distributed to the Select Board, along with other boards, courtesy of Lisa Turowski.

*Documents and Other Exhibits Used at the Meeting*

*Vendor, Payroll, and Payroll Deduction Warrants (FY 2018)*

*Special Town Meeting Warrant 10/30/2017*

*Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District letter from South Deerfield Select Board and supporting docs*

*Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership: Draft meeting notes 7/11/2017; FAQ Final Draft September 2017; Advisory Committee Agenda 10/3/2017*

*Next Meeting*

Scheduled for Monday, October 30, 2017 at the Town Office, 32 Main Street, 6:00 p.m., prior to the special Town Meeting at the Conway Grammar School at 7:30.

- **At 7: 10 p.m., on a motion from John O'Rourke to adjourn, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.**