

Minutes
CONWAY SELECT BOARD
Town Office, 32 Main Street
Monday, December 11, 2017 6pm

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

Others present: Tom Hutcheson, Town Administrator; Lisa Turowsky, Assistant to the Town Administrator; Dan Fentin-Thomas, FCAT, Dana Goodfield, Capital Improvements Planning Committee, Linda Driscoll & Nelson Shifflett, residents

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

Minutes

November 27, 2017

- **On a motion from John O'Rourke to approve the minutes of November 27th, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Warrants

- **On a motion from John O'Rourke to approve the vendor warrant of \$113,501.12; the payroll warrant of \$122,216.73; and the payroll deduction warrant of \$31,020.22, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Meetings Attended by Select Board Members

John O'Rourke had a ZBA meeting and attended a FRCOG Finance Committee meeting, at which problematic accounting software was discussed.

Citizens' concerns *None.*

Old Business

Discussion: minimum value to be considered for capital planning. Tabled.

Dana Goodfield was here to talk about this and says it has been the Capital Improvements Planning Committee (CIPC)'s understanding that the minimum was set at \$5000, not at \$10,000. Tom Hutcheson noted he had recommended at the formation of the CIPC that it be \$10,000, although Joe Markarian tentatively put in \$5000 as a conservative figure in the long-term financial plan, the figure to be revisited. Dana Goodfield asked why we'd want the figure to be \$10,000 instead of \$5000. Tom Hutcheson said first to distinguish between smaller and larger pieces of equipment; if you had to replace a broken snowplow for \$6000, it would have to have a CIPC recommendation. He said there could be a number of items that can cost over \$5000, and these would have to be in the capital plan—this is really a planning issue. Robert Baker supported a figure of \$5000. John O'Rourke noted CIPC is advisory, and not giving final approval of expenditures. Dana Goodfield hasn't convened the CIPC to talk about it. Robert Baker asked if Dana Goodfield would like to have some more time for CIPC to discuss this matter, and Dana Goodfield said yes.

Receive letter requesting Safe Communities article be placed on the annual Town Meeting warrant

Linda Driscoll and Nelson Shifflett were in attendance to present a letter requesting that the Safe Communities article that was tabled at the Special Town Meeting on Oct. 30th be placed on annual Town Meeting warrant without need of a further petition by citizens, in accordance with motion that John O'Rourke made at the Nov. 27th Select Board meeting. Linda Driscoll said that the motion could not have been put back on the table, which Nick Filler has concurred with. Linda Driscoll is pleased that the voters of Conway will have an opportunity to consider the article. When the warrant opens for the annual Town Meeting, John O'Rourke stated that the article will be put on the warrant verbatim.

- **On a motion from John O'Rourke to accept the Safe Communities article for inclusion on the Annual Town Meeting warrant, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

New Business

Discussion: participation in FRCOG facilitation of electricity procurement aggregation

John O'Rourke noted that the Select Board has a memo from Bob Dean of the FRCOG; Bob Armstrong recapped that Franklin County CPR adopted a number of issues task forces, including the issue of renewable energy to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. One of the projects that came up in discussion was aggregating electricity procurement in towns. Various towns in Franklin County were interested in doing this. Our Energy Committee said this was exactly the kind of project they could do. The Select Board discussed aggregation (collective buying). It's now time to have towns declare whether they're interested in moving forward and helping the group choose a broker. FRCOG is helping with the coordination, forming a committee that would facilitate choosing a broker. Task Force members are talking with Select Boards in support of the aggregation project. Aggregations have been able to get lower prices than what utilities are charging. Conway is essentially ready to go forward once the task force selects an aggregation consultant. Tom Hutcheson thinks it would be good to bring it back to Town Meeting for a follow-up vote; John O'Rourke noted that it is not necessary. Bob Armstrong wants people to understand what aggregation is, and to appoint someone to be on the committee to select a broker. This process would only apply to people in Conway who are buying their electricity from Eversource. There is an opt-out provision for people who could buy electricity from another source, but the default would be whoever the Town chooses to replace Eversource. Reasons to aggregate include financial stability and that the consumer can choose to mitigate climate change by selecting a plan based on a higher content of renewables. Bob Dean has a grant for partial funding, and Bob Armstrong got a grant for the remainder, so Conway wouldn't have to pay anything for the facilitation.

- **On motion by John O'Rourke to nominate Bob Armstrong to be on the committee being formed by FRCOG, Robert Baker seconded, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

MIA annual business meeting and lunch at MMA annual meeting: attendance and representation

Tom Hutcheson asked who wants to go to the lunch that MIA is holding? Tom Hutcheson will be going; the Select Board agreed that he should represent the Town at the annual meeting, as usual. Tom Hutcheson will RSVP for himself, Bob Armstrong, and John O'Rourke for the lunch.

Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting

None.

Town Administrator update

Committees

I filed the annual Green Communities report. We are about ready to declare the Town Hall project done and pay the final invoices. We will then need to see whether there is any money left over for a small project.

Both Sunderland and Whately are asking for advice about their upcoming anniversary celebrations, and both are complimenting Conway on its success, so we can congratulate ourselves again on our success. On a related note, I have an e-mail out asking about the plan for taking down the banner, but I don't have a date yet.

The Planning Board and the Conservation Commission both are planning to ask for funds for a clerk, and I have suggested that they combine their requests into one. They are also indicating the need for a laptop computer, which I fully support as it would be connected to the Town IT system, which is recommended for security, back-up, and access to public documents. The clerk could report either to me or to the Board chairs; based on a STAM survey, about half the towns who have clerks for multiple positions do it each way. This will be a decision for the Select Board.

The Conway Grammar School Moves and Grooves Committee would like to hold their annual 5k celebratory run/walk for CGS families later this spring, as they have done the past two years. The day that seemed to work best for them would be Sunday, May 20, at 9 a.m. I'm checking with the Police Chief to make sure that's alright, but I don't anticipate any problem.

Departments

I completed the registration for the Local Update of Census Addresses. This allows the Town to review the records of the Census Bureau and update them appropriately for the 2020 Census. The information has to be protected for confidentiality, and in this age of computers, this will involve some work by our IT consultant, as we'll be working in Excel rather than just from paper.

The Highway Department has submitted four requests for capital items: bridge repair work; the five-year replacement of a Kaboda tractor; the five-year replacement of an excavator; and a second request for a lift, as the Highway Supervisor would like another chance to make the case for it.

I've started filling out the FY 2019 budget with items that have come in. FYI, I am going to propose a slight rise in Select Board stipends to keep in line with others. It has been many years since there was any rise.

There was a report of a dog nipping a bicyclist on Whately Road; it did not break the skin, so quarantine was not required. The owner was contacted, but this is a second complaint, so I'll keep you informed if it keeps up.

I am considering holding an all-staff meeting before the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust comes out with its final plan, as we want everyone to be as informed as early as possible.

Concerns of the Selectmen

None.

Mail:

The Select Board members received an email from a resident that came to the Select Board members regarding plagiarism in John O'Rourke's Greenfield Recorder op-ed. In response to the email, John O'Rourke said his remarks weren't plagiarized nor is he a member of a hate group.

Notice of Small Town Summit, January 11 at 7 p.m. in Dalton Town Hall

Announcements:

The Town Holiday party will be held on December 21st from 5 to 7 pm at the Conway Inn, for all Town staff, their partners, and volunteers.

Documents and Other Exhibits Used at the Meeting

Vendor, Payroll, and Payroll Deduction Warrants

Letter from Nelson Shifflet requesting the resubmission of "A Bylaw Declaring Conway to be a Safe Community" for the annual Town Meeting warrant, no citizen petition required

Letter from Robert Dean, FRCOG, concerning regional electricity aggregation project

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 26, 2017 at the Town Office, 32 Main Street, 6:00 p.m.

Executive Session

For Reason #7, to comply with any general or special law, specifically, to deliberate on past minutes of executive sessions.

- **On a motion from John O'Rourke to enter into Executive Session for Reason #7 and to adjourn immediately thereafter, the vote was Bob Armstrong, aye; Robert Baker, aye; and John O'Rourke, aye.**