

Minutes
CONWAY SELECT BOARD and FINANCE COMMITTEE
Town Hall, Academy Hill Road
Tuesday, January 16, 2018 6 p.m.

Select Board present: Robert Baker, Bob Armstrong; John O'Rourke, Chair; Alan Stone, Finance Committee; Andrea Beaudoin, Finance Committee; Roy Cohen, Finance Committee; Tom Donovan, Finance Committee

Others present: Tom Hutcheson, Town Administrator; Lisa Turowsky, Assistant to the Town Administrator

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

Minutes

December 26, 2017

- **On a motion from John O'Rourke to approve the minutes from December 26, 2017, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

January 8, 2018

- **On a motion from Robert Baker to approve the minutes from January 8, 2018, seconded by Bob Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Meetings Attended by Select Board Members

Bob Armstrong went to the Energy Committee meeting to discuss aggregation; the Committee supports aggregation for the Town. He also attended a Franklin County Selectman's Association meeting where regionalization was discussed, and a FRCOG meeting. Robert Baker went to a unification drill at Conway Grammar School which involved Fire, Police, and School personnel. John O'Rourke attended the HCGIT meeting where insurance rate increases were discussed; he also attended the Franklin County Selectman's Association meeting at GCC.

Citizens' concerns

None.

Old Business

Sign warrant for Citizens' Caucus: March 5, 2018, 8 p.m. at the Town Hall

The dates for signatures were corrected; warrant is now ready to be posted. Tom Hutcheson will notify Ron Hawkes.

- **On a motion from John O'Rourke to approve the warrant for Citizens' Caucus, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Annual Town Meeting warrant

Review and discussion of draft

Tom Hutcheson has removed the draft article relating to a bylaw regarding public trees, as it has been determined that there is no need for this article.

- Article 3: concerning repair of N. Poland Road bridge; the bridge can be repaired instead of replaced;
- Article 7: concerning Conway Grammar School capital expenses; these are the actual figures so far and the only capital expenses for FY2019;
- Tom Hutcheson is suggesting that \$10,000 be dedicated to OPEB liability to improve the Town's financial situation when borrowing in the future;
- Planning Board and Conservation Commission have asked for a part-time clerk; Tom Hutcheson believes this position could also support the ZBA. More general language will be included so as not to limit the position to those bodies. It may be that this position could serve as PT assistant to the Town Clerk or other committees or boards as well, so he will re-write that article;
- Article 15: concerning Assessors' software; this relates to second year of conversion of the software;

- Christmas tree fund needs help; Tom Hutcheson suggests \$1000 to be earmarked for this so as not to deplete the account;
- Flag funds: there are two funds related to flags; Tom Hutcheson has proposed an additional \$200 for special revenue account for the purchase of flags;
- CPC budget: there is an additional section this year for the deficit secondary to the UCC church damage;
- Article 21: concerning creation of a revolving fund if matching funds are needed for future grants—this may only require a special revenue account, so the article will be re-written with that in mind;
- Article 22: the revolving fund (or special revenue account) would be seeded with \$10,000; Tom Hutcheson will review this;
- Article 23: would impose a 3% tax on the gross sales of any future retail marijuana establishments;
- Article 25: concerning state-compliant Commission on Disability; Tom Hutcheson reported that our present Commission on Disability does not meet State standards, which require a 5-member Commission that meets on a monthly basis; however, he believes the Town version is sufficient to support grant applications, etc., so he will strike this article for now;
- Article 26: the renumbering/reclassification of Town bylaws would create a good deal of order in our by-laws without changing any of them;
- Article 27: would strike the continued mailing of the Town Report to all residents, but would allow for a more limited printing/ mailing scheme once residents are adequately notified of the change;
- Also proposed is a Planning bylaw concerning large-scale construction and a citizens’ petition brought forward from the Special Town meeting last October; there are no ballot questions.

Update on Chapter 32B process for choosing health insurance representative: question of counsel

There was discussion of the pros and cons of choosing HCGIT versus MMIA health insurance plans. Tom Hutcheson has recommended that Town Counsel oversee the process, which is quite complex, once the Select Board is ready to act. Ultimately the Select Board will have to make the choice. HCGIT offers stability, reasonable rate increases, and Conway is one of 70 members with a seat at the table when decisions are being made. MMIA offers lowers premiums than HCGIT but the second year, the risk is that prices will go up if someone in Conway’s pool gets very sick.

New Business

Postponed until conclusion of Joint Meeting with Finance Committee

JOINT MEETING WITH FINANCE COMMITTEE, 6:30 p.m.

FY 2019 budget deliberations: general considerations; schedule for departmental reviews

Joint meeting of Select Board and Finance Committee was called to order at 6:40 p.m.

Tom Hutcheson began the meeting with the caveat that the numbers in the budget excerpt are preliminary only. In general, the Assessors Administrative hours should be 24, not 23 hours. In the Public Safety departments, still no figures for radio fees from FRCOG. Board of Health figures were inadvertently left out; Tom Hutcheson will email them to the Finance Committee. Many of the departments will be level-funded, including Moderator; Personnel; Park, Recreation & Trails; Emergency Management; Animal Control Officer; Tree Warden; Historical Commission; Open Space Committee. As far as other Departments/Committees/Boards:

- Finance Committee: slight increase to allow three members of the Committee to attend Association of Town Finance Committees conference;
- Reserve Fund: \$40,000 is a “comfortable” figure to keep in the Reserve Fund;
- Assessors: mostly level-funded, some items are decreasing; salary and hourly figures are brought over from FY2018 except there is an increase in Assessors’ stipends;
- Select Board: Tom Hutcheson is recommending increasing the stipends but the consensus among Select Board members is not to raise them; the Personnel Committee will review stipends to evaluate how reasonable they are;
- Treasurer/Collector: these departments are presented together, as separating the functions is artificial. There is a slight increase due to new software and an additional mailing;

- Town Administrator: The TA's contract provides for a raise in FY2019, and there are also increases related to mileage and attendance at various trainings, especially the procurement class, which is quite important; there is also an allowance for professional development for the Assistant;
- Town Report: discussion concerning doing away with the mailing of the Town Report to all residents, which is quite costly (\$4000 to \$5000 each year); the budget figures are based on actual costs for FY2016's publication;
- Legal: Tom Hutcheson proposes an increase of \$2000 to this item, to \$12,000, because last year's figure was too close to the limit;
- Town Clerk: the request for a part-time assistant position has been included in the budget, though if one is not hired this year, it would raise questions about including the money for FY 2019;
- Workers' comp and general liability figures are based on historical data, with better figures to come;
- Personnel: health insurance costs for the group are based on real figures from HCGIT;
- Planning Board: there are small increases in light anticipated public hearing expenses and the addition of a part-time clerical position;
- ZBA: slight uptick in work accounts for a small increase;
- AgComm: this committee has indicated that it wants to have Right to Farm signs created to post at Town boundaries;
- FRCOG: no figures are available yet, but John O'Rourke indicated that our regional assessment is going down;
- Public Safety: budget request will go up due to rising radio fees;
- Fire Department: slight increase due to cost of vehicle maintenance and increased radio repairs;
- Ambulance: increase due to more training;
- Public Works: decrease resulting from being able to repair grader rather than replace it.

New Business

MMA resolutions for annual business meeting:

- 1) *Ensuring a Strong and Enduring Fiscal Partnership Between Cities and Towns and the State...*
- 2) *Opposition to the Ballot Question that Would Reduce the Use and Sales Tax Rate*
- 3) *Supporting a Local-State-Federal Partnership to Combat the Effects of Climate Change*

- **On a motion from Bob Armstrong to approve the MMA resolutions for annual business meeting, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting

None.

Town Administrator update

Committees and Boards

As I mentioned some time ago, the Assessors are interested in making improvements to our GIS capacity. The Administrative Assessor and I have been working on a grant proposal, totaling about \$40,000. This would also entail annual spending of up to \$6,000 in subscriptions to maintain the additional capacity. Benefits would also accrue to the Planning Board, Highway Department, Public Safety departments, Conservation Commission, Agricultural Commission, Open Space Committee, Historical Commission, and Parks, Recreation, and Trails (especially Trails).

As you know from my earlier e-mail, the economic development report done for the Planning Board by the FRCOG has been completed. We are waiting for paper copies, in color, and will post it on the web.

Departments

I am pleased to report that we have been able to clear the trail on the Fournier property, the last clean-up from the tornado. A minimal amount of work was done simply to clear the path, and the wood was laid on the south side of the path, away from the ecologically sensitive areas.

The grant proposal to make the downstairs bathroom in the Town Hall accessible has been approved. I'm working with Ron and Ken to make it happen.

Concerns of the Selectmen

None.

Mail:

Comcast announcement of right to change programs available
Thank-you letter from Sen. Adam Hinds
MMA – annual meeting credentials vote form
Veterans Service District announcement of tax work-off program for vets
Deerfield River Watershed maintenance resiliency plan

Announcements:

None.

Documents and Other Exhibits Used at the Meeting

FY2019 Annual Town Meeting Warrant DRAFT
Budget excerpts
MMA resolutions for business meeting
HCGIT and MIA: Pros and Cons
MIA Town of Conway Fiscal Year 2018 HMO Active Plan Rates...
HCGIT health Insurance rate comparisons

At 8:15 p.m., on a motion from John O'Rourke to adjourn, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.

Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 22, 2018 at the Town Hall, 5 Academy Hill Road, 6:00 p.m.