

Minutes
SELECT BOARD and FINANCE COMMITTEE
Town Hall, 5 Academy Hill Road
Monday, January 22, 2018 6 p.m.

Present: John O'Rourke, Chair; Robert Baker; Bob Armstrong

Others present: Alan Singer, Chair, Finance Committee; Roy Cohn, Tom Donovan, Andrea Beaudoin, Finance Committee members; Ron Sweet, Highway Supervisor; Dan Fentin-Thomas, FCAT; Tom Hutcheson, Town Administrator

John O'Rourke called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes

On a motion from John O'Rourke, seconded by Robert Baker, to approve the minutes of Tuesday, January 16, 2018, the vote was unanimous in favor.

Warrants

On a motion from John O'Rourke, seconded by Robert Baker, to approve the vendor warrant of \$142,248.71, the payroll warrant of \$105,040.29, and the payroll deduction warrant: \$27,806.10, the vote was unanimous in favor.

Meetings Attended by Select Board Members

Bob Armstrong attended the annual meeting of Frontier Community Access Television and was re-elected as President, and the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Municipal Association, where he attended climate change and renewable energy break-out sessions.

Robert Baker attended the Conway Grammar School Committee meeting, where the first draft FY 2019 budget was presented. There was good representation from the Finance Committee; there is a 3-4% budget rise proposed by the Superintendent and Principal, though final figures are not yet in; and there was a discussion around upcoming building needs.

John O'Rourke also attended the Massachusetts Municipal Association annual meeting, which he found very well done and with good workshops.

Citizens' concerns

None.

Old Business

Annual Town Meeting warrant

Review and discussion of draft

Tom Hutcheson reported that he had made the changes discussed at the last meeting and also had a revised figure from the Assessors for the software conversion costs. He also corrected the order to reflect, as usual, the money articles in descending order. There has been some sentiment to put the school items up front for the sake of the superintendent and principal; in the past, this has been thought to encourage people leaving after the school votes have been taken.

The Select Board requested Tom Hutcheson to contact Brian Blakeslee regarding the amount requested for the Flag Fund.

Cancel state of emergency for tornado

- **On a motion from John O'Rourke, seconded by Robert Baker, to lift the state of emergency for the tornado of February 25, 2017, since all obligations have been covered and there is no need for the state of emergency to be in place, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

New Business

Priorities for Direct Local Technical Assistance for the FRCOG

The Select Board reviewed the FRCOG's 2018 Local Technical Assistance Request Form.

Under Planning, they chose 1) Zoning Bylaws Development (recreational marijuana retail and/or cultivation and Short-term- residential rentals 2) Open Space and Recreation Plan Update, 3) Deerfield River Economic Impact Study, 4) Floodplain and River Corridor Management, and 5) Recreational Marijuana Assistance (all three sub-topics).

Under Regional Projects, they chose 1) Local Official Continuing Education Workshops, 2) Regional Opioid Task Force, 3) Support local substance abuse prevention plan for young people, 4) Succession Planning; and Tom Hutcheson will check with Tracy Rogers at the FRCOG and our Emergency Management Director regarding the EMD Networking item.

The Select Board requested that the item be brought back next week for a final discussion before it is submitted.

Draft comment of Town Administrator on draft marijuana regulations

Tom Hutcheson reviewed the main points of the draft comment: 1) ensuring public outreach complied with the Open Meeting Law and 2) referring explicitly to the Board of Health as the local body responsible for ensuring compliance with state sanitary code.

The Select Board requested that the item be brought back next week for further discussion.

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

Review FY 2019 Proposed Budget

Highway Department

Highway Supervisor Ron Sweet reviewed the proposed budget. Changes included an increase in hourly wages, mostly for the laborer hired in April to become a full truck driver/laborer, as well as for Ron Sweet's assistant; an increase in materials, for keeping up with summer needs; and more for fuel, as prices are rising. The total is down from last year due to the one-time bump last year for grader repair—which turned out substantially less than expected, with the problem in the electronics rather than the mechanism.

There was considerable discussion about Highway winter operations and the winter budget. John O'Rourke commended the Highway Superintendent for his budget management.

General

There was no discussion on other budget matters.

Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting

None.

Town Administrator update

Committees

The Energy Committee has unfortunately stopped making headway in negotiating with the Town Hall insulation contractor. They and I are preparing a counter-proposal to his offer to reduce the final payment for the job, which was not completed according to the contract.

Departments

I attended the annual conference of the Massachusetts Municipal Association this past weekend and learned two items relevant to our budget. First, unrestricted general government aid will be rising 3.5%, and second, our MIIA insurance cost increase—both workers' compensation and property and casualty—will be about 2.5%, depending on our claim history.

The Franklin Regional Retirement Board will be voting Wednesday, February 28 on a proposal for a cost-of-living adjustment of 3%. The meeting is public and member towns are invited; our Treasurer will be attending for the Town. Please let me know if you'd like further details.

Conway has received a Community Compact grant under the Efficiency and Regionalization program to assist in our Treasurer's software conversion, along with several other towns. This was facilitated by our Treasurer, with Royalston as the lead town. Since the Community Software Consortium is also partially funding the conversion, we anticipate this will be able to be completed without using any Town funds.

There will be an Information Night for those interested in Comcast service who would like to speak with company representatives. It will be February 6, 2018 from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Representatives will be at the Town Hall from 7-8:30 to answer questions, provide information about Comcast's services or make an appointment for a construction estimate for those homes and businesses that Comcast has identified will require additional construction.

We have received a preliminary budget for the Conway Grammar School, but as that does not include the new figures for Chapter 70 state assistance, which Governor Baker said were fairly rosy, we should delay any discussion until the Union 38 business manager incorporates those numbers.

Concerns of the Selectmen *None.*

Mail

The Massachusetts Taxpayer Foundation sent their annual mailing regarding the state budget.

Announcements *None.*

Next Meeting

Scheduled for Monday, January 29th, 2018 at the Town Hall, 5 Academy Hill Road, 6:00 p.m.

Joint Meeting with Finance Committee, 6:30 p.m., mostly regarding FY19 public safety budgets

On a motion from John O'Rourke at 7:25 p.m. to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.