

Minutes
SELECT BOARD and FINANCE COMMITTEE
Town Hall, 5 Academy Hill Road
Tuesday, February 20, 2018 6 p.m.

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

Others present: Alan Singer, Chair, Finance Committee; Roy Cohen, Finance Committee; Tom Donovan, Finance Committee; Dan Fentin-Thomas, FCAT; Tom Hutcheson, Town Administrator; Lisa Turowsky, Assistant to the Town Administrator; Ron Sweet, Highway Department; Carl Nelke, Board of Health

John O'Rourke called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

Warrants

- **On a motion from John O'Rourke, seconded by Robert Baker, to approve the vendor warrant of \$165,464.47, the payroll warrant of \$104,939.66, and the payroll deduction warrant of \$25,831.30, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Minutes

- **On a motion from Robert Baker to approve the minutes of Monday, February 12, 2018, seconded by Bob Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Meetings Attended by Select Board Members

Bob Armstrong was at the State House visiting Steve Kulik, who has announced that he is not running for re-election.

John O'Rourke attended a meeting of the MMA Board of Directors, where he learned about an increase in state revenues resulting from early tax payments; legislative matters and the activities of the Cannabis Control Commission were also discussed. John O'Rourke also went to a meeting of the Local Government Advisory Committee where problems with Ch. 70 and Ch. 90 funding and the Governor's budget were discussed. John O'Rourke also went to a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Mass. Selectman's Association; members reviewed the upcoming schedule of meetings.

Citizens' concerns

None.

Old Business

Annual Town Meeting warrant

Review and discussion of draft

Tom Hutcheson reported that there were not many changes to this draft of the warrant. There was a change in the placement of \$10,000 in grant funding from the by-law section of the warrant to the usual money articles earlier.

Petition for change in Highway operations: labor and capital considerations

Ron Sweet of the Highway Department came in to talk about the citizens' petition which has been added to the warrant concerning the possibility of the Highway Department taking over the mowing/landscaping of several areas in town including the cemeteries, ballfield, and Conway Grammar School. What people don't realize is the cost of this upkeep has been absorbed by Conway Grammar School and some trust funds that cover the cemeteries and ballfield. It was explained that the resulting increases to the budget of the Highway Department would exceed the cost of the contract with the present vendor, which is about \$15,000. Ron Sweet explained that his department's new mower wasn't purchased to handle the type or amount of maintenance that the outsourced vendor has been doing. He calculated that it would cost \$46,500 in initial equipment purchases of a larger mower, a storage trailer, and a pick-up truck to move the mower from site to site. The labor required would be about 30 hours/week at \$20/hr. for the season which starts in April. The current staffing of the Highway Department does not allow for this extra work. The current contract expires at the end of this month and Ron Sweet has to find a vendor for the new term starting April 1st. He will obtain three quotes from other vendors and share the numbers with Tom Hutcheson.

New Business

Oil Spill at Transfer Station

Carl Nelke reported on the status of the oil spill at the Transfer Station, which occurred on/about February 11th. ON that date a resident who brought five drums to the station went around the line of other residents and threw four barrels into the scrap metal container before the attendant could get to him to assist. A fifth drum which the resident stated was empty was found to be empty. On February 14th the weather warmed up; two attendants smelled oil and noticed a stream coming out of the scrap metal container where the barrels had been deposited. They got the spill kit out and called Jan Ameen from FCSWMD. Carle Nelke was notified as was DEP emergency hotline. The oil was waste from firing the evaporator at the resident's maple sugaring business. There were no caps on any of the barrels, and there is no way to determine how much oil was in the barrels or how much leaked out. Clean-up was initiated with a vacuum truck. A site visit with contractors to get quotes is planned for Wednesday Feb. 21st. A new empty scrap metal container has been brought in for deposits of uncontaminated metal. The amount of clean-up is thought to be rather small because the area where the station is situated is mostly ledge and asphalt with little dirt. DEP has declared the resident and the Town to be jointly responsible for the spill. Jim Allen is preparing a written document about the incident.

Discussion: DAR Apiary Program

Tom Hutcheson suggested referring this discussion to the Agricultural Commission. The Select Board asked that the letter about the program be put on the website.

JOINT MEETING WITH FINANCE COMMITTEE, 6:40 p.m.

Review FY 2019 budgets and annual Town Meeting warrant articles

Radio fees

There is a substantial increase in the amount of radio fees that they require departments to increase their budgets. Tom Hutcheson has already amended the ambulance budget to reflect increased fees. The Police budget is fine; the effect on the Fire budget has not yet been determined.

Discussion: COLA increases Tabled.

It was recommended that these increases be referred to as a general raise, and not COLA increases. Tom Hutcheson has presented draft budget figures showing 2%, 2.5%, and 3% increases. Tom Hutcheson cautioned that the budget figures do not include any school budget figures, which he hasn't received yet. The draft budget shows a healthy excess levy capacity. The Finance Committee deferred their vote on the amount of the general raise; Tom Hutcheson suggested that a 2.5% raise would be good for morale, as that has been the recent history, and the amount would be only about \$2,650.

Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting

None.

Town Administrator update

Town Meeting and Budget

Insurance is going up over 15% for workers compensation, and the tornado damage will be factored into FY 2019's rate as well, so I've raised the insurance numbers accordingly.

Committees

The Capital Improvements planning Committee Meeting scheduled for tomorrow night has to be cancelled—I had agreed to do it at the chair's request, and put it on calendar for yesterday, but of course wasn't in due to the holiday. As I can't take this on for all committees, to be fair, I have notified them they will have to post their own meetings.

Departments

I've received another call from the owner of the property on Delabarre Ave. requesting relief from the parking by-law (part of the zoning by-law). The Highway Department has been very responsive but has not said she can disregard the by-law. She believes that restoring the original driveway is not acceptable and says that her neighbor is not happy about her using the neighbor's driveway.

Conway is unfortunately ineligible for the Community Compact IT grant this year. We are participating this year in a regional grant the Treasurer joined for software conversion, and even though we are not the lead town, we are participating, which makes us in eligible until next year. That said, the Administrative Assessor and I will be ready to submit the proposal next year, when we are once again eligible.

I am working with Bruce Jouannet to line up a firm to work on the Conway Grammar School well pump replacement and water tank liner, if Town Meeting approved the funds. There is a fairly narrow window to get the job done, as Bruce is going to be on vacation just prior to a period when there is little activity at the school (early August). Unfortunately, quotes so far did not include prevailing wage, which is required for this work; I have gotten the standard form and am working with Bruce to get it out to the firms he asked for quotes. This means that the final amount on the warrant may need to be higher than the current amount.

I got a note on Thursday from the Union 38 business manager saying that the Conway Grammar School had a pipe freeze during their Christmas vacation and just submitted the invoice, for \$14,300.66, to see whether our insurance will cover it, which of course it will.

Town Counsel reports that he is working with the state office of Administration and Finance to clarify rules around the acceptance of a new health plan. The process is quite involved and demanding, and he is trying to see whether it can be made easier.

I am making steady progress on the budget, though there will be some uncertainties, especially concerning the school budgets, which are not final.

Concerns of the Selectmen

None.

Mail

Comcast is ready to renegotiate its contract with the Town. The discussion will be on the agenda for February 26th.

Announcements

None.

Next Meeting Scheduled for Monday, February 26th, 2018 at the Town Hall, 5 Academy Hill Road, 6:00 p.m. Joint Mtg. with Finance Committee, 6:30 p.m.

At 7:20 p.m., on a motion from John O'Rourke to adjourn, seconded by Robert Baker, the vote was unanimous in favor.