

Minutes
SELECT BOARD
Monday, October 15, 2018 5:30 p.m.
Town Office 32 Main Street

Present: Bob Armstrong, Phil Kantor

Also present: Dan Fentin-Thomas, FCAT; Bruton Strange, Conservation Commission; Tom Hutcheson, Town Administrator

Minutes

October 1, 2018

- **On a motion from Armstrong to approve the minutes of October 1, 2018, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous (2-0) in favor.**

October 4, 2018

- **On a motion from Armstrong to approve the minutes of October 4, 2018, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Warrants

- **On a motion from Armstrong to approve the vendor warrant of \$153,850.54, the payroll warrant of \$116,900.04, the payroll deduction warrant of \$28,695.87, and the school activities warrant of \$4,375.72, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Meetings Attended by Select Board Members

Kantor reported attending Conway School Committee and Frontier School Committee capital budget meetings, and noted the November 13 public unveiling of the Frontier capital budget; he would like to see as many people there as possible.

Armstrong reported attending the Frontier School Committee capital budget meeting.

Public Comments None.

Old Business

Representative for Frontier Regional negotiation

Hutcheson explained the process: Select Board representatives will meet to elect from among themselves a single representative for negotiations. Kantor is the representative and nominee from Conway. The meeting for Frontier is set for November 13.

FRCOG Direct Local Technical Assistance: confirm meeting for Oct. 22, 6 p.m.

There had been some thought that the meeting would be redundant, in that the schools are responsible for all aspects of covering youth substance abuse; the Board of Health has opted not to participate. Hutcheson said that there might be specific Select Board or Board of Health policies that could help and urged the Select Board to hear what the FRCOG representatives had to say. Without objection, the meeting was confirmed.

New Business

Appointments:

Bruton Strange, Peter Zale to Conservation Commission for terms ending 6/30/2021

Hutcheson explained that Mr. Strange and Mr. Zale had apparently been left off the appointment list in June; this action will correct that.

- **On a motion from Armstrong to appoint Bruton Strange and Peter Zale to the Conservation Commission, with terms ending June 30, 2021, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Letter to Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs regarding notification of land acquisition

Hutcheson explained that both this letter and the one following this on the agenda are initiatives of Rural Commonwealth. Armstrong explained that if the actions in this letter were taken, towns would be given advance notice when land is proposed to be taken by “consensual eminent domain” by the state.

- **On a motion from Armstrong to sign the letter, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Letter to state officials regarding sharing information on payments for state-owned land

Hutcheson outlined the two requests, which concern notification of payments for state-owned land sent to town officials and a hearing to be held.

- **On a motion from Armstrong to sign the letter, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Re-name “Highway Garage Committee” as “Highway Facility Committee”

Hutcheson said that there was some desire for clarification expressed at the special Town Meeting to indicate that the proposal may not be a single building. At the end of the last process, there was a suggestion to call it a “Highway Facility,” so he is bringing that forward as a proposal.

- **On a motion from Armstrong to approve changing the name of the committee to “Highway Facility Committee,” seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Sign Cultural Council contract for \$4,500

Hutcheson said that this is the annual contract with the state for Cultural Council money.

- **On a motion from Kantor to approve signing the letter, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting

Bruton Strange reported that Peter Zale is planning to resign from the Commission and requested the Select Board appoint a member. Hutcheson will notify Zale regarding the need to resign in writing to the Town Clerk. Armstrong is willing to fill in. The next meetings are October 23 and November 4. Strange said that another couple of members would be good as well.

- **On a motion from Armstrong to appoint himself as a member of the Conservation Commission, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Franklin County Technical School: representative selection meeting Tuesday, October 23, 6:00 p.m. This is a meeting of either the Select Board chair or his designee. The Chair not being present, the item was tabled.

Town Administrator update

Committees

The Highway Garage Committee met for the first time on Tuesday and set its meeting dates for the year, until the annual Town Meeting. The dates are November 6; Dec. 4; January 15; February 12; and March 12 (all Tuesdays), and the time is 6 p.m. The November 6 meeting will start with a site visit to the garage at 6 p.m., followed by a meeting at 6:30 in the General Purpose Room to discuss the history of the project, the previous plans, and begin re-assessing the project from the beginning, starting with defining the need and the functionality of a facility designed to last for several decades.

John Heffernan is resigning from the Conway Recreation and Trails Committee as chair and member effective immediately. He has a new primary job that is much more demanding than his previous position. On top of parenting, his second job as an adjunct professor at Tufts, and his coaching and organization work with Cal Ripken and Babe Ruth baseball, he can't give the Recreation Committee the attention it needs and deserves.

Departments

Tax bills are slated to go out this week. The Assessor spent a great deal of time with DOR reviewing new information, which, together with a late start on property visits, contributed to missing the original target date of Oct. 1 for the mailing. The good news is that there is substantial new growth, primarily in personal property, and the tax rate is slated to go up only about \$0.15, to \$18.65/\$1,000—the lowest increase in several years. I am not aware of the effect of the revaluation on property values, but we are slated to have an excess levy capacity of about \$160,000. While I may propose in my FY2020 budget both a grant match fund and a study for a Town Hall lift, we should maintain fiscal discipline going forward, reserving some excess levy capacity for unforeseen emergencies.

Based on an e-mail from our police and fire injured-on-duty insurer recommending maximum coverage for police and fire injured-on-duty claims, I requested and received a quote for the maximum coverage. We are now paying \$11,890 per year; maximum coverage would cost \$30,676. Prior to my coming to Conway, we had been paying about \$15,000, and I moved us to the MIA program as a money-saver. While we value our public safety officials greatly, we do not have full-time staff and our risk is lower than many municipalities, so I will continue to recommend the less costly package.

The Treasurer reports that the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust has realized savings of about \$1M on pharmaceutical expenses based on implementing various discounts, which is likely to grow over the next two years. In addition, claims have leveled off, so the Trust is not losing as much money as it was last year when it proposed plan changes. Based on this, Jan does not recommend a plan change at this time.

The Highway Department participated in the annual MMA survey on road and bridge needs as part of their advocacy campaign for Chapter 90 funding. We estimate we get about one-quarter of our needs met, with \$264,963 out of \$1.1M needed to keep all our roads and bridges in good repair.

I sent out a request for information on conservation agents to surrounding towns. None had one, but Deerfield and Williamsburg expressed possible interest in a shared position. We are sending out a notice for ConCom membership, but really need long-term expertise.

Other

The Town Hall will again be used by volunteers for a Halloween party. See Helen Baker for more info.

Select Board Comments

Phil hoped for more opportunities to discuss Town Meeting warrant items before Town Meeting. This would also give those presenting topics the opportunity to hone their presentations.

Mail

FCRHRA invitation to their 45th Anniversary and Kulik Meeting Room Dedication

HCSBA invitation to a meeting October 19 to discuss their future

Mass. Office on Disability reminder of the option to have a Commission on Disability

Flyer announcing free legal advice Tuesday, October 20, from 4-7 p.m.; call 413-782-1659

Suffolk University and the MMA are working on a five-week, \$800 program to help fill municipal finance positions

Moonlight Magic in Shelburne Falls will be Friday, November 23 from 4-9 p.m.

The Historical Commission wrote the United Congregational Church urging them to solicit Town donations

John Heffernan is resigning from the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Committee

There will be a “Celebrate Shelburne Falls” event October 18 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Announcements None.

Next Meeting

Monday, October 22th, 2018, Town Office, 6:00 p.m.; 6 p.m.; FRCOG presentation on youth substance abuse prevention