

Minutes
SELECT BOARD
Monday, October 29, 2018 6:00 p.m.
Town Office 32 Main Street

Present: Bob Armstrong, Phil Kantor, John O'Rourke

Also present: Esther Glovacki, FCAT; Tom Hutcheson, Town Administrator; Lisa Turowsky, Assistant to the Town Administrator

Minutes

October 12, 2018

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to approve the minutes of October 12, 2018, seconded by Kantor, the vote was 2-1 in favor, with O'Rourke abstaining.**

October 15, 2018

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to approve the minutes of October 15, 2018, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Warrants

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to approve the vendor warrant of \$63,094.65, the payroll warrant of \$109,781.41, and the payroll deduction warrant of \$27,147.65, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Meetings Attended by Select Board Members

Armstrong reported attending: an American Planning Association event in Shelburne Falls which celebrated Shelburne Falls having been named one of the top destinations in the country; an off-week Select Board/FRCOG presentation dealing with drugs; a Mass. Coalition Against Pipelines (MCAP) meeting; and an MMA breakfast in Sunderland, where a review of the legislative session was given.

Public Comments *None.*

Old Business *None.*

New Business

Appointments:

Tom Pleasant, Highway Facility Committee, to June 30, 2019 Tabled.

Hutcheson emailed Mr. Pleasant, who seemed "on the fence." Ken Ouimette is going to talk to him.

Jason Hunter, Basketball Director for 2018-2019 season

This is not a paid position; still, rather than having PRT people do these positions internally, they would rather the Select Board appoint people for Conway Youth Sports positions.

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to appoint Jason Hunter as CYS Basketball Director for the 2018-2019 season, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Electricity Aggregation: discussion

Armstrong talked about the background; a group of energy-interested people went around and spoke to people about aggregating electricity. DOER held a consultation conference call last week with all the towns involved in the aggregation plan except one (12 of the 13 towns reviewing the aggregation plans. Conway should receive a consultation letter from DOER by the end of this week. Once the letter comes Conway can submit the plan to DPU and start a public review process ending in a public hearing at a Select Board meeting for the residents of Conway. Public comments will be included in the final plan that goes to DPU. Hutcheson will notify the Energy Committee when letter is received. Kantor said the only argument against the aggregation plan is that you're depriving people of choice etc. It's an opt-out program, according to the law, replied O'Rourke. All agreed the math makes sense. People can opt out any time.

Citizens' Academy: a community education initiative

Hutcheson outlined several such projects that have been carried out in Massachusetts towns. It's a way to introduce the functions of the Town to people in a structured way. Department heads would present what their organizations do on a weekly basis for about 8 to 10 weeks. It's a great way to have a place for people to learn about departments and how people work together. Hutcheson would create a registration process and believes the most important participants would be members of elected boards/departments/commissions. The goal is to see if people are interested in volunteering on Town committees. Giving residents the opportunity to show up and ask questions is what Hutcheson sees as one of the main reasons to do something like this.

Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting *None.*

Town Administrator update

Departments

Although tax bills went out late—Monday, October 22—we received Department of Revenue approval for the proposed tax rate of \$18.65. Our maximum allowable levy is \$5,075, 837, with an FY19 levy of \$4,916,079.86, leaving us with an excess levy capacity of \$159,757.14. This is excellent news, and we should be sure to proceed moderately so as to maintain a healthy excess levy capacity.

The Finance Committee has approved two transfers of funds from the reserve fund, one for the Town match for a FEMA grant to renew our hazard mitigation plan, and one to erase a deficit in the Mark Boice Germain Fund, which we had been using to assist in mowing the cemeteries.

As you will recall, I have sent an e-mail to all department heads asking for their responses to a way to get more people involved in Town work, both as volunteers and as potential staff. Next fall, I'd like to offer Conway residents a formal opportunity to learn about local government, a "Citizens' Academy" in which each department or board head (or a combination) would meet with residents. This would go for about eight to ten weeks, one meeting per week. Those who completed the program would get a certificate. This has been very successful in other communities, and I look forward to seeing how it works here.

I had a chance to test the water at the Grammar School and found it odorless, though with a very slight taste different from bottled water. I've talked with Bob Lesko and we'd like to sit down with Mass Tank inspection and express our concerns about the cost of the bottled water, our belief that their proprietary cleaner leached through the liner, and our consequent lack of faith that the liner has maintained its integrity. Monthly tests are on-going, and the school would like non-detectable toxin residue to assure parents of excellent water quality. Regardless of whether results are zero before the end of the year, we're planning to request Mass Tank to re-line it over the holiday break, as we have no confidence the liner is intact, if unevaporated cleaning solvents leached through it (which I believe is the most likely scenario).

I attended a meeting with FEMA to learn about the hazard mitigation grant to renew our plan, which qualifies us for FEMA hazard mitigation funding; apparently services for implementing the planning section must be procured under federal regulations, which differ from state regulations, though if we take the appropriate steps, we should be able to contract with the FRCOG, as planned.

I have used other towns' documents freely for many years and am glad I was able to share an excellent example from Conway. A number of towns are interested in re-payment plans for employees who receive training, and I sent out the agreement we came up with for our Ambulance service EMT training to several towns, spreading the good name of Conway throughout the Commonwealth.

MMA staff gave a short presentation on an FCC rulemaking regarding cable franchise fees and a possible substantial reduction in PEG access money. Bob Armstrong was also there, and we've gotten some preliminary information from MMA we'd like to bring to the next Select Board meeting.

Select Board Comments *None.*

Mail

Eversource re: stopping their brush control program (power line maintenance)

Announcements *None.*

Next Regular Meeting Tuesday, November 13, 2018, Town Office, 6:00 p.m.

The meeting was moved to the Town Hall.

ALL-COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, October 29, 2018 7:00 p.m.
Town Hall, 5 Academy Hill Road

Select Board members present: John O'Rourke, Chair; Robert Armstrong; Phil Kantor

Others present: Robert Anderson (Community Preservation, Parks and Rec.), Robert Baker (Fire), David Barten (Personnel), Dana Goodfield (Capital Improvements Planning), Walter Goodridge (Highway Facility), Gisele Litalien (Cultural Council), George Murphy (EMD), Carl Nelke (Board of Health), Mark Silverman (ZBA), Alan Singer (Finance), Bruton Strange (Conservation), Joseph Strzegowski (Planning), Ron Sweet (Highway), Lee Whitcomb (Assessors); Esther Glovacki (FCAT); Tom Hutcheson (Town Administrator); Lisa Turowsky (Assistant to the TA)

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm. Chairman John O'Rourke welcomed committee chairs and department heads.

For the Highway Facility Committee: Walter Goodridge reported that the Committee has had one meeting so far. He encouraged people watching to come to the next scheduled meeting on November 6, which begins with a tour of the current Highway Garage at 6:00 p.m. and moves to the Town Office at 6:30 p.m. for the regular meeting. Goodridge stated that there's a new sense of urgency regarding getting a new facility built because the OSHA regs will no longer grant exemptions and the current facility is woefully substandard. He concluded by asking for comments and suggestions well in advance of Town Meeting.

For the Personnel Committee: David Barten, Chair reviewed the work that the Committee, which has met six times this year, has done. The Committee consists of Barten, Susan Fentin, and Robert Stone (back as an active member after a period of ill health.) The employee handbook has been updated with Fentin's indispensable help. The handbook will go to the Select Board for final approval after the Committee's next meeting on November 7. Tom Hutcheson has offered to review the handbook with all new Town employees at time of hire. Barten also noted that human resources/personnel issues concerning school staff, who are Town employees in addition to being covered by collective bargaining agreement, have surfaced; the Committee has been looking at their policies to be sure the Town is covered.

For the Finance Committee: Chair Alan Singer reported that the Committee has five active members at present. He noted that the state has not certified free cash yet for FY19. After that is done the Committee will be looking at the budget for FY20 and submitting it for review. Singer also noted that the union negotiation period for school personnel is coming up. He said that auditors have just completed their initial round of review. He reminded everyone that the long-term capital improvements proposal for Frontier Regional is being presented on November 13.

For the Cultural Council: Gisele Litalien reported that the group is charged with distributing money from the state for small arts grants. The group will review applications on November 7. She is pleased with the better choices that the group will have this time; more outreach was done than last year, which resulted in improved and more local applications—they are especially interested in local events, and she encouraged locals to apply. The Council sponsored an event this past summer with Tom Riccardi which was quite successful. They plan to sponsor an event each year.

For the Highway Department: Department Head Ron Sweet spoke about how tough the winter was on Conway's roads. Lots of bad weather led to issues with blacktop roads. Also, problems with a contractor resulted in delays in resurfacing some of the roads. Hoosac Road has been reclaimed; N. Poland and Main Poland Roads will be reclaimed by next week.

The state paving project of Route 116 resulted in the donation of millings which were used to apply a new layer to Roaring Brook Road. The Department is somewhat behind in fall grading due to the inclement weather. At the state level there is pressure to bump up Chapter 90 funding. Sweet applied for a MassWorks grant and has not received word yet on the status of that application. He has learned that the state is going to replace the N. Poland Road bridge in 2023 so his Department is going to nurse it along until then.

For the Board of Health: Board Chair Carl Nelke reported that there have been many Title V failures this past year. The BOH has been keeping up with food establishment inspections, especially as they relate to Airbnb's in town. He mentioned the reduction in the membership of the Board, which lost three members last year. They had asked the Select Board to help by appointing Ginny Knowlton as a member, which has enabled them to keep up with the Town's demands. He talked at length about a crisis situation with the Transfer Station's recycling efforts; Conway is close to the bottom of the list with respect to its recycling efforts. They believe trash is being brought in from other towns. In response to this problem, the BOH established a system for dump stickers, which cost \$10 annually. The BOH is hoping this system will alleviate the trash problem and make it unnecessary to institute a pay-per-bag program, which many people would likely object to. It was suggested that a Town-wide mailing about the recycling/trash problems be done; it would have been done with the recent tax bill mailing but there were already too many other inserts.

For the Capital Improvements Planning Committee: Chair Dana Goodfield reported that it's been a quiet year for his Committee. He said he was working on preparing information for the website that would speak to the logistics behind Ron Sweet's desire to replace equipment. Tom Hutcheson noted that residents can find the original long-range financial plan on the Town website on the Town Administrator page.

For the Conservation Commission: Acting Chair Bruton Strange described the work of the Commission as helping residents navigate the laws around water-based natural resources when doing projects. He reported that the Commission is in serious need of members; two members left recently, and one of the members of the Select Board, Bob Armstrong, had to step in to assist them with permitting work. Strange asked for volunteers.

For the Fire Department: Chief Robert Baker raised an alarm about the impact of new OSHA/Department of Labor Standards regs that are expected to come out in the near future. According to Chief Baker, if inspectors from these programs came to Conway they'd close the Highway/Fire Department buildings down. Baker stated the rural fire chiefs can't follow the new standards which set out an inordinate number of requirements of new volunteers. One problem is cleaning turn-out gear, which requires a certain type of costly washing machine. The cancer awareness class has been well-attended by volunteer firefighters. The Department will need money to become OSHA-compliant.

For the ZBA: Mark Silverman said the ZBA has succeeded in having application fees cover the cost of legal notices etc. He also noted that there has been increased cooperation between ZBA and Planning Board in the process of special permitting/variances.

For the Parks, Recreation & Trails Committee and Community Preservation Committee: Robert Anderson noted that both of these Committees need Chairs, as Peter Zale (CPC) and John Heffernan (PRT) have recently resigned.

For the Planning Board and Wastewater Committee: Co-Chair Joe Strzegowski stated that the Planning Board is awaiting approval of its large-scale industrial solar bylaw and its recreational marijuana bylaw. The Board is involved in cleaning up the Master Plan. They have been working on the enhanced 911 system with Ambulance and Fire Departments. After recent ZBA/Planning Board hearings concerning a new sign for Greenfield Savings Bank, at which the proposed variance was rejected, the Board is considering the signage bylaw may be too restrictive. The Board is also looking at possibility of regulation of tiny houses and Airbnb's. Finally, Strzegowski noted that a 6-megawatt solar farm on Main Poland Road may be a possibility. As for Wastewater Committee progress, Strzegowski reported that a MassWorks grant for \$1.5 million was applied for; no word yet on the status of this application.

For the Emergency Management Department: George Murphy reported that his new assistant Phil Snow is learning the town. Once Phil receives his computer the two of them will work on testing the emergency 911 system. Thankfully there have been no emergencies this past year.

For the Board of Assessors: Lee Whitcomb reported that tax bills finally went out on October 22. The extra data collection over the summer yielded a great deal of new growth which kept the tax rate increase to 15 cents. In the Assessors' office, the circuits had to be upgraded prior to the conversion of the valuation program which is "coming along." Both the old valuation program and the new one will be run concurrently for a couple of years.

For the Broadband Committee: Bob Armstrong reported that Conway is now 99.9% wired; only two homes haven't gotten access, one of which doesn't really need it. Franchise agreement negotiations with Comcast will soon be underway.

For the Ambulance Committee: Tom Hutcheson read the report of the Ambulance Committee from Gemma Vanderheld, who stated that the number of calls is holding steady. The Department is looking for EMTs; people are asked to contact Gemma or Chris at ambulance@townofconway.com

For Conway Youth Sports: Tom Hutcheson read report from Julie Petty, who stated that the CYS financials are good. FY2018 marked the conversion to online registration, including waivers and payment, a great change for all. There are some new benches on the fields, purchased by Parks & Rec. in FY2018, 100% recycled and they have a 50 year guarantee. There will be turn-over in CYS next year, with Julie and two sports directors slated to resign.

For the Town Administrator: Tom Hutcheson reported that he is planning to introduce a "Town Academy" next fall. This will be an opportunity for residents to learn about the work of the various Town departments/boards/commissions, see how these bodies work together, and consider volunteering for one of the positions open in Town. He also spoke about completing a state grant for making renovating the restroom here on the first floor, it accessible, and that he was planning to ask at the spring Town Meeting for 40% matching funds for the design (not construction, yet) of a lift for the Town Hall, making the upstairs accessible, for an eventual Town Hall renovation into both offices and meeting rooms. Finally, we are looking for an administrative assistant to help with various committees, commissions, and boards in town. We have one excellent applicant so far; please let me know if you know of anyone else.

For the School Committee: Phil Kantor reported that Conway Grammar School is ranked 18th in the state out of 390 schools! Kantor expressed his concern about the Town's Personnel Committee addressing policies affecting the schools, which are under the authority of the School Committee.

For the Select Board: John O'Rourke, Chair, stated that the duties of the Board are ensuring the health, safety and welfare of the Town's residents and being fiscally responsible. He thanked the participants for coming to the meeting and recommended that they continue to communicate with each other.

At 8:45 p.m., on a motion from John O'Rourke to adjourn, seconded by Bob Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.