

Minutes
SELECT BOARD
Tuesday, May 28, 2019 6:00 p.m.
Town Office, 32 Main Street

Select Board present: John O'Rourke (chair); Bob Armstrong; Phil Kantor

Others present: Dan Fentin-Thomas, FCAT; Russell French, Board of Assessors; Lee Whitcomb, Board of Assessors; Nicholas Langone, Eversource; Tony Borton, resident; Lisa Hebert, resident; Deb Radway, consultant; Ron Sweet, Highway Department; Tom Hutcheson, Town Administrator; Lisa Turowsky, Assistant to the Town Administrator

Minutes

May 13, 2019; May 17, 2019

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to approve the minutes of May 13, 2019, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**
- **On a motion from O'Rourke to approve the minutes of May 17, 2019, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Warrants

Vendor warrant: **\$200,690.45**

Payroll warrant: **\$121,548.52**

Payroll deduction warrant: **\$30,153.04**

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to approve the warrants, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Meetings Attended by Select Board Members

Kantor attended Union 38 Instructional Assistant negotiations; a tentative agreement was reached. Armstrong had an FCAT meeting where the budget was approved; he reported that the FCC is looking at letting local companies like Comcast recoup their costs by deducting those amounts from the money the towns get. This could result in localities not getting the money to run FCAT. Armstrong also attended the scholarship meeting on May 17 with O'Rourke and Kantor. O'Rourke attended the retirement party for Ginny Knowlton.

Public Comments

None.

Old Business

Guilford Fund

Request for funds; discussion of options for Guilford Fund loan disbursements

Hutcheson and Warner talked about various ways that disbursements can happen. Kantor raised the issue of taking away the right-of-way. O'Rourke likes option two for future disbursements. Any real estate activity would involve a Town Meeting vote, said Hutcheson.

Assessors: sign Nexamp agreement

The number referenced in the agreement for valuation and taxation is within the range for western Mass. according to the consultant the Board of Assessors employed. The goal is to make payment of taxes predictable, just and fair. Kantor asked about the process of how they got to this point. Whitcomb explained how they arrived at the taxable price per kilowatt hour; the Conservation Commission is negotiating with Nexamp about this. The Select Board is asking for top dollar and willing to spread it out over 20 years. The next step is for Nexamp to respond to this offer. Whitcomb advises that the Select Board "hold very strongly" to the figure of \$13.5 per kilowatt hour.

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to sign the Nexamp agreement, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Revoke vote to transfer \$4,100 from Town Clerk – Salary, Wages to Town Clerk – Operations

It was erroneous to put this number in as a consultant; money needs to be put back into Operations budget. Kantor does not think a returning employee should get a higher hourly rate (\$50/hr. for the new position as Clerk Emeritus). Kantor also objected to the fact that Town Meeting was not informed of this rate of pay.

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to revoke the transfer from Town Clerk - Salary to Town Clerk - Operations budget, seconded by Armstrong, Kantor abstained, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

New Business

Elect Chair and Secretary

Armstrong nominated O'Rourke, seconded by O'Rourke. Kantor would like to nominate Armstrong, seconded by O'Rourke. Vote was taken on nomination of O'Rourke, two in favor, one opposed.

- **On a motion from Armstrong to elect O'Rourke as Chair, seconded by O'Rourke, the vote was two in favor, one against.**
- **On a motion from O'Rourke to elect Armstrong to act as clerk, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

6:30 Pole Hearing for Main Poland Road, approximately 1,300 feet northerly of Adams Road

Langone of Eversource said they want to add a supporting pole because an existing pole is currently being supported by a tree. Resident Tony Borton said the new pole would be right in the middle of his gate. Langone said he'll go out and move the stakes. Borton wants the stakes to be moved about 10 feet. The residents, Select Board and Langone looked at photos to determine an acceptable pole location. It was agreed that the pole will be moved about 15 feet south, closer to the existing pole. The location was marked on the diagram that Eversource provided. Resident Lisa Hebert said she received a phone message that Eversource was going to brace a pole on her property. There will be a new pole on her property but not supported with a brace. Borton described another situation where some wires were knocked down into his field this past winter. He asked that these wires be removed or re-braced. The situation involves the pole right at bottom of the hill. After determining where the problem is, Langone said he will look into it. 234 Main Poland Road is Borton's address.

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to approve the pole hearing as amended, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Sign regional human resources study contract with Deb Radway, Conway being the lead town

This study is being done under the best practices grant of the community compact grant. Various options for staffing the human resources function among the four Frontier district towns will be studied. The four town administrators feel keenly that a human resources professional is needed within the Frontier district, said Hutcheson. It is not clear whether combining the human resources function between the towns and the schools will work but we need to start looking at options. This is a feasibility study at this point. Kantor noted that the project scope is limited, and does not include benefits administration, which he would have preferred.

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to sign the regional human resources study contract with Deb Radway, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Authorization for Conway Highway Department to use parcels 411-006-000, 411-008-002, 411-008-003 for materials and equipment storage

This is codifying current practice which has been in place for decades.

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to authorize Conway Highway Department to use parcels 411-006-000, 411-008-002, 411-008-003 for Highway Department materials and equipment storage, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Appointment: Michael Merritt for Parks, Rec and Trails (Soccer Director) for a term ending June 30, 2020

Hutcheson explained that the Committee would make Merritt the Soccer Director.

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to appoint Michael Merritt to the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Committee, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Renew Police and Fire insurance (MIIA/Cabot Risk/CHUBB)

Hutcheson stated that renewing this policy has been recommended by MIIA; it's even better than last year's price. Kantor objected to the lack of alternate options. Hutcheson responded that MIIA's mission is to give the best value to towns. He also switched from the previous insurer, which may towns use, several years ago and saved the Town \$3,000 per year.

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to renew the Police & Fire insurance with MIIA/Cabot Risk/Chubb, seconded by Armstrong, Kantor abstained, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Appoint Virginia A. Knowlton as Town Clerk Emeritus for a term ending June 30, 2020

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to appoint Virginia Knowlton as Town Clerk Emeritus for a term ending June 30, 2020, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Authorization for Treasurer to sign on-line renewal contract for payroll and tax title software support

On a motion from O'Rourke to authorize Janice Warner, Treasurer to sign on-line renewal contract for payroll and tax title software support, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.

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

Town Administrator update

Committees

Parks, Recreation, and Trails has installed a sign on the ballfield wall (new from the MassWorks project) warning against playing on or climbing the wall. This had been a suggestion of various residents since it was installed, and will help in the case of an insurance claim.

I believe we have sorted out the issues surrounding the Community Preservation article at Town Meeting. The advice I got from the Department of Revenue was to include both a statement of the percentage (for example, 10% for historic preservation) and an estimated dollar figure for the following fiscal year. This estimate would then be revised as actual figures became known.

The Council on Aging is expecting to have two vacancies as of July. They are posting a notice in the Visitor hoping to attract people. They are especially looking for members willing to take on tasks.

Departments

The Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update meeting originally scheduled for Thursday, May 23 has been re-scheduled for tomorrow morning, Wednesday, May 29, from 9:30 to 11.

The Highway Department is moving the salt shed electrical service, per the owner's request, hence the excavation on the side of the road there you may have noticed. This is unrelated to the Highway Facility project.

I referred Mr. Burt's complaint about the noise from Ms. Dufresne's geese to the Animal Control Officer. He is working on it and has met with Mr. Burt and is seeking to meet with Ms. Dufresne, who appears to have only three or so geese. The Animal Control Officer and I agree that even if there is a problem, there's not much the Town can do in this dispute between neighbors. We have a few noise items in our by-laws and none of them seem to apply.

As mentioned earlier in the meeting, I erred in assigning Ginny's post-employment earning to the operations account and having the Finance Committee and the Select Board transfer those funds. Susan Fentin of the Personnel Committee notes that Ginny's work would not fall under the Massachusetts Independent Contractor's Act and so she should be treated as an employee. Now that we've solved the immediate problem, this leaves a problem for FY 2020, as those funds for Ginny were appropriated by Town Meeting, and must also be re-appropriated by Town Meeting, at least until May 2020. I'm thinking of various ways to approach that and am checking in further with Town staff.

There was an outbreak of spam e-mails sent to people using my e-mail address. I am working with our IT consultant on this, but his first impression is that it is virtually impossible to protect against this sort of thing and that people should simply not click on any links.

Select Board Comments *None.*

Mail
Comcast notice of service change. Hutcheson said he usually files those in the general mail folder, which he encouraged the Board to look at outside of meetings.

Announcements *None.*

- **At 7:25 p.m., on a motion from O'Rourke to adjourn, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Next Meeting
Monday, June 10th, 2019 at the Town Office, 32 Main Street, at 6:00 p.m.