*Minutes*

SELECT BOARD

Wednesday, September 4, 2019 5:00 p.m.

Town Office, 32 Main Street

*Select Board present*: John O’Rourke; Phil Kantor; Bob Armstrong

*Others present*: John Boschen, FCAT; Roy Bishop, Consultant; Lee Whitcomb, Assessor; Tom Hutcheson, Town Administrator; Lisa Turowsky, Assistant to the Town Administrator

*Minutes*

August 19, 2019

August 27, 2019

* **On a motion from O’Rourke to approve the minutes of August 19, 2019, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**
* **On a motion from O’Rourke to approve the minutes of August 27, 2019, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

*Warrants*

* **On a motion from O’Rourke to approve the vendor warrant of $26,697.84; the payroll warrant of $86,490.15; and the payroll deduction warrant of $22,388.57, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

*Meetings Attended by Select Board Members*

Kantor attended a short meeting to prepare for state mediation re: school contract.

Armstrong had a ConCom meeting and an MVP meeting with FRCOG.

O’Rourke had a MMA Personnel and Fair Labor Relations Committee.

*Public Comments None.*

*New Business*

*Chapter 90: request for reimbursement for Hoosac Road*

* **On a motion from O’Rourke to approve the request for reimbursement for paving Hoosac Road, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

*Transfer remaining funds in accounts 122-5800, Elderly Housing ($475.00) and 122-5850, Batchelder property* ($2,000) to General Fund

* **On a motion from O’Rourke to approve the transfer of funds in accounts 122-5800 and 122-5850 to the General Fund, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

*Approve the use of $2,952.54 surplus bond proceeds from ATM 4/12/2010 Article 4 to be applied to the FY19* debt service for the school roof project, all in accord MGL Chapter 44, Section 20

* **On a motion from O’Rourke to approve the use of surplus bond proceeds to be applied to FY19 debt service for school roof project, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

*Approve design proposal for Town Hall lift*

Hutcheson received two proposals, one significantly more than the other, so he’s only considering the lower proposal from Stevens & Associates. Hutcheson said the parties came and looked at the Town Hall. The installation of a lift would make an eventual renovation of the Town Hall less expensive. The lift design would specify costs, which would require further appropriation of funds by town meeting. If we can get a design now, we can apply for a matching grant for 60% of the cost of the design proposal then can ask the annual Town Meeting for the rest of the money to do the construction. Hutcheson is hoping to the design can be done by the time the grant proposal is due in October.

Kantor expressed concerns about the total cost of any renovation of the Town Hall and changes in the building’s use. There was a lengthy discussion about whether an eventual renovation of the upstairs into office space would mean the end of the traditional Rag Shag parade. He said the parade is “really a key event in the life of the Town,” and that he can’t support changes to the use of the Town Hall if they would result in the parade having to move to another space in Town, as was suggested by O’Rourke, or worse, ending altogether. Kantor said that the question of the impact of a change in use of the Town Hall was ignored at Town Meeting. He said that citizens of the Town would oppose the lift for this reason.

Hutcheson said that what’s being discussed at this point is funding the design of a lift which would make the second floor of the Town Hall accessible. The space would be usable for public functions, and for office space if Town Meeting ultimately approved that use. O’Rourke noted that the Select Board has been talking about potential changes in use of the Town Hall for years. He also noted that having the lift would make the Town’s public space compliant with the ADA.

* **On a motion from O’Rourke to approve the design proposal by Stevens for the Town Hall lift. seconded by Armstrong. Kantor opposed, the vote was two in favor, one opposed.**

*Old Business*

*Nexamp Proposal: Discussion with Roy Bishop*

Whitcomb described Bishop as a very experienced appraiser of solar projects who helps towns write PILOT programs. PILOT establishes a tax rate for 20 years which allows Nexamp to apply for funding etc. while giving the Town a steady stream of predictable income. PILOT escalates 1% per year for life of agreement. Nexamp felt the proposal was a bit “too sunny” for Conway. In part, there are many more arrays coming online, changing things within the electrical industry. SREC program is no longer operational. SMART program was oversubscribed since it opened in 2019. Nexamp’s counterproposal speaks about rated capacity, not installed capacity. Annual rate, escalation, processing fee are all different in their counterproposal. More information is needed, according to O’Rourke.

Consultant Roy Bishop of Bishop & Associates reviewed Nexamp’s counteroffer and verified the revenue stream with Nexamp. Bishop stands by his original PILOT estimates which were previously presented to Nexamp. Bishop’s Conway Solar Assessment Estimate shows that total revenue per Kw is $.1310, which is right in the middle of the current PILOT range per Mw for other communities in which he has provided assistance. The PILOT program benefit is a stable and increasing 20-year revenue stream with a first year PILOT payment of $81,000.00

*Items not anticipated within 48 hours of the meeting None.*

*Town Administrator update*

**Committees**

The Open Space Committee requested that the additional parking area at the South River Meadow that was created by the Highway Department be seeded.

The Open Space Committee reports that the stone memorial (Hatch) bench has gone out for engraving to Nagus and Taylor two weeks ago. They are looking for a targeted completion date so a dedication date can be planned.

The Highway Facility Committee has reviewed the plans for the Highway storage barn and approved and advertised an invitation for bids for the engineering and construction of the facility. The bids are scheduled to be opened September 18.

**Departments**

The Highway Department clerk is resigning, to work at a local business. She was extraordinarily good with resident communication and will be greatly missed. I am working with the Highway Superintendent to fill the position.

I received a note from a resident concerned about bears, specifically, the fact that feeding them can make them unafraid of people and therefore potentially dangerous (and liable to be shot if involved with people publicly). I have forwarded her concern to the Animal Control Officer for his response. One option the resident mentioned was creating a petition for a Town Meeting warrant article prohibiting the feeding of bears.

I followed up with the Open Space Committee’s concern about stiltgrass and the Highway Department’s mowing. The Highway Supervisor says the mower is not adjustable and may sometimes cut at ground level. He suggested that the Open Space Committee hire a landscaper to manage stiltgrass in these situations. On another Highway/Open Space Committee note, the Highway Superintendent questions seeding the parking area (as it meant to be for parking). I have not yet received the Conservation Commission’s Order of Conditions.

Also, regarding the Highway Department, I am working with the Superintendent to create a policy for Town departments and committees that would like to request assistance.

I have scheduled the Town Academy sessions for Thursdays in October and November and went over the plan at a Department heads meeting. I have the Select Board introduction down for the first meeting, on October 3 (along with a general introduction and my own position). I encourage all Select Board members to attend all the sessions, but this one especially.

The team updating the Hazard Mitigation Plan had its last full meeting. Various data is being gathered by staff. I will consult with the FRCOG in advance of a final, public meeting, and the FRCOG can then revise the plan as necessary before submitting our final plan.

I brought in a MIIA/All One Health presenter for a harassment awareness program on Thursday, which was well- received by the 19 staff attendees. I plan to reach out to call staff with a similar program on a Wednesday training evening.

*Select Board Comments*

People complaining about construction downtown; this is a state project, so the Select Board doesn’t have input into how the project is conducted.

*Mail*

From a resident, wants the Select Board to support two bills proposed by Jen Benson; received a flyer re: event which is taking place on Monday, Sept. 9.

*Announcements*

The Historical Society is hosting an event on Tuesday, September 10th at 7:30 p.m. FCAT will record this event*.*

*Next Meeting*

**Monday, September 16th**, **2019** at the Town Office, 32 Main Street, at 6:00 p.m.

On a motion from O’Rourke to adjourn 6:40 p.m., seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous.