

Minutes
SELECT BOARD
Monday, September 30, 2019 6:00 p.m.
Town Office, 32 Main Street

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

Others present: Dan Fentin-Thomas, FCAT; Ron Sweet, Highway Department; Walter Goodridge, Highway Facility Committee; Tom Hutcheson, Town Administrator; Lisa Turowsky, Assistant to the Town Administrator

Minutes

September 4, 2019
September 16, 2019

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to approve the minutes of September 4, 2019, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.**
- **On a motion from Armstrong to approve the minutes of September 16, 2019 meeting, as amended by Kantor, the vote was 2 in favor, one abstention (O'Rourke).**

Warrants

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to approve the vendor warrant of \$131,400.03; the payroll warrant of \$120,848.44; and the payroll deduction warrant of \$29,302.93, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Meetings Attended by Select Board Members

Kantor attended Frontier meeting and Conway School Committee meeting. A \$30,000 grant that Conway Grammar School got for security upgrades was a big topic of discussion. The School was not bothered by the blasting.

Armstrong went to FCAT meeting; still nervous about what FCC is going to do to the budget. He also went to a Conservation Commission meeting and Franklin Regional Planning Board meeting.

O'Rourke went MMA Board of Directors meetings; local government advisory commission meeting with the Lt. Gov.; they're happy with results of tax revenue so far this year. He also attended a Mass. Municipal Association Board of Directors meeting, and a meeting of its Personnel and Fair Labor Policy Committee. He reminded everyone that the Mass. Selectmen's Association Western Mass. conference is taking place at UMass this Saturday.

New Business

Appointments: Ruth Bowman, Cultural Council

On the recommendation of the Cultural Council, O'Rourke said he was glad to approve the appointment.

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to approve the appointment of Ruth Bowman to the Cultural Council for a term ending 6/30/2022, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Accept bid for Highway shed construction

O'Rourke mentioned Town Counsel had a comment about section 3(b) and 3(d) of the contract; Goodridge asked Andrea Woods about section 3(d). Why is the liquidated damages penalty zero? Liquidated damages clauses are standard on contracts but they can be left out. O'Rourke thinks there should be a liquidated damages clause in this contract. Kantor agrees. They're anxious to get going but some prep work for concrete still needs to be done. Sweet is comfortable with the company that got the bid. Hutcheson says we can propose deleting section 3(d) and the Select Board can vote to approve the contract. The Select Board decided to strike the paragraph, initial it, and see if the other party will do the same.

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to sign the contract for the Highway shed construction, as amended, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Electric vehicle chargers for Conway Grammar School

Kantor noted that there are grants available for installing EV chargers. Eversource will give chargers for free for the first year. The school would be an initial good location, based on Armstrong's and Kantor's research. It would be helpful for

the staff; it would encourage them to buy electric cars. The Select Board will further investigate with Hutcheson's and Armstrong's further research.

Appoint Frontier Regional School Committee Capital Planning Sub-Committee representative
Armstrong was the last Select Board representative.

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to appoint Armstrong as Frontier Regional School Committee Capital Planning Sub-Committee representative, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Public Comments

None.

Items not anticipated within 48 hours of the meeting

None.

Town Administrator update

Committees

The Planning Board has been discussing options for Deerfield River Portage to work within the Town's by-laws, the requirements of which don't seem to apply well to businesses that operate with remote, distributed, or variable locations ("...for a commercial establishment up to 50 people shall be permitted on the premises at any one time").

The Open Space Committee/Friends of the South River have partnered with the Connecticut River Conservancy for enhancements at the South River Meadow on Sat. Sept. 28. They are being given about 200 shrub seedlings for volunteers to plant to improve riverbank stability and shading. As this is also part of the "source-to-sea cleanup" day, they are coordinating with the Highway Department for the removal of any trash collected during the event.

The Board of Health installed their new compactor at the Transfer Station on Tuesday. All went smoothly.

The Administrative Assessor and I are preparing a Community Compact IT grant for enhancing the Town's GIS capacity. We are trying to enhance both the efficiency and the capacity of the system and to make it more useful for the public.

Departments

We received a certification of our free cash, at \$577,425. I will note that about \$166,000 was turned over from this year, and I would like to reserve \$200,000 to turn over into FY 2021. That would still leave us with \$377,425 for stabilization, capital, and other non-operational expenses.

Our FY 2019 finances are closed and our FY 2020 tax rate has been set, at \$18.76. This is not the decline that Lee and I believed was possible, but it does represent just an eleven-cent, or a 0.59%, increase. Lee and I have identified most of the issues that led us to underestimate the tax rate and have improved the Excel sheet to be able to generate better estimates next year.

I understand that the newsletter of the local Congregational Church, The Visitor, has been having difficulty getting published. Many town residents—though not all—see the newsletter as the main means of getting Town information. If that publication ceases, which we all hope will not be the case, the Town may wish to pick up the slack. That would mean a major increase in service to the Town, though also an increase in work, which could be met in various ways. This is just to let you know that I am preparing for the possibility.

I looked into what it would take to get florescent school bus signs near the Greenfield Savings Bank; we would need to request MassDOT to put up extra signs (we already have yellow signs). If we go forward, I'd like to have a formal Select Board discussion and letter request, so I'd like to put it on the agenda for the next meeting.

A resident has expressed interest in a plot in Shirksire Cemetery. I believe there may be a map of plots with Planning Board materials and have asked about that; I've also asked Peter Freisem if he has any helpful information. I have nothing for Shirksire in my files.

A reminder that the first session of the inaugural Town Academy will take place on Thursday, October 3, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall. It would be great if the whole Select Board could show up for it.

Select Board Comments

Kantor got approached about questions concerning a Town vehicle having been in an accident. He doesn't know exactly what this refers to. Hutcheson will ask Sweet if any of the Highway Department vehicles have been in an accident.

Mail *None.*

Announcements

Festival of the Hills parade and other activities on Sunday, Oct. 6.

Executive Session

Under reason #6, to consider the purchase of real property (33 Main Street) if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.

- **At 6:50 p.m., on a motion from O'Rourke to enter executive session for the statutory reason Number One and adjourn immediately therefrom, seconded by Armstrong, O'Rourke voted yes, Armstrong voted yes, and Kantor voted yes.**

The meeting returned to open session at 7:13 p.m.

- **At 7:14 p.m., on a motion from O'Rourke to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Next Meeting

Tuesday, October 15, 2019 at the Town Office, 32 Main Street, at 6:00 p.m.