

*Minutes*  
SELECT BOARD  
Monday, January 6, 2020 6:30 p.m.  
Town Office, 32 Main Street

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

*Others present:* Dan Fentin-Thomas, FCAT; Carl Nelke, Veronique Blanchard, Board of Health; Alan Singer, Roy Cohen, Rhyanna McLeester, Finance Committee; Ron Sweet, Highway Department; Tom Hutcheson, Town Administrator; Lisa Turowsky, Assistant to the Town Administrator

*Minutes*

*December 23, 2019*

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to approve the minutes of December 23, 2019, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

*Warrants*

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to approve the vendor warrant of \$97,351.97; the payroll warrant of \$108,464.83; and the payroll deduction warrant of \$27,225.95, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

*Meetings Attended by Select Board Members*

Kantor attended Frontier Regional budget meeting and reported that the numbers are looking better than they did last year; he also went to the Planning Board meeting re: Roaring Brook Farms marijuana cultivation meeting which was very well-attended. Armstrong attended the Planning Board meetings as well; he noted that the Planning Board tried to accommodate requests by the public to speak although the public hearing has been closed.

*Public Comments*

*None.*

*Old Business*

*Town Office closure policy – discussion and vote*

There was considerable discussion about the necessity of the Select Board adopting a policy around closing Town offices for winter weather. Kantor insisted that, because any such policy would be in conflict with the practice of the Conway Grammar School per its contract, the Select Board should take a hands-off approach. Hutcheson noted that he needs a written policy to follow in the event of winter weather-related closures. O'Rourke pointed out that Kantor and others were here to act as the Select Board, not as the policy-setting body for the school. O'Rourke asked Hutcheson to run the policy by Town Counsel.

*New Business*

*Choose Conway resident (deceased) to honor with In Memoriam in Annual Report* *Tabled.*

Peter Zale was been suggested as the Conway citizen to be honored, but it was unclear whether he passed away during the calendar year or the fiscal year, which is the time frame for the Annual Report.

*Proposal for Town Hall and Office Renovation Committee*

Hutcheson has proposed a town hall and office renovation committee to consist of some department heads, the building maintenance manager, a member of the CIPC, Lee Whitcomb, Jan Warner, and O'Rourke. Kantor suggested that members of the public should also sit on this committee, but Hutcheson and O'Rourke would rather not, saying that the public can offer input at committee meetings, otherwise delays could be a problem. It was agreed that input of the Council on Aging was vital as they have an interest in substantial meeting space. The Select Board will vote on the constitution of the committee at its next meeting.

*Selectmen's working group to discuss the future of Union 38*

Kantor has been discussing the future of Union 38 with Sen. Hinds' staff. Kantor wants to assemble technical data with an eye toward proposing legislation to equalize rates of the health insurance offered among the four Union 38 towns (Conway, Deerfield, Whately, Sunderland). Currently employees of the four towns all have different co-pays. Kantor says this approach has been done 20 or so times across the state in the past, but he couldn't

speak to why nothing like this has been done for the past 5 years. If DESE supports ideas such as this, there is a much better chance of such an approach being adopted.

*Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting*

*Direct Local Technical Assistance project list for future prioritization and consideration*

FRCOG has requested technical assistance project lists from area towns. Hutcheson needs priorities from the Select Board by their next meeting if possible, definitely by their meeting in two weeks.

**7:00 p.m. JOINT MEETING WITH FINANCE COMMITTEE on FY 2021 BUDGET**

*Board of Health – discussion of higher recycling costs in FY 2021 and related matters*

Carl Nelke and Veronique Blanchard came in to discuss a substantial increase in the cost of Conway's dual stream recycling program. In July 2020 a new contract will go into effect which will increase the Town's costs for recycling. The amount of increase will fluctuate monthly; the total increase is expected to be about 5% each year. The new contract has to be signed by January 31, 2020. Some options to absorb this increase were discussed, including raising the price of trash stickers from \$10 to \$30 per household per year. The BOH would like to see increased participation by residents in the composting program. For FY2021 the BOH will increase its budget by about \$20,000 by adding a line item. This will cover the expected cost of the new recycling contract. Changes to the recycling/trash programs will be the subject of presentation at Town Meeting.

*Highway Department – regular and winter operating expenses; building maintenance*

Ron Sweet noted that he would like to increase the number of hours his assistant works as well as the hourly wage. He also requested about \$2,000 for supplies in the winter roads budget. His total budget will rise about \$5,000, or about 1%. In the Building Maintenance budget, Sweet has increased the amount allocated for electricity to \$18,000, partly in order to take into account the needs of the new Highway Maintenance building. For the grounds line item, he added \$2,000 to account for the loss of trust fund money that used to partially pay for ballfield mowing.

*Other FY 2021 Budget Business*

None.

*Town Administrator update*

**Committees**

As you know the Agricultural Commission has not chosen a chair. I am planning to send an e-mail to the currently appointed members noting that 1) the budget is due and that I'm proposing \$1 to keep the account active; 2) the Select Board acted as the Agricultural Commission in the Burt complaint; 3) without a chair, they will be unable to conduct business; and 4) I can convene a meeting to organize the Commission if a majority of people reply that they'd like to keep going.

I have been working with Malcolm Corse to develop an invitation for bids for the Town Hall cupola based on the Town Meeting vote in December. It should be ready to be posted in a week or two.

**Departments**

I have been asked by the FROCG to share Conway's experience with the Town Academy at a meeting on citizen engagement and education. I'll be pleased to bring the idea and some observations to regional towns.

The MMA would like to have a legislative breakfast in Conway on March 6. We can easily fit 50 people (their required number) in the general-purpose room and have it accessible. I believe the Town Nurse can hold the wellness clinic in the adjoining office, as she does not require much space for that; I have a message in to her but have not received an answer yet.

The Highway Superintendent asked me to look into some neighboring towns' policies of fines for plowing snow into the roads, a problem which has gotten much worse. I hope to have something on your next agenda about that.

The Town's Chapter 90 account will receive an extra \$26,476 due to the passage of the supplemental budget filed by the Governor, a 10% increase.

I regret to say that I found out today that our application for a grant from the Massachusetts Office on Disability was not awarded at this time, though if funding becomes available (that is, if other towns are not able to use their awards), it could still be funded. I have a call scheduled for Wednesday with the office to see how the proposal might be improved.

There has been some e-mail talk among the towns aggregating their electricity supply with Colonial Power of writing the Secretary of Energy and Environment to see what the hold-up is with issuing the order allowing the aggregation to proceed and copying our legislators. I'm not sure how much good that would do, but if the Board likes, I'd be happy to draft such a letter.

If anyone knows any economic development projects (unlikely for Conway) or potential brownfields assessment projects (public or private property), please let me know for submission to the FRCOG. Examples include old mill buildings, farm properties, and illegal dump sites; typically, residential properties without a history of commercial or industrial use are *not* eligible.

*Concerns of the Selectmen*                      *None.*

*Mail*    *None.*

*Announcements*

Hutcheson will contact the Agricultural Commission to see if they want to keep meeting, or if they want to be on hiatus, due to lack of a Commission Chair.

*Next Meeting:* Scheduled for Monday, January 13, 2020 at the Town Hall, 5 Academy Hill Road, 6:00 p.m. (then once a week until Town Meeting)