

Minutes
SELECT BOARD
Monday, January 13, 2020 6:00 p.m.
Town Office, 32 Main Street

**Joint Meeting with Finance Committee at 6:30 p.m. to discuss
FY2021 Budget**

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

Others present: Dan Fentin-Thomas, FCAT; Robert Baker, Fire Chief; Ken Ouimette, Police Chief; Gemma Vanderheld, Ambulance Department; Alan Singer, Rhyanna McLeester, Tom Donovan, Finance Committee; Tom Hutcheson, Town Administrator; Lisa Turowsky, Assistant to the Town Administrator

Minutes

January 6, 2020

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to approve the minutes of January 6, 2020, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Meetings Attended by Select Board Members

Kantor attended a Frontier School Committee meeting and a meeting of the Frontier Capital Planning Committee track bid opening, where nine bids were considered. Armstrong also attended the Frontier track bid meeting as well as a Capital Improvement Planning Committee meeting, and a Conservation Commission site visit to Roaring Brook Farm cannabis cultivation site.

Public Comments

None.

Old Business

Town Office closure policy – discussion and vote *Tabled.*

Hutcheson came up with a couple of different options for addressing pay issues. State-defined regional emergencies were added. Kantor wanted to know Town Counsel's opinion about the policy; Hutcheson reported that Town Counsel hasn't replied to Hutcheson's inquiry. The vote on the policy will be *tabled* until next week.

Appoint Town Hall and Office Renovation Committee

Hutcheson asked whether there were any further suggestions from the Select Board as to who should be appointed to this committee. A representative from each building would oversee gathering input from the people who use each building. Kantor thinks this is leaving committee members open to vulnerability at Town Meeting. Armstrong said the seniors are a group that really cares and suggested putting a member of the Council on Aging on the committee. That makes six voting members plus Hutcheson (Ron Sweet, Highway Superintendent, as Building Maintenance Manager; Staff member from Town Office (Treasurer/Collector); Staff member from Town Hall (Lee Whitcomb); Select Board member (John O'Rourke), Capital Improvement Planning Committee member, (to be named); Council on Aging Member, (to be named); and Town Administrator (Tom Hutcheson).

- **On a motion from O'Rourke approving the composition of the Town Hall and Office Renovation committee, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Town Report: Select resident for memorial

Suggestion was offered for Peter Zale, supported by all Select Board members.

- **On a motion from Kantor approving the composition of the Town Hall and Office Renovation committee, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

New Business

Council on Aging – request to appoint Gayle Connelly

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to appoint Gayle Connelly for a term ending 6/30/2022, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

MMA 2020 Annual Meeting

Vote on partnership and transportation resolutions; transportation policy

The resolutions are similar to those proposed previously. Hutcheson and O'Rourke were at a Mass. Municipal Association planning meeting that put these resolutions up to a vote. These resolutions are the standing policy of MMA.

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to approve the partnership and transportation resolutions and the transportation policy, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Direct Local Technical Assistance prioritization

The Select Board was given forms re: prioritization to fill out last week. There is time for everyone to send their priorities to Hutcheson, who asked that outstanding forms be given to him by Thursday, January 16.

Sign letter to the Department of Public Utilities regarding aggregation proposal

Hutcheson drafted a letter for the Select Board to sign a letter asking the Department of Public Utilities Chair to look into delays and move the process along.

- **On a motion from O'Rourke to sign the letter to the Chair of Department of Public Utilities, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting

Hutcheson reported that he learned that someone sold their Ch. 61 land without going through the correct process. Whitcomb and Hutcheson believe the parcel won't be of interest to anyone or to the Town with its right of first refusal. Hutcheson is checking with Town Counsel about legality of the transfer. Prospective buyer should have been notified of the process.

Town Administrator update

Committees

I have been working with the Planning Board to help ensure the best outcome from their deliberations regarding the special permit for Roaring Glen Farm. Their options are limited to ensuring that the Town by-law is enforced. Items such as flood lights may be controlled, but the Planning Board is not in a position to deny the special permit if the operation's plan complies with Town and state law—it can only make conditions, and the nature of those are limited.

I've been working with the Capital Improvements Planning Committee to produce a comprehensive list of items to consider, and Tricia Vinchesi met with the Highway Superintendent to see his trucks and equipment. I anticipate that the presentation of capital items at Town Meeting will be organized and informative, although it will probably take well into FY 2021 to produce a comprehensive capital improvements plan.

Departments

The Town has received its first distribution of room rental taxes, \$1,632.93 for the months of September, October, and November. If these three months are average, over twelve months, the Town should receive about \$6,532 each year from our room tax.

I've been working with Ron and Town Counsel trying to find a workable approach to people plowing snow into the street. The trails of snow often turn into bars of ice. It has gotten much worse this year. It may be time to bring back the proposal to make it a Town by-law; there is a similar state law, but it only covers state highways.

I have revised the draft Invitation for Bids for the Town Hall cupola and other repairs (the pillars and related work at the front door), gotten comments from the FRCOG, and am continuing to work with Malcolm Corse and the Building Maintenance Manager on specifications.

I had a conversation with Karl Bryan of the Massachusetts Office on Disability regarding the unsuccessful grant proposal for the Town Hall lift, who said that there was an unusual amount of competition this year, and that Conway has already received two grants, one for planning and one for implementation (making the first-floor Town Hall bathroom accessible). Also, competition for higher-end projects is even more competitive. He encouraged the Town to re-apply, and noted that the proposal was otherwise favorably reported.

I regret to inform you that Philip Snow has resigned from his position as Assistant Emergency Management Director, citing his need to be fully available for Eaglebrook should any local disaster take place.

The recycling contract is being discussed by DEP and the FCSWMD, who is asking for a one-month extension to solve some apparent non-compliances with state and municipal law. Town Counsel agrees with the points made by the FCSWMD's counsel. The FCSWMD advises Towns to sign the contract and turn them in to the FCSWMD; they're working on getting DEP to issue an addendum for signing later. Also, the MRF Advisory Board has voted to request that DEP send all towns an official amendment to attach so everyone has the same language. The FCSWMD is asking DOR-DLS to review the language as well.

6:30 p.m. JOINT MEETING WITH FINANCE COMMITTEE on FY 2021 BUDGET

In introductory remarks, Hutcheson said that in his preliminary budget, he is going to be asking for raises in Ambulance and Fire Department stipends to more adequately compensate the department heads; see Public Safety Compensation statement in the meeting record. He noted that he has requested the raises, and not the department heads themselves. He wants the matter of the raises for Ambulance and Fire Department stipends to be considered with the budget as a whole. Kantor doesn't agree with the proposal to approve raises that address historical deficiencies in one year said it would harm the Town's negotiating position with the teachers' union. He proposed that raises to these stipends should be done gradually, saying that adopting this proposal would set a precedent that would present a "massive issue" in the context of school budget negotiations.

Police Department

All but one item is level-funded; additional training adds \$900 to the budget. Overall increase is 0.05% of total.

Ambulance Department

Gemma Vanderheld tried to keep things as close to previous years as she could. She added an item for wages for a person who has been helping her out for free. She has increased hourly employee wages to cover wages for people who attend required trainings per our Employee Handbook. She stated that ideally there would be 6 to 10 EMTs; there are currently 4 EMTs. She increased postage to cover yearly applications to Boston. She increased the maintenance repair line, as the ambulance is getting older and some potentially expensive repairs may be coming up.

Robert Baker – Fire Department

Chief Baker asked for an increase in firefighter salary/labor line items. He requested an increase of \$6,200 to offset the cost of paying employees' wages for attending requisite training; he keeps careful records of who shows up for these trainings. He spoke about fire radio fees which have increased \$1,500 for installation of radios in vehicles which the State is not subsidizing. He requested Fire Department dues of \$355 to cover the cost of the dispatcher sending calls out via cell phones before the call goes out on pagers. This system also tells him who is responding to fire calls. It was suggested that the Fire Department increase the vehicle maintenance line item because this item goes up and down.

Concerns of the Selectmen

None.

Mail

Notice was received of a promotional event to raise awareness of child abuse; it would involve raising a flag on the town common to stay up for some predetermined length of time.

- **Motion by O'Rourke to support the promotional event to raise awareness of child abuse, the length of time for flag to stay up to be determined. Seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Announcements

None.

Executive Session

Under Reason #2, to conduct contract negotiating sessions with non-union personnel (the Town Administrator)

- **At 7:15 p.m. on a motion from O'Rourke to enter Executive Session for reason #2, to conduct contract negotiating sessions with non-union personnel (the Town Administrator) , and adjourn immediately therefrom, Kantor voted yes, Armstrong voted yes, O'Rourke voted yes.**

Returned to open session at 7:32 p.m.

- **At 7:23 on a motion from O'Rourke to adjourn, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was unanimous in favor, Kantor voted yes, Armstrong voted yes, O'Rourke voted yes.**

Next Meeting: Scheduled for Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at the Town Hall, 5 Academy Hill Road, 4:30 p.m.