

**sMinutes
SELECT BOARD**

Monday, January 25, 2021, 6:00 p.m.
Via Zoom

Present for the Select Board: Bob Armstrong, Erica Goleman, Phil Kantor

Others present: Alan Singer, Roy Cohen, Steve Dinkelaker, Rhyanna McLeester, Finance Committee; Kathy Llamas for the Newsletter Committee; Janice Warner, Treasurer; Tom Hutcheson, Town Administrator; Louise Beckett, Assistant to the Town Administrator

Bob called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Minutes

Approval of minutes from January 19, 2021

Minutes for the past week were tabled, as they were not ready prior to tonight's meeting. They will be on the agenda for the next regular meeting of the Select Board.

Meetings Attended by Select Board Members

Erica attended the online MMA Conference. Phil attended the planning board meeting on the river overlay district, with around 30 people attending. On Friday he attended the Deerfield Board of Health/Frontier school committee on youth sports. The numbers of COVID cases reported in the *Recorder* are 14-day averages. Conway has the second lowest rate of COVID in the state. Our firemen have all gotten vaccinated. Bob went to the MMA conference, and said it was bizarre due to its being held remotely. Almost all the speakers spoke of either equity, racial justice or climate change. The MMA is often conservative and biased toward larger cities and towns, but Bob said he thinks they are promoting good things.

Public Comments *none*

Old Business

Direct Local Technical Assistance priorities

Tom said that there was a request from FRCOG that if we put in for this assistance, they would adjust the amounts they bills the towns based on our requests. They are due next week, but the sooner people send in their choices for assistance, the better.

New Business

Approve renewal of Comcast cable license

This is still in progress. Bob said we received changes to the agreement from Eileen Leahy, but it's not finished yet, and the Cable committee should also weigh in before anything is signed.

Approve contract for Town nursing services with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Phil said that the County is doing a great job, but asked if Tom had seen the agreement they sent out. Why are they only sending out 'periodic' reports? Tom said they are likely giving themselves some flexibility. They have had an unusually heavy workload due to COVID. Bob asked about indemnification of insurance: what does that mean when we each indemnify each other? Phil said that each clause cancels out the other. **On a motion from Armstrong to sign the agreement, Erica seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Approve job description for Buildings and Grounds Maintenance Technician

Tom said this is the position Ron requested when told that the custodian is retiring in September. It is based on and similar to a position in the town of Northfield. The one thing not complete is assigning a class. The position

would do routine maintenance as well as fulfill the custodial duties. It is an upgrade from the current position in that it is full-time and benefitted. Don Jacobs, who drafted all the current Conway positions also drafted this position. **On a motion from Armstrong to approve the description, Phil seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

Appoint Joan Haley to Cultural Council, term expiring June 30, 2024

Erica voted to accept Joan's appointment. Tom said that if an appointment is made during or before January, the term should expire after the third year on June 30th. **On a motion from Armstrong to accept the appointment of Joan Haley, Erica seconded, and the vote was unanimous.**

6:30 P.M. Joint Meeting with Finance Committee

FY 2022 Budget

General update – Tom said that updates are not available this week due to a number of meetings he had.

Hearings:

Newsletter Committee Kathy Llamas presented the budget for *Conway Currents*, the town-funded newsletter. The finance committee and members of the Select Board said they thought the committee was doing a very good job. People have heard only positive comments about the newsletter.

Finance: Treasurer/Collector, Debt, Employee Benefits Janice Warner presented the Treasurer/Collector, Debt, and Employee Benefits budgets. The systems are now integrated making tracking things easier. Debt: there should be no surprises. We have made the last payment on the fire truck. We could reduce short-term debt if we don't think we will be borrowing for anything. Employee Benefits: Franklin County Retirement is where we fund our future retirement liabilities. Unemployment Insurance is based on a half-year projection. Our rate is fairly low now, but it may go up a little. If we had a significant layoff, we wouldn't feel it until 6 months later. This option gives us a little more time to react to an adverse situation. Fraudulent claims are an industry problem, but haven't affected Conway. Group Health Insurance: There is a small decrease for this year, but overall we are doing pretty well. Claims have been minimal. We don't have FY22 insurance rates yet. Medicare is roughly the same as last year. Alan asked when the audit figures from 2019 will be available, and Jan replied that we should have them very soon, and she agreed to come back and discuss it once we have the figures. Regarding OPEB, Tom said that he puts as much as he can into it each year. We are required to carry it on our balance books.

Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting none

Town Administrator update

Committee news

I was asked last week to see if the Personnel Committee would like to make a recommendation regarding staff raises. I posed the question to the Committee and asked whether they would like to have a meeting regarding the issue, and both current members replied that they believed it was a policy issue for the Select Board, not a personnel issue as such.

I've both phoned and e-mailed Pat Lynch to invite her to a Select Board meeting to discuss Lynne Hanley's letter. I have not yet heard back from her.

Departments

I have looked at the audit numbers again based on a conversation with the Treasurer/Collector. We need to cover the triennial single audit at the school, about \$2,500, and \$15,000 for the FY 2020 audit. We have \$32,602 in the account now, which will cover that easily. The next audit will be for our Fiscal Year

2022, which will occur in 2023, so we do not need to include that in this year's budget, and should have the remainder of the account, about \$15,102. We have an agreement with Roselli, Clark & Associates to have that next audit done for \$15,000, so that should be set. That said, after that agreement expires, I would advocate for the Town to consider having another auditor for a while, just to have a fresh set of eyes on the Town's finances as a whole.

I've been working with Jason Silverman regarding the agreement he has with the Town to hay the South River Meadow. That agreement is expiring, and I asked him to speak with the other hay farmers in town to see if anyone else wanted to share the public resource. He is doing so and we may have a proposed revised agreement for you within the next month or so.

I just got an indication of coming insurance figures; some categories (property and liability) are probably going up fairly substantially, but we may be going down elsewhere (workers' compensation), so it could end up pretty close to level-funded.

Concerns of the Selectmen *none*

Mail

Bob said he had gotten an email from the Town of Deerfield regarding the discussion last week about the Senior Center. Tom said that to be safe, if there is something you want to discuss, it should be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

Announcements *none*

Next Meeting: Scheduled for Monday, February 1, 2021, at 6 p.m., via Zoom