

Minutes
SELECT BOARD

Monday, February 22, 2021, 6:00 p.m.
Via Zoom

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

Others present: Gail Connelly, Pat Lynch, Carolyn Thayer, Joanne Kocot, Council on Aging; Jay DiPucchio, Linda Dunlavy, Claire McGinnis, Trevor McDaniel, FRCOG; Jackie Choate, Board of Health; Janet Chayes, Open Space Committee; Joe Strzegowski, Trish Vinchesi, Capital Improvements Committee; Roy Cohen, Steve Dinkelaker, Rhyanna McLeester, Alan Singer, Finance Committee; Tom Hutcheson, Town Administrator; Louise Beckett, Assistant to the Town Administrator

Minutes

Approval of minutes

On a motion from Armstrong to approve the minutes of February 16, 2021, Erica seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.

Meetings Attended by Select Board Members

Erica attended the planning board public hearing. Phil and Bob also attended that meeting, which was on the large solar array bylaw.

Public Comments *none*

6:10 JOINT MEETING WITH THE COUNCIL ON AGING

Discussion: Senior Center activities and options

Bob opened the discussion noting that the Selectboard had received a letter from someone in town who suggested that Conway join one of the neighboring town's senior centers. Pat Lynch said the problem in joining a consortium is that the state funding Conway receives would go to the consortium and not to Conway. People would have to travel outside of Conway if we join the consortium; we would not get the same state money. Trevor said that Deerfield receives its funding even though they are part of a consortium. Pat noted that you don't have to join a consortium to attend functions at the other senior centers. When asked, Pat said she had reached out to Lynne Hanley and answered her questions, and that she hoped that when the town hall is renovated that a dedicated space might be worked out for the CoA. Congregate meals were popular when they were held prior to the pandemic, bringing in 25-30 people each time.

6:30 P.M. Joint Meeting with Finance Committee and Capital Improvements Planning Committee
FY 2022 Budget

General considerations: Tom said he will have a draft by next week.

FRCOG budget

Linda Dunlavy and Claire McGinnis went through the slides of the presentation, which outlines what FRCOG does, and what it has done in Conway in 2020. Linda went through the different services FRCOG provides and explained all increases. Accounting is particularly difficult, as there is a lack of qualified candidates willing to accept public sector salary. They are working with GCC to develop a municipal accounting certificate in hopes it may increase the number of viable accounting candidates. Phil said he felt the Communication Position has a high price-tag. Erica disagreed and said that it's critical to have a highly-qualified communication position in any organization. Claire explained the budget, and a comparison table. When Steve Dinkelaker asked about the increase in public health, Trevor said it is mostly due to contact tracing, though they have also had to hire people to work in vaccinating, which the state does not cover fully. Linda said they did not assume that more monies will be coming in for FY22 from the state as there is no guarantee. Claire added that there are more hours needed for health inspectors.

Capital items: Assessors' shelving proposal; paving amount and funding source

This request comes from Lee Whitcomb, Chair of the Board of Assessors. Bob said it was from last year and should have been in the form of a capital request, which it is now. The shelving would go into the Town Hall vault as it needs to be fire-proof. There are a lot of things in the town hall and town office and this type of shelving would save a great deal of space, because they are movable like library shelving. Lee found a vendor, but it may not be the final choice. Tom said that it will go out to multiple vendors for the best price, though most quotes are only good for 30, 60, or 90 days, and the

price might go up. Alan asked if records could be kept electronically instead. Bob said we are obligated to store many items for 7 years; some in perpetuity. Scanning services are expensive also, Phil noted. Alan said he asked the question because he's sure it will come up in town meeting. Roy said that it's best to have both. Trish said that the shelving should be available to all departments that need secure storage, and that additional quotes need to be gotten. This is the 3rd year Lee has asked for this shelving, and Trish felt the town should support the request.

Money articles

Tom noted that the bill for a prior year from Tyler was an Assessors bill for the GIS system, not a Highway bill.

General update

Paving Shelburne Falls Road: Bob said that they had agreed to limit the paving to one mile at a cost of \$169,000+/-, and to request that the money be appropriated through borrowing.

Old Business

Draft Town Meeting warrant

Postponing Town Meeting

Bob asked if we are going to have the town meeting the first Saturday in June. **On a motion from Armstrong to hold the meeting on June 5th, Erica seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.**

The Selectboard also requested a warrant article to change the by-laws to that effect; Tom will draft.

Interim Town Administrator posting and process

Phil said we may want the interim to be longer than 3 months, potentially a year or so giving the candidate the opportunity to go through a full year's process. Erica agreed. Bob said it would be good to get the advertisement out right away because there are a lot of good people out there, and we might lose them to some other town. A discussion followed about posting the salary, but it was agreed to say "Salary commensurate with experience." **On a motion from Armstrong that the advertisement be posted as soon as possible, Erica seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Appoint preliminary screening committee

Bob said Jan, Laurie, and Lee are interested and we should have someone from the Finance Committee and someone from the Selectboard on the committee. Erica said she would be interested and Bob said he supported her interest. Alan also agreed to be on the committee. Bob asked if the committee would have to follow open meeting laws, and Tom said yes, that is the case.

New Business

Request for Town Meeting warrant article re: South River conservation and related matters

Joe Strzegowski said the Evans property is back on the market. We submitted a bid for \$70,000 and could submit a second bid for \$75,000. The Evans assessed value should be around \$82,000 as a 4-acre building lot. There is \$104,000 available for land acquisition. We would use the money for restoration of the South River. Two other adjoining parcels have come up along Shelburne Falls Road, around Emerson Hollow, neither of which is buildable, and worth about \$14,000 and \$8,000 respectively. We have no easement for the area on one of these properties where the firetrucks fill up, though that question could possibly be resolved as a last resort through eminent domain. Joe reminded everyone that Town meeting is coming up and we would be in a bargaining position if money were earmarked for the purpose of land acquisition. The Town can only buy property for as high as 125% of assessed value, as Joe interprets the law. We need to do a title search and appraisal, as well as a legal analysis. Money could possibly be gotten from the CPA and/or the land trust. Joe said that if the funding from the grant is not used by June 30, it will be lost to the state. **On a motion from Armstrong that the Selectboard approve FRCOG drafting a scope of work and hiring the right professionals to help with a title search, legal options for acquisition, and appraisals for the three properties being considered for purchase by the town, Erica seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Community Preservation Committee: request for members Tabled.

Appoint Aimee Anderson to the Community Preservation Committee with a term ending June 30, 2023 – Tabled, though she would like to be on the Open Space Committee.

Appoint Jacqueline Choate (1173 Pine Hill Road) to the Board of Health until the next Town election

On a motion from Armstrong to appoint Jackie Choate to an interim position on the Board of Health until the next Town election, Phil seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.

Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting: *None.*

Town Administrator update

Committees and Boards

Last spring, during the activity surrounding Town Meeting, I'm sorry to say that it appears we did not do all the usual annual appointments. Louise is working on sorting through that and we'll be sure to have a good list this coming June.

I've written the Council on Aging and the Parks and Rec committees regarding their delegates to the Community Preservation Committee. To avoid confusion in the future, it would be best if those committees' recommendations came to the Select Board for formal appointment.

I've written to the Board of Health asking for their recommendation on postponing Town Meeting till June to minimize potential exposure to the virus. Since they meet the same night as the Selectboard, we do not yet have a recommendation on that. However, I'm fairly sure that selecting a date in June will be fine.

Alexis Fedorjaczenko, Administrative Assistant to the Conservation Commission and Planning Board, is resigning in two weeks. He will draft an advertisement to fill her position.

Departments

EMD George Murphy, Assistant EMD Veronique Blanchard, and I are working to fix a problem for people signing up for the reverse 9-1-1 system. Apparently the problem is on the Blackboard end, the company we use that runs the system.

I will have for you next week an approval form for a dry hydrant installation proposed by a resident. This will be a new process for Conway but I think a good one for recording where dry hydrants are and when they were approved.

Select Board member comments and concerns *None*

Mail Tom said a letter on Affordable Housing workshops had been received and that he would scan it and send it out.

Announcements: *None*

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

At 9:05, on a motion from Armstrong to adjourn, seconded by Goleman, the vote was unanimous in favor and the meeting was adjourned.