

Minutes SELECT BOARD

Monday, March 8, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

Present for the Selectboard: Bob Armstrong, Chair, Erica Goleman, Philip Kantor

Others Present: Alan Singer, Steve Dinkelaker, Roy Cohen, Trish Vinchesi for the Finance Committee; Brian Cook, Calm Computing (Leverett); Janet Chayes, Marilyn Webster, Mac McCoy, Deb Donaldson for the Open Space Committee /Forest & Trails discussion; Tom Hutcheson, Town Administrator; Louise Beckett, Assistant to the Town Administrator

Bob called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Minutes

Approval of minutes of March 1, 2021

On a motion from Armstrong to approve the minutes of March 1, 2021, Erica seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.

Meetings Attended by Select Board Members

Erica attended no meetings this past week. Phil had a Frontier Budget Committee meeting, a Frontier School Committee Meeting, a Deerfield Board of Health meeting on Friday regarding winter and spring sports. Bob had no meetings this week.

Public Comments *none*

Old Business

Update on Interim Town Administrator position

Steve asked if the board could go into executive session to discuss the job search. Tom said we aren't prepared to go into Executive Session this evening and asked Steve for a general discussion. Steve said that the committee would like to advertise and interview for both the interim and the permanent positions now. When asked, Erica said she would support Steve's request. Phil said he had reservations about seeking the permanent position now and asked if advertising was sufficient to attract more candidates for the interim position. Bob said he liked the idea of seeking both positions now. Steve asked if there could be a vote on it. Bob said we should broaden the interim search, but also look for the permanent position now. On a question, Hutcheson clarified that preliminary interviews can be in executive session, but when the Selectboard interviews, it must be a public meeting. **On a motion from Armstrong to grant to the Committee that the application process include both the interim and permanent positions Erica seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.**

New Business

Request for the creation of a Forests and Trails Committee

Janet introduced Mac McCoy, Deb Donaldson, and Marilyn Webster to discuss the formation of the committee. Janet said she was proposing a group of people to work specifically on forest and trails issues. Bob asked if Janet was proposing two separate committees: Forest & Trails, and keeping Open Space as a separate entity. Janet asked, What's the best organizational plan for this? She said that the idea of a liaison with Open Space was what she had in mind. An 'informal' committee doesn't have to keep minutes and post agendas. Once it becomes the public's business, that's when it becomes subject to the open meeting law. Bob said that he thought the idea of a Forests & Trails committee was that they would work to implement some of the goals of the Town's Forest Management Plans. Deb said that all the work that went in to the study shouldn't be 'put on the shelf'. She said she thought there was an existing committee or at least a format for doing this work. Phil said that the forest management plan is very new, and that all the issues that were disagreements within the town were slated to be the work of a new forests and trails committee. Bob suggested we continue this discussion next week or at another time.

The Town of Hatfield's 350th Anniversary

Bob asked if we needed to get back to the Town of Hatfield, and Tom said yes. He added that the Selectboard needs to decide if they want to attend or be in the drive-through parade and to let Hatfield know individually.

Reappoint Michelle Sanger and Gisele L'Italien to the Cultural Commission as co-chairs, with terms expiring June 30, 2024

On a motion from Erica to appoint Michelle Sanger and Gisele L'Italien to the Cultural Commission as co-chairs, with terms expiring June 30, 2024 Bob seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.

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

FY 2022 Budget - General update

Tom said the last Excel sheet had not used the correct year-to-year comparison, but he corrected and re-sent it.

Storage of records and documents – general discussion

Bob said that the Assessors' vault is full and is the major fire-proof storage we have. Lee requested \$22,000 for a shelving unit, hoping that the final price might be somewhat less. Phil questioned whether historical deeds shouldn't be given to the Conway Historical Society, as they digitize their holdings and make them accessible online. They would not charge to store the documents. Brian Cook was asked to speak to this topic of scanned documents vs. storage of physical documents. It depends largely on how much data is stored. Roy outlined the Town's data capabilities. Trisha Vinchesi voiced concern that there is a lot in the vault that needs to be looked at; some items may not belong in the vault. She also emphasized that the solution needs to be town-wide: scan our documents but also keep those paper copies that we need to keep in a safe place. There needs to be a plan that involves all departments. Tom said we have all the equipment and software we need, but we need an estimate of how much time it will take to scan all the necessary documents, and an estimate of how much space is needed to store physical documents. Leverett appropriated up to \$10,000 a few years back for their scanning/archiving project. Tricia proposed a warrant article, which Bob agreed was a good idea. Tricia will speak with the Town of Leverett regarding their digitization/storage of records. Tom will meet with Lee.

Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting *none*

Town Administrator update

Committees and Boards

Malcolm Corse has stepped down as chair of the Community Preservation Committee, and next week we'll have a candidate for filling the Selectboard appointment left by Aimee Anderson, who will continue as the Open Space Committee representative. I expect they'll be meeting to consider the requests for funds to support the acquisition of land related to the South River flood mitigation project, and that Dusty King will be acting as chair. In related news, I plan to bring a proposal for that purpose to you next week to apply to the CPC for funding for a Phase 2 environmental assessment on land previously occupied by an industrial business (in the 19th century).

I am moving forward with hiring an assistant for Town boards and committees and plan to place an ad in the *Recorder* this week. I plan to post the position at \$20/hr., which is what the prior assistant was slated to have gotten this year if Town-wide raises had been approved.

Departments

Louise and I spent some time responding to a public records request for information regarding our aggregation effort. We don't know why the records are being sought, but we complied with the request as required.

I had scheduled next week's joint meeting with the Finance Committee to be the school budgets, but it looks as though we'll be participating in the broader meetings instead. Soon we should start having votes on recommendations on the Town Meeting warrant; please let me know if you have any preferences for that over the next few days.

Select Board member comments and concerns *none*

Mail

Bob said that The Conway Grammar School sent a letter asking for additional money for the playground equipment. Phil said the quote came in and that the Germaine Fund may be able to be used for this purpose, but we will need to know the balance left in the fund. The Germaine fund specifies that use of the funds covers items for the handicapped. Bob said that in both funds only the interest may be spent. Tom confirmed that and added that we have never spend the capitol, only the interest.

Bob thanked the Board of Health and George Murphy for publicizing COVID vaccination news in a timely way.

Announcements *none*

Next Meeting: Scheduled for Monday, March 15, 2021, at 6 p.m., via Zoom

At 8:03 p.m., on a motion from Bob to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Erica, the vote was unanimous in favor.