

**Minutes**  
**Joint Meeting of Selectboard with the Finance Committee**  
**Monday, December 20, 2021, 6:00 p.m.**  
Via Zoom

**Present for the Selectboard:** Phil Kantor, Chair; Bob Armstrong. Absent: Erica Goleman

**Others Present:** Alan Singer, Chair, Finance Committee; Roy Cohan, Rhyanna McLeester; Deb Donaldson, Véronique Blanchard, Town Administrator; Louise Beckett, Assistant to the town Administrator; Joe Stzregowski, Janet Chayes, Open Space Committee

**Meeting Called to Order** Phil called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

**Minutes** **On a motion from Phil to approve the minutes of December 6, 2021, Bob seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.**

**Warrants** **On a motion from Phil to approve the Accounts Payable Warrant W22-14 for \$501,517.93, the Payroll Warrant PW22-14 for \$115,210.74 and the Payroll Deduction Warrant PDW22-14 for \$29,070.69 Bob seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.**

**Meetings Attended by Select Board Members** Bob attended a Conservation Commission meeting; Phil attended a Union 38 negotiations meeting and a Frontier Regional Teachers negotiations meeting which Véronique also attended upon the consent of the union and administration.

**Public Comments** None

**Old Business** None

**New Business**  
*Discuss and vote to approve joining a regional Mass in Motion grant application*  
Véronique explained that the FRCOG asked if Conway was interested in signing on to apply for funding which will maximize the impact of the regional age-friendly Franklin County/North Quabbin initiative. This funding will look at projects at the town level including working with other towns. FRCOG is requesting a letter of support. **On a motion from Phil to approve joining the FRCOG application Bob seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.**

*Discuss and vote to approve Forest & Trails Grant Application to MA Cultural Council*  
Phil explained that Deb Donaldson and Suzanne Artemieff had put together a grant application for \$500 to add an educational component to the Fournier Forest project. Teachers and 6<sup>th</sup> graders are to be involved, and this is a great thing. But committees need to know that grant applications are done through the town and need to be processed through the town offices. The Forest and Trails grant application then, needs to be revised to follow Conway's bylaws and state law. **On a motion from Phil to approve the application with the revisions explained above, Bob seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.** Deb Donaldson remarked that the committee is considering another Community Forest Stewardship Grant

for \$5K. She asked if the process is to draw it up first, and if the committee decides to go with it they should then bring it to the Selectboard? Phil said yes.

*Discuss and vote to approve  
Town Administrator request for a  
Public Safety Building working  
group*

Véronique said that this request came out of discussions with the Highway, Fire, Police and Ambulance Departments about how the building might be used once the Highway Department moves out. Proposals for a new layout at the old town garage, and which bays could be used for which equipment have been discussed. There is the potential to put offices for police, fire and ambulance in the back of three of the bays with a hallway for accessibility for the public. The best use of the building should especially include public access and be ADA compliant. Police and Fire would move out of the Town Office upstairs – with its awful staircase which is difficult for many people to climb. **On a motion from Phil to vote to approve creation of a Public Safety Building Working Group, Bob seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.**

*6:30 p.m. Joint meeting with Finance Committee to discuss FY23 budget process*

Alan called the Finance Committee meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. Phil noted that this is the first meeting of the FY22 budget process and recommended that we change the order of the budget meetings so that the schools present as late as possible because their numbers are the last to come out. It was also recommended that the Highway Department budget requests be moved to later in the schedule as those numbers are usually not available early on. Alan recommended that capital budget items be considered later in the schedule as well. There followed a lengthy discussion regarding how best to re-order the various presentations. For example, all public safety departments can be done in one evening (police, fire, ambulance). Véronique reminded all that the individual budgets had not yet been sent out to the departments, and that she thought it fair to give everyone a month to work on them. Alan asked if the first meeting would follow Martin Luther King weekend (Tuesday, January 18<sup>th</sup>), or alternately January 24<sup>th</sup>. Phil said he was fine with either start date. It was agreed that assuming we start with public safety departments, we would see how their chiefs/directors feel about going first on either the 18<sup>th</sup> or the 24<sup>th</sup>. It was agreed that Administration and the Board of Health could go next, then the Assessors, Town Clerk, and Treasurer in one night.

Phil said he would like to see definite budget amounts and year to date expenditures. It was noted that the accountant sends detailed reports out each month. A discussion followed regarding how budgets are put together, accountability, best practices and the possibility of moving from a single yearly town meeting to having two annual meetings: Ordinary budget requests would be dealt with in the spring/summer; and in the fall capital requests, bylaw changes and other ‘incidentals’ would be on the warrant. Pre-town meeting is a good idea and gives departments a chance to explain their requests. The Town could budget through a line item the pre-town meeting and make it official instead of relying on volunteers. It was agreed that Véronique would put together an updated schedule and send it out to everyone.

**Mail** none

**Announcements** none

**Next Meeting** The next regular meeting of the Selectboard will take place on January 3, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

**Adjourn**

**On a motion from Phil to adjourn the Selectboard meeting to go into Executive Session for Reason #6: To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate, if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body, Bob seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.**