

Minutes
Selectboard and Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee
Monday, March 7, 2022, 6:00 p.m.
Town Hall, 5 Academy Hill Road

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

Others Present: Joe Strzegowski, Planning Board; Jan Warner, Treasurer; Cayte McDonough; Janet Chayes, Open Space; Cynthia Lawton-Singer, Living Arts Garden Design; Gemma Vandeheld, Ambulance Director; Alan Singer, Roy Cohen, Rhyanna MacLeester, Finance Committee; Véronique Blanchard, Town Administrator; Louise Beckett, Assistant to the Town Administrator

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

Minutes **On a motion from Erica to approve the Minutes of February 28, 2022, Bob seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Warrants None

Meetings Attended by Select Board Members Erica had no meetings this past week; Bob had informal visits to the Nexamp site to address erosion issues; he also met with Comcast regarding the language of the franchise contract. Phil had a joint Frontier and four-town school committees meeting regarding the mask policy; 90+ attended, many via Zoom. They approved the recommendation of Meg Burch and the school administration to become mask optional as of 03/14. On Thursday, he attended a union negotiations meeting.

Public Comments None

Old Business None

New Business

Vote to approve Board of Health nomination of Emily Sweet to fill the remainder of the term of open seat until 6/30/22.

On a motion from Phil to approve the Board of Health nomination of Emily Sweet to fill the vacant seat, with a term ending on June 30, 2022, Erica seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.

Cayte McDonough, Janet Chayes and Cynthia Lawton-Singer to discuss suggestions for plantings in front of town offices.

Cynthia explained the plan, which they feel is more environmentally sound than other plans that might be adopted and focuses on native New England plants. It also includes a rain garden to make use of water that comes off the roof of the building rather than letting it erode the land and compromise the mortar of the foundation. Janet said that the Open Space Committee has a grant to cover the cost of the plantings but that they would need the approval of the Selectboard. Cynthia and Cayte are volunteering their services, and if the Selectboard votes for it, they will draw up more specific plans. Maintenance was discussed. Cayte and Cynthia would do the maintenance at first, and would train volunteers to take over later, though they said it should be a low-maintenance project. The Selectboard approved the concept of creating a native plant garden with a water component for the town offices, pending information about budget, maintenance, and Ron Sweet's input.

ARPA Discussion: Employee web services request, Treasurer's Office

Jan said this process is a module on our payroll system that would allow employees to view their W2, paystubs, and other information and to submit their timesheets online. The one-time cost of \$9,295 to update the system possibly with

ARPA funds would save us a lot of time, money, and paper processing. This would move us to a direct deposit system, and we would help people figure out how to look up information. The \$1,500 annual cost, which is comparable to the cost of our current paper processing, would remain in the Treasurer's operating budget. There was a brief discussion as to whether the funding should come from ARPA funds or elsewhere. **On a motion from Phil to fund the treasurer's employee web services request with ARPA funds Erica seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.**

6:30 Joint Meeting with Finance Committee

At 6:38 Alan called the Joint meeting of the Selectboard and the Finance Committee to order.

231 Ambulance

Gemma said everything but Salaries remains pretty much the same. A bit more on the radios and the software maintenance is requested, on which they have no control because it is a county-wide program. Hourly wages went down because there are not as many EMTs as there were previously. On training they may move monies for reimbursement for training time, which won't change the budget. On license and exams, she is trying to set up a revolving fund to reimburse EMTs at the time that they get their licenses to avoid payments from previous years.

543 Veterans

The Veterans budget has little change in the operating budget, the amount we pay to belong to the Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans Services District.

Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting

None

Town Administrator update

Conway has received notification that FY23's Chapter 90 award will be \$261,276, which is down from the \$263,668 awarded last year.

I reached out to Jaymie Stanton of Nexamp for an update, and received the following reply via email:

"Hello All,

As a follow up to the testing performed at the Main Poland Rd solar site, the acoustics testing did confirm the presence of audible noise ~5kHz. This doesn't provide any immediate resolution, but we have validated the existence of this abnormality. To this end we have engaged a 3rd party engineering firm with specialized experience conducting electrical testing and grid-scale modeling in New England. To date we have ruled out any simple, clear-cut issues and we expect to have results of the deeper analysis within the next 3 weeks. Nexamp will discuss re-activating the system with Eversource as soon as we have arrived at a solution we are confident will not negatively impact abutters."

I participated in several webinars last week, one each on ARPA, Community One Stop grant application process, a state legislative update and a climate assessment workshop put on by the Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

I completed 4 of 9 modules for my final MCPPO class and hope to complete the class by the end of March.

The MVP planning group met to discuss the upcoming grant application.

Fuss & O'Neill has sent a proposed contract for groundwater monitoring and on-call services if needed at the transfer station. The groundwater monitoring is a legal requirement with MassDEP, and the on-call services will be for engineering help if/when Ron and I work on fixing the back portion of the transfer station.

**Select Board member
comments/concerns**

None

Mail

None

Announcements

None

Next Meeting

March 14, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

**Adjourn to go into Executive
Session**

At 7:10 on a motion from Erica to go into Executive Session for Reason #6: to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body, Bob seconded, all voted by roll call and the vote was unanimous in favor.