Minutes Selectboard and Joint Finance Committee Meeting Monday, March 14, 2022 Town Hall, 5 Academy Hill Road

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

Others Present: Samantha Staelens, Children's Advocacy Center; Alan Singer, Roy Cohen, Rhyanna McLeester, Finance Committee; Véronique Blanchard, Town Administrator; Louise Beckett, Assistant to the Town Administrator

Minutes On a motion from Bob to approve the minutes of March 7, 2022, Erica

seconded, all said ave and the vote was unanimous in favor.

Warrants On a motion from Bob to approve the Accounts Payable Warrant W22-20

for \$524,858.29, the Payroll Warrant WP22-20 for \$109,903.82, and the Payroll Deduction Warrant PDW22-20 for \$27,764.38, Erica seconded, all

said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.

Meetings Attended by Erica had no meetings since last Monday's meeting; Bob also had no meetings; Select Board Members Phil had a union negotiating committee meeting and they tentatively settled

claims with the union. Both the Conway Grammar School Committee and the

Frontier School Committee need to approve it.

Public Comments None

Old Business None

New Business

Samantha Staelens of Children's Advocacy Center of Franklin County and North Quabbin re: flag raising ceremony

ARPA

6:30 Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee

Frontier Regional School District budget; Conway Grammar School budget; School Capital Requests The Children's Advocacy Center in Greenfield works on issues of child physical and sexual abuse and neglect; they work with local law enforcement and healthcare professionals to address these issues; and they work with the children to reduce trauma and to coordinate mental health issues. Case manager Abby Bliss is from Conway, as is Samantha. The Advocacy Center does a lot of prevention, and one thing they do to draw attention to the issues of child abuse and neglect is a flag-raising ceremony in April in honor of Childhood Abuse Awareness month to recognize children who have gone through abuse and to celebrate their resiliency. Staff attends and Representative Natalie Blais, Senator Adam Hinds and District Attorney Dave Sullivan will be invited to attend. The Selectboard said that they support the flag raising ceremony on April 8, at 1 p.m. and said they would leave the flag up for the remainder of the month. If the selectboard decides to move forward with funding for businesses affected by COVID we may need to set aside certain monies for that purpose and designate the rest under the revenue replacement category. Phil said there are a lot of things that have needed to be addressed for years – like the public safety building and the lift for the town hall - and would like to assure we can focus on

to spend them. The Frontier Budget has been voted and has increased by 3.64%. The increase in our Frontier assessment is 2.64% or \$40,000. Total operating budget is in excess of \$13 million. Of that over a million is from school choice. There was an increase in the number of students using school choice. Frontier had a drop in enrollment (a total of 60) most of whom were from Deerfield and who elected home-schooling during the pandemic. Our share of the \$75,000 Capital Request

them first. But we need to know amounts before making decisions. Véronique added that the funds don't have to be obligated until 2024 and we have until 2026

of \$13,867.50, is to replace the walk-in cooler of the main kitchen. This will be a warrant article. The Conway Grammar School budget of \$2,086,307 (an increase of 2.96% or \$60,000) is up for a vote on Thursday. Conway K-12 enrollment is 384 students; 126 are enrolled in the grammar school. Conway Grammar School is the only one of the four schools that has a capital stabilization account. It was established 6-7 years ago because we wanted to have the money to replace the very old boilers. The current balance is \$59,000. It would be prudent to get the amount closer to \$125,000, though this would not likely be possible in the short term. There will be an article on the warrant to increase the stabilization fund.

Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting

None

Town Administrator update

- On the advice of both MIIA and town counsel, I will be asking the Conway Mall volunteers to sign a 'hold harmless' waiver. Volunteers fit the definition of an "employee" and thus are considered "insureds" within the General Liability policy, and MIIA has told me that 'It is our recommendation that the Town ask volunteers to sign a "Hold Harmless" Agreement to the effect that the Town is not to be held liable for injuries to the volunteers.
- I have received updated cost estimates from Jan Ameen of the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District costs will unfortunately be going up for both recycling processing and trash disposal. I will forward for review the updated transfer station budget next week.
- The Public Buildings Committee had its first meeting last Thursday and is currently discussing design plans for creating office space for Fire, Police and Ambulance at the old highway garage. Plans are moving forward with siting and drilling the new well.

Select Board member comments/concerns

Bob said the Selectboard got a request to support two bills, H.912 and H.1002 before the House for forest protection and would take most of the forest managed by the state so that no logging would be allowed. The only forests that wouldn't be covered in these bills are recreational areas. If the bills pass, it would not allow the DCR to support their budget by logging. The second bill is to protect forest reserves and is supported by the first Hampshire district representative. A Conway resident has asked if the board would write a letter to Rep. Blais, etc. in support of the bills. On a motion from Bob to send a letter in support Phil seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.

Mail

National Grid notification dated 03/03 re: Upcoming Sideline Vegetation Management

Phil said that where National Grid is planning on doing this vegetation management is in the old railroad bed along the Deerfield River. There is a transmission line above Conway Station, which goes across Bardwell's Ferry above the parking area. Though this area is largely uninhabited we will send them a letter asking them to come in and explain their method as we did with Eversource recently.

Announcements

None

Next Meeting

March 21, 2022 at 6:00 PM

Adjourn

At 7:40 on a motion from Bob to adjourn, Erica seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.