

**Minutes**  
**Selectboard and Joint Finance Committee Meeting**  
**Selectboard and Joint Cable Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**Monday, March 28, 2022**  
**Town Hall, 5 Academy Hill Road**

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

**Others Present:** Deb Donaldson, Forest & Trails; Susan Fentin, Superintendent Rick Martin, Business Manager Russ Kaubris, Franklin County Technical School; Ron Sweet, Highway Superintendent; Bill Arduser, Ron Hawkes, Jonathan Barkan, Cable Advisory Committee; William Soloman, Attorney; Alan Singer, Roy Cohen, Rhyanna McLeester, Finance Committee; Véronique Blanchard, Town Administrator; Louise Beckett, Assistant to the Town Administrator

**Meeting Called to Order** At 6:00 p.m. Phil called the meeting to order.

**Minutes** On a motion from Erica to approve the minutes of 03/21/22, Bob seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor

**Warrants** On a motion from Erica to approve the Accounts Payable Warrant W22-21 for \$115,547.47, the Payroll Warrant WP22-21 for \$112,855.13, and the Payroll Deduction Warrant WD22-21 for \$28,548.89 Bob seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.

**Meetings Attended by Select Board Members** Erica had no meetings; Bob had a Conservation Commission Meeting, and on Friday had an FCAT ‘cleanup’ meeting to clear an area in the Sunderland Town Hall for the use of the Town. Phil had a school administration meeting in regard to the Union agreement.

**Public Comments** Susan Fentin said that the trees on Roaring Brook Road have been cut to the extent that it’s horrendous. Though some branches had to come down, which she appreciates, the result is ‘awful’. Bob asked if anyone had gotten back to her, and she said that she did hear back from Walter (Goodridge, tree warden). Ron said that he has had so many complaints over the past few years and needs to protect the roads. The tree canopies make it impossible for the roads to dry out. The state and Eversource have also been taking down trees. Susan said that the next time the town does this kind of extreme cutting, they should consult an arborist.

**Unfinished Business** None

**New Business** Deb and TerraCorps member Audrey (Boraski) walked the trails in the Fournier Forest, which will be mapped by TerraCorps using Gaia GPS software resulting in detailed maps of the trails. There will probably be a post-building project estimate. The selectboard approved and signed the contract. **On a motion from Phil to sign the contract with TerraCorps, Bob seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.**

**ARPA – discussion on the Meeting OWL Pro for hybrid meetings** Bob explained that the OWL system uses the audio as its recording to move the camera to each speaker. Véronique will be going to Whately to evaluate how the system is working for their selectboard. Bob said that the selectboard wouldn’t have to sit together at one table because of the capability to focus on the speaker. The selectboard members could sit 6’ apart. It hasn’t been budgeted and the cost is roughly \$1,000. It’s a savings to FCAT that they no longer have to come up to Conway to make the recording.

**6:30 Joint Meeting with Finance Committee**

*Franklin County Technical School budget presentation*

At 6:30 p.m. Alan called the Finance Committee to order.

The format of the electronic budget has been updated with capability to click on specific topics to get an explanation. Rick Martin gave an overview of the Franklin County Tech budget and he and Russ Kaubris went over the budget point by point. Alan thanked them for giving a very good presentation.

*Highway Capital Requests; review of all capital requests*

Ron Sweet, Highway Superintendent, presented his capital requests. He originally had two requests but decided not to ask for the grader. He is now asking for \$140K to replace the over the fence mower up from the \$125K originally requested. This increase is because of the way costs are going up. Equipment is getting older, and we won't be able to use older vehicles for trade-in value – we'll have to budget the entire amounts on future purchases. We may have to allocate more to equipment repairs - which might not have to be if we didn't wait so long to upgrade. He said the town now does all our mowing instead of hiring out as a cost savings. A comment was made as to whether we are putting enough into the stabilization fund in light of the fact that repair and replacement costs have been increasing substantially of late.

**7:00 Joint Meeting with the Cable Advisory Committee**  
*Comcast Cable License Renewal*

Atty. Solomon said that the final changes were minimal, mostly word corrections, and then gave a summary. The agreement is normally a 10-year contract, but the pandemic was partly to blame that we are a few more than 10 years with this contract, and we also wanted some changes connect Town Hall to the Town Office with fiber and to allow live programs from the Town Hall to the server in Deerfield. There will be some changes in the high-definition aspects of the contract so that when FCAT programs the selectboard meetings, they will be in high-def and likely the channel number will change from 15 to a higher number. **On a motion from Bob for the Cable Advisory Committee to accept the franchise agreement negotiated between Comcast and the Town, beginning April 1, 2022, Ron Hawkes seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor. On a motion from Bob that the Select Board, as cable television license Issuing Authority, vote as follows:**

**“To grant the subject Cable Television Renewal License, with an effective date of April 1, 2022 to Comcast of Massachusetts II, Inc. ("Comcast"). All terms and conditions contained in the Renewal License have been agreed to by Comcast. Comcast, by and through its authorized representative, shall execute this Renewal License (Agreement) as set out on the Signature Page of the Renewal License. The Board further votes to authorize the Chair of the Cable Committee, with the assistance, if sought by the Chair, of Special Counsel for this License Renewal, to make any nonmaterial change to the License Renewal Agreement document as may be needed for administrative or document-related purposes prior to the execution of the License by Comcast”**

**Phil seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.**

**Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting**

None

**Town Administrator update**

• I have finished the last of my MCPPO classes for the designation, sent in my CORI form and \$100 fee and hope to hear back soon that I have been certified.

- The Public Building Committee is making progress with design plans and will be requesting \$25,000 on the warrant for engineering services.
- The Municipal Vulnerability Program RFR is now out and the planning group is working with GZA and the FRCOG to develop priorities for this application, which is due in May.
- The ARPA working group met and is still very interested in extending help to negatively affected businesses. This will increase the level of complexity for required ARPA reporting, and I have reached out to the FRCOG for help both with reporting and with criteria for allocating funds to affected businesses.
- Ron and I met with Shelley O'Toole and Beth Dubrawski of MEMA to discuss the Delabarre Avenue project. Covid has pushed back progress, but the grant deadline can be extended. Of concern is that this project's estimated costs, which began back in 2015, are no longer valid, and any overrun costs on the project will have to be paid for by the town.

**Select Board member  
comments/concerns**

**Mail**

**Announcements**

Bob announced that the northern portion of Shelburne Falls Road is closed as of today and will remain so until July. People will need to find alternate routes between Conway and Shelburne Falls/Buckland.

On Saturday, Deerfield is having a climate change symposium at Frontier from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. and not many people from Conway have signed up.

Erica said that on April 18<sup>th</sup> she will be traveling and won't be able to be at the selectboard meeting on that date.

**Next Meeting**

Monday, April 4, 2022, 6:00 p.m. Town Hall

**Adjourn**

**At 8:20 p.m. on a motion from Phil to adjourn, Erica seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.**