

Minutes
Joint Selectboard and Finance Committee Meeting
Monday, April 4, 2022
Town Hall, 5 Academy Hill Road

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

Others Present: Laurie Lucier, Town Clerk; Alan Singer, Roy Cohan, Rhyanna McLeester, Tom Donovan, Finance Committee; Véronique Blanchard, Town Administrator; Louise Beckett, Assistant to the Town Administrator

Meeting called to Order Phil called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

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

Warrants None

Meetings Attended by Select Board Members None reported

Public Comments Pixie Holbrook presented to the selectboard a certified citizen's petition to add in a 'Fair Share Amendment' article to the warrant for June 4, 2022 annual town meeting.

Unfinished Business None

New Business

Appoint Roger Goshea as Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans' Services District Advisory Board Representative for the remainder of the John O'Rourke's term ending in 2022.

On a motion from Phil to appoint Roger Goshea Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans' Services District Advisory Board Representative for the remainder of John O'Rourke's term ending in 2022, Erica seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.

ARPA: request from town administrator to hire Capital Strategic Solutions for help with ARPA reporting and compliance

Véronique said that with Covid funding under the CARES act, the state acted as mediator between the federal government and the town. But with ARPA we are directly connected to the treasury but have no help. We need to have a consultant who can let us know if expenditures are allowable under ARPA. Capital Strategic Solutions came highly recommended and we can use ARPA funds to pay for these services. The amount of time necessary to research issues is prohibitive, and if we do something out of compliance, the concern is that it could affect the Town's liability. **On a motion from Erica to hire Capital Strategic Solutions for help with ARPA reporting and compliance, for up to \$3,200 for 20 hours of consulting time, Bob seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.**

Vote to open the warrant and set closing date of April 26th.

On a motion from Erica to open the warrant for annual town meeting on June 4, 2022 Bob seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor. On a motion from Bob to set the closing date for the warrant for the June 4, 2022 annual town meeting of Monday April 25, Erica seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.

Discussion of a possible letter to the Frontier Regional School Committee regarding potential amendments to Frontier Regional School Four Town

All four towns would have to vote to open the agreement and any amendment needs to be voted by all four towns. The operating agreement is from 1954, though there have been some amendments. The driving issue is that the state mandates that compensation must be equal, but in fact is not. The question was

Operating Agreement.

asked if this is the beginning of trying to regionalize the elementary schools. The benefit to regionalization is that it would give us transportation reimbursement, but the cost of insurance would be prohibitively high. Bob said he isn't for regionalizing the four elementary schools. It could potentially trigger a mechanism whereby one of the elementary schools could close. There are three elementary schools within two miles of each other. Conway is only 17% of the four-town school district whereas the other towns make up a higher percentage. A two-hour meeting of the schools is on the agenda along with setting the school calendar.

6:30 Joint Finance Committee meeting
Conway Grammar and Frontier Regional School capital requests; review of all capital requests
Discussion of warrant articles

At 6:32 Alan called the Joint Finance Committee/Selectboard meeting to order. There followed an item by item discussion of the Conway Grammar and Frontier Regional school capital requests.

Warrant articles including highway, fire, and police requests were discussed until members of the finance committee were called away on other business. Alan said that as the warrant end date is April 25, the Finance Committee should meet separately on that Monday to come up with their recommendations. **At 7:10 p.m. Alan adjourned the Joint Finance Committee/Selectboard meeting.**

Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting

None

Town Administrator update April 4, 2022

- The town has advertised again for the position of building maintenance technician in the *Greenfield Recorder* and online. To date only one person has applied and I will be interviewing tomorrow.
- I was given an Operational Services Division training on posting bids and purchasing through their blanket contracts. Some of the companies on contract with the state include WB Mason and Staples, so I will be investigating whether the state pricing is indeed cheaper than what we currently obtain and possibly begin purchasing through the state contract.
- On Thursday I met with the Finance Committee to review the non-Article 2 money articles with possible funding sources.
- On Wednesday I met with Brian Domina, Whately's Town Administrator, to see in person how the OWL Meeting Pro works. Brian mentioned that they used PEG funds to pay for their setup, which is what I would like to do, to keep providing Zoom access in hybrid meetings. I would be purchasing a dedicated laptop, the OWL with tripod, and a locking cabinet to house the equipment at the Town Hall.

Select Board member comments/concerns

None

Mail
Mr. John Pekarski concerns

John has voiced concern over his perception that there was a wetlands violation on Boyden Road back in 2011. The Conservation Commission followed up at the time and found no violation. The Highway Superintendent at the time also confirmed that the conduct of the Highway department as represented in Mr. Pekarski's communications was not true. It was agreed to send Mr. Pekarski a letter acknowledging that the selectboard discussed his request but could take no further action.

Nexamp update

Nexamp's letter doesn't specify whether the audible noise problem is caused

by the inverters or if it's a problem with the grid lines that go up to Route 116, although the consultant's opinion is that it is the inverters. If the cause is the inverters, and they are replaced, that should solve the problem. The project is off-line until the problem is fixed. In any case, they have a vested need to fix it, and have in fact listened to the Selectboard's concerns.

Announcements

All were reminded of the flag raising on Friday, April 8, at 1 p.m. at the Veterans Park on the corner of Academy Hill.

Next Meeting

Monday, April 11, 2022 at 6:00 p.m., Town Hall, 5 Academy Hill Road, and accessible via Zoom.

Adjourn

At 7:35 on a motion from Phil to adjourn, Bob seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.