

**Minutes**  
**Selectboard and Joint Finance Committee Meeting**  
**Tuesday, April 19, 2022, 6:00 p.m.**  
**Town Hall, 5 Academy Hill Road**

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

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

<b>Minutes</b>	<b>On a motion by Bob to approve the Minutes of April 11, 2022, Phil seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.</b>
<b>Warrants</b>	None
<b>Meetings Attended by Select Board Members</b>	Bob had no meetings; Phil had a Frontier school meeting. The No. 2 boiler is down and may require a massive expenditure to repair. Boiler No. 1 is also down. To remove them may cost over \$100,000 if the walls have to be taken down.
<b>Public Comments</b>	None
<b>Unfinished Business</b>	None
<b>New Business</b> <i>Walter Goodridge, Tree Warden to discuss his responsibilities and authority</i>	Walter explained the complaint from Cayte McDonough about the tree trimming on Whately Road last year. His understanding is that Conway has the right to maintain the trees on the public roads but does not own them. Complaints have escalated from prior years as to the ugliness of the tree pruning. A comment was made that Eversource used to prune both sides of the road, but now only maintains the side where wires are located. Cayte has done research on the duties of the tree warden and sent Walter MGL Chapter 87 sections 1-7 on public safety definitions. She says the statute says it doesn't matter whether the Town owns the trees or not, the Tree Warden has the duty/responsibility to trim them. A further comment was made that the Highway Supervisor believes in cutting as much of the trees as is possible as it helps with melting snow in the winter. This may be partly due to the fact that he only has a lift for a limited period of time. Walter left the transcript of his conversations with Cayte McDonough for the Selectboard to review.
<b>6:15 Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee</b>	At 6:25 Alan called the joint meeting of the finance committee and selectboard to order.
<i>Discussion on FY23 Cost of Living Allowance</i>	There followed discussion about the size of the cost of living allowance, either 2, 2-1/2 or 3%. A comparison with the schools' COLA was also made, though school employees have insurance. There seemed to be more support for 3%.
<i>Discussion of budget as a whole</i>	Free cash is looking good.

## Discussion of warrant articles

The over-the-fence mower was brought up. Equipment repairs, especially major ones, are difficult for the highway department to make. The idea of a regionalized highway/special services department was discussed, but it was felt that this had been tried by the schools some time ago, for their IT departments, and the result had been disastrous. Why is there a stabilization account for a new fire truck, but not for highway department requests? The highway department has access to the Capital Improvements Stabilization fund as well as Chapter 90 monies. The argument for purchasing new vs. maintaining old is that parts become difficult to find, and the technology to do the repairs is not readily accessible. Concern was expressed that there is no inventory of highway equipment. Leasing of equipment came up, but MA laws passed in 2016 make it very difficult if not impossible to do so. The Board of Health budget was split up: some going to the Highway Department, and the Transfer Station came under the purview of the Selectboard. The cost of trash disposal is going up from around \$86/ton to \$100/ton. How is the town to offset the continued increases in the cost of trash disposal? The increase from 4 to 10 students at Franklin County Tech school will cost the town \$100,000. IT went up by 10% due to the new highway garage, which adds another site. Comcast is about 40% of the increase; subscription items make up the rest (malware; ransomware) with a small increase in Roy's service fees. The Finance Committee will vote on warrant article recommendations next week, as will the Selectboard. The finance committee will meet on Thursday, April 21 at the Town Office at 6 p.m. to go over the warrant. **At 7:35 p.m. Alan adjourned the joint meeting of the Selectboard and the Finance Committee.**

**Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting** None

## Town Administrator update

- This Nexamp update was forwarded to me and quotes Ethan Gyles: Our engineering lead sent the following when I inquired: "Yes, Power Electronics [our vendor who manufactures inverters] was on-site in Conway on Friday. They found one issue with an inverter; it's unclear if it's connected to the noise problem but Power Electronics is intending to return Monday for some follow-up testing. Nexamp has also been in discussions with Eversource to perform what's called a harmonic study of the Conway feeder [the power lines that run from the substation to Main Poland Road], which is another level of analysis beyond the standard impact study. Nothing finalized on that front though".
- I attended a Municipal Vulnerability Program grant planning session, and the upcoming application will remain mostly the same as last year. Since the town had to decline the grant due to the lack of a land acquisition and therefore the loss of the grant match, the plan is to proceed with the same tasks from last year, which have been restructured. If the town passes the warrant article requesting the \$65,000 in CPA funds, the town will be able to leverage \$585,000 of grant funds to carry out this important work in protecting the town from future flooding events to the best of its ability.
- I attended a webinar hosted by the FRCOG on state sources of funding; this one was on the Community One Stop program. The FRCOG also held a town administrators update on issues of concern, such as ARPA and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) application process. Lastly I attended a Department of Labor Standards webinar on the municipal budgeting process.
- I am very saddened to tell you that I learned over the weekend that our former town counsel, John (Jack) H. Fitz-Gibbon passed away suddenly on April 7th while on vacation on the Island of Bonaire.

**Select Board member  
comments/concerns**

None

**Mail**

None

**Announcements**

None

**Next Meeting**

Monday, April 25, 6:00 p.m. at the Town Hall, 5 Academy Hill Road.

**Adjourn**

At 7:45 on a motion from Phil to go into Executive Session for Reason #8: To consider or interview applicants for employment or appointment by a preliminary screening committee if the chair declares that an open meeting will have a detrimental effect in obtaining qualified applicants; provided, however, that this clause shall not apply to any meeting, including meetings of a preliminary screening committee, to consider and interview applicants who have passed a prior preliminary screening, Bob seconded, all said aye and the vote was unanimous in favor.