

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN OF CONWAY, MA
MINUTES
December 27, 2010

Meeting Open: 7:00PM

Present: Maureen Chase, Victor C. Trombley, Jim Moore, Tom Spiro

Others present:

Appointments

7:00 Conway Conserves – Sue Bridge, Nelson Shifflet

Sue mentioned that they were in attendance as private citizens and that the committee was now dormant. Nelson explained that he was a supporter of First Call for Action with regard to fuel assistance for Town residents. He said that there was less state funding for this program, and that fuel prices had risen, creating stress on funding. He said that there were 40-50 residents who had used fuel assistance in Town. He felt that at a minimum, the Board should act to help the 25 people who have already used their assistance money for the current heating season. Mr. Shifflet also noted that fuel assistance was \$1250 last year and had been cut back to \$500 this year. Most people have gone through that allotment and needed help. Chuck said that even though money was short on the state and federal levels, citizens in general should not rely on public programs. Nelson continued that there may be young children and elderly people that may be involved.

Tom explained what services First Call for Action performed and what money they had been given previously. Sue asked for the Board to agree to add \$15,000.00 to the remaining funds in the First Call account, and suggested that it could be donated on an as-needed basis. Maureen and Chuck were in agreement that this donation would be made as was Jim. Nelson asked if this donation and existing balance could be used for fuel. The Board said that they agreed with this use, but were cautious of using these funds as intended. Tom asked Sue & Nelson for their opinion on use of these funds for other projects such as home insulation, and their response was that there were other programs could be used to fund that type of project. The Board will write and send a letter to instruct First Call for Action to use the remaining balance of \$5400 of Conway account money for fuel assistance and that other funding that may be available through the Town would be researched.

7:30 Elizabeth Braccia – personnel issues (cancelled)

9:00 Randall Williams – Ambulance Dept. accounting write-offs

Randy explained that the amount he had to write off had increased, but that the amount of billings had also increased. He reminded the Board that it had voted this policy to continue as in the past at a previous Selectboard meeting when Randy first inquired continuation of these write offs after taking over the directorship of the ambulance service in 2009. Chuck said that there should be more effort at collecting monies owed especially from out of Town persons due to the expense increases faced by this service. It was noted that Town counsel gave his opinion that all persons using the ambulance should not be billed or pursued according to residence. Randy was asked to research whether the Town could change this policy to allow the department to pursue billing and sending follow-up invoices to non-residents. The Board did not vote to approve the current amount of the department write-offs pending results of this research.

meeting items

- The warrants were signed.
- Minutes for 12/20/10 were not reviewed.
- The Board spoke about options with regard to replacing the Town accountant. Tom explained that advertising had been distributed to various sources for a permanent staff member, but that the year-end reports could be done during that search. Tom presented a list of accountants that worked in western Massachusetts who knew how to use the Town's accounting software (SoftRight™) for consideration. He also pointed out that the FRCOG program has agreed to temporarily assist with end of year work for the accountant. This would not include warrant preparation. The Board agreed to accept their proposal to work for 20 hours at \$1,100.00 to complete the year-end reports, which would include completion of Schedule A and closing out FY2010.

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- The Board approved the WiredWest warrant article submitted by Bob Armstrong, specifying that the article wording was standard and used for other local towns.
- Tom noted that he had contacted DOR regarding the necessity for appointing him as acting or temporary Town accountant until a replacement could be found to prepare weekly warrants. He said that Terry Williams did not feel that this was necessary, and the Board decided not to make this appointment. Tom would be asked to continue to prepare the warrants, signed as 'prepared by the Administrative Aide'.
- Board members will go to a forum on Local Aid in Springfield on Friday, January 14th, 6 to 8:30 PM.
- Town counsel gave his opinion that the Parks, Recreation and Trails Committee can move forward to use money previously approved to build a shed for the Town ball field without the need to revise the warrant article to exclude Franklin County Tech School labor as stated in the original article.

Mail and Other Items

- Mail items were reviewed.

9:30 PM Motion to adjourn meeting was made by Chuck, seconded by Maureen, all in favor.