

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN OF CONWAY, MA
MINUTES
June 6, 2011

Meeting Open: The Select Board meeting was called to ordered at 7:00 PM

Present: Victor C. Trombley, Jim Moore, John O'Rourke

Others present: Mike Kurkulonis, David Barton, Lee Whitcomb (last half of the Planning Board meeting), Bob Baker & Ken Ouimette (for the bid opening), Kevin Parsons (for the Tax Incentive Financing Agreement), Joyce Palmer-Fortune (for the FCAT appointment)

Appointments

7:01 PM Planning Board Meeting - The Select Board Meeting was temporarily adjourned to allow Select Board members to participate in the Planning Board Meeting.

At 8:29 PM, the Select Board meeting was reconvened.

8:30 PM Bid Opening for Town Hall Boiler - Bob Baker, who is in charge of Facilities Management, reported that three (3) bid packages were sent out. At 8:30 PM, there was only one bidder in attendance. The Select Board waited until 8:40 PM to allow additional time for bidders arrive at the bid opening.

At 8:40 PM, there was still only one bidder in attendance. The Select Board proceeded with the opening of the bid for replacing the boiler in the Town Hall building. The only bid was submitted by Ouimette Plumbing and Heating for \$29,125. It was commented that there had been an estimate for over \$60,000 at an earlier point in the investigation of replacing the boiler in the Town Hall building. Because of the time pressure to use the grant funding allocated for this project and because an earlier estimate was much higher, the Select Board decided that the best course of action was to accept the sole bid for the replacement of the boiler. A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

9:00 PM Tax Incentive Financing (TIF) Agreement – Kevin Parsons, attorney for Poplar Hill Machine, Inc. and Mike Kurkulonis, President of Poplar Hill Machine, Inc., presented a proposal to take advantage of the Massachusetts Tax Increment Financing Exemption. The TIF agreement allows municipalities to provide flexible targeted incentives to stimulate job-creating development. The TIF agreement can range from 5 to 20 years and allow a tax exemption from 5 to 100%. Popular Hill Machine, Inc. reported that they employ 14 people, 3 of whom live in Conway. Poplar Hill Machine, Inc. wants to expand its operations in Conway.

The TIF agreement with the Town, as a necessary first step, will allow Poplar Hill Machine, Inc. to apply for larger tax and incentive programs at the Commonwealth level. The Town and Poplar Hill Machine, Inc. agreed to a property tax exemption based on 50% of the value added through new construction or significant improvement for a period of ten (10) years. The accompanying property tax exemption for the planned expansion for the ten (10) year period would result in an average tax exemption of about \$1,300 per year.

The Select Board expressed an interest in helping small business people in Conway and the TIF agreement with Poplar Hill Machine, Inc., which is the first agreement of its kind entered into by Conway, will encourage the location and expansion of small business in Town. A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

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9:30 PM Joyce Palmer-Fortune, Chair, Board of Directors, Frontier Community Access Television (FCAT) - Ms. Palmer-Fortune came before the Select Board to outline the program offered by FCAT whose current membership is aligned with the towns (Conway, Deerfield, Sunderland & Whately) that participate in the Frontier Regional School District. The Towns of Deerfield, Sunderland & Whately joined to form FCAT in 2004 when, at approximately the same time their Comcast cable system licenses came up for renewal and they all negotiated Public, Education & Government (PEG) access television. Conway was not involved since their Comcast cable system license renewal was out of synch with the other three towns. When the Conway Comcast cable system license renewal came up for renewal in 2010, the Broadband Committee negotiated PEG capital and support payments. Those funds are specifically limited to use for PEG programming and technology used in production of PEG programming. Now that Conway has these PEG funds it can participate as a full member of FCAT.

This presentation was to outline the benefits and costs for Conway to join FCAT. Ms. Palmer-Fortune gave the Select Board an estimate of the annual cost of joining FCAT which is very close to the support payments that Conway receives from Comcast. Ms. Palmer-Fortune will provide the Select Board with an exact payment after the next FCAT Board of Directors meeting.

In discussions after the presentation, the Select Board was generally in agreement that joining FCAT would be beneficial for the residents of Conway.

Meeting items

- The warrants were signed.
- No minutes were approved.
- A letter from Sofia Hart Libby, expressing concern about ongoing maintenance of Howland Cemetery was discussed. The Board decided to draft a response to her to address these concerns.
- The Board discussed cemetery deed records for Town owned cemeteries.
- The Board discussed the progress and final scheduled inspection of the Bardwell's Ferry Road slope failure construction project.
- The Board discussed the FRCOG-lead regional health assessment program and grant.
- John reported on the full-day New Officials Finance Forum that he attended on June 1. He reported that the forum was very informative on municipal and Commonwealth financial matters and was well worth attending.
- John reported on the full-day Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) Leadership Conference for Selectmen that he attended on June 11. He reported that the conference was very informative on many matters of municipal governance and related laws, outlined important relationships with Commonwealth agencies and programs and that meeting Selectmen from other towns and discussing common town issues was very educational. The conference was well worth attending.

Mail and Other Items

- Mail items were reviewed.
- Next meeting will be 06/27/2011

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