

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN OF CONWAY, MA
MINUTES
February 6, 2012

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: Tom Spiro, Dave Barten

Appointments

7:00 Bob Baker – 140 Academy Hill Road

The Board spoke to Bob about the site visit made at this location the previous week. Bob said that there had been a problem there where water ran from one house to the next one down the hill. Chuck said that Maria Iken had complained that the department changed the road structure such that it had created this drainage problem. Bob said that he had worked within the road right-of-way to make water move off of the road to prevent icing. Jim gave his recollection of how the water flows down the road. Bob recommended that she dig a ditch so that water can funnel into a lower ditch, helping to prevent flooding there. It was thought that water was originating from the land of Bob Coleski. Chuck recommended that a letter be sent to him stating that there was a complaint about water coming from his land, and that he should contact Bob Baker for a suggestion as to what remedy could be utilized. Marie Iken and Maureen Landis will be copied on this letter.

7:15 Jan Warner – Benefits

Jan asked the Board for a determination regarding whether Virginia Knowlton, the Town Clerk who is an elected official, be given health benefits. Jan noted that Ginny is an hourly employee who works over 20 per week and wanted to know if she was qualified for health coverage. Chuck felt that this question should be addressed by the Personnel Committee, Town counsel and then maybe the Finance Committee. Jan noted that she is both an elected official, who are entitled to receive individual coverage, and also an hourly employee who are eligible for family plans in addition to individual coverage. John asked Tom to refer this question to the Personnel Committee for recommendation.

7:30 Finance Committee – Budget season; Jim Bosman, James Cabral, Roy Cohen

James spoke about the importance of their meetings with department heads. There were some questions pertaining to the new budget book and how the line items in each individual budget had been rearranged. Tom reported that the old budget accounts had been rearranged and consolidated according to the uniform state method of accounting, and for ease of use by departments. There was a discussion about use of the free cash. Several suggestions were made, including the following:

1. Supplementing the Real Estate tax,
2. level funding or decreasing departmental operations budgets,
3. Town-wide broadband coverage,
4. repairing the swimming pool,
5. add to the stabilization funds, \$950,000.00 now. \$300,000.00 last year.
6. Create funding for Town Hall renovations, and
7. Purchase of the house at 22 Academy Hill Road.

The Board and Committee spoke about these items as possible uses of free cash. John reported that the Department of Revenue (DOR) review had voiced opposition to tax reductions, an operations function, using free cash. John reported that he had done research that would support expanding broadband Town-wide, and would contribute this information to see what it would cost to cover all houses. It was thought that CPA funds could be used to cover some of the repair costs for the swimming pool.

Roy talked about his meeting with the Highway and Fire Departments. He said that Bob had told him that the pumper truck would need to be replaced. Chuck recommended that an independent consulting company review this need so the Town could make an educated decision on this issue. It was noted that a new stabilization fund could be established for this purchase, as well as other departmental requests, such as loader and wood chipper, which Bob mentioned could be partially paid for from the Machine Earnings account. There was a brief discussion about reimbursement for costs due to Tropical Storm Irene.

Jim Bosman then noted that this year's tax increase was 2%, which coincided with the current levy limit. He said that the money the Town had received from the Massachusetts School Building Authority negated

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any increase in state funding for last year which caused a \$70,000 increase in the Town's school budget for this year. He also noted that SPED costs were budgeted to increase by \$80,000 due to one student's needs. Jim warned about reaching the levy limit and said that we may consider using free cash to balance the school budget. He noted the school's requests for a new data/telephone system and for new replacement heating boilers. There was discussion about the SPED budget. Jim then recommended that when a new ambulance director is appointed, they must create a new departmental budget.

9:00 Lee Gray – Dog Issue

Lee gave the Board a print out that had information from an online conversation on Facebook. He said that this information shed new light on Lisa Vega, his tenant, as not credible, and asked the Board to take additional action regarding his tenant's dog. Lee felt that her credibility was now more in question and that the dog is dangerous to people. The Board took Mr. Gray's information and added it to the file. The Board explained that there was not much else they could do at this point. Chuck said that the Board made a decision which it will stand and could only act if there was a breach of the order.

Meeting items

- No warrants were signed.
- The minutes for 1/30/12 were approved as revised.
- The Board and Finance Committee agreed to extend the school loan for 5-10 years, but John asked for specific information from the Treasurer so that they would know exactly what each financial option represented.
- Tom suggested that a new line item could be inserted into the budget that set aside money for matching grants. The Board and Finance Committee agreed not to add this line.
- The Board approved Malcolm Corse to the CPC to the as the Historical Commission's representative.
- Tom was asked to research the limits for annual stabilization deposits and free cash spending. John wanted to see the final cherry sheet numbers to determine specific amounts for Conway. Tom will ask Joyce for this information.

Mail and Other Items

- Mail items were reviewed.

Next meeting will be 2/13/2012

9:45 PM Motion to adjourn meeting was made by Chuck, seconded by Jim, all in favor.