

**Minutes of Meeting
CONWAY BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

Wednesday, August 27, 2008

The Selectmen's Meeting convened at 4:04 p.m. in the Meeting Room of Conway Town Hall with the following present: Selectmen Larry Martin (Chair), C. David Weathers, Mark Hounsell, Howard C. Dickinson and Robert Drinkhall; Town Manager, Earl W. Sires; and Recording Secretary, Karen Hallowell

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Martin led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

The Board reviewed and signed various documents contained in the signature folder.

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

The Board reviewed and signed the manifest dated August 27, 2008.

BUDGET WORKSHOP

Mr. Sires advised this workshop was scheduled to give an update on the 2008 budget and to talk about policy for preparing for the 2009 budget.

Finance Director, Lucy Philbrick, reviewed the 2008 budget with the Board and advised there is 36% remaining, which is a little on the short side. Mr. Sires and Ms. Philbrick explained that trees aren't going to be worked on this year, a parks maintenance employee will be dropped early this year, highway department won't be doing curbing, paving projects will be put on hold and other things. Ms. Philbrick advised we will just have to watch everything we spend. Mr. Sires added we are prioritizing and we have put things on hold until the end of the year to see how much money we will have left.

Mr. Sires next advised they were going to recommend items such as the Turkey trot etc of the Recreation Department be canceled; however, a public hearing will be held for unanticipated revenue in the near future for revenue donated by the Red Jacket in the amount of \$2,000 and that money could be used for this purpose. The Board was okay with this and this money will be presented to the Board at the next meeting.

Mr. Sires next advised that he has also sent a memo to Police Chief Wagner and Librarian Margaret Marschner regarding expenditures through the end of the year. Mr. Sires advised that he has met with the Police Chief already and will be meeting with the Library soon on same. Mr. Sires assured the Board the Town is paying attention and actively managing the budget and will keep the Board posted on same.

There was next a brief discussion regarding timing and when to buy oil.

Mr. Sires next reviewed the estimated cost of living budget for 2009, given certain assumptions about the cost of health insurance and other items. It was estimated that the cost of living budget would increase by 5-6 %. Mr. Sires went on to say that since some portions of the budget can't be reduced like long term debt payment, etc., and since some items are going to increase, the increase in some items is beyond our control, and in order to have a zero increase in the operating budget, many areas of the budget would actually have to be decreased by 7-10 % from 08 levels. Mr. Hounsell asked about the NH Retirement system mandate. Mr. Sires advised this is 9% and this has been added into the figures. The Board discussed the budget scenario. Mr. Sires also briefly discussed the default budget.

Mr. Hounsell stated he feels that the School Board should go through a similar exercise as this Board. Mr. Hounsell further added he feels there should be a zero budget increase. Mr. Martin stated he doesn't think it is appropriate and feels it should be left to the voters to decide at Town meeting, at the deliberative portion on the floor and at the polls.

Mr. Dickinson moved, seconded by Mr. Drinkhall, to approach the Selectmen's budget from the zero based budget approach. Mr. Sires clarified –zero based budget approach and then build. Mr. Dickinson replied in the affirmative. The Board all agreed that Mr. Sires will bring the proposed budget which brings cost of living approaches, etc and then the Board will go through each program/department, etc (why do we do each) and then decide whether to do it or not. Mr. Drinkhall feels we should give notice to the school on this as well. There was further discussion. Mr. Weathers clarified that if Mr. Dickinson's motion passes, then budgets brought forward would only reflect cost of living and then be tweaked. The overall budget and program will be reviewed with each department head. Mr. Dickinson replied in the affirmative. Mr. Weathers next stated that we can take this approach but unless the school is on board as well it won't make a difference on tax bills. Mr. Dickinson stated we still need to take care of our part and set an example. **The motion carried 5-0-0.**

The Board next reviewed the motion on the table from 8/5/08 as follows: Mr. Drinkhall moved, seconded by Mr. Hounsell, that the bottom line budget be at zero percent and that we request the school do the same. **Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Drinkhall, to remove the motion from the table. The motion carried unanimously.** Mr. Dickinson asked for clarification on the motion of zero percent increase. Mr. Drinkhall explained where he felt cuts could be made, i.e. reduction in plowing, salt & sand, etc. There was further discussion. Mr. Drinkhall stated he could amend the motion to state that the bottom line goal be at zero percent. The Board mulled this wording over. The Board next suggested dividing the question. **Mr. Hounsell moved to divide the questions. The chair ruled in favor of dividing the question.** The Board proceeded to vote on the latter part of the motion: **Motion that the school do the same. The motion carried 5-0-0.** The Board agreed a letter would be written from the Town to the School on this matter. **Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Weathers, to table the first part of the motion.** There was discussion as to why or why not to table the motion. **A vote to table was taken and the motion failed 3-2-0, with Messrs. Dickinson and Hounsell in favor and Messrs. Drinkhall, Weathers, and Martin voting in the negative.** Mr. Hounsell asked if a motion to reconsider this was at our next meeting was needed. The majority of the Board felt this was not necessary.

OTHER

Meeting Schedule – The Board discussed the fact that the next meeting day, September 9, 2008, falls on Election Day. The Chair suggested holding the meeting either Monday, Wednesday, or Thursday of that week. After discussion, the date of Thursday, September 11, 2008 was set for the next Board of Selectmen meeting.

Legislative Policy Positions – Mr. Dickinson requested permission to send a memo to State Representatives and others asking for support of the proposed policy positions. The Board approved Mr. Dickinson sending the memo asking for support of the policy positions and also supported this be e-mailed where possible to save postage costs.

Valley Vision – Mr. Hounsell reported that Valley Vision Station Manager, Doug Poore, resigned. He has done an outstanding job and we appreciate the work he has done. Mr. Hounsell next advised that Valley Vision has been proactive in making adjustments in line with our current Memorandum of Understanding.

Addiction Treatment Solutions Program – Mr. Dickinson reported on a letter received from Dr. Cunningham regarding the Addiction Treatment Solutions program being set up and advised they are having a fundraiser on October 2.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND MEDIA QUESTIONS

Casey Conley of the Conway Daily Sun questioned the 9.8% increase discussed. Mr. Sires reviewed this was just an exercise. Mr. Conley further questioned cutting personnel. Board members stated this was a premature discussion.

ADJOURN

At 5:41 p.m., Mr. Weathers moved, seconded by Mr. Drinkhall, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen J. Hallowell
Executive Secretary