

**Minutes of Meeting
CONWAY BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

November 4, 2010

The Selectmen's Meeting convened at 9:10 a.m. in the Meeting Room of Conway Town Hall with the following present: Selectmen, Larry Martin (Chair), C. David Weathers, Howard C. Dickinson and Bob Drinkhall; Town Manager, Earl W. Sires; and Recording Secretary, Karen Hallowell

Michael DiGregorio was not present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Weathers moved, seconded by Mr. Drinkhall to accept the agenda as presented. The motion carried 4-0-0.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

DISCUSSION OF 2011 BUDGET WITH POLICE COMMISSION

Police Commissioners, Theresa Kennett, David Doherty and Rodney King, Police Chief, Edward Wagner, and Police Lieutenant, Chirs Perley, were present for discussion. Also present was Finance Director, Lucy Philbrick.

Chief Wagner advised the proposed 2011 Police Department budget includes the addition of 3 new officers. He has heard that the Board of Selectmen have been asking –do we really need three new officers. Chief Wagner stated he feels the appropriate question is tell me why you need the additional police officers. He would like the Board to hear why and then make a decision.

Lt. Perley and Chief Wagner distributed information to the Board including a list of Towns Listed by 2008 Offense Totals, a NIBRS Based Policy Activity Analysis, the Conway Police Department study entitled "Workforce for the Future, lists entitled "Activity Analysis and Projections for 2010", "Comparative Activity Analysis 2009 and 2010" and "Comparative Activity Analysis 2008 and 2010", and, also, a lists of Revenue Generated by the Conway Police Department 2009 & 2010 and reviewed same with the Board. (Copies attached). The Chief and the Lieutenant reviewed population figures, tourism, the number of police officers and crime. The Police reviewed that Conway is the 13th busiest town in the State of New Hampshire. The Police advised they are here to ask for three more officers and the need is the interest of public safety.

Mr. Martin questioned if this need puts more stress on the people working now at the police department. Commissioner Kennett advised it is an impact on how safe the police officers are. This is a great concern for the Police Commission and this is also a concern for the police officers. Ms. Kennett reviewed that the officers are put in situations and they respond alone in situations. This is because of the size of the workforce that they respond alone.

Chief Wagner next reviewed the calls for service, arrests, etc. The Chief reviewed comparisons with years past and, also, projections for the future. The Chief advised they are doing more with less.

Mr. Drinkhall asked about the full time prosecutor that was hired by the police department. Lt. Perley advised this used to be an officer position and they have now hired a prosecutor. Mr. Drinkhall stated the police department recently lost a lieutenant and questioned if they plan on hiring another. Chief Wagner advised the need for officers answering calls is greater than the need for brass. They do plan on replacing a lieutenant some time in the future. Mr. Drinkhall questioned if three officers would cover a shift. Chief Wagner advised they would add one officer to each shift. The Chief further explained that the shifts vary i.e. Monday versus a Friday evening. If they had additional officers they would add one to each. Mr. Weathers reviewed that a few years ago the police made a presentation that they wanted to add officers and now you are trying to get heavier coverage during peak times. He needs to understand this as it seems variable. Chief Wagner explained during 3 shifts they have a Sergeant, Corporal and two patrolmen on each. Those people have to fill Monday through Sunday day shifts for seven days and everyone works on Friday. Very often they only have two people on the road. Mr. Weathers stated that as little as three years ago you were saying you wanted to have three people on. Chief Wagner stated they can't always get that coverage. The Lieutenant added he does not think the minimum goal should be three, but minimum staffing is two. The best case scenario would be four with a supervisor. They need the officers for work and there is a huge amount of work now.

Mr. Martin stated this must affect the functionality of the police officers in place now. Mr. Martin next asked about conviction rates and how it affects same. Lt. Perley stated they are making arrests; however, is everyone getting arrested – no. It really affects the department in the area of arrests. For instance on the night they had two fatal accidents at the same time it effects coverage in other areas because they can't do as much with fewer people. With regard to conviction rate –this would be hard to figure. What is happening is reports are not getting done fast enough. The stack up of work is getting heavy. They should be able to get work out in five days and this cant always be done.

Mr. Martin stated that this Board is struggling with our budget and we are cutting back on streetlights, etc. We are also looking at staffing and positions internally here. Mr. Martin next stated he felt the Police made a wonderful presentation and he does see the need. However, after this past Tuesday's elections, people went to the polls because they want spending cuts. Mr. Martin questioned if we can work this so that the impact isn't so intense. Ms. Kennett stated that she understands the position the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager are in –but they would like to see a united front. She agrees that three is a lot for people to factor now. Partially, this is because they are unaware of the Police asking in years past. Ms. Kennett went on to add that in knowing that three in one year is a lot, they are here to find out how many the Board can support. If we were to dilute the additions over a year or two, could you in spirit say you would be in favor of supporting some this year and some next year. Also, they would like the people to know and understand the ramifications of not having adequate coverage. They would also like people to understand that if they don't get additional officers this year, the need won't go away.

Mr. Sires next stated that preparing the budget is a long process. Mr. Sires next reviewed for the viewing public how the budget is prepared. How the town staff, library and police department prepare a proposed budget that goes to the Board of Selectmen to work and then the Board of Selectmen forward a proposed budget on to the Budget Committee and then it will go to Town Meeting. Mr. Sires next stated we are just starting to work this process at this point. Mr. Sires next stated that he could not support putting three officers in the operating budget. Mr. Sires stated he thought it would be a better approach to put this out there as a warrant article and then get the information out there to the public regarding same. Mr. Sires next explained that he has been tasked by the Board of Selectmen to present a budget that is status quo. Mr. Sires added he thinks it makes sense to go with a warrant article as we can present the entire picture to the voters. Mr. Sires next reviewed that revenues are down and we are getting less from rooms and meals. Also, there is no guarantee that we will receive rooms and meals tax next year and then somewhere during budget process we may find out that the \$435,000 is not available from rooms and meals.

Ms. Kennett stated she felt to put two of the three officers on a warrant article makes sense. Ms. Kennett suggested putting one officer in the budget and the other two on a warrant article.

Mr. Drinkhall questioned if more officers mean they will need more vehicles. Chief Wagner advised they would not need more vehicles.

Mr. Martin stated he is not sure he agrees with Mr. Sires regarding putting all three officers on the warrant. He is thinking putting one in the budget and if voters don't want it there they can pick it out at Town Meeting. Mr. Martin next asked about health costs, etc. The Chief reviewed that with three new officers for half a year, medical benefits and pay raises, they would be up \$214,001. If they took two out of the budget it would be up around \$140,000.

Mr. Dickinson questioned how much thought has been given by the Commissioners regarding the idea of one officer in the budget and two in a warrant article. Commissioner Doherty advised the Police Commissioners need to sit down and discuss this suggestion.

Mr. Martin suggested a straw vote of the Board on the idea of one new officer in the budget and two officers in a warrant article.

The Chief stated that he never came to this Board and asked for something that he does not absolutely need and never will. We are in a time and place that Conway is not the same Conway as it was and it will only get worse – and it will also get worse for the Police Department. The Chief further added that he understands it is not a good year, but it also wasn't back in the 1990's either. They are doing more work and need more people. He would like to come to an agreement that is good for all.

Mr. Martin stated he feels that we should put one officer in the budget and two on a warrant article. Mr. Martin again suggested a straw poll and then let the Commissioners go and discuss same. Mr. Martin added that with granting one in the budget and two on the warrant, if they don't get the two, they can come back to the Board next year and make another request.

Mr. Drinkhall stated that he feels the consensus of this Board is one officer in the budget and two in a warrant article. Mr. Dickinson stated he agreed. Mr. Weathers also stated one in the budget and two in a warrant article and that he would like to see more figures. He would like to sit down with someone and go over the figures. Mr. Martin also agreed with one officer in the budget and two officers on warrant. Mr. Martin next asked that the Police Commissioners to have discussion on this matter to see how they feel about this option.

Mr. Martin next read an e-mail from Selectmen, Michael DiGregorio, regarding this matter stating he would like to see a warrant article. (A copy of the e-mail is attached hereto).

Mr. Martin next stated the next step is for the Police to please bring their budget back after having further discussion and we will go from there.

Ms. Kennett thanked the Board of Selectmen for having this discussion today.

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF TAX ABATEMENT FOR MAP/LOT 262-83.203

Tax Assessor, Tom Holmes, joined the meeting. Mr. Holmes explained the property owner of Map/Lot 262.83.203 is an elderly woman that qualifies for the abatement. Mr. Holmes advised this elderly person forgot to apply and this application is past the deadline. Mr. Holmes asked the Board to look at this as accident, mistake or misfortune. Mr. Weathers questioned if there is any way to prevent this from happening again in the future. Mr. Holmes advised his office called and sent letters however the application was not timely filed. **Mr. Drinkhall moved, seconded by Mr. Dickinson, to grant the tax abatement. The motion carried 4-0-0.**

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Sires reviewed that he had recognized Town Manager, Earl Sires, six months late for his 10 years of service at a recent meeting. Mr. Martin stated that Karen Hallowell had also reached 10 years of service in August of 2010. Mr. Martin stated he had no complaints and a great job done.

Mr. Martin reviewed that the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for November 9, 2010.

Mr. Martin next commented that Valley Vision has been doing a great job also. He had made a comment at a previous meeting about a particular program but he did not mean they weren't doing a good job.

NON PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3:II(E)/LITIGATION MATTER(S)

At 10:13 a.m., **Mr. Drinkhall moved, seconded by Mr. Weathers, to go into non public session under RSA 91-A:3II(e) to discuss litigation matters.** Included in the non public session was Town Manager, Earl Sires, Tax Assessor, Tom Holmes, and Recording Secretary, Karen Hallowell. **The motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.**

The Board returned to public session at 10:20 pm. The minutes of the non public meeting were not sealed.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Dickinson stated that he had a discussion with someone concerning the Eaton recreation matter. The point of this person was that they felt it was a big difference between using the formula for the dump and the recreation center. Everyone takes trash to the dump but not everyone has children. Mr. Martin pointed out it is the same with the school not everyone has children but pays. Mr. Martin also pointed out that Conway families pay for the recreation center too whether they have children or not. Mr. Martin further explained that Eaton would not be able to do this program on their own. Mr. Sires stated that Eaton should be promoting this as their program. The Town of Conway is also going to change our website to say it is a program of Albany, Conway and Eaton.

ADJOURN

At 10:22 p.m., the meeting adjourned at the call of the Chair, without objection.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen J. Hallowell
Executive Secretary