

**Minutes of Meeting
CONWAY BOARD OF SELECTMEN
December 14, 2021**

The Selectmen's Meeting convened at 4:00 pm in the Meeting Room at Town Hall with the following present: C. David Weathers, Mary Carey Seavey, Carl Thibodeau, John Colbath, Steven Porter, Town Manager Thomas Holmes, and Executive Secretary, Krista Day.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Weathers led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Weathers stated that they would be adding item 4a. Request for Increase in Tipping Fee for Drywall.

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Thibodeau, to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

REQUEST FROM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOR MASK BANNER (PG. 3)

Mr. Holmes explained that Janice Crawford had contacted him requesting permission to put the banner requesting that people wear masks in Town back in Schouler Park.

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Porter, to allow the Chamber of Commerce to put the Mask banner up in Schouler Park and the Board will reevaluate in four months. The motion carried unanimously.

Emergency Management Director and Fire Chief of Conway, Stephen Solomon appeared before the Board to give an update on the status of COVID-19 in the community.

Chief Solomon explained that the Mount Washington Valley is currently in the middle of a surge.

He noted that the local positivity rate was 13.9% which is higher than the State as a whole.

Chief explained that Memorial Hospital was operating above capacity and emphasized that all hospitals in the east are at or above capacity.

In terms of mitigation measures, Chief wanted to acknowledge those people who have chosen to get vaccinated, but said that he believes it should not be a mandate.

However, he stated that 85% of the COVID-19 patients who are currently in Memorial Hospital are unvaccinated.

Chief Solomon suggested changing the language on the sign at Town Hall to “Please Mask Up for Your Safety and Others”.

He explained that he does not believe a mandate will be fair to those who work in Town Hall and would have to enforce it.

Chief emphasized the important of staying home when you are sick and following the isolation and quarantine guidelines.

REQUEST FOR INCREASE IN TIPPING FEE FOR DRYWALL

Andrew Smith, Public Works Director, explained that he would like the Board to consider increasing the tipping fees for drywall at the Transfer Station.

He explained that the company that takes the drywall has increased their prices, therefore the Town should increase their tipping fee in order to cover the cost of trucking.

Currently, the tipping fee is \$125 a ton.

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Ms. Seavey, to increase the tipping fee for drywall to \$125 a ton. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Smith reviewed the hours at the Transfer Station as 7:00 am – 3:00 pm on Tuesday-Saturday, and 8:00 am – 12:00 pm on Sundays.

He explained that they are seeing increased traffic backup near closing time and recommend that the public arrive with ample time to be in the Transfer Station prior to closing.

DISCUSSION OF BUDGET COMMITTEE QUESTIONS (PG. 4)

Mr. Holmes noted that the Board had in their packets the Town's answers to the questions posed by the Budget Committee.

The Board commended Mr. Holmes for his work on these.

Mr. Holmes noted that Mr. Eastman and Ms. Golding also contributed.

DISCUSSION OF CONSERVATION COMMISSION BUDGET (PG. 25)

Chairman of the Conservation Commission, Rob Adair, appeared before the Board to present his budget proposal.

He explained that they were requesting \$1,200 more this year due to work planned on the Marshall Property to blaze and paint boundary lines and improvements to the rec trail systems.

VOTE ON BUDGET AND WARRANT ARTICLES

a. Budget (\$12,788,868) (pg. 25)

Mr. Holmes noted that they needed to decide whether to keep the funds in the proposed budget to complete an early revaluation.

Mr. Porter moved, seconded by Mr. Colbath, to keep the funds in the proposed 2022 Operating Budget for a revaluation in 2022.

Mr. Porter explained that he would rather give it another year in order to get a better idea of what the housing market is doing.

It was stated that perhaps waiting until 2023 to complete an early revaluation would be a better option.

Mr. Colbath stated that there are too many variables and he would be in favor of waiting another year.

The motion failed (1-4-0) with Mr. Thibodeau in the affirmative.

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Thibodeau, to recommend the 2022 Operating Budget of \$12,712,868. The motion carried unanimously.

b. CRF Warrant Articles

- i. CRF for Infrastructure Reconstruction (\$350,000) (pg. 26)
- ii. CRF for Highway Equipment Replacement (\$350,000) (pg. 27)
- iii. CRF for Solid Waste Equipment Replacement (\$225,000) (pg. 28)
- iv. CRF for Landfill Expansion (\$100,000) (pg. 29)
- v. CRF for Maintenance of Town Buildings and Facilities (\$250,000) (pg. 30)
- vi. CRF for Maintenance of Town Buildings and Facilities Leased by the Town (\$150,000) (pg. 31)
- vii. CRF for Parks Department Vehicles and Equipment Replacement (\$35,000) (pg. 32)
- viii. CRF for Police Department Vehicles (\$70,000) (pg. 33)
- ix. Expendable Trust Fund for Public Educational Government Cable Television (\$112,000) (pg. 34)

Mr. Holmes noted that they had added a line item in the CRF for Maintenance of Leased Buildings and Facilities for a security system.

He noted that they did not increase the request for the CRF, but that they planned to spend \$30,000 that was already in the account.

He explained that there had been a few incidents such as someone trying to stay in the building overnight by hiding in the front stairwell and that it was time to look into make this building more secure.

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Porter, to recommend that the following be placed on the warrant:

(Special – Not included in Budget Appropriation Article #) To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$350,000) to be placed in the CAPITAL RESERVE FUND FOR INFRASTRUCTURE RECONSTRUCTION to be used according to the purposes for which the fund was established.

(Special – Not included in Budget Appropriation Article #) To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$350,000) to be placed in the CAPITAL RESERVE FUND FOR HIGHWAY EQUIPMENT to be used according to the purposes for which the fund was established.

(Special – Not included in Budget Appropriation Article #) To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Twenty Five Thousand (\$225,000) to be placed in the CAPITAL RESERVE FUND FOR SOLID WASTE EQUIPMENT to be used according to the purposes for which the fund was established.

(Special – Not included in Budget Appropriation Article #) To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) to be placed in the CAPITAL RESERVE FUND FOR LANDFILL EXPANSION to be used according to the purposes for which the fund was established.

(Special – Not included in Budget Appropriation Article #) To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000) to be placed in the CAPITAL RESERVE FUND FOR MAINTENANCE OF TOWN BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES to be used according to the purposes for which the fund was established.

(Special – Not included in Budget Appropriation Article #7) To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Fifty Five Thousand Dollars (\$150,000) to be placed in the CAPITAL RESERVE FUND FOR MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES LEASED BY THE TOWN to be used according to the purposes for which the fund was established.

(Special - not included in Budget Appropriation Article #). To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Five Thousand Dollars (\$35,000) to

be placed in the CAPITAL RESERVE FUND FOR PARKS DEPARTMENT VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT to be used according to the purposes for which the fund was established.

(Special - not included in Budget Appropriation Article #). To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Seventy Thousand Dollars (\$70,000) to contribute to the CAPITAL RESERVE FUND FOR POLICE VEHICLES to be used according to the purposes for which the fund was established.

(Special - not included in Budget Appropriation Article #). To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Twelve Thousand Dollars (\$112,000) from the annual cable television franchise fees received to add to the PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL / GOVERNMENT CABLE TELEVISION (PEG) TRUST FUND, to support the operations and equipment needs of Public Education and Government broadcasting services. No funds shall be raised by local property taxes to support this warrant article.

The motion carried unanimously.

- c. Other Selectmen's Warrant Articles (pg. 14)
 - i. ESAA (\$10,000)

Mr. Porter moved, seconded by Ms. Seavey, to recommend that the following be placed on the warrant:

(Special – Not included in Budget Appropriation Article #) To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) for the support of EASTERN SLOPE REGIONAL AIRPORT.

The motion carried unanimously.

- ii. Disabled Tax Exemption

Mr. Porter moved, seconded by Mr. Colbath, to recommend that the following be placed on the warrant:

(Non-Monetary) Shall the town MODIFY the provisions of RSA 72:37-b, Exemption for the Disabled from property tax, based on assessed value for qualified taxpayers to be \$75,000. To qualify the person must have been a New Hampshire resident for at least 5 years, own the real estate individually or jointly, or if the real estate is owned by such person's spouse, they must have been married for at least 5 consecutive years. In addition, the taxpayer must have a net income of not more than \$22,000 if single or if married, a combined net income of not more than \$28,000, and own net assets not in excess of \$50,000 excluding the value of the person's residence.

The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF RECEIPTS

The receipts were available for review.

SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

- a. Request to the Trustees of the Trust for \$186,981.78 from the Capital Reserve Fund for Maintenance of Leased Town Buildings and Facilities.
- b. Request to the Trustees of the Trust for \$157,798.76 from the Capital Reserve Fund for Maintenance of Town Buildings and Facilities.
- c. Request to the Trustees of the Trust for \$293,107.97 from the Capital Reserve Fund for Solid Waste Equipment
- d. Request to the Trustees of the Trust for \$286,284.52 from the Capital Reserve Fund for Highway Equipment.
- e. Request to the Trustees of the Trust for \$572,011.81 from the Capital Reserve Fund for Infrastructure Reconstruction.
- f. Request to the Trustees of the Trust for \$112,684.76 from the Capital Reserve Fund for Public Educational-Government Cable Television Trust Fund
- g. Request to the Trustees of the Trust for \$29,641.00 from the Capital Reserve Fund for Police Vehicles
- h. Abatement of Taxes on Map/Lot 998-124
- i. Abatement of Taxes on Map/Lot 998-126
- j. Abatement of Taxes on Map/Lot 250-043
- k. Abatement of Taxes on Map/Lot 250-083
- l. Abatement of Taxes on Map/Lot 263-66
- m. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber on Map/Lot 283-25

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Ms. Seavey, to sign the documents listed above in a through m. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

- a. AP Manifest dated 12/16/2021
- b. Payroll dated 12/16/2021

It was stated that there was currently an issue with the software so the AP Manifest would need to be signed out of session.

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Thibodeau, to sign the and Payroll dated 12/16/2021. The motion carried unanimously.

RATIFICATION OF DOCUMENTS SIGNED OUT OF SESSION

(none)

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATION(S)\

(none)

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

- a. Regular and Non-Public Minutes from 12/7/2021

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Thibodeau, to adopt the regular and non-public minutes from 12/7/2021 as written. The motion carried unanimously.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Mr. Holmes noted that they had two candidates scheduled for an interview for the custodian position.

He added that if those two candidates do not work out, he would like some direction from the Board regarding what the new hourly rate should be so he can advertise again.

Ms. Seavey moved, seconded by Mr. Colbath to raise the proposed hourly raise for the custodian position to \$18 an hour. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Holmes stated that NHMA is only going to be sending out 10 hard copies of the Town and Country Magazine.

He would like some volunteers to receive it digitally instead.

Mr. Thibodeau, Mr. Colbath and Mr. Porter agreed to receive it digitally.

Mr. Holmes noted that he had received an estimate for the new sound board at the Marshall Gymnasium right before the meeting.

The current quote totaled \$16,194.10.

It was noted that Ms. Seavey would like to have some lapel microphones included.

Mr. Holmes will get that information for the next meeting and they can decide whether to move forward with spending the ARPA funds for this.

Mr. Holmes noted that the meeting regarding the Scenic Vista Bathrooms had happened earlier in the day.

He noted that the State is currently paying their Union help at the Scenic Vista \$12.68 an hour and cannot find enough help to be open 7 days a week.

Mr. Holmes added that Janice Crawford had some good ideas and the State is going to get back to the Town on potential solutions.

They did however agree to add another porta-potty at the Scenic Vista for now.

BOARD REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Mr. Thibodeau gave the November Activity Report for the ESAA.

He noted that Air New England Magazine had featured the ESAA.

Mr. Thibodeau stated that they would be having a Holiday Fly In event at the airport on December 18, 2021.

Ms. Seavey explained that she was concerned that the Village of Conway has no holiday lights this year.

She explained that when you enter Conway, it is in darkness.

She added that Chief Solomon was going to look into the lighting of the tree at the entrance to the Village and that Mr. Thibodeau was still looking into wreaths.

Mr. Colbath noted that Conway Recreation had done a great job on their light display as well as the Veterans Memorial.

Mr. Colbath stated that the Budget Committee and ZBA would be meeting Wednesday, December 15, 2021.

Mr. Porter stated that the Planning Board had met the previous week to discuss both the proposed TD Bank Building for the corner of Route 16 and 302 and also for the Valley Springs Car Wash Proposal.

Mr. Porter added that the next Planning Board meeting would be on January 13, 2022 and would be held at 6:00 pm in the Marshall Gymnasium due to the large crowd expected to attend.

Mr. Weathers opened the discussion back up regarding the date for the Fourth of July Festivities in 2022.

The Board had previously voted to hold the fireworks and entertainment on July 2, 2022.

Mr. Eastman stated that he has not signed a contract yet, but believes that they would be fine with holding the festivities either July 2nd or July 4th.

Mr. Porter stated he would like to move it back to July 4th.

Ms. Seavey agreed that she would change it back to the 4th if that was the consensus.

Jim LeFebvre noted that the American Legion would like to see the event held on July 4th.

Mr. Porter moved, seconded by Mr. Colbath, to hold the 4th of July Celebration for 2022 on July 4, 2022. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND MEDIA QUESTIONS

Tom Eastman from the Conway Daily Sun appeared on behalf of Daymond Steer.

Mr. Eastman asked how the Board felt about the Budget Committee's questions for the Town and if they felt the line of questions was going beyond the scope of their duties.

Mr. Colbath stated that as the Selectmen Representative to the Budget Committee, he did feel that they often do go beyond the scope of their duties, but also, the information gathered is information that the public in general is wondering about.

Mr. Thibodeau wanted to make it clear that his initial decision to hold the 4th of July Celebration on July 2, 2022 had nothing to do with catering to the tourists.

The consensus of the Board was the same.

ADJOURN

At 5:18 pm, Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Ms. Seavey, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Krista Day
Executive Secretary