

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN OF CONWAY, MA
MINUTES
January 14, 2008

Meeting Open: 7:30

Present: Christina Conklin, Jack Lochhead, Joe Strzegowski, Tom Spiro - AA
Finance Committee : Roy Cohen, Jim Bosman, Tanya Campbell, Amy-Louise Pfeffer, John Pitzi

Appointments

7:30 Assessors Hearing – Lee Totman, Lee Whitcomb

Asked for a \$2000 increase or 5 percent overall. This was due to an increase in salary for clerical staff. Office supplies and dues also increased while most other line items remained the same. Some salary will be for training of a new Board member to replace Lee Totman. Malcolm Course will be running for the opening but would not be the ideal candidate as he is away for 2.5 months per year. Jim asked why there was a discrepancy per year in salary from regular years vs revaluation years. IT was suggested that there would be extra monies for a revaluation year if an article would be added for that work. Amy asked what unclassified expenses were for the Zoning Board of Appeals. Lee Whitcomb noted that is was a combination of things including travel, advertising and dues.

8:00 Historical Commission – no show due to illness.
Their written request was level funding, which was approved.

Finance Committee Issues – There was a discussion of why there is so much free cash and why the number was submitted so late. Joe noted that in the past, there was no accountant to gather this information in a timely manner.

Roy noted that there was less procedural process that Conway followed in terms of official transparency. The discussion referred to the annual wage adjustment. Amy-Louise asked if there was an established policy then the process, would that not seem as arbitrary as it does now. Joe said that in the past there was concern that items needed to be level funding but recently this has not been the case as much. It was suggested that there needed to be a formula to establish a wage increases. The Selectboard did not think this was a solution as no specific formula has proved to be successful. Christina asked the Committee to make their own recommendation regarding a formula that will make sense.

8:40 Interview for Highway Job - Adam Baker

Christina asked if there should be a motion to hire Adam. One was made by Joe, pending attainment of his CDL license and passage of a DOT physical within six months from now. Jack seconded, all in favor.

9:00 Board of Health – Dave Chichester, Liz Braccia, Bill McLoughlin, Carl Nelke.

Dave noted that last year's budget included more staff expense due to expected waste materials in the steam. He now feels that there should be more oversight of public usage at the transfer station and more staff hours to cover attendance at all times.

Items that fell under last year's estimates were bulky waste by \$4,000, other services that cover many items, such as electronic and refrigerant disposal, and scrap metal. John asked why this line item was always over budgeted by almost double the year-end actuals. Dave's response was that the Board wanted to cover expenses mandated by the State. Dave noted that they get credit from the FCSWD for recyclables, which goes into an escrow account. Recyclable and bulk items are paid for by this account. He noted that the District will be renegotiating many contracts this year which may mean an increased cost of about 15% as per the FCSWD.

The Board was pressed as to why there seemed to be a history of an excess amount of \$20,000 in their budget. Jim mentioned that this was part of last year's budget hearing and that there was no foreseeable need for this excess.

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Dave brought up the notion that Conway pays its transfer station attendants less than 4 out of 6 other regional towns and that he was wondering if the Selectboard was considering a wage study to increase wages in the near future. Joe said that the Selectboard had not considered this yet but would take it under advisement. Dave recommended the salary be raised to \$12.00 per hour across the board.

Joe noted that the credit for recyclables did not offset the trucking fees for those materials. He asked if there was any way to make it more economical and Dave's answer was to institute the Pay-As-You-Throw program. Jack suggested that we not recycle any materials at all as an answer to this problem. There were various questions pertaining to diminishing the line item of \$25,000 for trucking of recyclables. Joe suggested to Dave that he challenge the FCSWD to come up with an answer to this question.

Jim asked if there is a desire to have large amounts of free cash or to slim budgets down to reduce free cash.

Joe then asked if the Finance Committee was in favor of inserting a salary adjustment line item in this year's budget for transfer station workers.

Dave noted that the Board of Health generates monies from fees and then has additional expenses that tend to create a zero net gain.

Dave also noted that they are in need of a snow plow for the transfer station to do additional finish work in excess of what the town equipment does, and so they purchased a snow blower.

10:00 Liz Braccia – Unemployment for Russ Mizula

She recommended that the reasons for discharge should be as accurate as possible. This would include a statement that notes misconduct.

Meeting Items

- approved minutes of 1/7/07
- Bob was alerted to two complaints about plowing. One at Randy Williams' house and one at 694 S. Shirkshire Road. Bob will look into each.
- Bob also noted that he was driving up route 116 when he was stopped by Russ Mizula who complained to Bob and also forcefully told him to plow Bond Road.
- The Clerk's room will be painted beginning on May 1, 2008.
- Jack asked if we should extend the contract period for Lashway Logging, who will not be done by the deadline date on March 26th. Jack will ask for a deposit if an extension is granted or ask for their proposal.
- Jack also noted that Natural Heritage will be holding a meeting at the Fournier logging operation. He said that the forester asked to change the path of a snowmobile trail to protect an endangered species. Several entities will be there.
- Tom reported on storage space for town equipment
- Tom gave an update on plans for a shared EMD.
- Tom noted that disparity in compensation for work comparing elected and appointed town volunteer groups. The Board took this information under advisement.

Mail and Other Items

- other mail items as per agenda

10:05 PM Motion to adjourn by Jack, 2nd by Christina, all in favor.