

**Minutes of Meeting
CONWAY BOARD OF SELECTMEN
November 28, 2023**

The Selectmen's Meeting convened at 4:00 pm at Town Hall with the following present: Mary Carey Seavey, Carl Thibodeau, John Colbath, Steve Porter, Ryan Shepard, Town Manager John Eastman and Executive Assistant Krista Day.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Seavey led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Seavey noted that there was one addition.

9a. Nomination to Saco/Swift River Advisory Committee

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

PUBLIC HEARING TO ACCEPT AND DESIGNATE A SPECIFIC PURPOSE FOR THE USE
OF THE FOLLOWING UNANTICIPATED REVENUE:

- a. \$70,440.88 from the State of New Hampshire for the Highway Block Grant

Ms. Seavey opened the public hearing at 4:02 pm.

Mr. Smith noted that this was the additional Highway Block Grant money that needed to be accepted as it was unanticipated.

He noted that in the past they had used it to offset some paving costs.

There were no public comments.

Ms. Seavey closed the public hearing at 4:04 pm.

CONSIDERATION OF UNANTICIPATED REVENUE MORE THAN \$10,000/RSA 31:95-B III (A)

- a. \$70,440.88 from the State of New Hampshire for the Highway Block Grant

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Porter, to accept \$70,440.88 from the State of New Hampshire for the Highway Block Grant. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF UNANTICIPATED REVENUE LESS THAN \$10,000/RSA 31:95-B III (A)

- a. \$1,300 from Rotten Rock for Conway Rec Basketball Travel Team Uniforms

Mr. Eastman explained that Rotten Rock had donated \$1,300 to purchase uniforms for both the girls and boys travel basketball teams.

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Porter, to accept \$1,300 from Rotten Rock for Conway Rec Basketball Travel Team Uniforms. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Porter thanked Rotten Rock.

2024 BUDGET REVIEW

a. Assessing

Assistant Assessor Corie Hilton noted that the overall Assessing budget is down 17.1% due mainly to the fact that the revaluation was done in 2023 and would not need to be budgeted for in 2024.

She explained that they were planning to advertise for a 16 hour per week position for some extra help in the office to start on May 1, 2024.

She also noted that they had budgeted for a necessary server update.

Ms. Hilton also stated that in the past they had been paying their mapping company to update per plan.

Because of all the development and the upcoming absorption of Conway precinct, they had budgeted to pay a little bit more to have unlimited updates.

b. Planning and Zoning

Town Planner Ryan O'Connor explained that his budget is up 14.82%.

He explained that they now have a legal line in their budget.

He noted that they try to utilize the free legal assistance provided by NHMA first, but they have other necessary legal issues that come up.

Mr. O'Connor explained that Ms. Whitelaw has transitioned into the Assistant Planner role and is amazing.

He noted that their overtime budget is up due to the extra work.

Mr. O'Connor explained that the consulting line is new this year which covers the offsite meeting minutes and engineering reviews which are covered by application costs.

c. Building Inspections

Building Inspector Jeremy Gibbs noted that his budget was looking at a decrease of 26.15% mainly due to the retirement of David Pandora.

He also noted that there was a reduction in the information technology line as they had bought the necessary computers this year.

Mr. Gibbs stated that they are budgeting for shirts for identification purposes for those going out in the field.

d. Health

Mr. Gibbs noted that this budget was level funded.

e. Non-Precinct Fire and Emergency Management

Chief Solomon noted that the Non-Precinct Fire budget was increasing by 6.5% due to the contract and the Emergency Management budget was level funded.

f. Ambulance

Chief Solomon noted that this budget was decided by the contract passed in 2021.

DISCUSSION OF TOWN CARS

Mr. Smith reported that he had done some research and was able to find two vehicles, one used and one brand new at Crest.

There was a Chevy Equinox that only had 16,000 miles and a new Chevy Trax.

The total cost would be \$27,578 for both vehicles.

Mr. Thibodeau moved, seconded by Mr. Porter, to allocate up to \$29,000 for two cars from ARPA funds. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Shepard asked if there was service included that would also save the Town some money.

Mr. Smith stated that there was.

DISCUSSION OF 2022 AUDIT

Mr. Eastman noted that there was a full audit report downstairs but he would go over the highlights.

He noted that there were no significant and/or unusual findings and they had no difficulties with staff or management.

He noted that there were three things that they mentioned: information and technology policy, escrow accounts and trustee interfund accounts.

The information and technology policy was adopted in January of this year and that the other two things mentioned were being rectified.

Mr. Colbath stated that he had gone over the audit extensively and it was one of the best audits he had seen.

He noted that the last page of the audit discusses the new general accounting standards that will be required in 2024 and stated that they were already being reviewed and implemented by our Finance department.

Ms. Seavey echoed Mr. Colbath's sentiments.

Mr. Thibodeau gave kudos to the Finance Department, Mr. Eastman and the rest of the Town staff.

He stated that it was a glowing review of the audit and capabilities of the Town staff.

NOMINATION

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Shepard, to nominate Nat Lucy for the Saco/Swift River Advisory Committee. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF RECEIPTS

The receipts were available for review.

SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

- a. Notice of Agreement to Relocate Recreational Path Right of Way Under Prior Recreational Path Easement Deed for Continuum at North Conway LLC
- b. Easement Deed for Continuum at North Conway LLC
- c. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber on Map/Lot 280-77.11

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

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

- a. AP Manifest dated 11/30/2023
- b. Payroll dated 11/30/2023

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Thibodeau, to sign the AP Manifest and payroll dated 11/30/2023. The motion carried unanimously.

RATIFICATION OF DOCUMENTS SIGNED OUT OF SESSION

(none)

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATION(S)

(none)

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

(none)

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Mr. Eastman stated that he had contact Lisa Weir from the State and was waiting for a draft lease for the information booth land in Conway Village.

Mr. Eastman noted that he planned to start locking the front door of Town Hall at 4:00 pm due to issues of lighting in the front hallway.

He also noted that per the personnel manual, they would be closing at 12:00 pm on December 22, 2023.

Mr. DegliAngeli explained that he had met with Ryan O'Connor, Ben Frost from the NHHFA, Eliza Grant and Mark Hounsell to work through some potential mechanisms in order to maintain green space on the Puddin Hill Subdivision property in order to maximize density on the Settlers Green Condo property.

It was noted that it would likely hold 104 units.

Mr. Porter expressed his full support in order to give this Valley some housing.

BOARD REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Mr. Shepard noted that the Historic District Commission would be meeting on December 6, 2023 and the Budget Committee would be meeting on December 13, 2023.

Ms. Seavey encouraged everyone to come to the Festival of Trees and noted that Valley Vision had filmed it.

Mr. DegliAngeli noted that he had addressed the local Rotary Club and there was a tree skirt made of neckties that had belonged to Briggs Bunker.

Ms. Seavey noted that many were also from the old Carroll Reed with tags on it.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND MEDIA QUESTIONS

Mr. Steer inquired again about power aggregation.

Mr. Colbath noted that he had spoken with Jess Keeler who is wrapping up a busy time of year so he thought they would get into that around the beginning of the year.

Mr. Eastman will make sure to reach out the companies.

Mr. Steer asked about the skating rink.

There were no employees at this time.

Mr. Steer inquired about the January 1, 2024 deadline as the website said you must register and obtain a rental license by that date.

Mr. DegliAngeli explained that they needed to have made application by that date.

Mr. Steer noted that this is not what the website says.

Mr. Steer questioned the checklist requiring hard wired smoke detectors.

Mr. DegliAngeli explained that that checklist was for self-reporting and would cease to be an option on January 1.

He went on further to say that the Board had voted to require licensing which was guided by the life safety code.

Because of this, whenever there is a new life safety code update, that would automatically apply when doing the inspections.

At this time, Bluetooth alarms are now allowable.

Mr. DegliAngeli stated that he keeps hearing “we aren't ready”.

He explained that while the statute requires one public hearing, they had four.

The program continues to evolve.

They are taking the comments in and many are reflected in the plan.

He noted that they had had their first meeting with the responsible short term rentals on May 12, 2023.

Mr. Shepard explained that he is not an expert, but he sees that staff have been willing to fine tune things even now.

He also questioned what specifically people were confused about.

Mr. Steer used the example of the hard wired detectors.

Mr. DegliAngeli stated that the Selectmen do not vote on code, they voted to inspect using the code which is decided by the State and is constantly evolving.

It was stated that people need to start coming to meetings to help with their confusion.

There was discussion about appeals.

Appeals for 3+ units automatically go to the Fire Marshalls office and unless the Selectmen vote differently, appeals for 1 and 2 bedrooms would go to the ZBA.

Mr. DegliAngeli emphasized that the Town just want to ensure safe rentals.

There was discussion regarding the issue that legal action has been threatened which makes constructive conversations difficult.

Mr. DegliAngeli stated that the Town is not going to shut down a rental if they have made application and are waiting for inspection.

Mr. Shepard emphasized that if there is confusion, people should actively seek out the information.

Ms. Seavey stated that ignorance is no excuse.

Mr. Porter stated that it seemed they were beating a dead horse.

Mr. DegliAngeli noted that he had given an interview about this program to the Boston Globe for their real estate section.

He said, "how did they hear about the program."

Mr. Thibodeau stated that he wanted to clarify what he means when he says short term rentals are a business.

He said that you can be a residential business, not just a commercial business.

These units are rented, people pay money in exchange for their stay.

Mr. DegliAngeli noted that they would be the 7th or 8th Town to do this.

Chief Solomon stated that the people with legitimate questions call them.

There was discussion regarding grills on decks.

It was explained that while it is not is the life safety code, it has been recommended by those with fire experience that they should not be allowed.

The Town can adopt a stricter rule than the State, just not anything less than the State.

Chief Solomon stated that it was adopted as a local licensing rule.

ADJOURN

At 5:39 pm, the meeting adjourned at the call of the Chair.

Respectfully Submitted,

Krista Day
Executive Secretary