

1   **CONWAY MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE**

2   **Wednesday, February 22, 2023**

3   **Conway Town Hall**

4   **23 Main Street, Conway, NH**

5  
6 The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM. The following Budget Committee members were  
7 present: Chair Peter Donohoe, Vice-Chair Frank Jost, John Colbath, Jim LeFebvre, Dave Jensen, Bill  
8 Marvel, Terry McCarthy, Quentin Lewis, Randy Davison, and Ellin Leonard.

9  
10 Absent: Bob Drinkhall, Stacy Sand, and Kit Hickey

11  
12 The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Donohoe.

13  
14 Chair Donohoe provided opening remarks:

- 15     ▶ The task before the committee is to vote on one warrant article that was not presented at the  
16 public hearing and to re-vote on the Police Department warrant article. **Mr. Colbath** stated  
17 according to DRA the only time the Police Department budget can be amended is at the  
18 deliberative session and must be voted back to the original amount.

19  
20 3. Re-Vote on Two Town Warrant Articles:

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22     **Article 17:** (Separate - not included in Budget Appropriation Article #14). To see if the  
23 town will vote to approve the cost items of a one-year **COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**  
24 **AGREEMENT FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2023 BETWEEN THE TOWN OF**  
25 **CONWAY AND CONWAY POLICE DEPARTMENT** which calls for the following increases  
26 in salaries and benefits over the costs that would have been paid under the current agreement at  
27 the current staffing levels.

28  
29   Calendar year   Estimated Increase  
30   2023   \$111,635

31  
32 And further to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Eleven Thousand, Six Hundred  
33 Thirty-Five Dollars (\$111,635) for the current fiscal year, such sum representing the additional  
34 costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those  
35 that would be paid under the current agreement at current staffing levels. This increase includes a  
36 6% COLA (Cost of Living Allowance) and up to a 3% salary adjustment as part of the yearly  
37 performance evaluation which is conducted on November 1<sup>st</sup>.  
38 Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0).

39  
40 **Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Marvel, to rescind the vote related to Article 17 as**  
41 **taken on February 15, 2023. Motion Carried (10-0-0)**

42  
43 **Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. LeFebvre to recommend Article 17 as written and**  
44 **read this evening. Motion Carried. (10-0-0)**

45 **Mr. Lewis** inquired if someone would be moving to make the change at the deliberative session  
 46 and offer an explanation. **Mr. Colbath** stated Chief Mattei will recommend reducing the overall  
 47 budget by \$5,000.

48  
 49 **Article 35:** (Non-Monetary). To see if the Town will vote to establish a **CHARTER**  
 50 **COMMISSION** for the purpose of revising or amending the Municipal Charter. Submitted by  
 51 Petition. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0)

52  
 53 **Mr. Marvel moved, seconded by Mr. LeFebvre to recommend Article 35 as written and**  
 54 **read this evening. Motion Carried. (9-1[Mr. Lewis]-0)**

55  
 56 **Mr. Jensen** inquired how the commission members are selected. **Mr. Colbath** stated if the article  
 57 is approved a special town meeting must occur within 90 days where voters will elect nine  
 58 members for the commission from candidates at large including town officials. The commission  
 59 is required to hold public meetings with a recording secretary and legal expenses. The Selectmen  
 60 voted to use \$15,000 of ARPA money to fund the Charter Commission. **Mr. Lewis** stated in his  
 61 opinion it would be more beneficial to have a public hearing to discuss everything before the  
 62 electing body. A discussion ensued

63  
 64 This was a petitioned warrant article that required 244 signatures and was submitted with 400.  
 65 **Mr. Colbath** stated it is up to the voters to become informed and educate themselves before they  
 66 vote.

67  
 68 **Chair Donohoe** at the request of Vice-Chair Jost discussed the meeting with Mr. Eastman and  
 69 others pertaining to the committee's ability to vote on non-monetary warrant articles. Legislation  
 70 for HB1392 passed in 2018, which was sponsored by Frank McCarthy to allow voting on non-  
 71 monetary articles as there could be a monetary impact on the town, such as the acceptance of the  
 72 roads. At this time, Attorney Dennis agreed to disagree as he is not convinced the committees  
 73 interpretation of HB1392 is accurate but is okay with the committee voting and for said vote to  
 74 appear on the warrant.

75  
 76 **Mr. LeFebvre moved, seconded by Mr. Marvell to move to question. Motion Carried. (10-0-**  
 77 **0)**

78  
 79 4. Old Business:

80 **Chair Donohoe** asked Mr. Davison to provide a summary of the School Board meeting held on  
 81 Tuesday, February 21, 2023.

82  
 83 **Mr. Davison** stated with a vote of 4-1, the School Board accepted the administrators'  
 84 recommendations to close a school and reduce ancillary positions to meet the requested budget  
 85 reduction. The district must investigate reevaluating facility use. **Vice-Chair Jost** recognized the  
 86 work Mr. Richard, and his staff did to adhere to the intent of the budget reduction. **Mr. LeFebvre**  
 87 stated reductions at the elementary level reflect 89% of the budget, where cuts at the middle and  
 88 high school level are only 46%.

89  
 90 **Mr. Davison** stated the School Board needs four firm people to make a chance and that is going  
 91 to come down to the candidates running for the board as the ultimate decision will rest with them.  
 92 A discussion ensued related to the tuition contracts and the master plan.

- 93 5. New Business: None  
94
- 95 6. Public / Media Questions or Comments:  
96 **Daymond Steer**, Conway Daily Sun:  
97 Inquired of the committee's position regarding the need for a warrant article that pertained to  
98 accepting the Conway water and sewer department as part of the dissolution of the Conway Fire  
99 Precinct. He stated this question was raised by Mark Hounsell as the NHMA says a warrant article  
100 is necessary. This question has been presented to Jason Dennis, Town Counsel, and a response is  
101 forthcoming. **Mr. Colbath** stated the precinct must vote on to dissolve the precinct or not and the  
102 Selectboard has not done any planning outside of how to absorb the infrastructure and personnel.  
103 A discussion ensued.  
104
- 105 **Mr. Steer** stated his concern the Town of Conway does not have a system in place to deal with the  
106 effects from the Ukrainian war. Chair Donohoe stated he doesn't know how the town would prepare  
107 or how other towns are or would prepare for that situation. Vice-Chair Jost stated in his opinion the  
108 town will react appropriately as they have in the past. Mr. Lewis stated it appears the Town is being  
109 asked to take money out of people's pockets in the form of taxation to put into an account that will  
110 lose 10% per year and I don't want to do that.  
111
- 112 7. Adjournment:  
113 **Mr. LeFebvre moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Jost to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m.**  
114 **Motion Carried (10-0-0)**  
115
- 116 Respectfully Submitted,  
117 *Lisa E. Towle*,  
118 Recording Secretary