

**Minutes of Meeting
CONWAY BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

December 4, 2008

The Selectmen's Meeting convened at 4:03 p.m. in the Meeting Room of Conway Town Hall with the following present: Selectmen Larry Martin (Chair), C. David Weathers, Mark Hounsell, Howard C. Dickinson, and Robert Drinkhall; Town Manager, Earl W. Sires; Finance Director, Lucy Philbrick; and Recording Secretary, Holly Meserve.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of October 14, 2008 should be amended as follows: page 1 under Pledge of Allegiance should indicate Chairman **Martin**; and page 1 under Table Motion/Believe in Books, third paragraph, line 2 should indicate Messrs. Drinkhall and Weathers voting in the affirmative and Messrs. Dickinson, Hounsell and **Martin** voting in the negative. **Mr. Drinkhall made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weathers, to approve the Minutes of October 14, 2008 as amended. Motion unanimously carried (5-0-0).**

Mr. Drinkhall made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weathers, to approve the Minutes of October 21, 2008 as written. Motion unanimously carried (5-0-0).

The Minutes of November 6, 2008 should be amended as follows: page 1 under Pledge of Allegiance should indicate Chairman **Martin**. **Mr. Drinkhall made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weathers, to approve the Minutes of November 6, 2008 as amended. Motion unanimously carried (5-0-0).**

BUDGET WORKSHOP

Mr. Sires stated that the current budget being considered is \$9,548,063 and is about a 2% increase over last year's budget. Mr. Sires stated, however, as we look at the revenue for next year we are looking at a 15% to 20% reduction in non-tax revenue. Mr. Sires stated that the tax rate will still go up and the Board of Selectmen will want to look at minimizing that impact.

Mr. Martin asked for public comment; Ted Sares stated that he is here this evening to offer a few suggestions and lend public support. Mr. Sares stated that the problem we're going through is replicated across the country. Mr. Sares referred to the information he sent to the Board via email. Mr. Sares suggested the Board look at how reductions would impact people.

Mr. Sares stated in regard to the rainy day fund if it can be used it should be used. Mr. Sares stated in regard to the Capital Improvements there has been a new committee formed, but we could defer capital projects, however, when you finally do it they would be done at a higher expense. Mr. Sares stated or the project could simply be eliminated. Mr. Sares stated that oil is now \$44 a barrel and he doesn't know the

situation of locking in, but it may be worth paying a penalty and renegotiating the contract. Mr. Sares stated the Town should be careful on downsizing as there are so many ways to cut the budget before doing that. Mr. Sares stated when you cut overtime be careful of the impact on that person, but you do need to be tough.

Mr. Sares stated that a microscope should be taken to the Recreation Department budget. Mr. Sares stated if the Board had the Police Department budget that is another area that should be reviewed. Mr. Sares stated in closing the Board should look at this with a can do attitude and say to themselves that you can do this and take a positive attitude. Mr. Sares stated that that he wished the Board luck. Mr. Dickinson thanked Mr. Sares for coming and for his advice.

Mr. Sires stated that he agrees with all the principals outlined. Mr. Sires stated lucky for the Town we did not have the cash up front in August to lock in on a fuel price so we're paying a percentage above and are benefiting right now. Mr. Sares stated bench marking is critical and the Town should go to Local Government Center and ask them are there any innovative things being done.

Bob Barriault stated Mr. Sares covered a lot of his items. Mr. Barriault stated it is extremely important to take a proactive approach and that the budget presented is level funded. Mr. Barriault stated that the Board should go out of their way to vote as you see fit, but be aware of the impact of your decisions. Mr. Barriault stated that the Board should review the Police budget. Mr. Barriault stated that he agrees with Mr. Sares that you look at the areas where you can possibly make cuts by looking at the easiest even if they don't make much of an impact.

Mr. Barriault stated that it is extremely important that this burden is shared across the line, not just the taxpayers, but the general public as well. Mr. Barriault stated reducing some services may cause some hardships, but may be necessary to do. Mr. Barriault suggested not plowing sidewalks after the holidays and the last resort should be the impact on personnel. Mr. Barriault suggested looking at overtime and telling employees if the work cannot be finished today, it has to wait until tomorrow. Mr. Barriault suggested putting a freeze on salaries, which you recover when things turn around. Mr. Barriault stated that is certainly better than downsizing. Mr. Barriault suggested a furlough day once a month. Mr. Barriault stated that he doesn't think it should be that taxpayers don't have any increase, but look at the last three years where it has gone up 54% to 56% to 61%.

Mr. Sires stated that the revenue numbers are best guess at this point, but he doesn't suspect they are going to be drastically better than this. Mr. Barriault stated that he doesn't think you'll be criticized if you make an honest effort to best guesstimate. Mr. Hounsell stated we are dealing with the impact on the Town as well as trying to understand what the impact is, but at the same time we can come close. Mr. Hounsell stated that he is encouraged that we can do better than the worse case scenario. Mr. Hounsell stated staff has brought in a budget with no fat and the only place we can cut is in the flesh and what are we doing for services.

Mr. Barriault stated that he hopes the Board does not interpret his comments as criticism and stated that this is not just an issue with the town because he will be saying the same thing to the school. Mr. Barriault stated that he is discouraged with the proposed budget for the County. Mr. Barriault stated that he thinks usage fees should be reviewed as well.

Bill Marvel stated we didn't reduce the budget or the services at the library because during economic downturn the usage is up. Mr. Marvel stated instead they dipped into trust funds income which had years of accumulation. Mr. Marvel stated that they didn't cut services. Mr. Barriault stated that he hopes the local paper picks this up to show other departments what the library is doing. Mr. Hounsell stated that the library trustees have set a good example for the rest of the Town.

Mr. Sires stated that he requested information from the Police Department, but he has not seen that information as of yet. Mr. Sires stated eliminating overtime at the transfer station would reduce the budget by \$27,000.00, there could be a saving in snow removal of \$12,000 and the Kearsarge bike lane could be reduced by \$80,000.

Executive: Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Weathers, to adjust line item #0140 to \$8,500. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Election and Registration: There were no changes.

Finance: Mr. Weather stated that there is a 4% increase. Mr. Sires stated that there was an increase in audit expenses. **Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Drinkhall, to adjust line item #0455 to \$2,000. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.**

Assessing: Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Weathers, to adjust line item #0565 to \$2,279. Mr. Sires stated that they do have to maintain their certifications; however, the Municipal Association seminar could be eliminated. **Chairman Martin tabled the motion.**

Mr. Dickinson moved, seconded by Mr. Hounsell, to adjust line item #0532 to \$0. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Legal: Mr. Dickinson moved, seconded by Mr. Hounsell, to adjust line item #0570 to \$55,000. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Employee benefits: There were no changes.

Planning and Zoning: Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Dickinson, to adjust line item #0630 to \$1,300. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Government Buildings: Mr. Dickinson moved, seconded by Mr. Hounsell, to adjust line item #0670 to \$5,500. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Mr. Dickinson moved, seconded by Mr. Hounsell, to adjust line item #0705 to \$32,000. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Mr. Dickinson moved, seconded by Mr. Hounsell, to adjust line item #0735 to \$13,500. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Mr. Dickinson moved, seconded by Mr. Drinkhall, to adjust line item #0748 to \$1,400. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Cemeteries: There were no changes.

Insurance: There were no changes.

Police: Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Dickinson, to adjust line item #0870 to \$1,096,186. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Mr. Drinkhall moved, seconded by Mr. Hounsell, to adjust line item #0880 to \$25,000. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Drinkhall, to adjust line item #1130 to \$1,800. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Drinkhall, to adjust line item #1240 to \$2,600. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Mr. Weathers moved, seconded by Mr. Drinkhall, to adjust line item #1289 to \$0. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Weathers, to adjust line item #1305 to \$9,000. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Emergency Services: There were no changes.

Inspections: Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Weathers, to adjust line item #1365 to \$500. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Highway Department: Mr. Drinkhall moved, seconded by Mr. Weathers, to adjust line item #1570 to \$135,211. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Weathers, to adjust line item #1383 to \$0. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Mr. Drinkhall moved, seconded by Mr. Hounsell, to adjust line item #1530 to \$87,000. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Mr. Drinkhall moved, seconded by Mr. Weathers, to adjust line item #1540 to \$103,000. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Drinkhall, to adjust line item #1560 to \$400,000. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Solid Waste: Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Weathers, to adjust line item #1650 to \$297,645. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Health: There were no changes.

Welfare: Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Weathers, to adjust line item #1810 by increasing it to \$40,000. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Parks and Recreation: Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Drinkhall, that the Teen Center as an independent program be eliminated and the figure become \$50,000 less on the bottom line or \$241,305. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Drinkhall, to adjust line item #1824 to \$510. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Drinkhall, to adjust line item #1825 to \$395. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Library: There were no changes.

Patriotic Purposes: Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Dickinson, to adjust line item #2010 to be \$6,000 less and that the Town funding of the fireworks display at Schouler Park be eliminated. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Conservation: Mr. Weathers moved, seconded by Mr. Drinkhall, to adjust line item #2110 to \$17,250. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Debt: Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Weathers, to adjust line item #01-4722.163-2150 to \$2,500. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Capital Reserve: Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Drinkhall, to adjust line items #2200 to \$30,000, #2210 to \$80,500, #2230 to \$94,500, #2240 to \$63,000 and #2260 to \$171,500. Chairman Martin tabled the motion.

Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Dickinson, to rescind the warrant article for the bond for the garage. Motion carried with Mr. Drinkhall, Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Hounsell and Mr. Weathers voting in the affirmative and Mr. Martin voting in the negative (4-1-0).

Mr. Hounsell stated that he has reviewed areas that revenue could be increased, such as franchise fees, special event permits, adult recreation activities, the recreation program and swimming program lessons. Mr. Hounsell stated we can find additional revenue to off-set what we are losing.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

There was none.

BOARD REPORTS AND COMMENTS

There was none.

PUBLIC COMMENTS / MEDIA QUESTIONS

Mr. Marvel stated that Town meeting should be held regardless of weather. **Mr. Hounsell moved, seconded by Mr. Dickinson, to send a letter to the Moderator that Town Meeting should be held regardless of weather. Motion unanimously carried (5-0-0).**

Casey Conley of the Conway Daily Sun asked the Board to explain the cut in the Police Department budget and if the proposal was to cut a full-time position to a part-time position. Ms. Philbrick stated that it is a full-time position that the Town only had to fund for ½ of the position. Mr. Conley asked if the Board was looking to eliminate the position. Mr. Hounsell answered in the negative.

Mr. Conley asked if there was a figure in mind to increase fees for adult recreation programs. Mr. Hounsell stated there are 171 games and they are charged \$70 a game and he would suggest charging \$90 a game.

ADJOURN

Mr. Weathers moved, seconded by Mr. Drinkhall, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Meserve
Recording Secretary