

**Minutes of Meeting  
CONWAY BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
November 19, 2019**

The Selectmen's Meeting convened at 4:04 pm in the Meeting Room of Conway Town Hall with the following present: Selectmen, 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 the Allegiance to the flag.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**Ms. Seavey moved, seconded by Mr. Thibodeau, to approve the agenda as written. The motion carried unanimously.**

BUDGET REVIEW

a. Library

Library Director David Smolen noted that their proposed budget had been unanimously supported by the Library Trustees.

He explained that they were looking at an increase of approximately 2.5% over the 2019 budget. Increases of note include the normal increases in salaries and benefits. He also noted they are asking for a larger increase to their buildings and grounds line in order to accomplish repairs to the sprinkler system.

Mr. Smolen also noted that he has created a new budget line for legal services for \$1,000. He explained that they annually receive money from Albany for use of the library services. They normally turn that money over to the Town and then if they need funds, they come before the Board. However, he noted that there is an RSA that would allow for the Trustees to keep those funds themselves if they have a contract for services between Albany and Conway.

Mr. Weathers questioned why they would want to do this when they can just ask the Board for funds when needed. He stated that then the Town would have no say in their spending. Mr. Smolen stated that they felt it would give them a little bit more flexibility with their spending. He also noted that they could save these funds for a few years to spend on a larger project.

Mr. Colbath inquired about any projected turnover in staff. Mr. Smolen stated that they did not plan on it.

Mr. Smolen noted that it is a great honor for him to be the Library Director and that he has wonderful staff.

b. Elections and Registrations

Ms. Inkell stated that this year the budget was up 10.9% due to the added major elections happening in 2020.

She also noted an increase to supplies for a printer.

Mr. Colbath inquired as to how much the Town relies on volunteers for the elections. Ms. Inkell explained that the volunteers do get a small stipend, however, they heavily depend on those individuals.

She noted that if anyone was interested in volunteering that they should contact the Town Clerk's office.

c. Tax Collector

This budget is reduced by .3% due to decreases in salary needs.

Mr. Holmes noted that while they have offered the Finance Director position to someone with lower starting salary, he has added funds for the director to attend the Government Finance Association Conference and dues for the GOFA.

Mr. Colbath inquired as to how the Deputy Town Clerk was doing. Ms. Inkell stated that she is doing great and is continuing on going training with the Secretary of State's office. She is starting the 4-year process towards certification.

d. Assessing

Mr. Holmes explained that they are reorganizing the assessing department. They are looking at a 12.6% increase in budget as they are anticipating a new hire and a promotion of the assessing clerk.

e. Planning and Zoning

Town Planner Tom Irving noted that there were no major changes to his budget other than merit raises.

Mr. Holmes explained that with the Board's approval, he was proposing to eliminate the part time code compliance officer position and move the code compliance duties under the responsibility of a new position in the building department. This full-time assistant building inspector would be responsible for code compliance issues as well as the management of duties that are anticipated to come as the town is looking towards regulation of short-term rental properties.

Mr. Holmes added that the responsibility of temporary event permits would be moved to the recreation department.

Mr. Thibodeau asked what would happen if the regulation of short-term rentals conversations did not amount to anything. Mr. Holmes stated that then they would eliminate the full-time position and keep the part time position, but it would still fall under the building department.

f. Building Inspections

Mr. Holmes reviewed that the new assistant building inspector position was budgeted for in this department.

g. Health

This budget remained level funded.

h. Welfare

Mr. Holmes noted that there were reductions in most lines other than salary. He explained that the lack of available housing options is reducing the amount of aid the town is giving just based off of availability.

Mr. Holmes noted that there are few motels that will work with the town.

Mr. Colbath stated that we are lucky to have the food pantries in the area that provide such a service to those in Conway.

REVIEW OF RECEIPTS

(none)

SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

(none)

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

- a. AP Manifest dated 11/21/19
- b. Payroll dated 11/21/19

**Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Thibodeau, to sign the AP Manifest and Payroll, both dated 11/21/19. The motion carried unanimously.**

RATIFICATION OF DOCUMENTS SIGNED OUTSIDE OF SESSION

(none)

REVIEW AND CONSDIRATION OF SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATION(S)

(none)

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

(none)

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Mr. Holmes wanted to address a few of the misconceptions that were printed in the Conway Daily Sun regarding the revaluation.

He wanted to make clear that the impact on short term rentals is, by no means, the only reason for the revaluation nor is it the only reason values went up. The economy nationally and locally has been super-hot over the past several years and this has created increases in real estate values regardless of short-term rentals. While the added demand on properties for sale created by the number of people who are looking to buy in order to rent short term had an effect on the prices, the overall positive economy is also at play.

Mr. Holmes noted that because it is a revaluation year, the increase seen on the most recent bill is the retroactive increase for the entire year. The amount will be cut in half going forward as it will be split between two tax bills.

Mr. Holmes wanted to let the public know that revaluations are mandated by the NH Constitution and must occur at least every five years. The town has no choice and they must be done at least every five years. The town could choose to do them more often, even every year but they must be done at least every five years.

Mr. Holmes state that the town has no legal ability to charge higher taxes on a property because it is being rented short term. In NH, the same tax rate must be applied to all properties in each taxing jurisdiction regardless of its use.

Mr. Holmes noted that the Budget Committee was looking for a recording secretary. Ms. Seavey noted that it is hard to find someone who will take the verbatim minutes that the committee prefers.

Chairman of the Budget Committee Jim LeFebvre noted that this method of taking minutes goes back a long time. He noted that he could address the issue with the committee at their next meeting.

Mr. Holmes noted that the Short-Term Rental Committee would be meeting on November 21, 2019.

He noted that on December 10, 2019 they would be potentially discussing possible warrant articles that could increase the disability and elderly tax exemptions as well as a potential surcharge on auto registrations.

BOARD REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Mr. Colbath stated that the ZBA would be meeting on Wednesday, November 20, 2019 and the Budget Committee would be meeting on December 11, 2019.

Mr. Colbath wanted to commend Chris Clough who had graciously taken the minutes for the Budget Committee at the last meeting.

There was discussion regarding whether there was a need for the historical verbatim minutes taken for the Budget Committee.

Mr. Thibodeau stated that the ESAA Executive Board would be meeting on November, 21, 2019.

Ms. Seavey stated that Valley Vision would be meeting tomorrow.

Mr. Weathers noted that the Conservation Commission had met to discuss issues of motorized vehicles in Whitaker Woods.

Mr. Weathers stated that the LMWVSWD had met and the majority of the meeting revolved around discussions on whether a second Hazardous Waste Day was needed.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS AND MEDIA QUESTIONS

Daymond Steer from The Conway Daily Sun asked if there is a way to figure out how much short-term rentals increased the market value in the community. Mr. Holmes explained that the town does not know where they all are and that the best they can do is speculate that in those areas and neighborhoods that are particularly attractive to short term rentals there is increased demand and therefore translates into an increase in prices.

Mr. Steer asked if there is a possibility that because property values are so high, that it could decrease the demand for potential short-term rental properties? Mr. Thibodeau stated that he does not believe that the town intends to regulate short term rentals to the degree at which it would discourage ownership.

Mr. Holmes explained that as the assessing department is not trying to influence the game, but instead just call balls and strikes. It is the real estate market that determines the values.

**At 5:11 pm, Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Ms. Seavey, to go into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II(C) to discuss a tax matter. The motion carried unanimously.**

#### NON-PUBLIC SESSION RSA 91-A:3 II(C) – TAX MATTER

At 5:33 pm, the Board returned to public session.

**Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Thibodeau, to seal the minutes from this non-public session. The motion carried unanimously.**

ADJOURN

At 5:33 pm, the meeting adjourned at the call of the Chair.

Respectfully submitted,

Krista Day  
Executive Secretary