

Minutes of Meeting
CONWAY BOARD OF SELECTMEN
April 21, 2020

The Selectmen's Meeting convened at 4:05 pm in the Meeting Room of Conway Town Hall with the following present: C. David Weathers, Mary Carey Seavey, Carl Thibodeau, Town Manager Thomas Holmes, and Executive Secretary, Krista Day

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Weathers led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Weathers stated that they would be using the Zoom platform to allow the public to call in and ask questions during public comment. He also noted that the meeting was being streamed via Facebook Live.

Mr. Weathers noted that the following were being added to the agenda under Signing of Documents:

- q. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber on Map/Lot 244-2
- r. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber on Map/Lot 203-112
- s. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber on Map/Lot 203-119
- t. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber on Map/Lot 269-14
- u. Permanent Application for Property Tax Credits/Exemptions on Map/Lot 264-25
- v. Permanent Application for Property Tax Credits/Exemptions on Map/Lot 262-83.99

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

ELECTION UPDATE

Moderator Deb Fauver and Town Clerk Louise Inkell were present.

Ms. Fauver explained that she first wanted to discuss how they could continue to encourage Absentee voting for the May 12, 2020 election. She noted that absentee ballot request forms were available at local Post Offices, Shaws, Hannaford, and online.

There was brief discussion regarding whether they could create a secure location at Town Hall for absentee ballots to be dropped off. It was determined that Mr. DegliAngeli could construct a secure drop box.

Ms. Inkell noted that the Post Office could also accept ballots.

Mr. Thibodeau moved, seconded by Mr. Colbath, to instruct the DPW to build a drop box and secure it to the building for absentee ballots. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Fauver asked the Selectmen to email her if they had any other suggestions on how to encourage absentee voting.

Ms. Fauver noted that she had reached out to the Emergency Management Director to find out if it would be possible to obtain more PPE for the poll workers.

There was brief discussion regarding how voting would go at the Town Garage. Ms. Fauver noted that there were lots of potential scenarios, however, she wanted to see how many Absentee Ballots get requested as this would change how they plan to set up for in person voting.

Mr. Colbath stated that he believes everything will be fine in terms of voting. He added that these are extraordinary time and that people will be understanding.

DISCUSSION OF CAMPGROUNDS

Conway Fire Chief Steve Solomon called into the meeting. He explained that there was a disagreement between many around the State and the Governor regarding his order that would allow campgrounds to open up around the State.

Chief Solomon explained that while social distancing may be practiced within the campgrounds themselves, visitors will inevitably leave the campgrounds to utilize other parts of our town such as grocery stores, etc. He was concerned that this will encourage people from areas of the country that are more saturated with COVID-19 cases to come to our area and potentially increase transmission.

Mr. Thibodeau summarized an email he had received from Senator Jeb Bradley regarding this issue. He noted that they are working on guidelines for opening campgrounds, but the Governor does understand that it just may not be possible to open them. He added that he would reach out with more information when he received it.

Mr. Thibodeau noted that he has not spoken to anyone who is in favor of opening campgrounds. He stated that while you may be able to socially distance in the campground, these people are going to be traveling around our town.

Ms. Seavey and Mr. Porter both agreed that they should express their opposition to allowing campgrounds to open up.

Mr. Colbath explained that he had listened to the Governor and he said they were waiting on guidelines from the Campground association.

It was noted by Chief Solomon that Chief Wagner was also adamantly against campgrounds opening as well.

It was determined that Selectmen do not have the authority to close the campgrounds themselves.

Ms. Seavey moved, seconded by Mr. Porter, to authorize the chairman to sign a letter to the Governor expressing their opposition to allowing campgrounds to open at this time. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION OF SUNSET HILL CELL TOWER PROPOSAL BY AIROSMITH

Mr. Holmes noted that they had not received any more information from Airosmith, however, they had received quite a bit of neighborhood opposition.

He noted that he had also received calls from people who have given him a little more information on the process, and also some companies that would like to be part of an RFP process.

Mr. Holmes stated that he thinks that Airosmith may be a broker and that we had been through a similar experience with solar panels in town.

Mr. Porter stated that he is still opposed to this project. He noted that they were elected to look out for the what is in the best interest of the residents of Conway.

Mr. Porter moved, second by Ms. Seavey, to reply to Airosmith and let them know that the Town of Conway is not interested in a tower at this location. The motion failed (1-4-0) with Mr. Porter in the affirmative.

Mr. Weathers explained that he does not necessarily disagree with Mr. Porter, however, he would like to get some more information before making a decision.

Mr. Colbath agreed with Mr. Weathers and added that they need to look at it as a potential revenue source and believed they should consider the improvement to the cell service in the area.

DISCUSSION OF 4TH OF JULY FESTIVITIES

Mr. Eastman was present to discuss the 4th of July Festivities with the Board. He explained that he is past due on signing the contract with the Fireworks Company as he wanted to bring up the subject.

He explained that there was a provision in the contract that would allow them to postpone the fireworks with no loss of their payment as long as they notified Atlas more than 15 days prior to the 4th of July. However, he wanted to see if there was concern from the Board on whether they should even be having these festivities on the 4th of July as many people such as Chief Wagner had expressed their concern and opposition on having that many people together in one place due to COVID-19. Mr. Eastman also had concerns about booking entertainment.

Mr. Holmes noted that Chief Solomon is also against having the parade in Conway Village this year.

Mr. Weathers stated that as patriotic as he is, he does not feel like it would be safe this year.

Mr. Thibodeau stated that he would like to see these events postponed until September.

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Porter, to cancel the 4th of July celebration events for 2020. The motion carried unanimously.

There was a brief discussion regarding other special events that may or may not be cancelled this year.

Mr. Eastman stated that he would reach out to Atlas to see if Labor Day Weekend would be available for fireworks and he would report back to the Board.

Mr. Thibodeau wanted to thank the entire Recreation Department for their Easter Events. He noted that they went above and beyond and did a phenomenal job.

Mr. Colbath also commended the Recreation Department for their virtual events via Facebook.

Mr. Holmes noted that he is not too comfortable committing money to the fireworks until they have a chance to look at where they are in terms of budget.

Mr. Thibodeau stated that they could reassess this next week.

DISCUSSION OF DPW STAFFING

Mr. DegliAngeli explained that they have not had any illnesses of his staff up to this point. His plan with the Board blessing would be to return to full power at the transfer station on May 11. He added that he could bring back the highway employees on April 28 if the Board wished.

Mr. Colbath asked what his recommendation would be. Mr. DegliAngeli stated that he would like to be cautious.

There was discussion on staggering employee assignments to allow for more social distancing. Mr. Holmes noted that the parks and recreation employees would be starting back on Monday.

DISCUSSION OF DPW PROJECTS

Mr. DegliAngeli explained that they are looking at issues of whether or not to spend funds on DPW projects because revenues remain unpredictable at this point.

There was discussion regarding the need to complete the paving of the North South Road and the replacement of a culvert on Westside Road regardless of whether the proposed operating budget passes on May 12 or not.

Mr. DegliAngeli noted that they may decide to not proceed with the reconstruction and paving of Birch Hill this year which would save the town money.

It was determined that these things can really not be decided until after we see which budget passes.

Mr. DegliAngeli did note that they had already signed the contract for the culvert as it was imperative that it be completed this year or they risked having to spend much more on it in the future.

Mr. Colbath asked for clarification regarding the Route 113 Outlet Bridge. Mr. DegliAngeli explained that the bridge has a difference alignment.

Mr. DegliAngeli noted that they had bid the garage expansion and it was within their budget, however, they have to wait until after the May 12 vote to see if they would be moving forward with that.

REVENUE UPDATE

Mr. Holmes explained that he and Finance Director Kathy Golding had gone through line by line in their budget looking to update revenue projections. He explained that when these numbers decrease, the tax rate increases. He noted that regardless of what they end up spending, they still need to raise and appropriate the amount that the legislative body approves.

Ms. Golding explained that she would suggest reducing the projected revenue of interest on late tax payments as the initial figure was proposed by the interim Finance Director and was based on the old, high interest rates. She would propose reducing that line to \$112,500, which is 50% of what it had been.

There was brief discussion regarding whether waiving interest would encourage taxpayers to choose not to pay their tax bills and use that money for other things. Mr. Holmes noted that there were still questions to be answered in terms of whether they could even waive interest and late fees on the bills that would be due in July.

Ms. Golding proposed reducing motor vehicle registrations by \$250,000. She noted that this could be revisited again when revenue starts coming in.

She also noted that there was still much uncertainty in terms of what they will see from the State for Rooms and Meals tax with the hotels and restaurants being closed.

Some of the smaller proposed reductions in revenue including school bus maintenance, fuel, police reports, and Planning Board revenue.

Ms. Golding noted that while there was some opposition, if the voters approved selling the Old Recreation Center, this revenue could really help the town.

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Porter, to accept the revised revenue figures as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION OF VALLEY VISION CONTRACT

Mr. Holmes explained that because the election had been postponed into May, he was asking the Board to consider extending the contract between the Town and Valley Vision until after the vote.

Ms. Seavey moved, seconded by Mr. Colbath, to extend the contract between the Town of Conway and Valley Vision until after the vote on May 12, 2020. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF RECEIPTS

None

SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

- a. Warrant for Land Use Change Tax on Map/Lot 258-68.16
- b. Warrant for Land Use Change Tax on Map/Lot 250-40
- c. Warrant for Land Use Change Tax on Map/Lot 250-36
- d. Municipality Land Use Change Tax Bill on Map/Lot 258-68.16
- e. Municipality Land Use Change Tax Bill on Map/Lot 250-40
- f. Municipality Land Use Change Tax Bill on Map/Lot 250-36
- g. Permanent Application for Property Tax Credits/Exemptions on Map/Lot 253-48
- h. Permanent Application for Property Tax Credits/Exemptions on Map/Lot 202-62
- i. Permanent Application for Property Tax Credits/Exemptions on Map/Lot 272-52.16
- j. Permanent Application for Property Tax Credits/Exemptions on Map/Lot 203-51
- k. Permanent Application for Property Tax Credits/Exemptions on Map/Lot 256-12
- l. Permanent Application for Property Tax Credits/Exemptions on Map/Lot 272-56.002
- m. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber on Map/Lot 241-3.101

- n. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber on Map/Lot 203-111.2
- o. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber on Map/Lot 203.111.1
- p. Application for Current Use Assessment on Map/Lot 245-65, 245-30, 245-29.1
- q. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber on Map/Lot 244-2
- r. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber on Map/Lot 203-112
- s. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber on Map/Lot 203-119
- t. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber on Map/Lot 269-14
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Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Ms. Seavey, to sign the documents listed above in a. through v. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

- a. AP Manifest dated 4/23/2020
- b. Payroll dated 4/23/2020

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Thibodeau, to sign the AP Manifest and Payroll dated 4/23/2020. The motion carried unanimously.

RATIFICATION OF DOCUMENTS SIGNED OUT OF SESSION

- a. AP Manifest dated 4/16/2020

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Thibodeau, to ratify the AP Manifest dated 4/16/2020. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATION(S)

- a. Tin Mt. Conservation Center Mt. Washington Century Run (7/25/2020)
Pending Insurance
- b. Conway Village Congregational Church Annual Spring Event (5/16/2020)

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Ms. Seavey, to sign the special event applications listed above in a. and b. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

- a. Regular Minutes and Non-Public from 4/7/2020

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Ms. Seavey, to adopt the regular and non-public minutes from 4/7/2020 as written. The motion carried unanimously.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Mr. Holmes noted that they had removed the re-use shelf at the transfer station due to virus concerns.

Mr. Holmes stated that he had given the Board the NHMA Financial Impact Survey Summary results.

He noted that they were receiving a large increase in requests for town welfare assistance due to this virus.

Mr. Holmes explained that the busiest they have been on any one subject is that of Short-Term Rentals. They had received many calls and emails from neighbors looking for the town to enforce the Governor's order. According to the order, the Department of Health and Human Services is the only entity that can enforce it. However, DHHS has now given the ability for police to cite people for misdemeanors if they are violating the order. He also noted that he has the Code Enforcement Officer looking at the online booking sites to see who may be in violation as well.

Mr. Holmes noted that there will be many Special Events that need to be cancelled and/or postponed. They will request that a list of these events and new dates appear before the Board.

There was brief mention of possibly moving meetings to the Recreation Center, however, due to acoustics, the Board decided they would like to stay at Town Hall. Mr. Holmes did note that the Planning Board was looking into using the Rec center for meetings so that they had a larger area to practice social distancing.

BOARD REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Mr. Porter noted that he would like to see the Board extend their previous motion on letting properties have more than one a-frame sign for the time being.

Mr. Porter moved, seconded by Mr. Colbath, to continue the moratorium of enforcement on the a-frame sign ordinance until July 1, 2020. The motion carried (4-0-1) with Mr. Thibodeau abstaining.

Mr. Colbath noted that his committees had not met, however, he wanted to show the Board that his grandson had been using his 3D printer to create a strap to hold masks on that eliminated the pulling of one's ears.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND MEDIA QUESTIONS

Daymond Steer from the Conway Daily Sun asked what proof someone would have to show the Police if they were staying at a Short-Term rental. Mr. Weathers noted that many essential healthcare workers carry a badge, however, it would have to be on the honor system.

Mr. Steer asked if the Town was considering layoffs. Mr. Holmes noted that this is a topic that keeps him up at night. However, he explained that virtually every department is seeing an increase in demand. He also added that even if they do lay off some employees, it would not lower the tax rate as the voters will vote to raise and appropriate a certain amount of money regardless of whether they spend it or not.

Mr. Steer asked if the new cell tower would be 5G. Mr. Weathers stated that they had not information regarding the tower so they were unable to answer that.

ADJOURN

At 6:15 pm, Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Thibodeau, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Krista Day
Executive Secretary