

**Minutes of Meeting
CONWAY BOARD OF SELECTMEN
January 2, 2024**

The Selectmen's Meeting convened at 4:08 pm at Conway 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

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

PRESENTATION/QUESTIONS FOR TAX ASSESSOR

Ms. Seavey thanked everyone for coming.

She reminded everyone that when she did open it up for questions that they needed to be general questions and that specific property questions needed to be answered by the Assessing Office by making an appointment.

Mary Beth Walker reviewed that she had been in before and went through another PowerPoint presentation (See Attached).

Ms. Seavey opened up the floor for questions.

There were a multitude of questions and comments from the public that Ms. Walker answered or instructed them to make an appointment as they were questions about specific properties.

Before ending this agenda item, Ms. Seavey encouraged people to make appointments with the assessing office to get any further questions answered.

DISCUSSION OF POLICE BOND ARTICLE WORDING

Mr. Eastman reviewed that there had been a discussion at the Budget Committee level regarding the use of verbiage relating to fund balance in the Police Bond Warrant Article.

Mr. Donohoe reviewed that his understanding of the conversation revolved around asking the Selectmen to remove any language about guaranteed use of fund balance in the warrant article as it may be confusing to voters.

He added though that he did not believe the Budget Committee was against the use of fund balance but would rather that commitment not be made in the actual warrant article.

The Board decided that they would not take action until after they heard back from the bond lawyers.

PUBLIC HEARING ON RSA 79-E: COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION TAX INCENTIVE

Ms. Seavey opened the public hearing at 4:50 pm.

Ryan O'Connor reviewed the language of the proposed tax incentive (See attached).

Ms. Seavey closed the public hearing at 4:55 pm.

VOTE TO PLACE COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION TAX INCENTIVE ARTICLE ON
THE 2024 WARRANT

Mr. Porter moved, seconded by Mr. Shepard, to place the Community Revitalization Tax Incentive Article on the 2024 Warrant as attached. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Eastman and Ms. Day will look into what wording needs to be on the warrant.

REVIEW OF RECEIPTS

The receipts were available for review.

SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

- a. Abatement of Taxes on Map/Lot 267-11
- b. Abatement of Taxes on Map/Lot 290-40
- c. Abatement of Taxes on Map/Lot 258-65
- d. Abatement of Taxes on Map/Lot 252-37.4
- e. Abatement of Taxes on Map/Lot 276-140.01
- f. Abatement of Taxes on Map/Lot 275-18.118
- g. Abatement of Taxes on Map/Lot 265-45.001
- h. Abatement of Taxes on Map/Lot 298-56.01
- i. Abatement of Taxes on Map/Lot 258-68.29
- j. Abatement of Taxes on Map/Lot 203-149
- k. Abatement of Taxes on Map/Lot 258-68.3
- l. Abatement of Taxes on Map/Lot 282-20
- m. Abatement of Taxes on Map/Lot 230-4.101
- n. Intent to Cut Wood/Timber on Map/Lot 240-24 and 240-16
- o. Intent to Cut Wood/Timber on Map/Lot 286-4 and 286-2

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

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

- a. AP Manifest dated 1/4/2024

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Thibodeau, to sign the AP manifest dated 1/4/2024. The motion carried unanimously.

RATIFICATION OF DOCUMENTS SIGNED OUT OF SESSION

- a. AP Manifest dated 12/28/2024
- b. Payroll dated 12/28/2024

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Thibodeau, to ratify the documents signed out of session as listed above. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATION(S)

(none)

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

(none)

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Mr. Eastman noted that Recreation Director Mike Lane had given an update on the Skating Rink and reported that the weather was still not cooperating.

Mr. Eastman noted that next week he would give a full report on the flood damage.

Mr. Eastman explained that Ways and Means Committee at the State level would be taking up HB 1258 the next day which would be the ability for a Town to charge a fee per night for hotel rooms/short term rentals.

Mr. Eastman encouraged the public to reach out to their representatives as the Town is not able to have the voters of Conway vote to charge these fees unless the bill passes.

Mr. Eastman also noted that they need to contact their representatives to get a Homestead bill passed at the State level as well to allow the Town to charge a different tax percentage to those who live here as their primary residence vs those who are second/third homeowners.

Mr. Thibodeau emphasized the importance of these bills.

Mr. DegliAngeli noted that in the past, Senator Bradley had not been favor of the homestead bill even though it is permitted in all of our surrounding states.

He noted that it would allow the Town to shift the burden from folks who live here to the people who have the means to own more than one property.

BOARD REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Mr. Shepard noted that the Budget Committee was meeting the next evening.

He stated that he understands that taxation is a very emotional issue, however, abusing the assessing department is disgusting, ridiculous and childish.

He explained that there is a proper way to go about asking questions and having your assessment reviewed.

He asked that people are respectful.

Mr. Colbath noted that the ZBA would be meeting on the 17th.

He added that he believes they are doing the best job they can and wanted to make it clear that they are not bringing in extra money.

Ms. Seavey thanked the people who attended the meeting.

She wanted to make it clear that the Board of Selectmen does not control the escalation in prices for homes which was the culprit of the increase in assessments.

She commended Ms. Walker.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND MEDIA QUESTIONS

Linda Burns stated that she was excited to see so many people here.

She hoped that the paper could do a positive story.

She said that she continues to choose to be educated.

Mr. Preston who commented during the revaluation presentation stated that he understands that the Town cannot regulate who purchase property, but questioned whether the Town saw this coming.

Steve Porter explained that on the commercial side of things, they had passed a moratorium on new hotel construction, however, for other things, they cannot deny people building permits if they meet the zoning ordinances and procedures as voted on by the voters.

Shawn Bergeron suggested that they put something on their homepage for people to contact their State Reps.

Bob Drinkhall complimented Ms. Seavey, Mr. Colbath and Mr. Shepard for their comments on the revaluation presentation.

Dave Bennett pled with the Board to do something to help everyone lower their taxes.

The Board encouraged him to see Ms. Walker.

Mr. Shepard asked Mr. Steer what the purpose was of putting the Selectmen's tax amounts in the paper.

Mr. Steer stated to look at 5 different individuals.

Mr. Steer asked where the money for abatements come from.

It was stated that it would come from the overlay fund.

Mr. Colbath noted that two years ago the city of Berlin went through this revaluation shock and it all worked itself out.

ADJOURN

At 6:07 pm, Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Shepard, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Krista Day
Executive Secretary