

**Minutes of Meeting
CONWAY BOARD OF SELECTMEN
February 20, 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

Ms. Seavey noted that they would be removing agenda item 7.

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

DISCUSSION OF HOUSE BILL 1254, HOTEL/MOTEL SURCHARGE

Mark Hounsell stated that he was proud of the leadership that this Board has given to the people of Conway.

He thanked the staff and others who traveled to Concord last month to testify in support of HB 1254.

He also thanked Tom Buco for being the prime sponsor of the bill, along with Representative David Paige and Representative Stephen Woodcock.

Mr. Hounsell stated that he was surprised and happy that it was voted 10-10 to go to the floor without recommendation.

He explained that now it will be a floor fight.

Mr. Hounsell noted that with the unjust shifting of the tax burden from the commercial to the residential properties, HB 1254 would provide real property tax relief for the people of Conway.

He explained that there is an unfairness that the people of Conway must foot the entire bill for those people who come to enjoy our town.

He stated that HB 1254 is a bill of fairness.

He explained that it would be a local option, not a requirement.

It would allow the Town to receive \$2 dollars per rented room per night.

Mr. Hounsell explained that he would look to reaffirm Mr. Thibodeau as the Board Legislative Liaison.

Mr. Thibodeau should be ready to reach out and communicate with all interested parties and attend the hearings in Concord.

Mr. Hounsell added that the people of Conway need to reach out to their representatives.

Mr. Thibodeau noted that he had spent the last two days making phone calls and that it appears that Republican leadership may be against this bill.

Mr. Thibodeau stated that it may not happen this year but that it won't be for lack of trying.

Steven Steiner stated that he is anti-tax and anti-user fee, but Conway needs help.

He stated that he believed it should be more than \$2 a night.

Ed Poliquin stated that as a republican himself, he does not understand why people are against this.

There was mention that the contact information for the district representatives would be put on the Town Website.

Mr. Hounsell thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak.

He wanted to say goodbye to everyone as he is looking to get out of political involvement.

He explained that while he is not a marine, he knows a lot of marines.

He stated that marines are taught not to lose; they fight.

He stated that after years of fighting, he is worn out.

PUBLIC HEARING PER RSA 40:13, II-B(A); 33:8-A, PETITION TO ACCEPT SETTLERS GREEN DRIVE AND THE PRIVATE PORTIONS OF COMMON COURT AS PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY

Mr. Thibodeau opened the public hearing at 4:44 pm.

Rob Barsamian from Settlers Green appeared before the Board and gave a quick history of the construction of the roads in and around Settlers Green.

He noted that people are using their roads currently to get to and from the North South Road.

He noted that the petitioned warrant article would ask that the voters accept their roads as town roads utilizing the betterment process to bring the road up to Town standards.

It was noted that the abutters would be the ones responsible for the bond payments for the construction.

Mr. Thibodeau asked why they would not just bring the roads up to Town standards first themselves.

Mr. DegliAngeli noted that there would be the chance that they Town would not vote to accept the road and that the money spend on bringing it up to Town standards would be for nothing.

It was noted that future maintenance would be the responsibility of the Town.

Amy Snow asked who would be maintaining the sidewalks.

Mr. DegliAngeli stated that the Town would if they took over the roads.

Mr. Thibodeau closed the public hearing at 5:21 pm.

DISCUSSION OF PATRIOTIC PURPOSES CONTRACT

Mr. Colbath asked if we needed to make a motion regarding HB 1254.

Ms. Day said she would come up with a motion during the next agenda item.

Recreation Director Mike Lane explained that the company that they use for fireworks has come forward to ask the Town to sign a three year contract for services on the 4th of July with a \$2,000 price increase each year.

He explained that they are in high demand and if they do not sign, they would be at risk of not being able to find a company.

Mr. Thibodeau asked what the difference in price would be if they chose not to hold them on the 4th.

Mr. Porter stated that he saw the increase each year as minimal and believed they should hold it on the 4th.

There was note that if for some reason the budget did not pass, they could potentially utilize funds from the Recreation Revolving Fund.

Mr. Porter moved, seconded by Ms. Seavey, to authorize the signing of the three year contract with Atlas for fireworks to be held on the 4th of July. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Porter moved, seconded by Mr. Colbath, to express the support of the Board of Selectmen for the passing of House bill 1254, Relative to an optional local public safety assessment on certain room occupancies. And further to encourage the people of Conway to write, email or call district representatives to express the importance that this bill would have on property tax relief for the Town of Conway. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION AND SIGNING OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF DISSOLUTION OF CVFD

Mr. Eastman explained that the next document was an acknowledgement of the transfer of debt from the CVFD to the Town when the district dissolves.

Mr. Thibodeau emphasized that these debts would continue to only be paid for through the water and sewer bills of those in the current district.

Amy Snow from the CVFD agreed and explained that different loans and debt the district currently holds.

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Shepard, to sign the acknowledgement of dissolution of CVFD. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF RECEIPTS

The receipts were available for review.

SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

- a. Agreement of Services for 2024 with Conway Area Humane Society
- b. Certification of Yield Taxes Assessed on Map/Lot 206-1
- c. Original Warrant Yield Tax Levy on Map/Lot 206-1
- d. Permanent Application for Property Tax Credits/Exemptions on Map/Lot 273-8
- e. 2024 Warrant

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Porter, to authorize the Chair to sign the Agreement of Services for 2024 with the Conway Area Humane Society. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Porter, to sign the document listed above in b. through e. motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

- a. AP Manifest dated 2/22/2024
- b. Payroll dated 2/22/2024

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Porter, to sign the AP manifest and payroll dated 2/22/2024. The motion carried unanimously.

RATIFICATION OF DOCUMENTS SIGNED OUT OF SESSION

(none)

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATION(S)

(none)

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

(none)

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Mr. Eastman noted that there had been confusion regarding whether Veterans would need to reapply for their tax credit if the warrant articles regarding those credits passed.

He stated that they would not need to.

Mr. DegliAngeli gave an update on the various grants related to housing that the Town had been applying for and receiving to help with zoning and housing.

BOARD REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Mr. Shepard noted that the public hearing for the Budget Committee had lasted 7.5 hours; he thought it went well.

Mr. Shepard brought attention to the coverage of the meeting by the Conway Daily Sun.

He noted that he felt he was misquoted and it was misleading.

He called the article divisive where in reality, he did not feel that way.

Mr. Colbath noted that the staff did a good job presenting the information.

While he felt some opinions are contentious, he did not find the behavior contentious.

Ms. Seavey stated that the disappointment for her was the number of people there.

She noted everyone attacks the Board and want change but then do not get involved.

Mr. Thibodeau gave the January airport report.

He stated he was disappointed with the Budget Committees voted on the ESAA warrant article.

Mr. Colbath noted that the ZBA was meeting the next night and had 8 hearings.

Mr. Porter noted that the Planning Board meets on Thursday.

He noted that the Master Plan process was nearing completion and would be holding an open house at Cranmore on Wednesday, February 28, 2024 from 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND MEDIA QUESTIONS

Wryan Feil wanted to say that if the Board wants to hear from the public on an issue, they need to hear both side of these issue.

He did not feel you should close comments off from those you don't agree with.

Daymond Steer from the Conway Daily Sun asked if Mr. Colbath and Mr. Porter planned to run for Selectmen again.

Mr. Colbath said he was and Mr. Porter stated that he did not plan to.

ADJOURN

At 6:24 pm the meeting adjourned by the call of the Chair.

Respectfully Submitted,

Krista Day
Executive Secretary