

**CONWAY VILLAGE FIRE DISTRICT
COMMISSIONER'S MEETING
Thursday, November 19, 2015 3:30 p.m.
Minutes**

Meeting was called to order at 3:30

Commissioners present: Janine Bean, Michael Digregorio, Joseph Quirk

Others present: Gregg Quint- Superintendent, Chief Solomon, and Amy Snow-Municipal Bookkeeper

Public present: Mr. & Mrs. William Masters

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Mr. Digregorio made a motion to approve items A through C, motion seconded by Mr. Quirk; motion passed 3-0-0.

- A. Ratify A/P Manifests and sign checks dated 11/19/2015
- B. Ratify Weekly Payroll and sign checks for week ending 11/15/15
- C. Approval and signing of Superintendent's and Fire Chief's time sheets for weeks ending 11/15/2015

Mrs. Bean signed the Superintendent's and Fire Chief's time sheets for weeks ending 11/15/2015

Mrs. Bean signed the Pre-application for wastewater asset management

Mr. Quirk made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes dated October 29, 2015, Mrs. Bean seconded the motion; motion passed 2-0-0. Mr. Digregorio abstained due to not attending that meeting.

Mr. Digregorio made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes dated November 12, 2015, Mrs. Bean seconded the motion; motion passed 2-0-0. Mr. Quirk abstained due to not attending that meeting.

BOC INFORMATION

The Board reviewed the Albany tax rate – they owe us \$1,065. Amy made a clarification to last week's discussion regarding the rate. It was stated that the taxes went up 32 cents (10%) but they went up 25 cents (8%) - we were comparing it to 2013 mistakenly instead of 2014. Discussion ensued around taxes and debt for next year but all the budgets are not done yet. Mrs. Bean hopes that if we go up in taxes we can hold steady with rates.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Masters came to Board to talk to them about the Fire Department and the finances of the district. He feels there is a lot of redundancy in services in the town and he thinks of this as one town. He feels there is a systemic problem within the town government and that it is antiquated and there are those that don't like change and he feels it is time to update. He feels the district is in a position to pave the way towards consolidation of the town. He spoke of the 1997 town warrant article that addressed the town assuming operational and financial responsibilities if any of the districts requested this of the town. He would like the district to look at relinquishing more of its responsibilities. He wanted to know how to word a warrant, do we want to get rid of everything at once or piece meal? Mr. Digregorio feels that we should combine things down the road but thinks that we have to fix revenue problems first, maybe using the fire department. The district residents pay more for fire than non-residents and this can be fixed with the new contract

(2017). He wants to be fair and equitable. He feels selling bulk water can make revenue on the water side. He said that even if we turn everything over to the town, the district is still going to have water and sewer debt that will be charged to the district residents. He mentioned that Dave Bernier has a presentation on how to sell bulk water but the NCWP commissioners do not want to hear it nor allow Dave to present it to us and he thinks this is almost disgusting. Mr. Masters' opinion is that if the district is abolished the town will take it over immediately but Mr. Digregorio questions how that will help the district. Mr. Masters thinks that once the town takes over it becomes town debt just as all the assets become theirs. As when, if the fire department is turned over it becomes a line item in the town budget, we do not have the tax base to afford what we got. He stated that this precinct has a chance to help the town (community) by trusting them to be fair and equitable. Mr. Digregorio stated that this still does not help the precinct with the debt. Discussion ensued regarding the school district. Mrs. Bean reminded everyone how hard it is just turning over the sidewalks. Mrs. Bean recounted a story of her grandmother's attempt to help get a school in Conway Village showing the history of how long there has been division in the town and she pointed out this district went to the town regarding a town wide fire department and connected to NCWP for both water and sewer. She also believes that we need one (1) town government.

The chief stated that the services he is supposed to provide are becoming increasingly more expensive and they will continue to grow exponentially, more than the village district tax base can afford. He feels that charging Albany and the Town more will not work. He feels the best interest of the district to either divest of the fire and ambulance service next year (2017) or dissolve the district completely in 2017. There are so many big ticket items that we cannot afford. He took this year's budget and warrant articles for the fire department and came up with a tax impact for just the fire department of \$2.58/\$1000 to the village. The same spread over the district and two non-precinct areas drops the impact to \$1.27/\$1000. Other districts are trying to hire full-time chiefs and build larger firehouses so the time is now. He explained how the town will benefit financially by taking over the fire department.

Amy stated that we don't need anyone's permission or need to negotiate with the town. If the district decides to close the doors to the fire department and liquidate, it will be the town that has to figure out what to do for fire suppression. Chief Solomon said it would be in the best interest of the district taxpayer to work with the town and Amy agreed. Mr. Digregorio feels we could turn over the building, and equipment lock stock and barrel and still get the same protection we are getting now. Mrs. Bean said that we need to talk about this more and as a board figure out what is best for the district. The Chief feels that because our meeting is the first of the Annual Meetings, we could impact what other precincts do.

The chief also explained how other areas of the town could get services not available to them now like inspections. Mr. Masters said he was going to research what would happen to the debt if the district dissolved. Mrs. Bean iterated that we combined the ambulance with the fire to help keep it but it is not working. The Chief wanted to know what the commissioners need for information, he was told that any info he can get, Mr. Digregorio wants to know how much the fire department is worth. The chief wants permission to speak with town staff as well; he said the district's best interest is his goal.

Discussion ensued regarding rate schedules. Mrs. Bean said 25% of the district do not, and most likely will not, get sewer service but they pay towards debt. Amy stated that they still benefit indirectly. It was stated that the water and sewer would not be town wide - only district if the town took over. Mr. Masters was asked to come to our December 3rd meeting to present what he finds out. Mr. & Mrs. Masters left the meeting at 4:39.

FIRE CHIEF'S BUSINESS

Chief Solomon verified the quote from Superior Insulation and it is what was stated last week. He needs it done before the end of the year but does not have a time from them yet. The dry hydrant in front of Dave Weather's house was replaced. Mr. Digregorio mentioned that Chief Solomon is the only one that tests his hydrants; the chief said we test the ones in Albany as well.

SUPERINTENDANT'S BUSINESS

Mr. Quint stated the brick building by the school is appraised at \$8000. There is one caveat – if it is not sold to the people living there, there could be an issue with the railroad. Mrs. Bean asked about selling it to the railroad and wants them contacted. Mr. Digregorio told Mr. Quint to contact the school as well.

The water budget was handed out. The commissioners asked to have what is spent to date for water and sewer and to e-mail them to the commissioners.

OTHER BUSINESS

The chief mentioned that he hired Jonathan Powers as the new Full-time Firefighter, he will start December 1st.

Mrs. Bean asked how the application process was going and was told that we received 38 applications and the Superintendent will be going through them next week.

Amy handed out an updated list of properties with sprinkler risers that showed who was not back-flow compliant and showed the commissioners a letter sent to them in March giving them three (3) years to comply due to the magnitude of the cost involved. This list also showed how many properties do not have sewer, (attached). She spoke to them about income from sprinkler risers and backflow fees from both sprinkler system backflow preventers and domestic backflow preventers. Chief Solomon explained what a backflow preventer does – protects our water system from icky water backing up into our system. It was stated that once we are set-up we will be doing the backflow testing our self. Mr. Digregorio wants to know what the loaded labor cost is for this. Dave Mercier stuck his head in, discussion ensued regarding Defelice not paying subs; the commissioners want to know when subs are not getting paid. Discussion ensued regarding time-line for paying Defelice.

Mrs. Bean wants a letter to go out to warn people of the sprinkler charge.

The letter to the State Elected Officials was reviewed and edited to be sent to all representatives and Senator Bradley regarding HB 376 (attached).

FUTURE DATES

- A. Next Commissioner's meeting 12/3/2015
- B. Conway Village Enhancement Committee 12/9/2015

It was stated that New Years Eve and Christmas Eve were on Thursdays and we are not meeting on those nights so the meetings may have to be on Wednesday.

Meeting was adjourned without objection at 5:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Snow, Municipal Bookkeeper