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MINUTES OF THE
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING OF
November 6, 2019

A meeting of the Conservation Commission was held on November 6, 2019 at the Salem Town Hall, 33 Geremonty Drive, Salem, NH.

PRESENT:  Ruth Isaks, Chairman; Linda Harvey, Vice-Chairman; Dave Blake, Secretary; Donald Marotte; Crystal Napoli, Alternate; and Karri Makinen, Community Development Coordinator.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Isaks introduced the commission members and went over the agenda.

OTHER COMMISSION BUSINESS

1. Review of Minutes – October 2, 2019

MOTION by Mr. Blake to accept the minutes of the October 2, 2019 meeting.
SECOND by Mr. Marotte.

VOTE ON MOTION: 5 – 0
UNANIMOUS

2. Conservation Fund Report

Chairman Isaks said that there were deposits into Citizens Bank and Salem Coop and as of September 2019 the balance in Citizens Bank is about $781,190. And in Salem Coop it is about $228,974. The total balance is 1,010,164.99.

Chairman Isaks mentioned that at our last meeting, the Conservation Commission accepted a $1,000 donation from Edward Hawkins. The acceptance of those expenses needs to be approved by the Board of Selectmen, which they did at their November 4, 2019 meeting.

Mrs. Harvey said it was a donation, not an expense.

Chairman Isaks it was a $1,000 donation from Edward Hawkins. Next is our report from the Treasurer John Sytek, about investing our funds. We got a report and it differs with investing in CD’s which she assumes he means by the investment at the Citizens Bank, and the short term investment, as well as investment in treasury bills. He has done calculations. Both of those are essentially 100% safe. The Treasury bills certainly are, and are guaranteed by the Federal Government. The CDs are also essentially 100 percent safe because they are guaranteed by the
bank. If anything happens with respect to the bank, they give us a certain percentage on the CDs.

Mr. Sytek did calculations and it looks as if rates using Treasury bills ends up being a bit more
profitable than CD’s at Citizens Bank. The question we have been tossing back and forth, is
whether to go with the Treasury bills, which can be done at Citizens Bank, as well as the CDs.
We can decide if we want to put all the money in one or the other. The Treasury bills are more
profitable. We could also put half in Treasury bills and the other half in CDs, and see how they
do. We can switch when they end up becoming due, if one is better than the other. One reason to
split it, is that if you feel uncomfortable with Treasury bills, but more comfortable with CDs,
doing it 50/50 may be reasonable.

Mr. Blake said, it looks like we make out better going to Citizens Bank for the Treasury bills. Its
90 days. He is inclined to go that way.
Chairman Isaks asked Ms. Makinen if she has the memo he sent with the calculations on it. The
Treasury bills give a better yield. They are a little further timeline. But if we did both, we could
see how they both fare. With the CDs, we’d be able to draw the money within 90 days. But there
is a penalty for either one.

There was discussion of Mr. Sytek’s memo.

Ms. Makinen said, the account through Citizens Bank is 1.4% for 90 days. He used $300,000 as
an example amount, and said it would earn $1,050. The Treasury bills earn 1.93 % but charges a
fee of $45 for each transaction. So the earnings would be $1,402 on the same $300,000 for 90
days.
Mr. Blake suggested putting everything in the Treasury bill and pay the $45 fee.
Ms. Makinen said, the Treasury bill earns more. Mr. Sytek calls it a money market (CD), and it
is more flexible so you can pull out before 90, but with the “T” bill you are in there for the full
90 days.
Mr. Blake asked, there is no penalty for pulling out with the CD?
Ms. Makinen said, he didn’t say, he just said the CD offers more flexibility. For the “T” bills
there is no way to get it out before 90 days.
Mrs. Harvey said, we have no major expenses on the horizon that she is aware of. Anything that
may develop, would take at least 90 days before we have to make a significant deposit because
we have to do groundwork first. That costs money, but not a significant amount. She suggested
that we look at doing about $900,000 into the Treasury bills. We know that we won’t need that at
least for 90 days. It leaves about $110,000, which is quite adequate. It is more than what we need
to cover anything that comes up in the next 3 months. She suggested leave $50,000 to cover
anything and do some combination with the balance of it, to get the most bang for the buck.
Salem Coop is doing 1%. Citizen Bank’s 90 day account rate is 1.4%. What is the 1.7 % rate?
Ms. Makinen said, he is talking about the affective rate of the Treasury bill, which varies
depending on how much you invest.
Mrs. Harvey suggested we close out Salem Coop and put $900,000 into the “T” bills and get the
most bang for our buck. That leaves $110,000 out. Put all but $50,000, so put $60,000 into the 90
day account for the CD. Keep $50,000 out for expenses. We’ll have town forest expenses, and
the town forest parking lot. That’s probably it until next year.
Chairman Isaks said that we should be able to go back and see what we have had for expenses for the last year.

Ms. Makinen said, the fund report shows 2019.

Mrs. Harvey said the big expense in January this year was for the town forest, paying for land assistance from Southeast Land Trust. It was $5,400 in April for the same thing. There were also the signs, which were $137.85. We may have to buy paint. We have nothing over the next 90 days. Max it out as much as you can.

Chairman Isaks said, we have $500,000, and we said we’d put in half.

Ms. Makinen said, there is just over $1 million total in the fund. John Sytek recommended taking all the money in the Citizens Bank account and investing that, and leave the $250,000 in the Salem Coop account. But Linda Harvey’s proposal is more aggressive. We don’t have a lot of big expenses so we could be more aggressive.

Mrs. Harvey said, the problem with the Salem Coop account is, if we needed to write more than 3 checks in a month, we get hit with fees. It is a limited account for check writing. She would leave money for expenses in Salem Coop because it gets a higher percent. She hopes we don’t go over 3 checks. And if we do, spread them out.

Chairman Isaks asked, what is in the Salem Coop account now?

Mr. Blake said, $228,974.

Mrs. Harvey said, roughly $229,000.

Chairman Isaks suggested that we work on this more.

Ms. Makinen said, the longer you wait, the more money that you are missing out on.

Chairman Isaks said, we just got this.

Ms. Napoli thinks it would be appropriate to be more aggressive with investing now. The discussion, if it is $900,000, do we want all that tied up for 90 days? We may not see anything coming up. We would still make money with the CD. You could do $800,000 and $100,000.

Mrs. Harvey said, or you could do $300,000, $300,000, and $300,000, and every 3 months do the renewal for $300,000. Then the first one comes up for renewal, and if you don’t have anything you can reinvest. Is there a 30 day option for the CD?

Ms. Makinen said that Mr. Sytek didn’t mention it.

Chairman Isaks said we should leave $100,000 in Salem Coop and then divide $900,000. We have $100,000 in Salem Coop to use for expenses, and take $900,000 and do $450,000 in “T” bills and $450,000 in CDs.

Mrs. Harvey suggested that we put it all in “T” bills.

Chairman Isaks clarified, so $900,000 in the “T” bills and $100,000 in Salem Coop.

Mrs. Harvey said, and $10,000 is additional.

Ms. Napoli said she just worries about not being able to access the funds.

Ms. Makinen said, she is not sure of the legality of this, but she thinks it may be possible to borrow money from the town if something came up, as a short term loan.

Mrs. Harvey said, we can borrow from Salem Coop, because other commissions have done that.
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Mr. Blake asked, do we have any projection of what could come in, in those three months?
Mrs. Harvey said, there is nothing.
Ms. Makinen said, any land acquisition project would take more than 3 months. There is nothing even close right now.

**MOTION by Mr. Blake to put $900,000 into Treasury bills through Citizens Bank, and keep $110,000 in Salem Coop for anything that comes up.**
**SECOND by Ms. Napoli.**

Mr. Marotte said, he would have liked to see some of it go into CD’s but he is good with it.

There was more discussion.

**VOTE ON MOTION: 5 - 0**

**UNANIMOUS**

3. Town Forest
Chairman Isaks said, neither Mr. Edwards nor Ron Klemarczyk are able to be here tonight. Ron is eager to start the timber harvest. The only question we have to discuss is that the yield from the town forest will be around $7,200 but we need about $2,100 to pay Ron’s fees. There has been a suggestion to do additional logging, but we can propose that his fees come from the conservation fund itself.

Ms. Makinen said, the amount is very approximate right now because it depends on the harvest. If trees are rotted they are not worth anything, so it is up in the air. She said that Mr. Klemarczyk believes that he usually marks conservatively, so his estimates are usually on the low side to be safe. So there may be enough from that. It is possible that he could mark a few more trees in areas of difficult terrain that he thought would be difficult to get through, but that the logger felt he could reach. He could cut into buffer along the trails, and there would be some additional trees cut where the logging road will be that he didn’t count, so there will be a few extras there.
Chairman Isaks thinks there are additional areas that can be logged for additional funds, but she isn’t sure if that’s the direction we should go. We should do the logging as it was planned and consider paying his expenses from the conservation fund.
Ms. Makinen said that Glen did email saying that he agreed with Ron’s recommendation to try to cut some extra if it is possible, safe and appropriate to do that. She thinks there is a compromise where there may be extra trees cut and the numbers coming out higher than predicted, but maybe we end up spending some from the conservation fund also. She thinks there is a middle ground. Chairman Isaks said that the harvest may be questionable in terms of value of trees and amount cut.

Mrs. Harvey said, Ron marked the ones that need to come out for habitat maintenance. If more needed to come out, he would have marked them already. She is not inclined to have more come out than what has already been suggested or needed. We have enough in the fund. We should have them do what they think is best, and if we need to take some from the conservation fund to
pay for Mr. Klemarczyk’s work, we can do that at the time. We’ll know that at the end.
Regarding marking additional trees, if they are not needed for habitat maintenance, she wouldn’t
do that. She would leave it up to Glen and Ron to decide.

Ms. Napoli said that is how she feels too. Especially if they get close to the trails or buffer areas.
Mrs. Harvey said, we don’t do the harvest to make money, we do it for habitat and to have a
healthier forest. The harvest is necessary to keep the forest healthy. It is selective cutting. We
take out the unhealthy trees.
Ms. Makinen said, so you want to cut what is necessary for the health of the forest and not cut
extra just to make money. She will pass that along. It may be appropriate to authorize up to
$2,100 from the conservation fund to pay Mr. Klemarczyk’s fees if necessary. Or we can
authorize more than that as a maximum amount.

Mrs. Harvey asked, will he want to get paid before the next meeting?
Ms. Makinen said, we can probably wait until the next meeting, and he will probably send an
invoice.
Mrs. Harvey suggested that we wait until we have the actual number.

Chairman Isaks asked, so we will indicate to him that we’ll pay his fees?
Ms. Makinen said yes, whatever is above and beyond the timber harvest proceeds.
Chairman Isaks asked, do we need a motion for that?
Ms. Makinen said she doesn’t know if that is necessary.
Chairman Isaks said, it may be, because we are authorizing payment from the conservation fund.
Ms. Makinen said, you are not doing that now, unless you want to. But it sounds like you want to
wait until next month.
Chairman Isaks said, our intent is to pay his fees.

4. Conservation Commission Goals

Chairman Isaks asked, were the ATV signs replaced? Did Glen Edwards request those additional
signs?
Ms. Makinen said, at the last meeting, he asked her to remove that goal from the list, so she did.
Chairman Isaks also mentioned the fence that was going to be installed. You indicated that they
haven’t gotten back to you yet?
Ms. Makinen said, she heard from them tonight. She will meet with them on Tuesday, at the site
to make sure they know where it’s going and that it’s the right size, and then she will order it.
She asked if anyone else wants to go.
Mr. Marotte said he may be available.
Chairman Isaks mentioned the monarch butterfly conservation. At the NHACC this past
weekend, there was a person there, Vicky Jane Brown with New Hampshire Natural Resources.
She is involved with habitat restoration for pollinators. She would like to come and talk to us
about the monarchs, as well as the other pollinators. She has a group called Pollinator Pathways,
and she has a brochure. She would like to come and talk to us and has suggested either January
or February. When do we start working on butterflies again?

Mr. Marotte said, it depends on the species, but it’s around there.
Chairman Isaks suggested April. She will get in touch with Ms. Brown.

Chairman Isaks said, one item is the lead tackle buyback program. She asked Mr. Blake if he
heard back about that.
Mr. Blake said, it is on hold until April. The closest place for buyback is Raymond. There is
nothing in this area. He asked them about connecting with Dick’s Sporting Goods in Salem, and
they didn’t get back to him on that. He asked them if he could go and speak with Dick’s, but they
didn’t get back to him.
Chairman Isaks said, they also sent you information on loon eggs that they are testing.

There was discussion of the egg testing and contamination issue.

Mr. Blake said, the loon preservation will let him know when they have results. The eggs are
sent out of the country to be tested.
Mrs. Harvey asked, has this information been given to the Board of Selectmen?
Ms. Makinen said, it was not formally presented to them.
Mrs. Harvey said, that one chemical that was mentioned is the one that the State gave zero
tolerance for in the water. She thinks the Board of Selectmen should be made aware of what
showed up in an egg shell.
Ms. Makinen said she can bring it to the Town Manager.
Chairman Isaks explained that it is a widespread contamination but the chemicals have been
phased out by the industry when they discovered the health issues with them.

5. Discussion of warrant article

Chairman Isaks said that the warrant article is retaining town owned property. This will go to the
Board of Selectmen on Monday November 18th. She read the warrant article, regarding obtaining
a parcel of land. This is off of Partridge Circle, map 8, lot 5900.
Ms. Makinen said, on November 18th, the Board of Selectmen will review all potential warrant
articles as concepts. She drafted these based on prior ones. The Board of Selectmen will give an
idea if they’ll sponsor them. If the Board of Selectmen don’t want to take up these articles, then
the Conservation Commission can do it themselves as a citizen’s petition, and you will need to
collect signatures and those would be due in January. The first one is map 8, lot 5900, which is
off Partridge Circle. This is one that we looked at before. It is surrounded almost completely by
other conservation land. There is a conservation easement on three sides of it, and another part of
it is bordering town owned conservation land. And to the west, is the Windham town forest. It is
part of a big block of land we’re hoping to protect. Its town owned. We are asking that it be
designated as conservation land that would be protected and the Conservation Commission
would control it. The next one is about the town forest maintenance fund. This fund was
established by a town meeting vote in 1983, but when the town forest was established, the fund
was never created. When it was first established, it said $1,500 each year would be kept, and retained in the town forest maintenance fund, and the rest would go in the general fund. In 1993, it was amended. It was decided that, 50% of the timber harvest, or $1,500, whichever was greater would be held in the conservation fund, and the rest would go in the general fund. In practice, all of the timber harvest money has gone into the conservation fund. This article would allow the Conservation Commission to keep 100% of the timber harvest proceeds in the specially designated forest maintenance fund that’s required by law.

Mrs. Harvey suggested adding the term “with no cap” because we have to get rid of the $1,500. Ms. Makinen said, the Board of Selectmen will be reviewing these on the 18th, so it would be a good meeting to pay attention to. At the December meeting, we will have a direction from them and will know if we need to do a citizen’s petition.

MOTION by Mr. Blake to adjourn.
SECOND by Mr. Marotte.

VOTE ON MOTION: 5 - 0
UNANIMOUS

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Minutes by: Susan Strugnell, Conservation Commission Recording Secretary
Approved: Conservation Commission

Date: