MINUTES
COVENTRY TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2019, 6:30 executive session in Town Hall Conference
Room B and 7:30 P.M. in
TOWN HALL Annex

1. Julie Blanchard, Chair called the Town Council meeting to order at 6:32 in
conference room B of the Town Hall the full Council was present as well as John
Elsesser, David Petrone, Robert Carroll, Attorney Kevin Roy and Jenifer Beausoleil,
Mary Kortmann, Barbara Paree, Kristi Williams, Gene Marchand.

Jonathan Hand moved to go into executive session pursuant to CGS 1-200(6)(D) for
the purposes of discussing the proposed Teachers Contract, Seconded by Matthew
O’Brien Sr. and unanimously approved by the Council members.

The council left executive session at 7.25 and Julie Blanchard directed the Council to
reconvene the meeting in the annex.

2. Call to Order, Roll Call
The December 16, 2019 Meeting of the Town Council was called to order by
Council Chairperson Julie Blanchard at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Hall annex.

Members Present:
Julie Blanchard - Chair
Matthew O’Brien – Vice Chair
Richard Williams – Secretary
Lisa Conant
Jonathan B. Hand
Matthew D. O’Brien, Jr.
Lisa Thomas

John A. Elsesser - Town Manager

3. Pledge of Allegiance
Recited by Members and the audience.

4. Audience of Citizens
Howard Haberern, 80 Cassidy Hill Road – Relayed some of his history in Coventry since
1971. The town was fractured between the South side, North side, and farmers. As a
Boy Scout leader he was berated for allowing a scout from the other side of town to join.
The police department was not run well; the State became involved and provided
training. Mr. Haberern related other issues that he experienced during this chaotic period.
That has all changed in recent years. The current Council membership may turn those
changes for the better around. The Republicans did not win the majority for the school
board; Bill Oros won the majority for the party. Republication party embarrassed itself in
recent months. Haberern is affronted by the actions of the O’Brien’s and how they will
act in future actions.

Robin Gallagher, 984 Main Street – Was at the previous meeting when she and members
of the audience asked for an apology from two members of the Council for behavior
exhibited at a Board of Education meeting. No apology has been forthcoming. Lack of appreciation that the behavior was inappropriate and a lack of moral fiber or integrity to issue an apology once it is owing. She is disappointed. The two in question have extensive experience with town politics, understand how meetings are held, and they are not very good listeners. Ms. Gallagher understands apologizing is difficult. The apology to Mr. Oros and the CI students is still owing; she listed other people to whom apologies are needed. Her statement was provided to the Town Manager for inclusion with the minutes.

Emma Eaton – 41 Sean Circle – Stand before you again because apologies have not been issued by Mr. O’Brien, Sr. or Mr. O’Brien, Jr. for the behavior during and after the Board of Education meeting of November 14, 2019. No apology has been forthcoming despite multiple residents’ request. Ms. Eaton related the behavior that happened at the meeting and online. Children and teenagers are taught to treat people with respect. The children are seeing these actions. The O’Briens are supposed to be leaders in the Town and role models for youth and adults. Eaton related some statements that O’Brien, Jr. made last year and ask that he listen to his words and respond accordingly. He and his father have demonized Mr. Oros for his nomination for the chair of the Board of Education. Constituents and the entire community want you to work with the Board of Education and each other. Adversarial actions do nothing for the town. Again, public apologies are needed to those listed previously. She also requests that her statement be read into the minutes.

Kathleen Breitenwischer, 61 Barbara Drive - Requested the Council’s full attention. To Mr. Matt O’Brien, Jr. she noticed at this segment of the last meeting seemed not to be listening. Suggests he give people here his undivided attention as are the other members of the Council. Have not heard any support of the behavior of the Misters O’Brien at the Board of Education meeting. Still waiting for an apology. An apology is difficult to make, but it is the right thing to do. Breitenwischer’s sixth grade son suggested to Mr. O’Brien, Jr. take the online digital citizenship class that all students are required to take to learn what is and is not appropriate on the internet. The ramifications of what O’Brien, Jr. posted are still being felt. Will be listening and waiting for the apology. She requests that these be added to the minutes.

Jessica Hall, 745 Merrow Road – Before you again stating that the O’Brien’s owe an apology to Mr. Oros for the way they behaved toward him during and after. Also to the CI students; others people were listed to which an apology is owed. She requests that this statement be read into the minutes.

Katherine Kennelly, 2293 Main Street – Listened carefully to the concerns from the speakers at the last meeting and then to Matt O’Brien, Jr.’s comments later in the meeting and they totally missed the point. She related her understanding of the events that transpired at the Board of Education meeting. The behavior that occurred may have been motivated by politics, but the behavior was inappropriate. The issue continues to be non-political. We hope all elected officials will act in the best interest of our town. Citizens responsibility to be aware of what is happening and speak up when we have a concern. At this point, it would be difficult to consider an apology sincere. However, this concern is not going away and citizens will continue to monitor the behavior of these two individuals for the rest of their term of office. She would like her comments included in the minutes.
John French, 392 Pucker Street – If anyone should have an apology it is the Republican candidates. The last Democrat mailer was mostly an attack on Matt O’Brien, Jr. The O’Briens seem to be a scapegoat. The night of the election Lisa Thomas sent out an email stating that the governor contacted her to see how the election was going. He said, “Go, fight, win.” She followed it up (Mr. Hand has a copy) by saying that he also said, “We should make sure to beat the white nationalists.” On November 11th on Eyes of Windham that French hosted he requested that Ms. Thomas step down. Cannot think that someone with such hatred in her communications could work for the good of the town. We tried to communicate with Mr. Oros many times. He was promised by his wife before the meeting that Bill would contact him that day. Saw Mr. Oros fifteen minutes before the Board of Education meeting. That is when we found out what Bill’s intentions were. Hard to imagine the outcome while the party supported him during his illness and the election. The Republicans won the majority all the way through. What happened at the Board of Ed meeting was justifiable since they were trying hard to talk to Bill. Mr. French can’t imagine what would have happened if the Democrats had it happen to them. Time to put all of this behind us and do what the political signs said no matters whose they were. Throughout town it was Coventry First. Tonight we should start looking at Coventry First and stop this that people deserve apologies. This is politics. It is for moving forward. Society today is horrid at a national level, it is just insane. We should not let this infiltrate Coventry, not at the local level. Follow Coventry First. We should keep an eye on all them. They should be put in place to protect our well-being in this community.

The portion of the meeting was closed by the Chair.

**Motion:** I move that we move up item 9.E. 19/10-31: Consideration/Authorization: Acceptance Of Donation To Coventry Police Department.

By: O’Brien, Sr.  Seconded: Hand

**Voting:**
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

**9.E. 19/10-31: Consideration/Authorization: Acceptance of Donation To Coventry Police Department**
Blanchard stated that Officer Ted Opdenbrouw was present. Elsesser provided background that any gifts to the Town must be approved by the Town Council. The person wishes to remain anonymous.

Sargent Ted Opdenbrouw was asked by Chief Palmer to speak on his behalf at this meeting. A long-term Coventry couple approached the Chief and stated their desire to donate funds purchase equipment for the department to express their appreciate of the efforts of the department to the community. The department has been looking to enhance their firearms training program with a simmitions systems. This system fires a plastic projectile from the handgun. Used throughout the country in law enforcement and military training. It is well used and well known and well accepted. Moving in that direction to keep their training up. This equipment has been discussed with the donors.
and they are excited to move forward with purchasing the equipment for the department. The cost of two simnitions barrels is approximately $1,000.

**Motion:** I make the motion to accept this donation.

*By: Williams*  
*Seconded: O’Brien, Sr.*

Discussion: Thanks were expressing to the donors. The officer explained the system. There is a conversion kit that goes on the barrel of a handgun. Buy special ammunition. It fires a plastic projectile that has a marker in it, such as paint, so you know where you hit. The benefit you can create real-life scenarios that produces stress on the officers so they become acclimated to that and see how they respond. Analyze how the scenario how played out. Elsesser added that plastics versus metals has less environmental impact. Thomas confirmed with the Officer that these are to be used during training purposes. Such training will likely be conducted in Coventry. Coventry currently uses an Airsoft system in Willimantic that isn’t as realistic. Simnitions system provides a better type of training. The department is looking for training locations in town; they do have an agreement with Willimantic to have that facility at our disposal at no cost. Other benefits are that you are using your own firearm and the ammunition capacity of, perhaps, eleven is more real world where the officer would have to reload under stress.

*Voting:*
*For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams*
*Against: None*
*Abstain: None*

**Motion:** I make the motion that we move up item 9.D. 19/20-30: Revaluation Status Update: Michael D’Amicol, Assessor.

*By: O’Brien, Sr.*  
*Seconded: Thomas*

*Voting:*
*For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams*
*Against: None*
*Abstain: None*


Mike D’Amicol has been the Assessor for about twelve years minus a couple of deployments. This is the third revaluation during his tenure under a five-year cycle by State law. D’Amicol presented using a PowerPoint slideshow. An increase in the assessment does not equate to an increase in taxes. Elsesser stated that the bottom line if every property went up by the same value then the mil rate would go down by a proportional amount and then add in what the next fiscal year is. Some people have been paying over in taxes, some people have been paying under. There is no one statement. But if your value went up it does necessarily mean you will have an increase in taxes. If your value went down there is a likelihood you are going to be paying less in taxes. When you receive your assessment ask yourself if you feel that your house is valued right, the fair market value. Because the Grand List is rising it is likely our mil rate will softly go down. Elsesser noted that commercial property only makes up about 5% of the Grand List for those people who are complaining about how commercial/industrial we
are getting. We are at the bottom of the state. Right up there with Roxbury, Kent. That piece of the pie includes all of our utility providers. Our neighbors in Bolton have much bigger than that. Reviews of assessments can be conducted until the Grand List is signed on January 31, 2020.

5. Acceptance of Minutes
November 12, 2019
Motion - I move that we accept the Minutes of the November 12, 2019 meeting.

By: O’Brien, Sr. Seconded: Williams

Discussion: Hand makes the recommendation that the minutes include the designation of junior or senior every time one of the O’Briens is mentioned. So there is clarity in which person is being referred to. Blanchard also suggests signifying the last name with either L. Conant or L. Thomas speak.

With the following corrections:
• Under remarks of retiring Council, the end of the 6th line down – remove the “a”.
• Third line up from the same paragraph – there should be an apostrophe in “Manager’s”.
• Bottom line on the first page - correct the spelling of “privilege”.
• Page 2, fourth line down – “serviced” should be “served”.
• Page 2, next paragraph, second line - insert the word “he” to make it “He added that he is very…”; take out the word “council’s”; spell “council” correct; comma after the word “made,“.
• Continuing to below Sustainable CT – “achieve” should be “achieving”.
• Continuing two lines down – change “annual average…” to “average annual…”.
• Third line up from the same paragraph – Melissa’s name needs to have an “s” added.
• At the very bottom of page 2 – insert an apostrophe to indicate possessive to “Council”.
• Second paragraph, line starting Ad Hoc Senior committee – change “begin…” to “begin to…”
• Next paragraph down, Mike Sobol said – add an “s” to “congratulations”.
• Six lines down of the same paragraph – add “to” after “listen”.
• Two lines down – add an apostrophe to the end of “girls”.
• Julie’s comments, third line – there is a “has” missing.
• Top of the page, second line – the ‘r’ in readiness should be capitalized.
• Page 3, second paragraph, Lisa C’ s comments – first word in the second line should be “Had”.
• Fourth paragraph – missing an “n” on John; insert “it” after “said”.
• Page 4, last paragraph, 3rd line down – change “out” to “our”; next line change “girl’s” to “girls”.
• In O’Brien, Sr.’s motion – remove the second instance of “move”.
• Last paragraph, second line from the bottom – add “everyone” after “thanked”.
• Last page of the minutes, first paragraph, third line up from the bottom – add an “n” to “Tow”.
• Thomas’ comments, third sentence, second line – change “2005” to “2007”. 2005 included were incorrect and she wishes to have it corrected to 2007-2016.
• Also in those comments – change “Lake to “Lakes”.

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• Second paragraph starting with Matt O’Brien, Sr. — add an “s” to “Member”; also correct “retooing” to “returning”.
• In Thomas’ comments she was talking about the motivation to run for Town Council for the first time, which did take place in 2005. Her submitted comments were correct.

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

November 18, 2019
Motion - I move that we accept the Minutes of the November 18, 2019 meeting.

By: O’Brien, Sr.  Seconded: Thomas

With the following corrections:
• Page 1, third line up from the paragraph under Audience of Citizens — add a “.” after “civility”.
• Page 2, Emma Eaton’s comments, end of the first line — add “a” after “been”; fourth line from the end — add “who” after “students”.
• Similar corrections to be made in Robin Gallagher’s comments as those in Eaton’s comments.
• Second paragraph up from the bottom — remove the punctuation after “apology”.
• Last line of the page — change “bade” to “made”.
• Page 3, Kelly Sobol’s comments — change “bade” to “made”.
• Same correction to add “who” after “students”; same corrections in Jessica Hall’s comments.
• Page 5, last bullet — change “wall to “walls”.
• Page 6, last paragraph, third line down — “barrier” to “barriers”; change “it” to “them” in the next line; three lines from there — change “barrier” to “barriers”.
• Top of the page — change “CE DEEP” to “CT DEEP”.

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

6. Consent Agenda
All items listed with an asterisk (*) will be acted on by one motion. There will be no separate discussion on these items unless a Council member so requests in which case, the item will be removed from the consent agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda.

Motion - I move that we accept the Consent Agenda.

By: Thomas  Seconded: O’Brien, Jr.

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams

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7. Reports:

7.A. Council Chairwoman: Julie A. Blanchard

- Attended a CCM convention. Sat in seminar about housing.
- LECC – Local Emergency Coordinating Committee meeting was held the Thursday of the month.
- Fire Merger Study Committee is hoping to speak to the Council at a meeting in January.
- Christmas in the Village happened and well attended.

7.B. Council Members:

Conant:
Conant, Thomas, O’Brien, Sr attended the Wreaths across America ceremony. The ceremony was moving, well attended, and the weather cooperated. Thanks to the Cemetery Commission, Elsesser, Fire departments, and the town staff for helping that event go so well.

Hand:
- Echoes the comments of Blanchard about Christmas in the Village; it was a fantastic event for all ages. Shout out to the Lions, Village Partnership, and everyone for making it all possible.
- Today attended PJ Day/Movie night at Coventry High School. Amazing event right here in Coventry – the home of PJ Day. The event reminded him of what a great community we have.
- Wreaths Across America was very moving. Such a heartfelt tribute to our fallen heroes. Congratulations to the members of the Cemetery Commission. And thank you to the Fire Departments for displaying the flags over Route 31; it really set the tone for those arriving to the event. Thank you to Elsesser and the other town staff that supported this effort, emergency staff, EMS, all of that. Kudos to the three female high school students who performed a fantastic a cappella rendition of our national anthem. Boy and girl scouts attended and actively participated. A big thank you to Hannah Cole and the high school band for a job well done. A special shout out to the trumpet players who performed in echo Taps.
- Heard from a couple of folks about the revaluation hearing process. Their experience with it is that it has been very professional and fair. Encourage people to see the Assessor if they do not understand the revaluation they receive.
- Echoing Blanchard’s comments on the CCM convention. It was an honor to be there when the Town got presented with their Silver Certification. One of only fourteen towns in the state for Sustainable CT. Items surfaced that are sustainable and that will save the town money. Also attended the workshop on housing. How to develop low income housing and housing alternatives.

Thomas:
- Wanted to recognized the loss of Tim Ackert’s wife publicly. It doesn’t matter the letters after your name. He and his family have contributed and been supportive of the community. Elsesser added that Teddie will be missed.

7.C. Finance Committee: Matthew O’Brien, Sr., Chairperson
- Did talk about the Board of Ed preschool fund as members were not entirely familiar with how that works.
• Talked about the Board’s tuition fund account and had some questions.
• Talked about the Town’s LOSIPs balances. Right now there is about $105,000 available. Expecting an additional $100,000 from the State in the spring.
• Four years of data were given to the committee about garbage and recycling fees. There has been a dramatic change in the last two years of the fee that was received for recycling. We are now paying for recycling and have been charged a fee for dirty recycling. The cost for recycling for this fiscal year will be about 13% higher. It is 44% higher than it was for fiscal year 18. We will have to keep an eye on that account.
• Went over the results for the bond offering and monies that might be available for other uses.
• Talked about the money for lake management. A report was given showing that since 2015 the Town has spent $60,217 for fanwort expenditures; $160,670 for hydrilla expenses; $14,504 for general monitoring and $42,848 has been transferred for the lake gate and dock purchase. There is currently $66,346 remaining in the account. The State has set a new program where they are setting up boat license fees that will be dedicated for towns fighting aquatic invasives. Hoping that some of those funds are available to the Town under that plan.

7.C.1. * Minutes, November 18, 2019
Included in the packet.

7.C.2. * Minutes, December 9, 2019
Included in the packet.


7.D. **Steering Committee: Matthew D. O'Brien, Jr., Chairperson**
• Steering discussed our appointments and reappointments. They will approving those shortly.
• The Insurance Advisory Committee is no longer active and the town no longer uses an insurance agent/broker. Determine risk levels and with the risk audit recently performed that went well. Audits on a regular basis should be all we need. Steering is recommending that the Insurance Advisory Committee that be dissolved.
• Steering directed the Town Clerk to notify any remaining personnel of the Appeals Board that that committee has been dissolved due to the adoption of the amended personnel rules and going forward the committee will be removed from the monthly report.
• Working on a new policy for the interaction of Town Council members with town staff. The goal is to enable members to ask questions of staff if the answers are readily available. Will recommend that questions requiring research to direct the question through the Town Manager so there is minimal disruption to town staff. Mr. Hand would like to ensure that all information gathered in this manner is disseminated to all Council members.
• Looking at the repeal of town ordinance of Article 4, Section 38-9.1 through 38-9.6 due to changes in state law.
• Bud Meyers to attend the Steering Committee meeting to discuss modifications to ordinances about inspections, permits, and open burning.
• Looking at the implications of taking Avery Shores Road.

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7.D.1. Reappointments:

7.D.1.a. Housing Authority: Lynch
Motion: I move that the Council approve the reappointment of Lorraine Lynch to the Coventry Housing Authority; term to expire 11-30-24.

By: O’Brien, Jr.               Seconded: Hand

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

7.D.1.b. HUD Housing Rehab/Fair Housing Commission: Bradley
Motion: I move that the Council approve the reappointment of Albert Bradley to the HUD Housing Rehab/Fair Housing Commission; term to expire 12-31-21.

By: O’Brien, Jr.               Seconded: Hand

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

Motion: I move that the Council approve the reappointment of Albert Bradley to the Human Rights Commission; term to expire 1-1-22.

By: O’Brien, Jr.               Seconded: Conant

Discussion: Hand has 1-1-22. The term expiration is added to the Statement of Interest form by the Town Clerk which has been accurate. The motion can be amended if the term expiration is not 1-1-22.

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

7.D.1.d. WPCA: Brand
Motion: I move that the Council approve the reappointment of Richard Brand to the Water Pollution Control Authority; term to expire 11-7-21.

By: O’Brien, Jr.               Seconded: Hand

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

7.D.1.e WPCA: Twerdy
Motion: I move that the Council approve the reappointment of Matthew Twerdy to the Water Pollution Control Authority; term to expire 11-7-21

By: O’Brien, Jr. Seconded: Conant

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

7.D.2. Appointments:
7.D.2.a. Senior Housing Alternatives Study Committee, At-Large Member: Hoffman
Motion: I recommend that the Council approve the appointment of Aline Lynch to the Senior Housing Alternatives Study Committee for the duration of the Committee’s work.

By: O’Brien, Jr. Seconded: Hand

Discussion: Who is she representing or is she at-large? At-large member. Hand thinks it is great that we have community members who step up to be part of that effort.

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

7.D.2.a. Senior Housing Alternatives Study Committee, At-Large Member: Vinkels
Motion: I recommend that the Council approve the appointment of Valdis Vinkels to the Senior Housing Alternatives for the duration of the Committee’s work; another At-large.

By: O’Brien, Jr. Seconded: Conant

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None


7.E. * COVRRRA – John A. Elsesser:

7.F. Town Manager – John A. Elsesser:
7.F.1. Projects Update:
The project update report was distributed. Are there any questions?
O’Brien, Sr. asked to get some information about changing the paramedics contract. He was not aware that they were changing the contract. Elsesser responded that it is a renegotiation. Some rates will go down.

Williams asked about the CHS Walls Code Compliance pushing for an update on the wall scanning. Elsesser replied that this is an eight-year project. It goes back to 22 years ago when the walls were built for the addition to the high school. Some of the walls did not meet the building code at the date of construction. They are stronger than the two buildings they are connected to. They have been working through three Councils with DiBlasi to find out what is inside the walls through scans. Finding acoustic ways to find out how much rebar is in the walls. Some holes have been cut into walls to see what is there. We must come to a resolution that the buildings are structurally safe for wind and earthquake code. We cleared earthquake code. Now it is a sheer wind load issue. In some tornadic wind gusts the walls may move. The committee has saved a large amount of money. We have to work with DiBlasi to understand if the amount of rebar we do have in the span average out areas that may need reengineered. In some cases there is going to have to be destructive work or is there some exoskeletal membrane that can be used on the outside to strengthen the wall. We are at the point of meeting with the engineering firm to explain the report to them. The committee may return to the Council for more funds. Destructive cut holes may be required to see if the actual agrees with the scan.

Hand asked Elsessor to speak about the Northfields water main work. There have been some boil water advisories in the area. Elsessor responded that the water mains are being replaced because they are bad. As the excavate to the old pipe it breaks. The system was quite leaky. Repairing the break takes about an hour, but the entire system must be tested, which takes 24 hours. Two-thousand feet of pipe remains to be replaced to complete the project. Hand opined that getting to completion may be a bit bumpy, but once there, the system will be solid for some time. Elsessor added that the weather may cause the project to extend into the spring season.

7. F. 2. Microgrid Update:
Elsessor stated there is a weekly conference call each Friday. There is conflicting language in the contract. An update cannot be gotten from the DEEP business office until Representative Ackert stepped in. They wanted to be sure that the monetary costs would not be more that stated before putting up money for a design from Eversource. They are now putting up money for the Eversource design to hone in on a PPA price to sell to the town.

O’Brien, Sr. has spoken to Dan Champagne regarding the Bolton sewer line. Champagne is trying to set up a meeting with Bolton, Manchester, and Coventry.

7. F. 3. LOTCIP Project: Swamp Road Intersection, Presentation From Public Information Meeting on 11/21/19
Elsesser felt the information meeting was productive. A lot of good thoughts are being tracked down to look at. DOT will look at the signal in January to see if they will requires us to add one. He feels that they will make us replace the whole
system. They will have to work with us to increase this 100% grant. This should not delay the project more. This still has the possibility of being under construction this summer. The sense of the audience is that including Northfield to connect to Swamp was the way to go. A sight line easement may be required. The location of the septic could be a deal breaker.

7.F.4. CERC Town Profile 2019
Blanchard stated this was very informative and is available through the meeting agenda on the Town website.

Williams notice that our population was going down. By hundreds. Elsesser stated that all of eastern Connecticut is slowly decreasing with a lot of it being aging out. He will believe these estimated numbers after the census. Williams was surprised about how little diversity there is in town. It is not intentional and it is economic. We are starting to see more diversity moving in.

7.F.5. Crumbling Foundations Updates: November 2019
Two pages of information. They are reopening to take another round of applications starting in February. UConn has studying and developing alternative testing processes. They have been able to prove that water starts the reactions. They have an XRF, a scanner type of tool, that has been used for about ten years to test for lead that they have been able to modify it to test for pyrrhotite. This is significant because core sampling, which is the current method of testing, could take months to get the results. Trinity is also doing testing.

7.F.5.a. Update: Multi-Jurisdictional Concrete Foundation Testing Program
This data shows how many houses in town are getting done. Another small cities grant has been announced.

Blanchard stated that Hand spoke about this with Coventry being awarded a Silver Certificate for our participation at CCM. Thanks to Staff who have worked incredibly hard to get these accomplished. This is an international business magazine that we were cited in.

Elsesser reminded the members that the Library Renovations and Improvements committee was asked by the Council to appear before the PZC and IWA. Based on a formula PZC came up with the additional parking spaces that can be situated at the back of the parking lot to add millings or asphalt. IWA asked them to come back with the committee knows the full plan. Inexpensive rain gardens may be the recommended mitigation. The pipe draining the courtyard was testing and found to be in good shape. While there a neighbor owning the land behind the library and is donating the land for this project. The LeDoyt family is offering a third of an acre behind the stone wall.

7.F.8. Selection of Potential STEAP Projects for Grant Application
Elsesser stated that this has to be tabled. The memo is for background information and listing priority projects for the town. Have to see how the governor’s office is going to prioritize these very political grants. Fire suppression in the Village is a priority. This program was originally for economic development. There are also possibilities for open space as well.

Motion: I make a motion to table or postpone this item to a future meeting.
By: O’Brien, Sr. Seconded: Hand

Discussion: Elsesser added that the memo contains his thoughts, but if members have different ideas bring them forward.

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

8. Unfinished Business:

8.A. 19/20-26L Review of Current and Pending Town Projects
- Elsesser used a slide show to provide some information about the review of the Plan of Conservation & Development by the PZC. The Commission is writing this themselves while towns around us, and most towns, hire a consultant for $50,000-$80,000. Elsesser feels that writing it ourselves a better document is achieved because those writing us know the town better than consultants would. When PZC gets near the end public hearings will be held on this topic. The public hearings are a chance for residents to voice their thoughts on development.
- The four-town economic development project will finish up over the next couple of months. A regional identity will be created. Each town will have meetings about the results.
- Bolton gateway sewers the DEEP said no. Working with local officials to see where the path forward is.
- Nathan Hale Greenway has a proposal for forestry management along the greenway to make sure we have healthy forest along the land we own.
- We will be meeting with Andover regarding the retained right-of-way status along Nathan Hale and Bear Swamp Road rights-of-way for recreational purposes. Bear Swamp Road goes all the way through the forest to Judd Road. This is logical if we are looking for a connector for people walking, biking, hiking to the Rail-to-Trails. Bear Swamp Road probably needs some grading and gravel work. The next grant would be used for this purpose with the Council’s approval. Homeowners have had mixed reactions about the new greenway. The town does need access if someone gets lost or hurt in there. His priority is to connect the existing roads that we already own. Andover is willing to talk about the same type of thing to come out of Woodbridge.
- Other Open Space acquisitions are not being actively sought. The Schmidt property along the Willimantic River is being donated to Joshua’s Trust. The last Council gave permission for us to work with Joshua’s Trust to help them with the property. Coventry will pay for a roll off so the trash that is on the land can be picked up by volunteers and disposed of there. Joshua’s Trust has done a lot for Coventry so we are excited to reciprocate. This is a big piece of
riverfront property. Looking at better corner marking on some of our properties. The towns are looking at placing mileage markers on the Hop River Trail. Right now it is hard for emergency responders to know where someone is located on the trail. This idea was brought forth by Andover.

- The EDC is conducting business outreach. Teleflex will be using some space below Pizza on Main allowing them to remove two containers that are at the back of the parking lot which is a zoning violation that has been tolerated while they are in transition with space.

- Capirlands grant is underway to hire an engineer and architect to survey what is there cost estimates for whoever the new owner is to renovate. There are some insurance issues; seeing if our insurance carrier has contacts that the administrator of the estate does not have. We are trying to help out so they don’t decide to just sell it for subdivision. Court proceedings continue against Dr. Cook for civil and criminal contempt. It is out of the probate court arena. Monitoring and assisting without spending money.

- The lease renewal for the Farmer’s Market is two years away. Last time the negotiations were not easy. We should start to talk about this now.

- On public safety we will see the Fire Merger Committee report and MOU in January. Doubling the bonus for length of service for work program, how credits are earned, or tax abatement are incentives being looked at. This is on actual participation. We need more ambulance coverage. The liability is that this is essentially a retirement program that is currently funded at 50%. Doubling that from the current $102,000 is scary.

- There are some minor items to wrap up for the police radio project. The police department have been working on their community outreach.

- The finance audit is being finished. Causation of the use of health insurance is reviewed and ties that into wellness programs.

- Computer back up project is working with the Board of Ed for cyber security and backups is being built on. Towns have huge cyber threats. Towns and Boards of Education are hot targets.

- Capital budgets were due to Elssser last Friday.

- Camera equipment for the Perggetia is ten years old. The audio while watching from home is a Charter issue because it does not happen on Facebook.

- Tech/security upgrades – the functionality of the door locks is being lost because the system is so old. Elssser hopes they can look at one system for use at all town buildings, including the fire houses. That may be a multi-year program. The sharing of the system at the schools is being investigated, but there are some licensing issues that may not be able to be resolved. There are four doors at Town Hall and are not networked. We would like to tie it into the automated timecards like the Board of Ed does.

- A greenhouse grant application through Sustainable CT is being looked at for Creaser Park. The disc golf course is waiting for signs to be created for the six holes that are in place.

- Laidlaw Park septic testing remains on the list for when the weather cooperates.

- The flooring in the Community Center at Patriot’s Park has subsflloring laid down; vinyl planking will be used. Elssser and Todd Penney will be looking at a parking lot expansion where the Caretaker’s House was.
• We are looking what we can do to promote Hayes art. An elevator wheel out of Kenyon’s Mill is looking for a home to display this historic piece. It is the first model built of the Philadelphia Elevator Company and that company is now owned by Otis. The first elevator in town was on Depot.
• Holiday food distribution was today. Bell ringers are still needed.

9. New Business:

Motion: I make to ratify the contract.

By: O’Brien, Jr. Seconded: Williams

Discussion: Finance looked it over. The Board of Ed and their staff asked some questions in Executive session. Thomas learned there are three things the Council can do – not take action and it goes into effect; deny it; or vote support it. However, statutorily the actions are have it sit or support it. I think it is important that we publicly support it, if that is the intent. That creates a bridge with the Board of Ed and teachers and sends a positive message to parents and taxpayers who are supporting our schools. She is in support.

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

9.B. 19/20-28: Consideration/Possible Action: Recommendation By Town Attorney To Repeal Ordinance: Article IV, Sec. 38-91 Through Sec. 38-96, Due To Changes In State Law and Call to Public Hearing
Elsesser stated there was a legal notice to call a public hearing on January 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Motion: I make a motion to authorize the Town Manager to call a public hearing and advertise it on January 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

By: O’Brien, Sr. Seconded: Conant

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

9.C. 19/20-29: Consideration/Possible Action: Recommendation By Town Attorney To Consider A Revision To Section 70-88 Of The Town Code Entitled: “Public Gathering” To Correct A Typographical Error
Motion: I make a motion to have the Town Attorney revise Section 70-88 Of The Town Code Entitled: “Public Gathering” To Correct A Typographical Error for January 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.
By: Hand
Seconded: Conant

Discussion: O’Brien, Sr. do we need to indicate a date. This is the same thing of calling a public hearing.

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

See above.

9.E. 19/10-31: Consideration/Authorization: Acceptance of Donation to Coventry Police Department
See above.

Motion: I make a motion to table or postpone this item to a future meeting.

By: O’Brien, Sr.  Seconded: Hand

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

9.G. 19/20-33: Consideration/Possible Action: Dissolution of Town Boards & Commissions.
1. Insurance Advisory Committee
Motion: I make a motion to dissolve the Insurance Advisory Committee.

By: Hand  Seconded: O’Brien, Jr.

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

2. Personnel Appeals Board
Motion: I make a motion to authorize to notify the dissolution of the Personnel Appeals Board.

By: Hand  Seconded: O’Brien, Jr.

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

9.H. 19-20-34: Consideration/Possible Action: Acceptance, Conveyance, Desiato Subdivision, Old Eagleville Road
Elsesser stated that when there is a subdivision they are asked for some type of public benefit. In this case, and commonly now, we ask for a conservation easement so it preserves part of the land. This is river frontage. In this area they can’t clear cut it.

Motion: I move to accept the conveyance of land associated with the subdivision Old Eagleville Road.


Discussion: Elsesser relayed that this piece of land is the filtration plant for CT Water to feed the Village from their new well.

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: Blanchard

9.I. 19/20-34: Consideration/Possible Action: Adoption of No-Tolls Resolution
Motion: I make a motion accept the Adoption of No-Tolls resolution.


Motion: I move to amend the resolution as follows – strike the third paragraph which has no statistical foundation and is moot with the Governor’s current proposal to put tolls only on fourteen bridges and replace the third paragraph with language “Whereas the Coventry Town Council recognizes that the Connecticut office of Fiscal Analysis projects significant operating deficits in the next three years it therefore opposing using 1.5 billion dollars of the budget reserve fund, also called the rainy day fund, as a means to fund necessary transportation infrastructure improvements,” And revise paragraph four to read “Now therefore be it resolved that the Town Council of the Town of Coventry is opposed to the imposition of tolls on its residents and businesses and to expending more than half of the current budget reserve fund on transportation infrastructure improvement and urges its elected representatives in the State Legislature to oppose any measure that would take these actions,”

By: Thomas Seconded: Hand

Discussion: O’Brien, Sr. said that if you are doing all that you should tell the state to stop stealing money from other sources of revenue they should be using for. O’Brien, Jr. it is the special transportation fund.

Voting:
For: Thomas
Against: Blanchard, O’Brien, Jr., O’Brien, Sr., Hand, Conant, Williams
Abstain: None

The motion fails.

Discussion: Blanchard stated that we are back to the original motion and asked if there are any questions about that. Thomas understands what the resolution is trying to do. She thinks that since it is so out of line with the current conversations that it doesn’t make sense for what we should be talking to our legislators about. I think we should take a stand against raiding the rainy-day fund to the extent that is being proposed given what the Office of Fiscal Analysis is telling us. That is also going to create problems for us. O’Brien, Jr. agrees with that part. Thomas thinks the resolution at it stands doesn’t include enough and doesn’t make sense at this point. It reflects an older conversation and older proposals so she is not sure how to approach this with legislators. Williams can tell you that he will pay a significant amount of money for his truck to go those highways. Thomas stated on those bridges. Williams added that he pays a tremendous amount of money in gasoline tax. Thomas is not saying that he doesn’t. Williams continued that for him, it hits home. He can’t pass that on to his customer so his net income will decrease to up to $2,000 a year. Thomas feels the current resolution does not reflect the current reality. Williams replied that it affects his reality. The issue is not about the impact on secondary roads. We are not near any bridges. Williams says it is a bigger picture; we are saying it is Coventry but it could happen anywhere. Perhaps take our Town of Coventry. The secondary roads are not going to be affected by tolling on bridges. Hand thinks given the history of the changing nature of what the proposals are he thinks we should wait until we have more information of what we can actually address. The stuff in this resolution doesn’t match what is in the proposal right now. We shouldn’t be acting right now because we don’t have enough information to act on it. The tolls proposal is changing. We should have something that matches the scenario that actually happens is instead of whatever is nebulous this week. Blanchard stated that her fear is that we need to let the legislators and governor know that we are opposed to tolls in the state of Connecticut. She wants to see a resolution from the Town Council. There are other towns that are doing this and thinks it is a good idea. Thomas knows that some of those towns did it when this language made sense because this is boilerplate of what was going on. It doesn’t make sense now and doesn’t look well for us. Thomas would still like to see something about protecting the rainy-day fund. We really need to make a bi-partisan issue to address both issues. Neither scenario is going to be a positive thing. Elsesser commented that besides taking all the money from the rainy-day fund there should be a discussion to oppose diversions of funds from Special Transportation fund. If you are adding financing, don’t take money from here also don’t strip money from here. O’Brien, Jr. suggested changing to third paragraph to address the rainy-day fund and the Special Transportation fund. Conant agrees with some of what Hand stated. In her line of work we are dependent on knowing what the proposal is. What the governor wants to do seems to be a moving target.
She wants to be sure of what she is voting for or against before she makes a decision. She knows that there have been people in the past who have jeopardized town funding based on things that were said. She does not want to see this happen. There may be grudges and we would not get the STEAP funding we want. She wants to consider this at a later time maybe after the governor meets. O’Brien, Sr. added after they approve it. Blanchard said this is her fear about not letting them know before their discussions that our opinion won’t weigh in at all. Conant said we could take the approach that Blanchard write a letter on behalf of the Council and we can take this up at the next meeting. O’Brien, Sr. suggested that goals and this subject could be added to a special meeting agenda and pass them on the same day that would be before the governor’s meeting. We can come up with language that would be much better than this. Hand feels that O’Brien, Sr.’s suggestion is in the right direction. He is still concerned about what the governor’s proposal will be and how that changes through time. They later this goes, the more we will know. Not know what you are up against and what the cost may be the Council should really weigh the options before putting something out. O’Brien, Sr. no tolls in Connecticut. How about that? Williams added that would be his opinion.

**Motion:** I make a motion to table or postpone this item to a future meeting when the Council’s goals will also be on the agenda.

By: O’Brien, Sr.  Seconded: Conant

**Voting:**
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

Thomas will send her proposed language to the members.

**10. Miscellaneous/Correspondence:**

10.A. * Board of Education: November 14, 2019 Minutes; Agenda

10.B. * Thank-You Letter, Veterans Day Patriot Race

10.C. * Thank-You Note, First Church, Waiver Of Building Permit Fees


**11. Executive Session**

**Motion** – I move that the Town Council enter into Executive Session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 1-200(6)(D) – discussion of the selection of a site or the lease, sale or purchase of real estate by a political subdivision of the state when publicity regarding such a site, lease, sale, purchase or construction would cause a likelihood of an increased price until such time as all of the property has been acquired or all proceedings or transactions concerning same have been terminated or
abandoned with the following people in attendance—the seven members of the Town Council and the Town Manager, John Elsessor.

By: O’Brien, Sr.  Seconded: Conant

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

Motion – I move that the Town Council enter into Executive Session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 1-200(6)(E) – discussion of any matter which would result in the disclosure of public records or the information therein contained described in sub-section (b) of Section 1-210 with the following people in attendance the seven members of the Town Council and the Town Manager, John Elsessor.

By: O’Brien, Sr.  Seconded: Conant

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Conant, Thomas, Williams
Against: None
Abstain: None

12. Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne B. Filip

Yvonne B. Filip
Acting Town Council Clerk

PLEASE NOTE: These minutes are not official until approved by the Council at the next Council meeting. Please see the next Council meeting minutes for approval or changes to these minutes.
I’m not a good public speaker, as you will soon see, but I feel compelled to talk tonight for the sake of all Coventry citizens, especially our youth.

I have owned a residence in Coventry since 1971. I have seen how our town has improved over these years. I love Coventry and we recently in 2016 relocated to another house in Coventry.

**Looking back at Coventry,**

At one time there were three main factions in our town who were not getting along with each other:

- The Northern side, the Southern side and the farmers. The north side and south side didn’t like each other, and the farmers didn’t really like either side.

- Example: As a Cub Scout Den Leader living on the North side, I was criticized by the higher ups in scouts for allowing a child from the south side to be included in my Northern Cub Scout Den.

- The police dept wasn’t well run. It was cited for an improper property search which included doing major damage to the home, shooting at a car that had only backfired, and other embarrassing acts. The State of Ct. even got involved and demanded better training for our officers.

- The town manager was at odds with the police dept. and had trouble getting much passed with a town in chaos.

- The North and South Fire departments didn’t exactly love each other.
• The Building Dept: Awful!
  I wanted to add an addition, and I couldn’t get a reputable builder
to remodel my premises in our town. I ended up with a shoddy
desperate carpenter.

• The lake had pollution issues.

• There was a period when the High School was on the verge of
  being decertified by the state.

• The roads were in bad condition.

• A lot of people just didn’t want to locate to Coventry.

New people moved into Coventry

One reason being our advantageous location between I84 and
I384 and our wonderful rural setting.
The new citizens didn’t want these conditions to continue to exist
and got involved in our political system.

The town has greatly progressed since those days.

A perfect example is Look at our model school system.

We now have a reputable police dept.
We have a very knowledgeable Town Manager who gets much accomplished, can find grant money wherever it may be hiding, and works cohesively with all.

The lake is once again in pretty good shape.

Our roads have been greatly improved.

We have a non-bias user-friendly building dept. and helpful building inspector.

Unfortunately, there are people who sit on this Town Council who want to turn the clock back:

**Their MO is:**

- Pit Democrats against Republicans divide this town on what party you support. Hate they neighbor.

  Basically call at least half of our residents the ENEMY!

- Ostracize anybody who doesn’t agree with them. Like they did with the Sobols and Bill Oros.

- Rewrite God’s calling:

  Matt O’Brien Junior professed in his Creaser Park rant that only Republicans are people of God- the old God trick!!!!
What was that all about, that is really scary stuff, unstable!

- They have embarrassed our town - creating disgusting articles in the J.I.

One of my cycling partners said to me a few weeks ago while we cycling that she is glad that doesn’t live in Coventry, “Your town has some real problems doesn’t it?” “yes it does” I replied, “the O’Brien’s and their hateful tactics.”

Several people, both republicans and democrats, asked at the last Town Council Meeting for an apology from them, NONE was given, not a surprise to me.

________________________________________________________________________

**The Election for the School Board**

In reality, the Republicans certainly didn’t win the majority vote for the School Board.

**Bill Oros Won the majority for the republicans!**

My wife and I are both democrats and we voted for Bill. If it wasn’t for Bill you wouldn’t have gotten our vote, we would have voted for a democrat and the democrats would be in charge.

There were other Democrats in this town who crossed the party line and voted for Bill. They have told me that they too voted for him. So - you are in a majority because of him!! Do you get it?
How disgusting it was to see how you attacked him and what forums you used.

You embarrassed yourselves, our town, and your own Republican party. The students were laughing at you at the School Board Meeting! The parents were disgusted.

I know Bill very well and he is a person of intelligence, he is kindhearted, has a great sense of humor, and loves helping Coventry and its people.

He is also a Master Gardener and has made our Coventry Community Garden a huge success.

I only wish you guys were more like him, but you’re not!

I’m now going to use strong words, you know the type that you two casually use on somebody you don’t like.

In actuality, you two are the liars and are the real traitors, not Bill. Look at the oath you recently took when you were sworn in.

**I quote what you swore to:**

“Do you solemnly swear to uphold your duties as a member of the Coventry Town Council to the best of your **abilities** so help you God?”
Well you O’Brien’s, either don’t believe in God since that is part of the oath you swore to; or you don’t really have any abilities at all and thus should resign if that is the best you can do. You guys won the election and violated the oath you took immediately!

**The Town Council Election:**

There again there were many Democrats who crossed and voted for Michael Sobol because he is a person of reason and character who puts the town first and foremost. He sinned by voting sometimes with what the democrats had proposed.

Yes, Democrats didn’t like the way you treated him, and voted for him, which helped you win a majority on the Town Council.

We will watch you in the next two years on how well you perform as Town Council members.

Let me quote the first section of “Goal #1 “for the Coventry Town Council which is,

“Community Cohesion & Collaboration: Work in collaboration with our Board of Education and other boards/ commissions to ensure a respectful partnership in providing “.. and it goes on.
Community Cohesion & Collaboration, important words and values! You need to follow them. Maybe these are only meaningless words to you, so then you did lie to the oath you took.

My predictions are

- Mr. O’Brien senior, you will once again focus on attacking the School Board like you did the last time you were in a majority.

- You will continue to attack any person, republican or democrat who doesn’t obey you!

- You won’t make any real progress for our town.

- Both O’Brien’s will again use false propaganda to try to win votes in the next elections as you did in the last election.

- Mr. O’Brien senior, you will basically focus being THE POWER Broker!!!

- Isn’t that what your real specialty is?? not finance as you previously stated - Slaughtering anybody who doesn’t follow you blindly.

To be honest I have NO HOPE that you O’Brien’s will make any positive changes in how you conduct yourselves you are too filled with hate.

You never really listened to any of the citizens who have condemned your actions when they spoke at the last Town Council meeting.
You showed that by ignoring their concerns and by not making an apology.

Keep it up, we will do our best to vote you out and replace you with nicer people regardless of their political affiliation in the next election. People with good intentions, not hate.

One last mention:

You need to change section 3-2 of *Presiding officer* for Town Council. Replace chairman to chairperson, *his vote* to the chairperson’s vote, and *his office* to the chairperson’s office. We have had and again have a women chairperson.

I request that this statement be read into the minutes.
I stand before you once again tonight because apologies have still not been issued by Mr. O’Brien Sr. or Mr. O’Brien Jr. for their behavior during and after the Board of Education meeting that took place on November 14, 2019. Over a month has passed since then, and although members of the community both here at Town Council and through multiple other avenues have clearly asked that this wrong at least be mitigated by a sincere apology, aside from Mr. O’Brien’s disjointed and dismissive remarks about revolutionary blood running in Coventry during the reports section of the last Town Council meeting following the audience of citizens where you heard from eight of us demanding this apology, there has been no response from either of you.

As a reminder, during the November 14 BOE meeting Mr. Bill Oros, a long standing member of the BOE, made the decision to support an incumbent BOE member rather than a freshman candidate for the role of chairperson. This decision was met with overt hostility at the meeting by the meeting’s many audience members, behavior that was an embarrassment coming from any grown adult. What brings me before you again is that two members of this council participated in these behaviors at the meeting. Mr. O’Brien Sr. was heard shouting at Bill during the meeting and Mr. O’Brien Jr. participated in similar behavior during the meeting and in the days that followed took that behavior and spread it online both on the RTC page and, worse, on the page of an activist soliciting harassment of Bill by their followers. Mr. O’Brien Jr. even provided Mr. Oros’s email address on that post, inviting people to contact him go ask why he was a traitor.

The schools in this town who educate our young people have a zero tolerance policy when it comes to bullying. We expect our children and teenagers to treat each other and their community with respect. We know because they’ve told us - both privately and at the BOE meeting on December 4 - that they are watching
our Town Council and BOE members. They see what you have done and even more than that, they see that you are unwilling to accept responsibility for those actions by issuing a public apology. You are supposed to be leaders in this town, role models for both adolescent and adult community members. You are supposed to be setting examples for people to want to follow. I’m a parent and I would be absolutely horrified if any of my children behaved in the manner you both did at that meeting. Beyond that, they’d be expected, with absolutely no exceptions, to apologize for their wrongdoing and do it with sincerity and alacrity.

Mr. O’Brien Jr., last November you posted a speech to the RTC Facebook page in which you stated “I haven’t, nor will I ever, demonize a member of our community. Ever. We are all neighbors. I care about each and every one of you. Politics will always come second. Our first priority should always be to listen. Try to learn as much as possible from those around us and be respectful.” I am asking you to listen to your own words, and respond accordingly. You and your father have been party to demonizing Bill Oros for following his conscience and experience in his nomination for chairperson of the BOE.

In your own words, Mr. O’Brien Jr.: “If we are to accomplish anything we have to work together. If we cannot tolerate the opinions of others then we have no business being in the conversation.” Your constituents and your community want you to work cohesively with the entire board of education and with each other. These adversarial politics do nothing positive to help our town.

And so, again, I stand before you as a member of this community to reiterate that you both owe a public apology to Mr. Oros for the way you behaved toward him during and after that meeting. An apology from you is also owed to the CI students who witnessed your behavior while attending that BOE meeting as part
of a school assignment. Lastly, you owe apologies to Naomi-Lynn Sanders, Owen Dieterle, Ava Kuhnly, Dylan Patrick, and their families, who had what should have been a celebratory evening receiving their CAPSS Superintendent’s awards disrupted and derailed by the irresponsible and reprehensible behavior displayed that night by adults who should know better.
Kathleen Breitenwischer

I am back. And I am going to first request your full attention. Matt O’Brien Jr. I noticed last time I was here during the audience of citizens you seemed to have lost interest in what each of us was saying as you were feverishly writing instead of listening. I would suggest you take note of what your peers are doing right now and that is giving us, the audience of citizens, your constituents, your full and undivided attention.

I have not heard anyone come out publicly since the last Town Council meeting in support of either Matt O’Brien Sr or Matt O’Brien Jr.’s behavior at the Board of Ed meeting or after online. Instead, I have heard a chorus of individuals and editorials lambasting your childish behavior. And, even a resignation on the RTC because of this whole fiasco. And yet, here we are, still waiting for an apology. Yes, apologizing to someone is one of the most humbling acts you can do and yes, just like when you were a child, it is still very difficult to do. But, it is the right thing to do. You still owe an apology to Mr. Oros and the students that witnessed your atrocious behavior. My 6th grade son has also made a suggestion to Matt O’Brien Jr that you may want to consider taking the Digital Citizenship class that all sixth graders are required to take to learn what is and is not appropriate behavior on the Internet. The ramifications of what you posted online and then reposted outside of the Coventry RTC page are still being felt. Are you proud to have the face of one of our Board members imposed with the background of the North Korean army? Your actions did that.

I will be listening and waiting for that apology. I strongly encourage you to not make us wait much longer. Our voices will only continue to get louder and your two year term will only continue to get shorter.
Again, I stand before you as a member of this community to reiterate that you both owe a public apology to Mr. Oros for the way you behaved toward him during and after that meeting. An apology from you is also owed to the CI students who witnessed your behavior while attending that BOE meeting as part of a school assignment. Lastly, you owe apologies to Naomi-Lynn Sanders, Owen Dieterle, Ava Kuhnly, Dylan Patrick, and their families, who had what should have been a celebratory evening receiving their CAPSS Superintendent’s awards disrupted and derailed by the irresponsible and reprehensible behavior displayed that night by adults who should know better. I request that this statement be read into the minutes.
12/15/2020

My name is Catherine Kennelly

At the last meeting I listened carefully to the concerns of most of the speakers. I then heard the comments made by Mr. Matt O’Brien Jr. later in the meeting, and they totally missed the point.

As I understand it, the situation at the Board of Education may have begun because a political decision had been made to nominate a brand new Board member as the chair. However, there was nothing political about the decision to nominate a Board member who had extensive experience on the Board to the position of chair. What then happened may have been motivated by politics, but the behavior and language used was inappropriate, no matter what the political party of those two individuals.

The issue continues to be non-political. We all hope that those who are elected to any position will act in the best interests of our town. As citizens, it is our responsibility to be aware of what is happening and to speak up when we have a concern.

At this point, it would be difficult to consider any apology as sincere. However, this concern has not gone away, and I hope that our townspeople will continue monitor the behavior of these two individuals for the rest of their terms of office.

Thank you for your attention. I would like my comments included in the minutes.