

**Minutes
Town Council Steering Meeting
December 28, 2020**

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by Matt O'Brien, Jr.
Present via ZOOM: Matt O'Brien, Jr., Julie Blanchard, Jon Hand, Lisa Conant
Also present via ZOOM: John Elsesser, Town Manager

2. Acceptance of Minutes:

Lisa Conant moved to accept the minutes of November 23, 2020, seconded by Jon Hand. The following corrections were requested by Matt O'Brien, Jr.:

- Page 2, top of the page, change "expand the tax base away from private homes" to expand the tax base."
- Page 8, second to last paragraph, halfway down, "especially with the embarrassment of riches" - he wasn't sure what that was meant to be. It doesn't make sense to him. Jon Hand said he was speaking at that point. What he meant by "embarrassment of riches" was that we had multiple people applying for the position.
- Page 9: the motion was not unanimous - he voted no. Jon Hand asked to verify whether that is clear on the tape of the meeting. Matt said it should be. John Elsesser said his understanding from Laura is that it is not clear either way. The camera was not focused on Matt because he was not speaking at that time. You can't see Matt's face, and you don't hear him vote either way. Matt said he stated, "I vote no." Jon Hand asked if we should go back and look at the tape. John said he did not look at it, but that Laura had said she reviewed it several times and didn't hear anything. At the end of the vote, no summary was given that the Chair often does, for example that the motion carried two to one. Jon Hand asked to review the tape. Upon review of the tape, it was determined that a verbal opposition to the vote by Matt could not be heard, and if he raised his hand to vote no, that the camera was not on him. It was noted that it was also not possible to hear Lisa Conant's vote. Julie suggested a verbal poll during votes in the future, to improve accuracy since the person taking the minutes is not present and cannot see a show of hands.

The motion to accept the minutes as amended carried on unanimous vote.

3. Reports:

A. Chair: none.

B. Committee members: Julie said her thoughts and prayers are with the families who suffered losses today. Jon Hand agreed, saying these are terrible losses of young people who are gone way too soon.

C. Boards & Commissions, Vacancy Lists/Possible Recommendations: Julie had several questions regarding the vacancy report. First, Economic Development has a vacancy. Jon and Matt said they think that's an error. Jon said he doesn't think Andrew's appointment was properly recorded at that time. Julie also asked about Human Services Administrator, with Annemarie's name and a life term, but she is our employee. John Elsesser said he will check. Matt noted there is still a particular alternate on the Walls Committee who shouldn't be on there. Julie noted the report lists the name of the person who used to be there. Jon says this makes it easier for us to know whose seat we are filling. The party affiliation of the previous person is also shown, which also helps to narrow things down more quickly. On the second page, Julie noted that Steven Hall is shown as a Planning & Zoning alternate, and a Planning & Zoning seat two full member. John said that is correct, because he moved up from an alternate to a full position. He is probably shown on the seat two appointment because his

term was up and he was just recently reappointed so the report might not reflect that yet. John will double check. The expiration report was reviewed and Jon Hand noted that some of the names shown there are on tonight's agenda for reappointment. Matt said he thought Susan Noyes was reappointed to the Housing Authority. John said this was done. It was noted that the reports were prepared on November 17th and the Council had their last meeting on December 23rd. Matt noted that even so, the list looks good - we are down to less than a page of vacancies. Some of the categories, such as Congress, State Rep, and the Registrars, are not the Town Council's purview.

4. Reappointments:

A. Capitol Region Council of Governments - Marek: Jon Hand moved to recommend the reappointment of Stephen (Ed) Marek to the Capitol Region Council of Governments, term to expire 1/2/2022. The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant and carried on unanimous vote.

B. Conservation Commission - Messino: Jon Hand moved to recommend the reappointment of Vincent Messino to the Conservation Commission, term to expire 1/2/2025. The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant and carried on unanimous vote.

C. Economic Development Commission - Barry: Jon Hand moved to recommend the reappointment of Barbara Barry to the Economic Development Commission, term to expire 2/1/2026. The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant and carried on unanimous vote.

D. Parks & Recreation Commission - Carlson: Jon Hand moved to recommend the reappointment of Beverly Carlson to the Parks & Recreation Commission, term to expire 1/2/2023. The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant and carried on unanimous vote.

E. Parks & Recreation Commission - Martin: Jon Hand moved to recommend the reappointment of Bob Martin to the Parks & Recreation Commission, term to expire 1/2/2023. The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant and carried on unanimous vote.

F. Parks & Recreation Commission - Miner: Jon Hand moved to recommend the reappointment of Jillian Miner to the Parks & Recreation Commission, term to expire 1/2/2023. The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant and carried on unanimous vote.

G. WPCA - Jamaitus: Jon Hand moved to recommend the reappointment of Susan Jamaitus to the Water Pollution Control Authority, term to expire 11/7/2022. The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant and carried on unanimous vote.

H. WPCA - Murphy: Jon Hand moved to recommend the reappointment of Daniel Murphy to the Water Pollution Control Authority, term to expire 11/7/2022. The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant and carried on unanimous vote.

5. Appointments:

A. Human Rights Commission - Kent: Jon Hand moved to recommend the appointment of Carol Kent to the Human Rights Commission, term to expire 1/1/2023. The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant. During discussion, Lisa said it was her recollection that we were going to hold off on appointments to this commission until we modified the charge, so people would know what they are signing up for. She has no problem with making the appointment of Ms. Kent, but she wants to make sure that we are doing what we were thinking of doing. Also,

she was looking through the Statement of Interest form, and it occurs to her that we may want to ask her to serve on CoventryVision as well. She has communication and amateur radio experience. John Elsesser noted there will be two other seats, unless you want to expand this Commission beyond five members. He does not know her, but Chief Palmer does and has had discussions with her. She came forward on her own after those discussions. We could certainly invite her to be on CoventryVision too, because right now the Human Rights Commission is not meeting a lot. Right now another month might not matter, but they could certainly meet if they needed to. Annemarie is attending the next Council meeting, and one thing that is coming up, is that the Board of Education wants us to get involved in the Community Conversations initiative, and the Human Rights group could be supportive of that role. Annemarie is going to help work with Board members on that. The goal is to be all-inclusive so that anyone who wants to be involved can do so.

Matt said he is comfortable with whatever the Committee wants to do and asked Jon Hand for his thoughts. Jon said he thinks the wiser thing is not to move forward at this moment, until we know what the charge will be, to make sure the person will know what they are getting into. He thinks we will be finalizing that charge in the near future. He offered to withdraw his motion at this time. Lisa Conant said she is of two minds about this. She agrees with our conversation at the last meeting to make sure that everybody is on board with the charge, and that we have something that makes sense to folks. But with that said, we might want to at least get a quorum so that this committee can start moving forward with the Board of Ed in their Community Conversations and Open Choice initiatives. That ball is rolling and it's not going to stop. Matt asked if we are doing a disservice to the committee and holding them back while things are moving forward in other areas. Jon said we are about to materially change their charge. Matt said if it's a material change, then what happens with the existing members? Are they grandfathered in? John Elsesser said yes. He thinks what we are talking about was not to change the ordinance, but to give them an additional assignment. One option could be that somebody calls her to go through those issues and see if that's how she wants to serve. Jon and Lisa indicated their agreement with this approach. John said then you can just forward your recommendation to the Council, making sure that's what she wants to sign up for. Lisa said then by next week when the Council meets, we'll have our answer. If she's comfortable, then that's great and we won't have to go back and do all that work again because she will already be seated. John said there are four talking points and he can forward them to whoever wants to make that phone call. Matt said he would be happy to make the call. John will forward the information. Jon Hand made a new motion to recommend to the full Council the appointment of Carol Kent to the Human Rights Commission for a term to expire 1/1/2023, pending the results of a discussion of potential changes to the charge of that Commission. Lisa Conant seconded the motion. The motion carried on unanimous vote. Matt said it would be good to have a conversation with her anyway, since he doesn't know much about her. He will also ask her about CoventryVision. Jon said that would be great, since her statement of interest form seemed to show some relevant experience.

6. Consideration/possible action: Update to Town of Coventry Affirmative Action Plan:

Matt asked if everyone had a chance to review the changes. There weren't too many. He asked if John Elsesser had any thoughts. John said he thinks it was very helpful what you asked for, and that Olivia put together. The changes are not dramatic. The goal table is still not quite complete - we are still working through some of those numbers. He thinks for tonight, the committee could go through it and see if they have any questions on the changes. If not, he thinks we still need to bring you the goals for your next meeting.

Matt said this was very helpful. Jon said we appreciate the effort that Olivia put into it. Matt

said he thinks it was just what we were looking for. He does not have any questions. He asked whether the other committee members needed clarification. None were requested. Jon Hand moved to table the discussion of the Affirmative Action Plan to a future meeting. The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant and carried on unanimous vote.

7. Adjournment:

Jon Hand moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 PM. The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant and carried on unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Stone
Council Clerk