

Minutes
Coventry Town Council Meeting
March 7, 2022
Town Hall Annex

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<https://coventryct.viebit.com/player.php?hash=koRmCbz1hvVx>

1. **The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by Council Chair Lisa Thomas.**
Present: Lisa Thomas, Julie Blanchard, Robyn Gallagher, Marty Milkovic, Matthew Kyer, Jonathan Hand, John French
Also present: John Elsesser, Town Manager; Amanda Backhaus, Director of Finance; Bill Watkins, Director of Public Works; Todd Penney, Town Engineer; Matthew Twerdy, Water Pollution Control Authority, Mike Ruef, WPCA Technician.
2. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. **Audience of Citizens:** none.
4. **Acceptance of Minutes, February 21, 2022:**
I move to accept the minutes of February 21, 2022, with the suggested edits provided by Lisa Thomas.

Moved: Marty Milkovic
Second: Jonathan Hand

Discussion: Gallagher: Capitalize “Chair” throughout. Take out parentheses. Blanchard: page 3 starting with “Julie Blanchard”, should include more of the statement about what citizens should expect – she thinks it got summarized too much in the minutes, although she understands that the full statement was attached. She feels that the stakeholders’ statement was important, i.e., “...expect that they will respond and deliver services to resolve an emergency situation.” Further down, on the 10th or 11th line, strike “until we catch up” in the sentence about the use of ARPA funds.

Vote to accept the minutes as amended: unanimous.

5. **Consent Agenda:**
I move to accept the Consent Agenda as presented:

Moved: Jonathan Hand
Second: Robyn Gallagher

Discussion: Thomas: request to remove item 6.F.6.

Vote to accept Consent Agenda with removal of item 6.F.6: unanimous.

1. **Reports:**

- A. Chair - Thomas: I think we must start tonight with recognition of the war being waged upon the Ukrainian people and their democratically elected government. I hope I speak for all of us when I say we stand with Ukrainians as they bravely defend themselves from Russia's premeditated attack and Vladimir Putin's authoritarian rule. We condemn in the strongest terms this assault on democracy and support the United States' and its allies' efforts to hold the Russian Federation accountable for its aggression and our effort to assist Ukraine in this difficult battle and humanitarian crisis.

My office hours were very well attended last week. I appreciated the opportunity to hear from community members who are working toward positive change. What most struck me was the research and learning they took upon themselves in order to be able to not only share their concerns, but their problem solving as well.

Tonight we will have the first of several budget presentations by town departments. This Council takes our budget development very seriously and will work diligently to adopt a budget that manages our town's needs with fiscal responsibility. There are two points in the budget process when community members have an opportunity to hear the most in depth presentation of the budget proposals. The first is at the Town Manager's Budget Hearing. The second is during the April 23 Town Meeting when the Town Manager and Superintendent of Schools will review the Town Council adopted budget. The March 10 meeting is when the Town Manager and Superintendent of Schools present their recommended budgets. It will be held this Thursday night in the high school lecture hall at 7:00. At this point, the Board of Education has already voted on and adopted a budget proposal. The Town Council has not. The Council will adopt a budget by April 4th. As the council deliberates, it may choose to make revisions to both the Town Manager's proposed budget and to the dollar amount requested by the BOE in their approved budget. To be clear: the Town Council can make changes to specific line items in the town budget during this process, but not to specific line items in the BOE budget. As far as the BOE budget goes, if the Council adopts a budget with a different dollar amount than the BOE's request it is up to the BOE to decide where to make cuts in order to reach that approved spending. Between March 10 and April 4th (when the Council will vote to adopt our town budget) the Town Council will meet with town agencies to hear their rationale for their budget requests. This allows the Council to better understand those requests before deciding whether to revise specific line items. Town Manager John Elsesser, all of our department heads, and the Board of Education have worked diligently to develop conservative spending requests that reflect what they need in order to move Coventry forward and maintain services. Of course, we are always looking for ways to improve how we serve our community. During the COVID pandemic, the previous Town Council made spending decisions that helped alleviate the economic stress of our residents. However, some of those decisions have left us with holes that can't be responsibly filled by turning to measures like using large sums of Fund Balance. Nor do we have the same access to pandemic recovery grants. As President Biden notes, America is making great strides in recovering from the COVID economy. We are realizing some of that benefit in Coventry, but also know that we will be hard pressed to finalize a budget with no increase in spending. If we are going to be fiscally responsible, we must budget in a manner that transitions us away from heavy reliance on federal and state grants, as well as from reliance on taking money out of our fund balance which is like yours or my savings account. Please be a participant in the budget process by

sharing your thoughts with us at the March 10 hearing. You can also comment during audience of citizens or email us at TownCouncil@coventryct.org.

B. Council Members:

Milkovic: Has a statement from Coventry UK, which he had the privilege to visit. While there he visited the cathedral which was destroyed during the bombings of WWII.

CAIF's statement on Ukraine: Sunday, 27 February 2022:

"The Coventry Association for International Friendship was founded in 1962 as the Coventry Committee for International Understanding with a mission to promote international friendship and understanding and to create closer ties between the citizens of Coventry and the people of its twinned and linked towns.

For some 60 years we have worked to foster international goodwill in pursuit of our city's historic commitment to peace and reconciliation.

This week we have been shaken to the core by the decision of the Russian Government to impose its will on a neighbouring country, Ukraine, by the deployment of a mass of military might.

Those who use force to achieve their objectives seem always to operate on the basis of the absolute correctness of their position, seeing the world as black and white, good and bad, dark and light, but we, the members of CAIF, refuse to accept that one nation - in pursuit of a geo-political objective - has an unchallengeable right to attack and seize the very fundamentals of another nation inflicting incalculable hurt and damage on its citizens. As advocates of the efficacy of civic diplomacy, we expect that conflict should be resolved through negotiation.

CAIF's connections with Russia have always been predicated on mutual trust and respect and an unshakeable belief in the need to work with our friends to strive for peace in a world which is increasingly unstable and fragile. It should not be necessary to learn again the lesson of the past - that when military conflict begins, in one way or another, everyone loses.

CAIF must express, therefore, its disapproval of what is happening today in Ukraine and appeal to Russia and the international community to take all necessary steps to prevent further violence and bring this conflict to a peaceful end."

Thomas paused reports.

Motion to move up item 8.A., budget discussion with Public Works, COVRRRA, and WPCA.

Moved: Blanchard

Second:

Vote:

8. A. 21/22-56: FY 2022/23 budget:

1. Budget meeting with DPW, COVRRRA, WPCA.

Bill Watkins, Public Works Director: presented a summary of the operating and capital budgets. (*Full report attached to minutes.*)

Highlights/changes:

3100 Roads and Drainage:

- 1 promotion from maintainer 1 to maintainer 2, \$4000 increase.
- Proposed \$28,510 increase in overtime. The requested increase would allow for DPW crews to provide additional **working** on road and drainage projects, culvert failures and repairs, ditching, sweeping, and provide emergency response after normal operating hours. Town Manager proposed \$2000 increase.
- \$1000 increase in Differential. This allows for upgrading crew to allow for better work flow.
- \$2000 increase for sand and gravel.

3101 Public Buildings:

- New custodial position; **DPW's share is 30%** which reflects a \$16,000 increase.
- \$4900 increase for HVAC preventative maintenance contract.

3102 Snow Removal:

- \$500 Increase for Equipment repairs.

3103 Facility Maintenance:

- 1 new maintainer 1 position starting 10/1/22.
- Proposed \$3750 increase in overtime. The requested increase will allow for the grounds crew to provide additional work to town Facilities that cannot be done during normal hours. Town Manager proposed \$250 increase.
- 1 Additional summer help position \$9840 increase.

3104 Fleet Maintenance:

- 1 promotion from mechanic 1 to mechanic 2.
- \$1000 increase for software updates.

3110 Tree Warden:

- \$1000 increase for the Tree Warden Stipend. Watkins has achieved Tree Warden certification.
- \$10,000 increase for tree trimming and removals by contractors.
- \$2500 for equipment rentals to perform tree work with DPW staff.

Thomas: Is the promotion in Fleet Maintenance from Mechanic 1 to Mechanic 2 already budgeted? Backhaus: It was supposed to be in effect Jan 1- now it is in the budget for a half year. Thomas: Is there a plan? Elsesser: We are still working on it - there is some language in the union contract to be addressed. We believe our lead mechanic will retire this summer, but have not received formal notice yet.

A summary of proposed capital expenditures includes:

- Large drainage projects: \$20,000
- Power curber: \$25,000
- Guardrails: \$25,000
- Pickup truck replacement: \$50,000
- Replacement dump truck body: \$12,000
- Small dump truck: \$95,000 (5-year lease purchase at \$20,000 annually)
- Zero radius mower: \$13,500
- Infield ball field groomer: \$25,000

Watkins: There are a couple things not in the budget that he had requested. We are still waiting on a DERA grant for a large dump truck. If we get it, it would cover \$60,000. He had also requested a wheel loader - we had discussed putting it in the bond package.

Gallagher: If we receive the grant would we have to move the cost for the truck up sooner. Elsesser: Yes. There are various options - we could lease purchase. We didn't want to double the budget.

Watkins: Also not in budget: a backhoe. As we grow the department we would like to have two construction crews working simultaneously or have some equipment staged.

Gallagher: What is a wheel loader? Elsesser: It is also known as a pay loader. We would keep the old one which is 30 years old or more. Still works but getting parts is a problem. It is essential during storms. If it goes down during a storm it would be a big problem. Alternative is to use the backhoe which has very small bucket and doesn't work well.

Gallagher: Are we replacing a large dump every year? How many in fleet? Elsesser: Seven. They have an average life - we try to keep them for 16 years. Average age is 12. They are aging out. We can get inventory for review. We went with Stirlings for a few years but they were not of good quality. Watkins: If we have more large trucks we can make plow routes smaller. Elsesser: our plow routes are longer than many. Watkins: Our largest is 14 miles. Elsesser: We try to keep to 10 miles. Technology and controls change over the years. We need to build replacement into the operating budget for consistency. We need a variety of vehicle sizes - large trucks can't do lake neighborhoods.

Summer 2022 Roads:

An outline of proposed summer road projects was presented, with an estimated cost of \$656,218. The list of streets and repair activity was developed as a result of findings in the Pavement Management Study which was completed recently. Elsesser showed detail from the map contained in the report. Roads include: Woodbridge, South Street, Lakewood Drive, and Edgewater in conjunction with work to be done by CT Water. Carver Lane can still be saved if we do it quickly.

A 3-year capital bond scenario was also presented for a total of \$3,353,344. This would include reconstruction of the Pilgrim Hills subdivision, two culverts on Parker Bridge and Bunker Hill, Loomis Lane which has failed, some lake region roads, and a new pay loader. We would also incorporate some of our summer road money into the plan.

Elsesser: Timing – We would try to run that type of bond with a town meeting for the November election. We are getting too close to do it with the annual town meeting - we need to do resolutions, etc. and it might be better to wait until fall, or to call a special meeting. We have enough work to do this summer. Watkins: This will give us more time to plan and get better numbers on what we need for drainage.

Elsesser: The Town Engineer's budget is also in this plan. Todd's time can be charged off to some of the projects we are doing. We propose to reduce his salary in the budget and include an engineering tech position. We did it with a light duty public works employee and it worked well. We would like to get more help in the engineering department. We were also subcontracting out for Inland Wetlands services - Mindy was brought in as full time. Penney: thinks the part time employee would be a wonderful addition to the engineering dept. Currently the two LOTCIP projects, Swamp Road intersection and South Street pedestrian improvements, will gear up this spring. Those construction projects reimburse our time so it would cover the cost of a part time employee. Mindy is progressing well - she has been in the 30 hour position since April of last year. Getting her to a full time position will be a good thing as she grows in the position.

Gallagher: It is great we can reimburse some of Todd's salary in LOTCIP but aren't we running out of LOTCIP projects? Elsesser: No - we could go on for 5 years with the projects in the works. Another project is in the pipeline for Daly Road. Penney: The transportation infrastructure bill will add additional opportunities. The South Street project has a \$300,000 earmark to deal with overages. Elsesser: LOTCIP is an ongoing program. They are talking about running some culvert projects through that program. All those projects have inspections, paperwork, etc. and we just don't have staff capacity. We can't take the grant money and not do the work. Gallagher: Doesn't want to get into a hole where we've hired people with grant money and then have them all on staff when projects run out. Backhaus: We have also discussed phasing back in Todd's salary.

Kyer: Regarding tree warden increases - is it the ash tree issue? Watkins: yes. Kyer: We know it is prevalent. Should it be a temporary increase? Will we see a drop once we take care of this issue? Elsesser: No. It could be as little as 10 trees. Or we bring in a contractor to do a large area. \$10,000 is nothing. We have a million dollar tree problem. We hope we can divert snow/sand/salt money to trees like we did last year. It will be close this year. We have a significant long-term tree problem. There are a lot of mature oak and maple trees that are also dying. It costs a lot to remove a large tree. Plus we keep adding miles of road. We are already out of money for trees this year. There is discussion at the State level of coming up with money for trees. We also use some LOCIP funds for this - primarily in parks. Kyer: This means it would take 10 years to catch up with this tree problem, assuming no new problems come up. Elsesser: one strategy is to get Eversource to pay for as much tree removal as we can. Mark Owens has been successful with some areas. Eversource is supposed to do removal in some areas in the 4th quarter this year.

French: What are we hearing about the asphalt market in going out to bid? Watkins: We based it on \$90/ton. We will see when the plants open. We locked in diesel and fuel oil

already. Things have changed since we started this budget.

Gallagher - what is going on w/telephone expenses? Elsesser: We had to run fiber to the Public Works garage. Backhaus: We also got VOIP phones installed there. That should be the last large increase we see there.

Elsesser: We would like to get the Council to the Public Works facility for a tour. Kyer: Would also like to see landfill/ball field area but it is gated off so he can't get in.

Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA):

Mike Ruef and Matt Twerdy in attendance. Detail is in Section 12-2 of the budget.

Ruef: Has been the Wastewater Treatment Operator for 13 years. Twerdy has been Chair of WPCA for 24 years.

Overview: The sewer system was built in mid-80s and contains 16 miles of sewers and the treatment plan. WPCA has an annual operating budget and a 10 year capital plan with items that keep us in compliance. We think we're doing a good job. CT DEEP issued a consent order for areas to put sewers in. There have been no permit violations or overflows. It provides clean water for lake residents, and the lake looks cleaner.

The budget is funded entirely by sewer use fees. The only exception is part of the debt service payment, which comes from the general fund. The last year for the loan is 2027. We need to do a \$25 year increase - it has been 5 years since we did an increase. We are below the rate of surrounding towns. We need to hold a public hearing to raise rates - planned for April.

Budget increases include items such as health insurance, service contracts, and repairs as equipment ages. Elsesser: We have data on flows - there have been decreases due to vigilance in identifying ground water infiltration. Some older areas of pipe under the lake by Patriots Park are scheduled for pipelining. We did one area in January and plan to do another section in front of Woodland Road next year. Blanchard: What is life expectancy for pipe lining? Ruef: They say 50 years. We believe it is more like 100. Elsesser: clarified that leaks go inward to the pipe, not out into the lake. Water gets in the pipe and affects capacity at plant. We don't want to treat clean water. Sump pumps tied into the sewers are illegal. We can see it after rain events. Hand: How much does the lining decrease the thickness of the pipe? Ruef: about a half inch. We are nowhere near the capacity of the pipe.

Ruef: We also do sewer connection inspections and emergency call outs. There have been increases. There is a lot of action at Bidwell Village - they are building new units. Most of what he sees for inspections now is people building new houses. Call outs are mostly from pumps the Town owns and maintains - that's usually from people flushing things they shouldn't be flushing. They get one written warning and then they get a bill. That usually works. There was a big increase of wipes being flushed during COVID when people had trouble finding toilet paper. These cause clogs at the plant.

French: Disposal costs have gone up - why? Ruef: Regulatory issues and the burn plant

closure.

Ruef: Future projects include tank rehab at the plant. The tanks are 35 years old. The concrete is getting soft. We also plan to address clogs created by the wipes. We have tried to do an education campaign not to flush wipes - we have put blurbs in the newsletter, etc. Watkins: And an insert in the trash bill. Ruef: We did a separate mailing from the trash bill too. Elsesser: Water saving toilets could also help.

French: What is capacity? Ruef: The plant is rated for 300,000 gallons per day. We are trying to stay stable at 90%. Elsesser: There are people who have paid for capacities that we must reserve.

COVRRRA:

Backhaus: The contract renewal with Casella is later on the agenda. The Manager's budget includes a rate increase of \$10 - actually we need more like \$20. We included health insurance for the new revenue clerk.

Elsesser: As you go through the budget book, drop a written question to him and Amanda and we will prepare answers for the whole Council.

6. Reports, cont.

A. Chair - Thomas: Previous decisions that were made during COVID have left holes in the budget. We will be hard-pressed to create a budget with no increase in spending. We must transition away from reliance on federal and state funds and taking funds from the general fund.

B. Council Members:

Gallagher: Participated in Read Across America at the Grammar School. It was meaningful - she got to read in her daughter's class. She read *The Book with No Pictures*. Highly recommends. Was impressed with how attentive the kids were. Also at the last Council meeting there was a discussion about making sure agendas were made available to everybody. As a member of the Finance Committee she was happy to receive a link to the Steering Committee agenda. The public can get the same access to agendas through the Town website. She encourages anyone on the Council or community to reach out if they have questions.

Kyer: Coventry Dollars for Scholars is doing their fundraising this month. All student applicants who complete the process will receive scholarships. Keep an eye out for their materials and consider donating.

Hand: Also read at Read Across America, but did it remotely. He read the same book that Robyn read.

Thomas: Also participated in Read Across America, and read one of her favorite books, *Abiyoyo*, in collaboration with Matthew Kyer, who played guitar.

Steering Committee: Matthew Kyer:

- The Steering Committee met on Monday, February 28th.

- We agreed to remove the discussion of the town's Policy for the Continuation of Hybrid In-Person/Remote Meetings from future agendas and to follow guidance from the state, which currently allows for both hybrid and remote meetings. We will continue our current practice.
- We discussed at length the Town's Vaccination, Testing and Face Covering Policy. John Elsesser will be presenting possible amendments for our consideration later in the agenda.
- We continued our discussion on the current process for reporting and addressing blight and zoning violations. We agreed that it would be beneficial to implement a system for reviewing special permits.
- We reviewed the handbook that is currently distributed to board, commission and council members and suggested edits. A revised version of the handbook will be reviewed at an upcoming Steering Meeting.
- We accepted the resignation of Arianna Mouradjian from the Planning & Zoning Commission. The members of the Steering Committee thank Arianna for her service to our community.

Appointment:

I move to appoint Mike Shor to the Coventry Human Rights Commission, term to expire 1/1/2024.

Moved: Kyer

Second: Hand

Discussion: Hand: Another good example of someone highly qualified stepping up to serve.

Vote: Unanimous

Blanchard: There were some other appointments on the Steering Committee agenda - are we making those? Kyer: We are going to bring those candidates in for discussion with Steering, per past practices. Elsesser: We have reached out to them to attend the April meeting.

6.E. COVRRRA:

Elsesser: We are looking at a proposal for a solar shed roof over the transfer station that will generate power for the Public Works garage vs. more expensive dumpsters with covers. Kyer: Can we re-use anything from the transfer station when we move it. Elsesser: Yes, the scale, and the blocks that form the retaining wall to create a buffer for the wetland area. The shed house. We are looking to see what we can do to accelerate the schedule. We are also getting prices from tree removal companies to remove trees in that area. Once the wetlands permit is approved we will cut the trees to make room.

6.F. Town Manager's Report – John Elsesser:

1. Projects Update:

- Last week was primarily budget-focused. The budget hearing will be broadcast on the Board of Education's cable access channel and their YouTube Channel. Video on demand will be available afterwards. Email budget comments to budgetcomments@coventryct.org.
- We got the balance of the Corsi-Rosenthal filters from UConn today and they are being distributed. We very much appreciate UConn contacting us to do it. It will help us improve air quality in the schools.

- The FBI investigation into school construction projects has brought our school roof and HVAC projects to a halt. We are at stage 2 of a stage 3 process, but don't know when we will get authorization to go to bid. This may affect our ability to get the work done this year, and the roofs are leaking. Designs should be here this week from the heating ventilation company.
- We were authorized to go out to bid for the South St and Swamp Road projects.

French: The bids for the landfill methane venting included an alternate for a recreational softball field in the rear. He had a discussion with Matt O'Brien, Sr. that we would were going to put in two whole fields instead of one practice field. Elsesser: Things changed since O'Brien left the Council - we got some gravel to extend that rear area. French: An additional field would bring in more revenue to town. Elsesser: It will be a full size softball field but would overlap the practice field. We would need some additional funding. This is on the agenda later tonight.

Blanchard: The Manager's update in the development group on page 4, said that the Planning and Zoning Commission had adopted a moratorium on cannabis retail sales. Has that been lifted? Elsesser: No, it's through June.

Blanchard: Will the drive-thru food distribution event on 3/25 take place Town Hall?
Elsesser: Yes.

2. COVID Update:

Elsesser: The numbers are down and we hope they stay that way. The Eastern Highlands Health District report shows over 75% of Coventry residents are vaccinated. Revisions to our personnel policies will be discussed later on tonight's agenda. Thomas: As a reminder, we have had 11 deaths in Coventry. That is a pretty significant toll in our little town. Hand: In the report from Eastern Highlands Health District, do we know the definition of fully vaccinated - does it include boosting? Elsesser: No. Hand: Thinks the designation with booster would be important to know, so we know if the community has achieved the high level of protection that the booster provides. Elsesser: We can ask the Health District.

3. Planning and Zoning Commission: 8-24 Review of Capital Improvement Plan:

Thomas: Noted that PZC put forward what they feel the budget priorities should be, which are listed in their memo. Elsesser: The community center is new this year. Increasing numbers of people are asking for a community center and the facility we are using now is shot. It has served us well for 25 years, but we need to be planning for the future. The water tower is primarily for sprinkler systems. There is no good source of money for that. We are working with CT Water to see if we can come up with a plan. Lack of sprinklers affects insurance for businesses, particularly Teleflex, who we wouldn't want to lose.

Gallagher: Do the sidewalks create a loop around the lake? Elsesser: Yes, but there is a missing link on two sides. We don't think we need sidewalks in every area of town - we don't have the population, but around the lake makes sense. Gallagher: Are there any plans to extend sidewalks down Main Street in the other direction? Elsesser: The original

plan was to get to Armstrong Road.

5. Coventry Refunding Resolution:

Backhaus: This item is informational for tonight. It will be on the March 14, 2022 agenda for consideration of adoption.

6. Crumbling Concrete Foundations Report - 3/1/2022:

Thomas removed this item from Consent, because she wanted to clarify we had 230 applicants for help with crumbling foundations. Have 215 been approved and paid for?

Elsesser: this report is for testing. Kyer: How much does testing cost? Elsesser: Depends on the kind of test.

7. Unfinished Business:

7A. 21/22-34: Consideration/Possible Action: Amendment for Town Personnel Rules per OSHA COVID Requirements:

Backhaus: None of the changes discussed at Steering are on the document attached to the agenda. Thomas: requested motion to continue.

I move to continue discussion of item 21/22-34 at the next meeting.

Moved: French
Second: Hand
Vote: Unanimous

8. New Business:

8.B. 21/22-57: Consideration/Possible Action: Landfill Gas Venting Project – Award and Additional Funding Request:

Thomas: Do we need to take action on the additional needed funds? Elsesser: Yes.

I move to authorize an amount not to exceed \$50,000 from the Town Council 1.5% Fund for the additional expenditure required for the bid alternate.

Moved: Kyer
Second: Hand

Discussion: Thomas: This is part of the discussion we have been having around adult leagues. It would not be instead of the regulation field that is being built for youth softball. Elsesser: it would not have an outfield fence. It would allow rentals as soccer fields too. It was recommended by the Parks & Recreation Commission as part of their master recreation plan. Gravel from the treatment plant helped to level the area in the back, so now we would just be doing the methane venting, and would have a field instead of planting grass. Thomas: Does this interfere with the football field? Elsesser. No. We would have two full fields instead of one and a half. Blanchard: Can Elsesser speak to Todd Penney's comments about the underground unknowns? Elsesser: Any project needs a contingency. We're cutting it down to 5%. If we don't need the contingency we won't use whole \$50,000.

Vote: Unanimous.

8C. 21/22-58: Consideration/Possible Action: Authorization To Execute Trash And Recycling Contracts Through November 13, 2027:

I move to authorize execution of the contract with Casella / Willimantic Waste Paper Company through 2027.

Moved: Hand
Second: Milkovic

Discussion: Elsesser: In our negotiations we wanted to go longer term, and prices reflect a longer term. Plant capacity is diminishing and the recycling market is interesting. People can help their bills by participating in recycling. He was pleased by the tipping fee.

Vote: Unanimous.

8D. 21/22-59: Consideration/Possible Action: Purchase of Conway Property on South River Road as Open Space:

I move to authorize the purchase of the Conway property on South River Road as open space.

Moved: Milkovic
Second: Hand

Discussion: Elsesser: If we pass this, it needs to go to a Town Meeting. Backhaus: The purchase price is \$69,000. The most we can take from the open space fund is \$50,000. Elsesser: Joshua's Trust will give us \$5,000 toward the purchase. Backhaus: we would need a minimum of \$14,000 along with the \$5,000 contribution from Joshua's Trust, and the \$50,000 from the open space fund. Elsesser: it would be a separate question at the Annual Town Meeting.

French: How much open space do we have in Coventry? Elsesser: 13%. The goal is 15%. French: what did Coventry do with the property that was given to them that was confiscated by the State for Expressway 6? Elsesser: It was given to us under strict guidance that it remain as open space.

Thomas: The characteristics of this parcel fits in with the Plan of Conservation & Development. It is not a buildable lot, but does potentially give some fishing access.

Gallagher: How much money do we usually spend out of the open space fund? Backhaus: It is minimal - \$500 to \$1,000 for such things as signage, etc. We tend to save the money for larger purchases. Elsesser: The importance of open space was very high polling in our community survey. When we ran a question to spend a million dollars for open space acquisition a few years ago, it failed by only one vote. The prior owner of this property wanted to sell it to the Town for \$140,000. We said no. He sold it to the current owner for \$69,000. They determined they could build a small house, but it would have to be next to the road and that's not what they wanted. Joshua's Trust did a major review and felt the property was valuable to acquire as open space, so agreed to commit \$5,000. It has riverfront and would provide access. Gallagher:

Encourages citizens that if we vote in favor of this, that people come to the Annual Town Meeting to make their voices heard. It is a tough decision in a difficult budget year. We would have to fund the difference.

Milkovic: Would there be a presentation at the Town Meeting? Elsesser: Yes.

Kyer: Thinks it is a great idea to partner with Joshua's Trust. This would be another way to bring people from out of town into Coventry and spend their money in Coventry.

Vote:

In favor: Thomas, Hand, Gallagher, Hand, Milkovic

Opposed: Blanchard, French

Motion carries.

10. Executive Session:

Backhaus: Only item #1 is needed. It is not pension.

I move that the Town Council enter into Executive Session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 1-200(6) (B)-discussion of strategy and negotiation with respect to pending claims and litigation to which the public agency or a member thereof, because of the member's conduct as a member of such agency, is a party until such litigation claim has been finally adjudicated or otherwise settled with the following people in attendance: Members of the Town Council, John Elsesser, and Amanda Backhaus:

Moved: Hand

Second: Milkovic

Vote: Unanimous

Executive Session commended at 10:10 PM.

I move to leave Executive Session at 10:30 PM.

Moved: Milkovic

Second: French

Vote: Unanimous.

11. Adjournment:

I move to adjourn the meeting at 10:31 PM.

Moved: French

Second: Gallagher

Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Stone
Town Council Clerk

PLEASE NOTE: These minutes are not official until approved by the Town Council at the next Council meeting. Please see the next Council meeting minutes for approval or changes to these minutes.