AGENDA
Town Council Steering Committee
Special Meeting December 23, 2019, 6:30 P.M.
Town Hall Conference Room B

1. Call To Order, Roll Call
The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by O’Brien, Jr.

Present: Matthew O’Brien, Jr., Jonathan Hand, Lisa Conant, Blanchard (arrived 6:34)
Absent: None
Also present: John Elsesser, Town Manager

2. Acceptance Of Minutes: November 25, 2019
Motion: I move to accept the minutes of the November 25, 2019 meeting.

By: Conant Seconded: Hand

With the following correction:
- Page 3, Item 8, 5th line from the bottom – add “at the same time to all Council Members” at the end of the sentence.

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Conant
Against: None
Abstain: None

3. Reports:
3.A. Chairperson
3.B. Committee Members
3.C. Possible Recommendations/Vacancy List/Board & Commission List
The board member report was reviewed. There are no recommendations since the last review. Hand mentioned that this list will get shorter as some boards are disbanded. The elimination of the Insurance Board will require a public hearing the negate the charge. Elsesser will check if the letter was distributed to the volunteers of the Personnel Appeals board.
No recommendations since last review.

4. Resignations/Not Wishing To Be Reappointed:
4.A. Veterans Memorial Commission: Kelly
Motion: I move to accept the resignation of Peter Kelly from the Veterans Memorial Commission with thanks for his service.
By: Hand

Seconded: Conant

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Conant
Against: None
Abstain: None

Elsesser added that the Cemetery Commission is not interested in taking on the Veterans Memorial Commission. However, they will try to recruit someone from the VFW community to serve on the commission.

5. Reappointments:

5.A. Ad-Hoc Farmers' Market Operating Committee: Coughlin
Motion: I move to recommend to the Town Council the reappointment of Janine Coughlin to the Ad-Hoc Farmers Market Operating Committee; term to expire 12-06-2022.

By: Hand
Seconded: Conant

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Conant
Against: None
Abstain: None

5.B. Capitol Region Council Of Governments: Marek
Motion: I move to recommend to the Town Council the reappointment of Stephen Marek to the Capitol Regional Council of Governments; term to expire 01-01-2021

By: Hand
Seconded: Conant

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Conant
Against: None
Abstain: None

Elsesser noted that Marek has served two terms and wishes to continue as the representative from Coventry with CROG.

5.C. Conservation Commission: Lowe
Motion: I move to recommend to the Town Council the reappointment of Leroy Lowe, Jr., to the Conservation Commission; term to expire 01-01-2024

By: Hand
Seconded: Conant

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Conant
Against: None
Abstain: None

5.D. Conservation Commission: Proctor (E)
Motion: I move to recommend to the Town Council the reappointment of Robert Proctor to the Conservation Commission; term to expire 01-01-2024

By: Hand Seconded: Conant

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Conant
Against: None
Abstain: None

5.E. HUD Housing Rehab/Fair Housing Commission: Grady
Motion: I move to recommend to the Town Council the reappointment of Dorothy Grady to the HUD Housing Rehab/Fair Housing Commission; term to expire 12-31-2020

By: Hand Seconded: Conant

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Conant
Against: None
Abstain: None

5.F. Parks & Recreation Commission, Alt; Carlson
Motion: I move to recommend to the Town Council the reappointment of Beverly Carlson as an Alternate on the Parks & Recreation Commission; term to expire 01-01-2022.

By: Hand Seconded: Conant

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Conant
Against: None
Abstain: None

5.G. Parks & Recreation Commission; Gallo-Hall
Motion: I move to recommend to the Town Council the reappointment of Marie Gallo-Hall to the Parks & Recreation Commission; term to expire 01-01-2022.

By: Conant Seconded: Hand

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Conant
Against: None
Abstain: None

5.H. Pension & Retirement Board; Emanuele
Motion: I move to recommend to the Town Council the reappointment of Benedict Emanuele to the Pension & Retirement Board; term to expire 01-01-2023.

By: O’Brien, Jr. Seconded: Hand

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Conant
Against: None
Abstain: None

5.I. Pension & Retirement Board; Jatkowski
Motion: I move to recommend to the Town Council the reappointment of Paul Jatkowski to the Pension & Retirement Board; term to expire 01-01-2023.

By: Conant Seconded: O’Brien, Jr.

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Conant
Against: None
Abstain: None

5.J. Pension & Retirement Board; Powers
Motion: I move to recommend to the Town Council the reappointment of David Powers to the Pension & Retirement Board; term to expire 01-01-2023.

By: Hand Seconded: Conant

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Conant
Against: None
Abstain: None

5.K. Veterans Memorial Commission; Lowe, Jr.
Motion: I move to recommend to the Town Council the reappointment of Leroy Lowe, Jr. to the Veterans Memorial Commission; term to expire 01-01-2022/

By: Hand Seconded: Conant

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Conant
Against: None
Abstain: None
Appointments:
1.A. Courant: State Says Eastern CT Tourism Group Must Return $150K
Elsesser mentioned this was discussed in a previous meeting about trying to find a person for this role. The law was enacted in the May/June timeframe. The meetings are held in Norwich during the day. The Group has not been holding meetings because a quorum cannot be reached, which is the basis for the call to return the funds. Every town in eastern Connecticut sends a representative with Bolton being the line designating that region. This is likely in response to the Quiet Corner never getting any money. The suggestion was to approach the parties to get the word out that a representative for Coventry is being sought.

1.B. Inland Wetlands Agency Alt.: Choate
Elsesser stated that the historical process is to call the interested party in for a discussion about their philosophies to be sure that those are in tune with the commission/board. This person looks well qualified. He suggests this person be invited to the next meeting for an introduction/discussion.

Motion: I move to table this matter until a discussion with the interested party is held.

By: Hand Seconded: Conant

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Conant
Against: None
Abstain: None

1.C. Senior Housing Alternatives Study Committee, At-Large Member: Twerdy
Motion: I move to recommend to the Town Council the appointment of John Twerdy; to a term for the life of the committee.

By: Hand Seconded: Conant

Discussion: The charge of the committee will now be developed as there is a number of members needed for a quorum – Christine Pattee, Aline Hoffman, Sondra Stave, Roberta Wilmot, John Twerdy, Vladys Vinkels – these people have much experience. One more Democrat can be added and the balance will be proper. Each of the following will have a representative – Town Council, Housing Authority, and Human Services.

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Conant
Against: None
7. Consideration/Possible Action: Policy For Council Interaction With Town Staff

Blanchard commented that she is still mulling this over. She recently experienced the red tape that can become involved about someone wanting to ask questions of Town Staff. As elected officials the chain of command should be observed. Questions with simple answers are not the problem. The issue arises when research involving Staff time is required. For these cases, there should be a formal process in place. Most questions are supposed to go through the Chair of the Town Council or if involving Town Staff the avenue should be the Town Manager’s office. Hand requested that answers to questions be distributed to the entire Council or the appropriate subcommittee to provide transparency. Elsesser added that the taking of Staff’s time has not been a huge issues.

**Motion**: I move that this matter be continued to a future meeting.

By: Hand  
Seconded: Conant.

**Voting:**  
For: O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Conant  
Against: None  
Abstain: None

8. Consideration/Possible Action: Modifications To Ordinances: Inspection/Permit, Open Burning

Elsesser reported this has been surfaced for three items that are being suggested to undergo fee changes. The philosophy being that we do not charge more than it costs to provide the service. These fees have not been changed in some time. Meyers gets a stipend of $500 per month for his services. Noel Waite, having more plan review experience than Meyers, will be asked to do these reviews when they surface.

Meyers is suggesting a crackdown on open burning that is more than a ceremonial bonfire. The current regulation allows for a fire that is not larger than five feet in any direction. People moving to the country have an expectation of being able to cook and/or have a fire in the backyard. While not quash that expectation too much, there are health concerns to be considered and that people not do have a fire and a crowd every weekend.

Conant asked how this could be possibly be enforced? By a fine of $200 or jail? Hand commented that the town size and population density can be considered as a nod to the rural character. Smoke does have a dissipating
area. He feels there should be a limiting of scope and clearly defining of what this should accomplish for Coventry and then research what other towns do. O’Brien, Jr. added air quality, fire size, and what is in the fires must be considered. Burning hazardous materials is different than burning a tree. There is a state law against burning leaves. Coventry will accept collected leaves without cost at the transfer station.

Elsesser will speak to Meyers about the bullet points and what the intended outcome is.

This matter was tabled until the January 27, 2020 meeting.

9. Adjournment

Motion: I move for adjournment at 7:11 p.m.

By: Hand
Seconded: Conant.

Voting:
For: O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Conant
Against: None

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne B. Filip
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Town Council Clerk

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