Minutes
Coventry Town Council Special Meeting
April 22, 2019
Town Hall Annex

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.
Present: Matthew O’Brien, Julie Blanchard, Mike Sobol, Joan Lewis, Lisa Conant, Carolyn Arabolos, Jonathan Hand
Also present: John Elsesser, Town Manager; Amanda Backhaus, Finance Director

2. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.


4. Acceptance of Minutes:
Motion #18/19-260: Mike Sobol moved to accept the minutes of the Special Town Council Meeting on March 21, 2019. The motion was seconded by Carolyn Arabolos and carried on unanimous vote.

Motion #18/19-261: Lisa Conant moved to accept the minutes of the Special Town Council Meeting on March 25, 2019. The motion was seconded by Matthew O’Brien. The following corrections were requested:
- Page 6, item 4, 2nd paragraph, 7th line: change 3% to 3.5%.
- Page 7, first paragraph, 3rd line: change the end of the first sentence to read, “...at a time that the officers would normally have worked if the positions were filled that were covered by overtime.”

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

Motion #18/19-262: Lisa Conant moved to accept the minutes of the Town Council meeting on April 1, 2019. The motion was seconded by Matthew O’Brien. The following corrections were requested:
- Page 1, item 4.A., 5th line: change “doesn’t mention what he talked about” to “is not an accurate reflection of what he talked about.”
- Page 3, item 7.A., 15th line: change $4,000,000 to $40,000,000.
- Page 4, last paragraph: Matthew O’Brien submitted replacement language beginning at the 5th line after “agreed with those changes” through the end of the first paragraph on page 5. (attached to minutes). Motion #18/19-263: Lisa Conant moved to table acceptance of the minutes of April 1, 2019 so that Matthew O’Brien’s requested changes can be reviewed. The motion was seconded by Jonathan Hand and carried on unanimous vote.

5. Consent Agenda:
Motion #18/19-264: Lisa Conant moved to accept the Consent Agenda, seconded by Jonathan Hand. Carolyn Arabolos requested to remove item 6.D. and Matthew O’Brien requested to remove item 6.D.1. The motion to accept the Consent Agenda as amended carried on unanimous vote.

6. Reports:
A. Council Chairwoman – Joan Lewis: no report.
B. Council Members:

Mike Sobol said it is nice to see the progress at Vinton Village where Wicked Slice was, with the walls and roof going up.

1. Update from CHS Walls Committee: Jonathan Hand reported that the committee met recently and received an analysis from DiBlasi Engineering. A number of the walls cannot support wind loading and one section of the wall has a design flaw. We reached out to DiBlasi for a scope of work to do a retrofit and testing for the other wall to see if we can limit the scope of the project. We will probably proceed in a piecemeal manner. John Elsesser noted that the seismic issue was resolved. There are still some wind shear issues that need to be evaluated on the outside wall. Regardless of the presence of r-bar, one wall does not meet code. The engineer ered. It is one wall on the exterior of the auditorium. This was just one engineer’s opinion. The repair is not outrageously expensive. We will have to design a couple of interior beams and support them to the existing structure to make the wall more rigid. The suggestion from the committee is since we know that wall has an issue, let’s go ahead and fix it since it needs to be done no matter what. Then we will come up with a process to monitor the other walls. Right now if the r-bar is there those would meet code. We need a more thorough vetting process. It’s frustrating because we hired professionals to do the job, but it is not the end of the world. The other issue is whether we go through the whole process of getting it through the State Board of Education for code reimbursement money. It is a very involved process that would require fully designed bid specs and would take 5-6 months. Taking an engineering approach might be a better way to go.

C. Steering Committee – Jonathan Hand:

1. Reappointments:
   - Motion #18/19-265: Jonathan Hand moved to reappoint David Lamore to the CoventryVision Committee, term to expire 5/3/2022. The motion was seconded by Matthew O’Brien and carried on unanimous vote.
   - Motion #18/19-266: Jonathan Hand moved to reappoint Sondra Astor Stave to the CoventryVision Committee, term to expire 5/3/2022. The motion was seconded by Carolyn Arabolos and carried on unanimous vote.
   - Motion #18/19-267: Jonathan Hand moved to reappoint Laura Stone to the CoventryVision Committee, term to expire 5/3/2022. The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant and carried on unanimous vote.

2. Appointments:
   A & B: Fire Transition Study Committee. Motion #18/19-268: Jonathan Hand moved to table items A and B. The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant. Joan Lewis said another application came in after the agenda was posted, so the Steering Committee moved to table this matter to get input from the Board of Fire Officers. Motion #18/19-268 carried on unanimous vote.

   C. Motion #18/19-269: Jonathan Hand moved to appoint Beverly Carlson to the Parks & Recreation Commission as an alternate, term to expire 1/1/2020. The motion was seconded by Carolyn Arabolos and carried on unanimous vote.

D. Finance Committee: Carolyn Arabolos:
Carolyn reported that the Finance Committee met April 8th and this is the first Council meeting since then, so she requested to remove this item from the Consent Agenda to make a report. The
Committee covered a number of items including a review of the monthly financial reports. Tax collections are at the 100% mark, and expenditures are at 79% which is in line with last year. The Board of Education has spent approximately 68% of their budget. We also talked about the contract with Charter/Spectrum being up and a potential charge for dark fiber. John Elsesser said we would go to a 30-day contract. The Board of Education was able to get new source of money called E-rate. They are going through the application process to get a new provider that would be cheaper in the long run. Charter wants to charge a fee based on speed. We don’t think we can hold them off much longer. This is for the two outlying schools. Jonathan asked if this would run on commercial space, or municipal gain. John replied we don’t know. When you run fiber you run extra pairs which could open the door for other options like broadband to select locations such as Patriots Park or the Public Works garage.

Carolyn provided other highlights of the Finance Committee meeting. We talked about the upcoming tax sale. Two properties came off and three more are hoping to pay soon. John Elsesser said we will evaluate whether to proceed with the sale this year or not, but we are doing very well at collecting without it.

Carolyn reported that the reduction to the grand list due to allowances made by the Board of Assessment Appeals was $235,170, with 15 appeals considered and six accepted. An RFP is going out for banking services. The dependent insurance coverage audit is underway and the deadline to respond is tomorrow. Amanda Backhaus said at the end of last week we had a little over an 80% response rate. An electronic reminder about the deadline went out. If there is no response the coverage will be removed. Carolyn asked if we have an update about the status of the warranty on the truck with the blown engine. John replied not yet.

Julie Blanchard noted that the COVRRRA collection is down quite a bit. Matthew O’Brien said that was why he wanted to remove item 6.D.1 from the Consent Agenda, because he had the same question. Amanda Backhaus replied that COVRRRA paid the costs for the cleanup of the Stewart property. We also just did some quarterly encumbrances. The number may decrease as we close out purchase orders. John Elsesser noted that disposal rates also went up. Julie asked why revenues are down. John said for two years in a row we lowered the rate by $5. Amanda said that collections are only $20,000 off. The anticipated revenue projections were off last year. We don’t think we are significantly off what is expected. John said that recycling revenues have dropped from $30/ton to $10 and now we are getting penalties for contaminated waste. Amanda said that the penalty is $75 and is basically offsetting our revenue. Matthew asked if we are still planning to print an informational sticker for the recycling barrels. John said yes; we are just waiting for warmer weather. Carolyn suggested that we share an overview of unacceptable recycling items. John said that styrofoam and plastic film are the two biggest issues. Right now there is no market for recycling. China stopped taking it. Eventually we will have to pay for disposal of recycling too. The only market right now is for very clean items. There was a lot of detail in our spring newsletter and we urge people to read it.

E. COVRRRA — John Elsesser:
1. Landfill testing: John said that we still don’t have a report from the engineering firm. Mark Kiefer is pursuing the matter.

F. Town Manager’s Report — John Elsesser:
1. Projects Update:
   - The Hale Greenway public meeting is this Thursday at 7 PM in the CHS lecture hall.
   - The Town Meeting is this Saturday at 10 AM in Veterans’ Auditorium.
• The softball fields have been too wet to do the drainage work. Once they are dry the contractor will start.
• The Jones Crossing contractor has done some minor widening. They will mill one lane at a time. The work should start soon and go quickly. Joan Lewis noted that the signage is confusing. John said we will check on that. Bridge construction is anticipated for mid-June. That process will take several months. Detour signage will go up for that. This does not affect any school buses, there are only 3 houses in that section.
• This Friday there will be a brief Arbor Day ceremony up at the north green at 1 PM to plant the tree we got from Sustainable CT.
• Carolyn Arabolos asked about the status of the Cumberland Farms project. The corporation is putting themselves out for bid – will that affect our project? John replied that we don’t think so. There are only 3-4 big chains that are New England based that could do it.
• Mike Sobol asked if things are going well with the water main work at Northfields. John replied that he drove through today and it seems so.

2. Local adoption of the Capitol Region Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan:
John Elsesser said that the federal government requires that regional hazard mitigation plans be reviewed and adopted every five years or so. The last time our plan was done was in 2014. Failure to adopt means we would not qualify if there is a FEMA event. They make an offer to come out and explain the plan to you. A public hearing was held in Hartford for the whole plan. Matthew O’Brien asked if there are things we might discover if we have the meeting. Joan Lewis asked if anyone from staff reviewed it. John replied yes, there was a team that included Mark Kiefer, Jim McLoughlin, Eric Trott and me. We met with the consultant twice. There is nothing obligatory. There were some stated goals which were able to check off, like Jones Crossing Road. This opens the door for some other grant opportunities. Matthew said he looked at it quickly thinking we would be getting a presentation later, but he did not read it in detail. Joan said she went through it, but not word for word. She wanted to make sure staff had looked at it. John asked if the Council wants someone out here for a presentation. Matthew asked if there is anything that might be an issue or have an impact for residents. John said it is hard to say. Some things are out of our control, like a re-do of the FEMA flood maps. Coventry Village is not mapped. Matthew said he would like to wait until the next meeting to give the document a closer look. Carolyn said she would like to have someone come to do a presentation. John will check availability. Lisa asked if there is a deadline. John replied there will be, but not yet. Motion #18/19-270: Lisa Conant moved to table consideration of the local adoption of the Capitol Region Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. The motion was seconded by Carolyn Arabolos and carried on unanimous vote.

3. Public Information Meeting 4/25/19: Nathan Hale Greenway:
John Elsesser said we have met with groups of neighbors about the Hale Greenway. We are finishing up the study. We are not seeking money to do any development at this stage. We don’t feel the neighbors or the Town are ready at this point. The next step would be forestry management, leading to a skid trail or well-worn path which could provide emergency access. That is our vision at this point. The community may have a vision in the future, at which point we would go through a wetlands process. Hunt Tree farm already has trails, and some minor repairs could be done to the foot bridges there. It would be extremely expensive to build a bridge across the Skungamaug River. This is only on the east side to try to get to the Homestead. The people who lost their land to the Rt. 6 Expressway project have strong feelings. Bolton is having their meeting next week. Mike Sobol asked if nothing is done if citizens can walk there. John said yes, it is public land which is one reason why we would like the skid row so the quad vehicle could
get in for emergency response. Joan Lewis asked if there any many options for what we can do.
John replied there are limits to what can be done. We cannot do active recreation like ball fields,
or farming. It is meant to be open space.

4. Legal Notice: Annual Town Meeting: John Elsesser reminded the community of the Annual
Town Meeting on Saturday, April 27th at 10 AM in the Veterans’ Auditorium.

5. Hydrilla treatment report: John Elsesser said that the appendix was added to the document.
The title page that says “draft” has not changed. We are still waiting on the final report but we are
planning on doing the June treatment. It looks like the State is planning to give their money in
June which is good because that means they won’t skip a year. The final number is $25,500.

8. New Business:
A. 18/19-64: Consideration/Authorization: FY 18/19 Year-End Transfers:
Motion #18/19-271: Carolyn Arabolos moved to authorize the FY 18/19 year-end transfers as
presented (attached to minutes). The motion was seconded by Matthew O’Brien. John Elsesser noted
that we did get some mail this week from the court about the street light repair. There is a restitution
statement for us to fill out. Matthew wondered why we didn’t budget for longevity. Amanda replied it
was an accounting department error. Motion #18/19-271 carried on unanimous vote.

9. Adjournment:
Motion #18/19-272: Matthew O’Brien moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 PM. The motion was
seconded by Julie Blanchard and carried on unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Stone
Town Council Clerk

Note: These minutes are not official until acted upon by the Town Council at its next regular meeting.
Those meeting minutes will reflect approval or changes to these minutes.
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