

**MINUTES
COVENTRY TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 17, 2021, 7:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX & VIRTUAL**

1. Call To Order, Roll Call:

The meeting was called to order by Blanchard at 7:31 p.m.

Members present:

Julie Blanchard – Chair
Lisa Conant - remote
Jonathan Hand – remote
Matthew O'Brien, Jr. - remote
Matthew O'Brien, Sr. - Vice Chair
Lisa Thomas
Richard Williams – Secretary

Members absent:

Also present:

John Elsesser – Town Manager
Amanda Backhaus – Finance Director - remote

2. Pledge Of Allegiance:

Council members and Staff stood to recite the pledge.

3. Audience Of Citizens:

(30 minutes – 5 minutes per person, 750-word count maximum)

Submit comments of a general nature to be read aloud to: audience@coventry.org
(Deadline 4 p.m.)

Blanchard read the following audience statement submitted to the email address. The statement in its entirety is attached to these Minutes.

Ashley Gagnon, 714 Brigham Tavern Road – Her email was directed to Richard Williams. She writes to express her concern at how she was treated at the Finance Meeting.

Williams said if his tone was not right or offensive to Mrs. Gagnon or to any other committee members he apologizes. He wants what they want. Sports are an important part of our community and he wants to give everyone access to what they need. O'Brien, Sr. said he takes part of the responsibility for this. He was running

the meeting. He has been to Softball Committee meetings and they do not follow Robert's Rules as the Council does; they do not get recognized before speaking. O'Brien, Sr. said he had recognized Williams and Gagnon interrupted Williams. It was understandable why Williams was upset about that as he is used to the running of meetings as the Council does. O'Brien, Sr. said this is about the two different processes of how meetings are run. He was trying to encourage a discussion so did not always require someone to raise their hand before speaking. He does not think Williams was demeaning to her as a woman or softball as a venture to be pursued. O'Brien, Sr. takes some responsibility as he was running the meeting.

Motion: I move the Council moves to agenda item 8.A. at this time.

By: Thomas

Seconded: Hand

Voting:

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

Against: None

Abstain: None

4. Acceptance Of Minutes:

- **May 3, 2021 Regular Meeting**

Motion: I move to accept the minutes of May 3, 2021 Regular Meeting.

By: O'Brien, Sr.

Seconded: O'Brien, Jr.

With the following corrections:

- Page 4, item 6.B, second paragraph, second sentence – add “and Hand” after “Thomas”.
- Page 4, item 6.B., fourth sentence – change “said” to “asked if”.
- Page 7, item 6.F.1., first bullet – change “grated” to “granted”.
- Page 8, first paragraph, second sentence – add after “started” “but that would not line up well with the Arts Festival.”.

Voting:

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

Against: None

Abstain: None

5. 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 members 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 to accept the Consent Agenda.

By: Williams

Seconded: O'Brien, Sr.

Discussion: Thomas asked that item 9.B. be removed from the Consent Agenda.

Voting:

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

Against: None

Abstain: None

6. **Reports:**

6.A. **Council Chairwoman: Julie A. Blanchard**

Blanchard said there is going to be another drive-through food distribution this Friday at 10:00 a.m. in the driveway loop in front of Town Hall. The Farmer's Market opens for the season on June 6th at 10:00 a.m.

6.B. **Council Members:**

Hand said he gives a shout out to Coventry Softball for the Pitch, Hit, Run event held this past weekend at the high school field. There were a few dozen girls there; everyone had a great time.

O'Brien, Jr. said toward end of April John had forwarded statement from the Executive Director of CCM. It was a sign-on statement condemning anti-Semitism. He read the statement and signed it. He invites other Members to sign it as well. O'Brien, Jr. read the statement and asked that John forward the email with the link to the statement to the Council members. O'Brien, Sr. suggested the Council have this as a discussion item on the June 7, 2021 meeting agenda.

Conant said on May 8th Coventry Cares organized the Food Truck Fest. It did not go as planned as they were hoping to have more food trucks there. They had three vendors committed to the event and two bailed out. Coventry Cares has learned some lessons and will hold this event again at a later time.

6.C. **Finance Committee: Matthew O'Brien, Sr., Chairperson**

O'Brien, Sr. read the following report of the Finance Committee:

Coventry Town Council Finance Committee
Report to the Council May 17, 2021

We held our Finance Committee meeting on May 10, 2021.

At the beginning of the meeting, Jennifer Rodgers, Mike Blouin, and Ashley Gagnon from the Softball Field Study Committee joined us.

The chair started the discussion by asking about the work that has been done on the existing fields that the Softball league is using this year that were in disrepair or had drainage problems when the committee first came to the Council. As part of this process, it was agreed that these

issues would be resolved to enable the league to have use of more fields while the committee pursues a more permanent solution. It was agreed that there has been good progress in improving drainage and conditions at the available fields but that the fact that the school field is controlled by the school can still cause problems and in fact, had resulted in missed games on the day of our meeting. Jennifer and Mike explained that the school had moved an away game back home and then the rain earlier in the day resulted in the school cancelling their game. Because the school cancelled their game the recreation leagues were also prevented from using the fields even though the sun was shining later in the day and the field appeared dry. They said that this shines a light on another reason why the Softball League needs their own fields.

We had a good discussion about a number of questions that have come up about either the proposed fields at the gravel pit location or at the football field/landfill location.

It was determined that the league would need one full size field that could be used for tournament play, etc. but that the second field could possibly have a smaller outfield (in the case of the gravel pit fields) and would not need to have a fence. It was also discussed that the regulation field did not necessarily have to have a permanent outfield fence but would need to have fencing along the 1st base and 3rd baselines to enable the league to hang banners. We could incorporate temporary fencing that could be put in place in the outfield during tournaments or as needed. We asked that these considerations be reviewed and new cost estimates provided.

John Elsesser said that the change to the second field would reduce the amount of work at the gravel pit site needed to cut into the hill where the outfield for the second field would be located. We asked that those considerations be included in updated pricing.

We discussed the proximity of the gravel pit fields to the nearby swamp, The second field is planned to be about 70 feet from the swamp. The chair asked if there would be any issue with smells or mosquitos or other bugs. Jennifer Rodgers and Richard Williams volunteered to investigate that site and the landfill site for smell and mosquitos in a few weeks as the weather heats up. They will report back to us.

A question had been raised about fundraising and what the committee could expect to raise towards the project. The chair said that because he had attended a number of the Softball Committee's meetings he understands that the committee expects to have greater options for fundraising once the location has been chosen and they can present a plan to perspective donors and grant applications. The chair continues to have a concern about fairness and not setting a precedent. In the past, sports leagues had come to the Council to ask them for partial matching of the funds they have raised towards the project they wished to pursue. Timing issues may make this a unique situation but the chair said he is trying to balance those concerns with the need to keep the project moving.

We understand that Baseball will not be using the snack shack or bathrooms this season. Jen said that Covid concerns have made it difficult to get volunteers to clean the bathrooms and man the snack shack. She also said that the bathroom is in disrepair and needs to be renovated

We discussed the landfill methane issue that will be resolved by the upcoming STEAP grant project that will install proper piping for venting and repair the fields. The Softball Committee and Wendy Rubin had done some investigation and it was agreed that once the project is completed to proper specifications this will not be a problem in the future.

We discussed that if the football field/landfill site were chosen then the STEAP grant project would enable there to be some savings in building the field(s).

The chair noted that there is a 30% lower cost associated with building at the football field/landfill site over the gravel pit site.

Jennifer said that their committee would be good with either site. They just want to get things moving and build fields the girls can use.

Our Finance Director, Amanda Backhaus reported we have collected 100.33% of the projected property tax revenue through April. The same period last year we saw property tax revenues at 99.14% of anticipated revenues.

General fund revenue collections are 99.71% of anticipated compared to 99.09% last year.

Amanda reported that the Board of Education expenditures are at 74.72% of their approved budget compared to 76.13% last year. The chair asked Amanda if this amount includes all of the Covid related expenses in their Management Report that have not been paid for with grant funds. Amanda said that it should but she would ask for clarification.

As of April 30th, COVRRA is projected to end the year with a balance of about \$170,000. This figure does not include the approximately \$80,000 of expenses associated with the landfill grant work. That would reduce the fund balance to about \$90,000. The chair noted that this suggests that we will have to raise rates in order to keep the fund healthy.

The Sewer Use fund is in good shape and as we discussed, the Recreation fund is projected to end the year with a deficit of \$95,000 before the anticipated infusion of ARP funds to offset lost revenues.

The committee reviewed the newly included EMS fund information that shows that the fund is projecting a \$152,041 deficit. Amanda and John explained that this is because of the increased costs related to changing to 24 hours ambulance coverage and the fact that Medicare and Medicaid only pay a portion of the ambulance charges. We will be closely monitoring this situation. The chair said that he understands that the fire associations are no longer fundraising and asked if the Town could send out a fundraising letter to continue the association's past work and support the department. John said he would look into what options may be available.

The loss in property taxes due to the crumbling foundations issues is \$175,753 as of April 30th.

The Council reviewed the 2020-2021 Council Unencumbered Fund (From 1 ½%). The current remaining balance available is \$388,502.18.

The committee discussed the Board of Education Management Report Cumulative Summary. The chair noted that deficit in the Covid Salaires account had increased by more than \$50,000 and the bottom-line projection had increased to \$70,542 in the past month. John Elsesser reported that he had received answers to the questions that the chair had asked of the Board of Education about their Covid expenses just before the meeting. He provided copies to the committee members and the chair asked that this information be put on the next Finance Committee agenda for discussion.

The Capital and Nonrecurring Fund Balance (CNREF) is \$152,517, the Board of Education 1% non-lapsing fund balance is \$175,920, and the Board's Tuition Fund balance is \$146,870.73 as of April 30, 2021.

The committee reviewed the Board of Education's Food Services February report which showed that net cash increased by \$11,368.60 bringing the total expendable balance available to \$133,643.38. The chair said that this fund will continue to grow through the end of the year and if it is extended into next year that will continue.

Amanda presented and discussed some additional year end transfers that she proposed and the Committee recommends that the Town Council approve these transfers totaling \$25,000. Amanda said that the recent cyber attack has caused the Town to recognize that we have to more

to improve our cyber security. She said she will be bringing additional information about this issue to the Council.

John talked about the American Rescue Plan and some upcoming opportunities to attend meetings when more specific information would be available.

The committee discussed the Avery Shores request to turn over their roads to the Town. Information was presented about the current condition of their roads and some information we received from our attorney. John said that they will be gathering additional information.

The chair said that he would like to hold our June Finance Committee meeting before the Town Council meeting on Monday, June 7th so we can discuss and make recommendations to the Council about possible use of ARP funds in the current fiscal year and begin planning for future uses of those funds and discussion of our projected end of the year general fund balance and any recommendations to use funds from our 1 ½% authorization prior to June 30th. John said he would poll the committee and recommend a date during the first week of June. Lisa and Richard said they were open to moving up the meeting.

I recommend that you review the attachments included on the Finance Committee agenda to get more information.

Matthew O'Brien Sr.
Chairman, Finance Committee

6.C.1. * Monthly Financial Reports

6.D. * Steering Committee: Matthew D. O'Brien, Jr., Chairperson

6.D.1. * Minutes: April 26, 2021

6.E. * COVRRRA – John A. Elsesser:

6.F. Town Manager – John A. Elsesser

6.F.1. Projects Update

Highlights to Elsesser's distributed report are:

- There has been some movement on the sewers. The proposed bill passed the Senate agenda. Now it is on the House side. Elsesser spoke to Rep. Ackert today to see what he might be able to do. Ackert said he is working on it.
- Mike Rueff, our sewer person, said the DEEP contacted him. DEEP is preparing their scoping notice. This is the formal process to determine the environmental impact. There is the advantage of other State grants becoming available.
- Road work update: Milling and paving is finished on High Meadow Lane and Ridgebrook. The final coat and curbing remains to be done. The underdrains are finished on Joshua Lane. Joshua Lane work is on the schedule in the next few weeks. In the Northfield subdivision patching up of seeding of last fall has been done. We are waiting for contractors for the rest of the schedule for chip seal.
- The Swamp Road project is back to the State seeking approval to go out to bid. This will not be finished until next spring.

- South Street sidewalks will be at 90% of the design stage at the end of this month. This would then go out to bid and be started in the fall.
- On the South Street and Swamp Road projects we have gotten comments to CRCOG in order to provide the final budget.
- CRCOG announced they are accepting the next round of LOTCIP projects in October. Coventry is targeting Daly Road. Todd Penney, Town Engineer, said we can do the estimates for that project in house. Penney is catching up with a lot of these projects as the Assistant Wetlands Agent is working out very well.
- The Memorial Day parade is going forward. It will start at the Robertson School with a stop at Memorial Green before moving on to the Village. The Shriners will be in the parade. There will be fewer children participating in the parade. Everyone enjoys this parade. It is so nice to get some normalcy back; it will be a breath of fresh air.
- Elsesser met with Penney to go over the softball field plans.
- The interview panel is set up for the Rec Director position. We had 27 applicants. That was narrowed down to 14; Elsesser will be talking to 9 candidates.
- We are working on a plan for Flag Day. Save the date for the dedication of the park bench and lighting in front of Town Hall in memory of Teddie Ackert.
- This is the last week for the UConn intern who has been working with Elsesser. She was very helpful in getting some projects done and motivating others in bring these to closure.
- The lake survey work for chemical treatment will be done in June. Elsesser expects the first treatment to happen around July 7th.

Blanchard said she did not see information about the budget voting percentage. O'Brien, Jr. said 11.5% cast a vote of the 8,600 registered voters. Elsesser said the budget passed. There are long order times for the dump trucks, mower, and ambulance cab & chassis. Hand said we have over 9,100 registered voters in town.

Blanchard said re: Elsesser's report about Community Development Grant pre-spending refunds he was hoping to get for the Senior Center improvements. Did we discuss using some funds from COVID expenses for the Senior Center, too? Elsesser said it could be but we need to spend some CDG money. There is an art to managing these grants.

Hand said he was pretty sure he read in this report about Coventry doing a bit better with FEMA funds than expected. He wants to give kudos and thanks from taxpayers in town to the Democrat President Biden for waiving the 25% matching on the initial round of FEMA funds. Backhaus said we will get another \$5,600 back from our COVID FEMA submission. She is wrapping up the Isaias submission of over \$100k because they are letting us claim regular time.

6.F.2. COVID-19 Update

Elsesser said the CDC guidance as of May 19th is that masks are not needed for the fully vaccinated. The simple message is that people are done with masks in general. Effective Wednesday, masks are not required for the fully vaccinated but they are still welcome to wear them if desired. We will no longer have check-in at the doors of Town Hall. Legally we could decide to require masks. With tax season approaching we do not think we can have huge lines in the hall corridors. We may have someone at the back door for the last week in July to control the number of people entering for paying taxes. The plexiglass will remain in place. Employee bathrooms were isolated from the public bathrooms and that will remain in place. We are looking to get things opened up at the Senior Center. Close contact activities will probably require masks.

O'Brien, Sr. said it sounds like the staff have been busy in adjusted to the new guidance. He thinks it has been a shock to everyone how quickly this new guidance came out. O'Brien, Sr. said every business can determine their own rules and people have to follow the guidelines of that establishment.

Williams asked if there is new guidance with the Summer Rec program and the library. Elsesser said the library has been opened more. Children are not vaccinated so the Rec program has the same issues that the schools have. The biggest issue for recreation is that there are no lifeguards available this year because there was no training this year or last. Lifeguard training runs on a three-year cycle. A training session was held and people did not show up. Most of our lifeguards are in the 17-19 year-old age group and there are less people in that age group. There has been a downward trend in finding people wanting to do this close, personal work.

6.F.3. Microgrid Update

Elsesser said DEEP did accept the plan. There are some concerns about the Senior Center and Orchard Hills being protected financially. PURA did open a sub-metering docket. There is a series of questions to be answered. We have been asked to be part of the steering group. There is a serious financier who would like to get started this summer. Backhaus met last week with the various parties that will be splitting the cost. We need to make sure the parties do not exceed what they are paying now. We will get resiliency and will be greener. There is another BRIC that has to do with a resiliency grant; this is due in July and Rep. Courtney's office said they can help that.

6.F.4. Rep. Joe Courtney: Response To FY2022 – Community Project Funding Request

Elsesser said Courtney has forwarded his decisions to the Transportation Committee who accepted the sidewalks to Daly Road project. So that is now in the running for funding. Having the sidewalks/bike way component all the way to Daly Road may make those retail establishments more competitive. Making

Daly Road more competitive provides a broader issue on the project than simply having the sidewalks installed.

6.F.5. Certification Achievement: Coventry Town Clerk

Elsesser said this is the highest level a Town Clerk in the state can have. He does not think the town knows how fortunate we are to have such good staff. Blanchard and other members said congratulations to Lori.

Elsesser said we do not have a recognition/award for this type of achievement. Blanchard said Steering should look at this matter.

7. Unfinished Business:

7.A. 20/21-74: Discussion: Audience Of Citizens Portion Of The Meetings

Blanchard asked if anyone had any new ideas to discuss. Williams said having people back in person sounds like a moving target. Thomas said she wants people to be able to come in person but the question is how. Elsesser said he tried rearranging the room to be able to bring in more chairs and we may have people come in and out. If it is a typical meeting the Annex will not be full. Should we experiment with this room arrangement for the July 7th meeting for citizens to participate in person? Williams asked about the podium being disinfected between speakers. Suggestions included removing the microphone and leaving a container of wipes on the podium for each person to wipe it down. Williams is all for having the public appear in person. This is a great step forward. We have the right to set whatever rules we want. We can start with having the chairs 3' – 4' apart and people can make their own decision to wear a mask or not. Thomas said we should not have more chairs than is currently set up to start with. We can open the windows to have air circulating. Elsesser said the air conditioning has the air handler, too. Elsesser said the average size audience is 3 – 4 people unless there is something hot on the agenda.

O'Brien, Jr. suggested we have a quick sign up through email so there is some expectation of the people that plan to come to the meeting. We have to have an upper limit for the number of people in the room unless we have people waiting outside. Elsesser said there are 14 chairs set up and spaced in the room. Williams said that seems like it would be enough.

Elsesser said the intention is to continue with Zoom so the Council members who want to can Zoom in. Those Zoomed in have been fully participating. Elsesser said these hybrid meetings are fully authorized by Executive Order versus by law. Everyone believes a law will eventually be passed as a way to open things up. This meeting method has proved online interaction works. The PZC and Council meetings seem to work well with this format. Online training sessions have had some issues. There will be a lot more of remote meetings. Giving up leases on buildings saves lots of money.

Elsesser said written correspondence can still be received by noon on the Wednesday before a meeting for inclusion as a category on the agenda. These will not be read at the meeting but will be available online for anyone who wants to read them.

Motion: I move for the Council to have in person Audience of Citizens at the June 7, 2021 meeting limited to the space we have and being conducted by our Standard Rules of Procedures.

By: Williams

Amendment suggested by O'Brien, Sr. and accepted by Williams: Written correspondence will be listed as such on the agenda. It will not be read aloud at the meeting but will be available on the website for anyone to read.

Seconded: O'Brien, Sr.

Voting:

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

Against: None

Abstain: None

Elsesser said the hybrid meeting format will be kept while the Executive Order is still in effect and requirements are easing. Those Members who wish to attend remotely may do so or you can come to the Annex for meeting in person.

8. New Business:

8.A. 20/21-75: Consideration/Possible Action: Ratification Of Appointment: Fire Chief, Coventry Fire/EMS

Bud Meyers and Jim MacLoughlin were present.

O'Brien, Sr. said we thank them for all of the hard and detailed work the Fire Transition Team has done. The Council did not expect to have an interim period. Meyers was the interim Chief.

Elsesser said Meyers was the one candidate that submitted his interest for the permanent position of Fire Chief. He appeared before a full interview panel including two experienced Fire Chiefs and Emergency Management personnel. That panel put Meyers in the hot seat. The panel said he exceeded all expectations for a volunteer Fire Chief. Elsesser met with Meyers for a while. He is happy to receive the ratification of the appointment from the Council.

Motion: I move the Council approve the appointment of Bud Meyers as Fire Chief of Coventry Fire/EMS Department 18.

By. Thomas

Seconded: Hand

Discussion: Thomas appreciates what Meyers has done for the department and his experience provided for a stronger transition to one Fire/EMS Department. O'Brien, Sr. said he echoes what Thomas said and he is excited to have Meyers as Fire Chief. The Town is blessed to have him help bring the departments together and we are also blessed to have the other members who serve. O'Brien, Sr. is looking forward to Chief Meyers' tenure and is grateful for his past. Meyers helped to pull everyone in the departments together and make the merged department work. Hand echoed what O'Brien, Sr. and Thomas has said. Hand added that if anyone can help navigate this organization coming together during a global pandemic it is Meyers. Hand said thank you, Bud, and Godspeed. Blanchard thanked those present for their work and the rest of the Transition team members.

Voting:

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

Against: None

Abstain: None

A round of applause was given. Chief Meyers thanked everyone present for the kind words. This is just another step in having the department move into the future. The department still has a lot of work to do but knowing the people involved it will go well. O'Brien, Sr. said the Council has been unanimously supportive of the financial steps needed to keep the department moving forward. Chief Meyers said the fire department members are grateful for that support.

8.B. 20/21-76: Consideration/Possible Action: FY 2020/21 Budget Transfers

Motion: I move that the Council approve the budget transfers as requested.

By: O'Brien, Sr.

Seconded: Thomas

Discussion: O'Brien, Sr. said the transfers requested are straight forward and the Finance Committee recommended.

Voting:

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

Against: None

Abstain: None

8.C. 20/21-77: Consideration/Possible Action: Release Hold On The \$99,999 In Funds Currently Held In The COVID Educational Expense Reserve Fund

Motion: I move that the Council release the hold on the \$99,999 in funds currently held in the COVID Educational Expense Reserve Fund.

By: O'Brien, Sr.

Seconded: Williams

Voting:

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

O'Brien, Sr. said he does want to express appreciation for the difficult year the BOE has gone through and the ability to maneuver the morass of COVID. And to utilize the grant funds that have been available and to put themselves in a position to return the funds they would not need. He also wants to give praise to the Council for showing the forward leadership and thoughtfulness to provide that opportunity for this total unknown.

9. Miscellaneous/Correspondence:

9.A. American Legion Post 52: Invitation To Participate In 2021 Memorial Day Parade

Elsesser said this letter is inviting Members and Town Manager to participate on May 30th and May 31st. Ceremonies will be held on May 30th at various cemeteries in town and the parade will be held on May 31st.

9.B. * Board Of Education: 4/29/21 Minutes; 5/13/2021 Agenda

Thomas said she wanted to mention something in the meeting minutes. A lovely letter was submitted to the BOE regarding the work that was done in keeping the schools open all year. Everyone involved did a good job in having that happen. This was 100% team effort. BOE members do not get enough recognition of the work they do for the school system. Communications we do get are usually critical.

Elsesser said along the same lines he recently received a letter of someone driving through Coventry (not a resident) and noticed the flags at half-mast in front of Town Hall. The writer expressed his appreciation of the attention given. Elsesser said there is a whole team of people involved to make things happen; these may seem like little things but people do notice them.

10. Executive Session

Motion: I move that the Town Council enter into Executive Session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 1-200(6)(A): discussion concerning the employment, appointment, performance, evaluation, health or dismissal of a public officer or employee with the following in attendance the seven members of the Council, John Elsesser, Town Manager, and Amanda Backhaus, Finance Director.

By: O'Brien, Sr.

Seconded: O'Brien, Jr.

Voting:

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

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 Council and John Elsesser, Town Manager, Amanda Backhaus.

By: O'Brien, Sr.

Seconded: O'Brien, Jr.

Voting:

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

Against: None

Abstain: None

The Council entered Executive Session at 9:09 p.m.

Motion: I move that the Council exist Executive Session at 9:34 p.m.

By: O'Brien, Sr.

Seconded: Williams

Voting:

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

Against: None

Abstain: None

11. Adjournment:

Motion: I move that the Council adjourn at 9:34 p.m.

By: O'Brien, Sr.

Seconded: Thomas

Voting:

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

Against: None

Abstain: None

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne B. Filip

Yvonne B. Filip, 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.

Amanda Backhaus

From: Ashley Gagnon <airforce_ashley@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 16, 2021 10:34 PM
To: Coventry Audience
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: 5.10.2020 Finance Meeting

Please see below email. There has been no response from Mr. Williams.

Thank you,

Ashley Gagnon

Begin forwarded message:

From: Ashley Gagnon <airforce_ashley@yahoo.com>
Date: May 11, 2021 at 12:38:39 PM EDT
To: rwilliamsjr@coventryct.org
Cc: lconant@coventryct.org, jblanchard@coventryct.org, jband@coventryct.org, mobrien@coventryct.org, lthomas@coventryct.org, mobrienjr@coventryct.org, Michael Blouin <blouin321@yahoo.com>, Bonnie Edmondson <bjedmondson@yahoo.com>, Matt Harrington <mattconnrestoration@snet.net>
Subject: 5.10.2020 Finance Meeting

Mr. Williams,

I am emailing you this morning to express my concern on how I was treated last night at the Finance Committee Meeting. This is not the first time you have interrupted and disregarded me in a meeting setting like this, but I assure you it will be the last time. I've dedicated much time and effort to the Softball Field Committee for the past 2 1/2 years, and I deserve to be a contributing factor when it comes to the discussion we had last night. I like many others that were there, juggle different roles; I work at Raytheon Technologies (former UTC), I am in the Air National Guard, I volunteer many hours for this community, and I am a mother and stepmother for 3 young females that partake in Coventry Softball. As you can see, this is very near and dear to my heart. Last night I was simply suggesting that we move to the next topic since we were taking most of our precious time talking about the potential impact of mosquitos. Mr. O'Brien clearly stated that I was not "just" a participant but a committee member. You were dismissive, belittling and aggressive towards me.

There were also many baseball references that were brought up. This is not about baseball. We have stated in the past that this is an equality issue within girls softball. I noticed that you did not dismiss any of the male committee members when they were speaking at this meeting. This is about giving equal opportunities to young females. Which starts with the respect for all females. How do I explain to my young daughters time and time again that games are postponed because we don't have a field? Yet they see their male counterparts not having this issue. Last night was a perfect example, girls softball was canceled because we have no other options for fields, but our friends who play baseball were still able to play because of the fields they have at Miller Richardson.

