

**MINUTES
COVENTRY TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 18, 2022, 7:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX & VIRTUAL**

See a video of this meeting at this link:

<https://coventryct.viebit.com/player.php?hash=WFdBP8ARv1wF>

1. Call To Order, Roll Call:

The meeting was called to order by Thomas at 7:30 p.m.

Members present:

John French

Jonathan Hand – Secretary – remote

Matthew Kyer

Marty Milkovic – Vice-Chairperson

Lisa Thomas - Chairperson

Members absent:

Julie Blanchard

Robyn Gallagher

Also present:

John Elsesser – Town Manager

2. Pledge Of Allegiance:

All Council members and Staff stood to recite the Pledge.

3. Audience Of Citizens:

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

Joe Jankowski, 3899 South Street: Thanked members of the community, the Council members, and the Town Manager for their support of the library. Jankowski read the following statement:

Statement by the Booth & Dimock Memorial Library Board of Trustees

Libraries exist to facilitate access to a world of information. In so doing, a Library may contain materials that some find relevant and others may find objectionable. A Library's goal is to always ensure that everyone is able to find something here, not that everything will be for everyone.

Recently, the Booth and Dimock Memorial Library received a “Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials”. The Library takes these requests very seriously. According to the established policy of the Booth & Dimock Memorial Library, the Library Director will review the request, review the material in question for its compliance with our Materials Selection policy, make a determination, and issue a response to the patron who submitted the request. While this review is underway, the Library has not removed any books from the collection, nor taken down any displays.

The Booth & Dimock Memorial Library’s mission is “to provide materials and services to help all residents of the community meet their informational, educational, cultural and creative needs.” The Booth & Dimock Memorial Library Association Board of Trustees has endorsed the Library Bill of Rights and The Freedom to Read Statement, issued by the American Library Association; both are integral to the Library’s mission.

The Booth & Dimock Library recognizes that appropriateness and suitability are widely subjective and vary widely from family to family. We offer materials on a variety of topics, at a variety of reading levels, containing content for a variety of maturity levels. It is every parent/caregiver’s right to select, with their children, the library materials that align with the standards of their family.

Library staff are always available to assist families with locating specific items or requesting materials through the statewide interlibrary loan program. These requests also help guide our future purchasing decisions, as we strive to maintain a community-focused collection in which every Coventry citizen can see themselves and others represented.

One purpose of displays in libraries is to anticipate the needs of our patrons and make it easier to find the materials they may be searching for. One example is our Pride Month display, which has been well-utilized and served many patrons looking for these timely items.

Everyone is always welcome at Booth & Dimock Memorial Library, Coventry’s public library.

4. Acceptance Of Minutes:

Acceptance Of Minutes, July 5, 2022:

Motion: I move to accept the minutes of the July 5, 2022, meeting.

By: Kyer

Seconded: Milkovic

Corrections:

- Page 1, item 2., first paragraph, second sentence – change to read “From Coventry High School softball Team – Remmy Cassida and Elizbeth Mitchell, and from Capt. Nation Hale Middle School Softball Team – Alaina Morano and Mia Gauthier.”.
- Page 1, item 2, third paragraph – change “them” to “the softball players”.
- Page 5, item 6.C.2.b., Motion – change “that” to “ and I”.
- Page 5, item 6.E., third paragraph, first sentence – remove “regarding”.
- Page 5, item 6.E., third paragraph, second sentence – change “packing” to “de-packaging”.
- Page 6, second paragraph, first sentence – change “\$70,000” to “\$17,000”.
- Page 7, second bullet, first sentence – change “Milkcovic” to “Milkovic”; and

- “educated” to “educate”.
- Page 7, open bullet, second sentence – change to read “He noted that the general public does not seem to know how much time it takes.”.
- Page 7, second bullet, fourth sentence – change “scheduled” to “schedules”.
- Page 7, item 6.F.3., first sentence – changed “archive” to “archived”; and add “media” after “social”.
- Page 7, item 6.F.3., last paragraph, second sentence – change “too” to “to”.

Voting:

For: Hand, Thomas, Milkovic, Kyer

Against: None

Abstain: French

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 member 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: Milkovic

Seconded: French

Discussion: Milkovic asked to have items 6.F.4. and 9.B removed from the Consent Agenda.

Voting:

For: Hand, Thomas, Milkovic, Kyer, French

Against: None

Abstain: None

6. Reports:

6.A. Council Chairwoman: Lisa Thomas

Thomas read the following:

* I am excited to report that we swore in Eric Petersen as our new Police Chief. We had a very well attended ceremony with police officers and chiefs from several departments. It was my honor to rise to welcome him. Councilors Hand, Milkovic and Gallgher were also present to welcome our new Chief. Several people from Plainville, Eric’s previous department, have reached out to let me know that they are sad to have lost such a fine officer and that Coventry has gained a terrific resource.

* John, staff and I met with the softball fields committee to fill them in on progress towards building the field passed at referendum. They were happy to hear that things are moving along, with the transfer station “transfer” underway and field construction going out to bid. They are thrilled to know that we are keeping our promise to work towards their second needed field by applying for funding through a STEAP grant.

* Councilors please note that attached to the agenda are our current goals. Please review and be prepared to discuss progress and modifications at our next Council meeting.

* Councilors will receive the Town Manager Performance Review form in the next day or so. Please complete your evaluation and return it to me by July 25 so that I can compile responses for our review during executive session at our next Council meeting.

Lisa Thomas
Chairwoman, Coventry Town Council
Coventry, CT

6.B. Council Members:

French: Reported on the bicycle accident Member Julie Blanchard recently had while in Vermont and provided information about her treatment and recovery.

Milkovic: Attended a CRCOG webinar, in conjunction with AARP, that included information about accessory dwelling units. He hopes our Affordable Housing Plan will consider these. All of the ongoing road projects are progressing which is very good. But the town remains far behind with what we need to do with our roads.

French: The June 20, 2022, Audience of Citizens seemed to be staged. We had the three young ladies to lead the Pledge and the mothers decided to do a beat down. He has never been in such a badly run meeting by a chairperson. The speakers should have been instructed to address the chairperson; one mother was very rude and should have been told to be respectful. When he asked to address the comments he was denied that by Elsesser under the Council's Standing Rules. He did not get to address his concerns while there was a full room but had to wait until later in the meeting. He feels hurt by this and that Kyer knew this was coming; Thomas knew as well because she had a softball t-shirt on playing into their hands. He would have handled the meeting differently when he was chairperson of other committees. He thought it was unfair; he has always supported women and young ladies. His suggestion is to go to section 2.10 and make it very clear there should be a code of conduct.

Thomas: Had the softball t-shirt on because she knew that the girls were coming to lead the Pledge. She did not know what people would be speaking about. French: One mother took his 'let kids be kids' out of context and came after him. Thomas: She misinterpreted the language of the procedures while trying to do that on the fly. She apologized for misreading or misinterpreting what was in the Rules of Order later in the meeting. She will thinking about reminding people of their tone and what they are saying. She is hesitant about stopping someone while they are speaking. Receiving hate mail is part of being a public official. She will remind people to be civil during Audience of Citizens.

Kyer: Asked French what he was chairperson of for ten years. French: Chairman of the Finance Board in Windham.

6.C. Finance Committee: Robyn Gallagher, Chairperson

Milkovic: Finance met last week first having a joint meeting with the Board of Education fiscal committee. Primarily discussed were capital items to clarify some items. It was a positive meeting.

At the regular Finance Committee we reviewed the end of year finance reports. We have collected 99.86% of property taxes. The General Fund and encumbrances were 97.17% of the budget. The projected year-end surplus is \$327,851 which is about .07% of the overall budget. The surplus goes back to the General Fund. The COVRRRA and sewer funds were positive. The Recreation revenue and expenses were back to the same level as 2020. The EMS fund is in the red and has a negative balance of over \$300k which we have tentatively targeted ARPA money to fill that hole which was built over a number of years. It is still an important issue that the FIRE/EMS department is addressing. The BOE will return ~\$4k to the General Fund. There are no new recommendations for the ARPA funds.

6.C.1. * Monthly Financial Reports

6.D. * Steering Committee: Matthew Kyer, Chairperson

6.D.1. * Minutes, 6/27/2022

6.E. COVRRRA – John Elsesser

Elsesser: Transfer station project has been started.

6.F. Town Manager – John Elsesser

6.F.1. Projects Update

Elsesser reported on the highlights:

- The hydrilla application on the lake is scheduled for Thursday. There will be no swimming that day as a safety requirement of operating the boat and concentrating on even distribution of the chemical. Boating is acceptable.
- Blue-green algae in the lake is being taken seriously. Dr. Kortmann was on the lake today. It is getting worse after it had been stable for the last two weeks. Test results will come back this week. Elsesser has never seen the lake this green. It is a natural thing, not caused by chemicals.

Kyer: We are controlling the goose poop in the grass eliminating that run-off at Patriots Park. We are only getting the run-off from the sand area there? Elsesser: Yes, and it does not have anywhere to go because the water does not move there. They are looking at mechanical aeration. It is also because of the heavy use by people. We are looking at three

turbo aeration systems that will move the water around. Those are \$15k - \$20k apiece. The concern with those is they have to be mounted on a dock and electricity brought out there. He asked Chip about removing some of the big stones in the jetty to create a hole to allow the water to move through. None of the other beaches around the lake close; it is only that section. There is also a lot of geese this year. In looking back at previous lake reports Dr. Kortmann recommended landscaping some of the areas because geese do not bushes because they feel threatened.

6.F.2. COVID-19 Update

Elsesser: The health district had a pop up clinic at the Farmers' Market.

6.F.3. Veterans Memorial And Events Commission; Repairs To Vietnam War Memorial Monument

Elsesser: This can be sent to Finance first.

6.F.4. * Staff Meeting Minutes, 7/6/22

Milkovic: Mentioned the information about the lake associations.

Elsesser: The State has taken over the names and contact information of all public associations. You can probably go online and find out the information.

Milkovic: There is an ice-cream social on July 20, 2022, with the staff of the Senior Center.

7. Unfinished Business:

7.A. 21/22-18: Consideration/Possible Action: Assignment Of American Rescue Plan Funding

Thomas: We continue to carry this on our agenda. There are no recommendations from Finance at this time.

8. New Business:

8.A. 22/23-3: Consideration/Possible Action: Approval Of 8-24, Takings By CT DOT For Hop River Road Bridge

Motion: I move that the Council approve 8-24, takings by CT DOT for Hop River Road Bridge.

By: Hand

Seconded: Milkovic

Discussion: Elsesser: We have allowed the State to take over this project. In the design there are temporary and permanent easements. The State will pay the town \$7,400 for the easements as the town owns the bridge.

Voting:

For: Hand, Thomas, Kyer, French, Milkovic

Against: None
Abstain: None

8.B. 22/23-4: Consideration/Possible Modification And Possible Adoption Of Proposed Job Description For Police Captain

Motion: I move that the Council approve the proposed job description for Police Captain.

By: Milkovic

Seconded: Hand

Discussion: Elsesser: It is a promotion not a new position. Police Captain becomes the second in command. Historically, we have not had a management person in the absence of the police chief. This is in our budget. This person is not entitled to overtime. It is important to have somebody else in charge.

Thomas: There will be one less sergeant position. We are not adding another body.

French: The chief is hired by the Town Manager. Shouldn't the Chief hire the captain? He has a problem with having someone else hiring a person underneath him. He can see both the Town Manager and the Chief combined

hire this person. Elsesser: Maybe is the answer. This is the job description

Mark Palmer gave to him. The reality is that he would have the chief actively involved. A recommendation from the last chief has identified a person. To be

consistent with police officers and their charter officers are selected by the chief and the Town Manager has to ratify them. French: Can he be on the road or

only be administrative? He did not see in the description that the captain can be

on the road. Milkovic: Other duties as assigned is listed so that could include

being on the road. Thomas: Perform other patrol duties covers being on the

road.

Elsesser: The amendment to the job description will be - the Caption is promoted by the Police Chief and ratified by the Town Manager.

Milkovic: What is the timeline for this? Elsesser: We will try to do it earlier

than January. Thomas: Earlier hiring is also out of respect for the new chief

allowing him to build the culture that he is looking to build and have that

captain involved from the beginning. It makes sense to be building the

department together. French: This is positive for the other officers, too,

because there is a moving up level. Kyer: Have not run this by legal, do you

anticipate issues? Elsesser: I do not usually run job descriptions by legal.

Kyer: Likes the idea of keeping the town manager involved.

The friendly amendment was accepted by Milkovic and Hand.

Voting:

For: Hand, Thomas, Milkovic, Kyer, French

Against: None

Abstain: None

9. Miscellaneous/Correspondence:

9.A. * Petition To Rescind Scenic Road Designation – North School Rd.

9.B. * Bear: Thank You/Support For Library Book Display

Milkovic: Read the email from Heather Bear that was sent to all Council members.

10. Executive Session:

- Discussion of Police Captain position

Thomas: Executive Session is not needed.

11. Adjournment:

Motion: I move that the Council adjourn at 8:25 p.m.

By: French

Seconded: Hand

Voting:

For: Hand, Thomas, French, Milkovic, Kyer

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.