Minutes
Coventry Town Council Meeting
August 5, 2019
Town Hall Annex

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

2. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.


4. Acceptance of Minutes:
   Motion #19/20-19: Lisa Conant moved to accept the minutes of the Town Council meeting
   on July 22, 2019, seconded by Julie Blanchard. The following corrections were requested:
   a. Page 3, second paragraph, last line: remove “in the spirit of” and rewrite the end of the
      sentence to read, “doesn’t technically apply here, but it is in the spirit.”
   b. Page 4 second paragraph, 7th line: change “$40,000” to “$47,000.”
   c. Page 6, item 7.A., 12th line: remove the word “probably” from the first sentence.

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

5. Consent Agenda:
   Motion #19/20-20: Lisa Conant moved to accept the Consent Agenda. The motion was
   seconded by Jonathan Hand and carried on unanimous vote.

7. Unfinished Business:
   B. 19/20-1: Consideration/Possible Action: CHS Walls Committee, Supplemental
   Appropriation up to $21,600 for Walls Testing:
   Motion #19/20-21: Matthew O'Brien made a motion to move up item 7.B as the next item of
   business. The motion was seconded by Jonathan Hand and carried on unanimous vote.
   Ed CoFrancesco, Chair of the CHS Walls Committee, joined the meeting. Joan Lewis expressed
   thanks for all the work the committee has been doing and the money that has been saved through
   their efforts. She noted that the Board of Education has appropriated 50% of the requested
   amount to perform the testing and the Council needs to appropriate the balance. She called for a
   motion. Motion #19/20-22: Jonathan Hand moved that the Town Council appropriate up to
   $21,600 for CHS walls testing. Mike Sobol seconded the motion. Mike said he appreciates the
   Board’s collaboration in coming up with half of the cost to finish this. John Elsesser said that the
   work was started today, and the first day was very positive in the media center and we hope those
   results hold up. The vendor had some comments about the prior company that is now out of
   business, that their equipment was not up to standards. They started in the media center and will
   bounce around to do areas where cabinets had to be removed so staff can get reorganized for the
   start of the school year. Matthew O'Brien said that the Board and Council have known of this
   issue for four years and he has asked every year if the Board would do this and he hoped they
   would. Jonathan thanked the committee for moving it forward - there were a lot of moving parts.
   If you dig into it you will see what great savings we have achieved. Ed thanked the Council and
   Board of Education for moving to get the scanning started before school starts. He said there are
   benefits to hiring a quality engineering firm. He is hoping the good news pays off for the rest of
   it. Any wall they find that is built up to plan specifications is a savings. Motion #19/20-22
carried on unanimous vote.

8. New Business:
   A. 19/20-5: Update: Fire Transition Study Committee:
     Steve Pacholski was present to provide an update on the progress of the Fire Transition Study Committee. He distributed materials for the Council’s review (attached to minutes). John Elsesser noted that Steve was instrumental in getting us online with the cameras. Jim McLoughlin, Fire/EMS Administrator, also joined the meeting.

     Steve provided highlights of the committee’s work. The committee has been in existence for eight months. There are two phases to their charge - phase one is the development of a plan, and phase two is implementation. The committee did a SWOT analysis and looked at the three reports that had been done over the previous 20 years. We also got participation from members. We took all that data and brought it back for analysis. The SWOT analysis represents the current environment. Our goal is to address a lot of the harmful items that were identified. Mike Sobol asked if there is anything that really stands out. Steve replied it was exactly what we expected. Some feelings are more prevalent from one department to another, but everybody was in agreement on the issues of public perception, egos, overall lack of strong leadership, goals and vision. Jim McLoughlin said we did not do a civilian pool. This was department perceptions only. John said we can share the opinion poll we did with the community that had some positives. Mike asked what the next steps are. Steve said after the SWOT analysis we developed a committee version of a mission and vision statement. It has not been approved by the members yet. We would like to time-stamp it and do it within a two-year timeframe. Matthew O’Brien asked if they are open to a shorter timeframe. Steve replied that the committee would be, but he thinks the departments might have some problems with that. Joan Lewis said she thinks it’s wise that they are taking that approach. Steve said it’s good but sometimes it slows us down. Matthew said he is thinking about contract lives and it would be easier to do if it is not in the middle of a contract. Steve replied that it lines up with the contract in December of next year.

     A committee-approved organizational chart was reviewed. Steve said we felt it was important to create opportunities to keep people interested. We have broken up into sub-committees working on administration and training. Some items may need to be phased in – for example, under current regulations only a few individuals are qualified to be a chief. Jim said a factor in having a two-year timeframe is if we can get a strategic plan approved while working on administration, people will have an opportunity to get trained for the advancement they will need. The training subcommittee is looking at both departments’ training and they are finding they are fairly similar. We are developing a town-wide training program.

     Next steps were discussed. Steve indicated that the committee doesn’t want to dictate what the associations have to do. The intent is to merge but the associations have identity. We have a meeting on Thursday and think we can probably complete most of phase 1 in the next two months or so. John Elsesser said there are lots of other activities that have been going on during this process. The general feeling is to get something in place today - it can always be changed later. We are making a lot of other progress outside the master plan for dealing with the two-department issue. When we started to fill in that organizational chart, people began stepping up to get experience in communication, etc. Jim said since the establishment of the transition team, one gentleman from North Coventry stepped up to manage all of the fleet vehicles town-wide. Two others are doing an inventory of all the radio equipment to determine whether they can be repurposed or if new equipment needs to be purchased. DJ (Figielo) has taken on responsibility to manage the EMS division town-wide. Social media started up but has dropped off. We see this all coming together. There were elections in June and now new chiefs are coming in with fresh
perspectives. We are taking advantage of some free CIRMA fire leadership trainings. The coordinator of the training asked for a vision statement, mission statement and core values. The course is a four-segment program and the first is hand-tailored to the mission and vision statement that we provide. The remaining three sessions flow from that. Jonathan Hand said he likes to hear that all of the sub-groups are working to get something in place to refine. Jim said any time we see opportunities to do things on a joint basis we are pursuing them. A mindset change is happening. John Elsesser asked about social activities. Jim said last year we had an appreciation event as part of Arts on Main. This year we are doing a stand-alone event in September at Creaser Park with a BBQ, music, bonfire and socializing opportunity. Mike said it is nice to see that a timeline is starting to be established. It feels like we have been running this race for some time and there is no finish line. Jim said one big goal is a comprehensive training program. Joan said maybe we could get a recruitment message in the next issue of the Town newsletter. Jim replied that he has shared the newsletter opportunity with Board of Fire Officers to see if they have ideas. We have also selected a company that does a comprehensive background check - we get it back in 24 hours. The Board of Fire officers adopting the policies means that people can applying to serve on the Coventry Fire Department. They can go through the interview process, background screening and can be assigned to the area of their choosing if they have one, or by their address if they don’t. It will eventually be available online. We’ve had six new applicants in the last four weeks through word of mouth. Mike said maybe we’re starting to turn the corner with negative public perception. Steve said this is what we feel internally. The study John mentioned shows a different picture. Matthew asked if there are any funding constraints that are affecting the growth of department. Steve said he can’t think of anything. Training is always needed. Joan asked if there is anything else they need. Steve said he thinks we’re good. He said that Jim’s experience has been very helpful. Joan said this is a very positive report. She is pleased with the work they’ve done. Jonathan gave kudos to the committee for pushing forward.

6. Reports:
   A. Council Chairwoman – Joan Lewis: Joan said that she, Carolyn, Jonathan, and John attended a Board of Education meeting for the presentation of the solar grant and microgrid. Much was added from what we heard before and it was very informative. She is glad that she went. She has a much greater understanding how this project is going to move forward.

   Congratulations to Police Sgt. Jeff Spadjuinske who has been selected to attend the National FBI Academy. Seats in the academy are highly sought after. Matthew said this will be an asset to the department. John Elsesser said the level of training they get is phenomenal and it spreads through the department. We hope to send others in the future. The department will have occasional overtime shifts during the process and there will be a modest travel cost. It is quite the honor to be selected.

   B. Council Member Reports:
   Lisa Conant said that a special meeting of the Economic Development Committee was held last Thursday to discuss the 10-year Conservation and Economic Development plan. She was able to attend along with Council members Carolyn Arabolos and Matt O’Brien. The meeting consisted mostly of a modified SWOT analysis and garnered some really helpful feedback from everyone. There will be a four-town meeting in late September to gather recommendations for a formal economic development action plan. Some of the plan’s goals will be to create a greater sense of place, diversify Coventry’s mix of businesses, and emphasize economic vitality that complements our historical and rural environment. The plan will be phased, actionable, and create branding with a focus on tourism, agriculture, outdoor recreation, the cultural arts, up-and-coming business opportunities such as hemp, linkages with UConn and others.
Lisa also said that yesterday she and Richard White of the Coventry Arts Guild gave out hundreds of event cards for Arts on Main event at the Coventry Farmer’s Market. Arts on Main is now in its second year and everyone is invited to attend on Saturday, August 24 in our historic Village area. This is a free, fun family event featuring arts & crafts vendors, kids’ activities and performances, concerts, a food court, art exhibitions, raffle prizes and more. One of the highlights of this year’s event will be the installation of original artwork from the world-renowned and longtime Coventry resident David Hayes. Plein air paintings from local artists will be on display in Mill Brook Place. Activities will be held along Main Street in the Village, beginning at the pocket park at Monument Hill Road, and going all the way down to the Booth & Dimock Library. There will be both indoor and outdoor children’s events at the library - some of these may or may not involve water balloons and a glow-in-the dark theme - as well as a celebration of all cultures and their contributions to the arts. Several Main Street businesses will be raffling off prizes. There will be a Food Court located at First Congregational Church that will feature their famous chicken BBQ as well as food trucks and vendors including Wicked Slice, Taco LaRosa, NoRA Cupcake, Jeff’s Kettle Corn and Corner Store of Coventry Ice Cream.

The main stage for the free concerts will also be located at First Congregational Church and the schedule includes:
11am: From Ashes to Riches
11:30am: Tony Susi & Friends
12pm: Whiskey, Wine & Coke
1:10pm: Jan Jungren Trio
1:40pm: Shaded Soul Band

The Kids Performance Schedule at 1153 Main Street will include:
12pm: Magic Show w/Matt the Balloon Man
1pm: On the Spot Jug Band
2:15pm: The Can-Dance Studio Interactive Dance
1pm-3pm: Balloon Twisting with Matt the Balloon Man

Kids Activities include:
Various Activities, Indoors & Out @ Booth & Dimock Library
LEGO Brick Building @ Country Way Realty
Face Painting & Kindness Rocks @ Pocket Park at Monument Hill Road
Temporary Tattoos @ Tips to Toes Nail Salon

Many thanks to both Coventry Village Partners for their hard work in coordinating this event and to the many local businesses, community groups and individuals who are both participating and sponsoring Arts on Main.

Matthew O’Brien said on a sad note, Tim Ackert’s father passed away today. Please keep him and his family in your prayers.

Jonathan Hand said that the Council got to see the Service 118 response vehicle. It looks fantastic and is a great asset for the town. It was great to see it.
F. Town Manager – John Elsesser:

1. Project updates:

- We are looking at taking the former North Coventry Suburban and wrapping it to match the same style as the Service 118 vehicle. Although it is 12-15 years old it still has some life. It will not go out except to assist the ambulance crew.

- Hydrlilla treatment in Coventry Lake went well. We await the survey to see how it looked a year after treatment and to determine the date of the second treatment. We have not gotten a date for the fanwort treatment at Eagleville Lake – the State is understaffed. They did come out due to concerns with a fish die-off at Coventry Lake. We believe it was related to hot water near the shore. It was a little more than usual – and it was species specific so they wanted to make sure it wasn’t a virus. We haven’t heard anything so we think perhaps it is not a serious issue.

- Daly Road chip sealing is complete. It looks good. Lewis Hill cold-in-place recycling is down and hardening. We are putting the catch basin covers back down. We will get the final two applications of wear coat down soon. We are trying to get Daly Road line-striped soon. Joan Lewis said that Lewis Hill is such an improvement. John said we are going to do signage because we are concerned about increased speed on that road. Daly Road will get side striping to maintain road width consistency.

- An update on the Eversource energy efficiency program: The incentive we are getting for the high school and middle school is $191,000 of lighting grant and a zero percent interest loan that we will pay off over a four-year period. An email with details will be sent. Jonathan said that this is where they continue to pay at the same rate and then after four years it will go way down. John said that the fire departments will be much less because it just lighting. The library and wastewater treatment plant were also accepted. We are below the cap so Coventry Grammar School and Robertson School will also be included. Matthew O’Brien commended John for his work on these projects. John replied that he connected the Board of Education to this opportunity and Bill Trudelle ran with it. It is not just lighting – it also includes other upgrades such as energy efficient motors.

- Softball field drainage work started today and will probably finish tomorrow. The contractor had a break in their schedule and will rough out the sidewalk tomorrow. While they’re going by with the drainage we’re getting them to pull the propane tank out. A meeting with BL Group is pending on the fire doors.

- We opened up the floor in the closet at the Community Center and it’s not good. Some of the wood is rotted and the block is crumbled. A meeting is pending with Public Works and the Building Official. We did budget some LOCIP funds in this year’s budget for the Community Center but it will likely be more than twice that amount. Matthew asked if they are they doing the bathrooms in that building too. John said we were going to, but those funds might be diverted. Amanda Backhaus said that the town hall bathroom renovations are moving ahead. When that is done the two on the lower level will be unisex. John said that the work at Millbrook Place will be done soon. Matthew asked if the Town Hall flagpole project is off the schedule. John said no, we are trying to squeeze it in. We would like to get it done – it has been too long. We are saying no to a lot of other projects. We are also working hard on the Sustainable CT project. The deadline is in three weeks.

2. General Obligation Bonds, Preliminary Financing Calendar: John Elsesser noted that this is for both the past bond and the new road bond. We want to try to lock in interest rates while levels are low. We are going to Standard & Poor’s which uses a different methodology that doesn’t rely on fund balance as much as other criteria such as stability, etc. Sometimes the first time they come out for a visit the process is more intensive. The date for the sale is Sept. 12th.
3. CT DOT: Follow-up to public information meeting, Bridge on Rt. 44 over Olson’s Brook: John Elsesser said that the culvert is collapsing at this bridge and there is a lot of material there like fiber optics etc. It will require a whole construction season and will not be good. Mike Sobol asked if there will be a lane for car turning. John replied that the wideness will allow it. We have asked for at least a left-hand turn lane. They are considering it. There are a lot of accidents there. We are also pushing to lessen the guard rail.

4. Blum Shapiro: Communication with those charged with governance: John Elsesser said that this Auditor-required communication was sent and he asked Council members to please take time to review it. It’s your audit of our work. Contact information is included if you have any concerns.

5. Letter to FCC regarding local cable access: John Elsesser said if the Council has a position on this matter we can communicate to our elected officials. We were probably hurt when we were moved from channel 13 to channel 191, but it is still beneficial to have a public access television station. He thinks we should forward this to our representatives and express concern that we are losing public access. There was consensus to communicate this concern.

6. Update: Crosswalk at intersection of Rt. 31 and Ripley Hill Road: A report prepared by Town Engineer Todd Penney was reviewed. The report describes conditions and recommendations for three measures. John Elsesser said that all these things would require permission from the State and we would have to pay for it. It is not hugely expensive - whether we could absorb it or not, we don’t know. Matthew asked if Todd had an opinion on push button signs. John replied that Todd did have opinions on several items. He is not in favor of in-road signage. It may meet the requirement for LED signs. Solar would be more flexible and economical. We are seeking Council guidance, and could have Todd come in for a discussion if desired. The lights would be interesting to try somewhere. We could see if the State would authorize it and money would be needed. It may generate more requests for lights in other areas. We would not want it to run continuously. It could be paddle-operated or motion sensitive. There are some ADA considerations that will also require investigation. We couldn’t get complete prices including the paddles but anticipate the cost to be in the $2,000 range. Matthew asked if we have a pedestrian count. John replied it is not extensive - about a dozen. Mike mentioned the issue of cars passing on the right. John said we would prefer a comprehensive traffic study for those issues. It is on CRCOG’s list to do. Todd is a good engineer but this is a specialty area. If we wanted to wait CRCOG would probably look at the signs too, but we don’t know when they are coming. Matthew asked if you have to be in the intersection for people to stop according to State law. John replied in Connecticut you have to be in the crosswalk for them to stop. In other states cars have to stop when people are at the curb, but there is concern that it causes rear-end accidents. John has experienced the flashing LEDs in a village up in Maine and found them to be extremely effective. Matthew said it will depend on the traffic. This is a very busy road. John will have a staff meeting with CT DOT and come back with information. Joan said she is glad it’s moving forward with school about to start. Jonathan asked if we can do it in time for school. John replied we can’t do anything until DOT gives permission.

7. Microgrid update: A PowerPoint presentation from the Board of Education meeting was provided. John Elsesser said that the contract was received from the State so the 60-day timeline is in play. Solar applications were submitted. We are holding a meeting to finalize the location of the high school carports. The capacity they need is a bit of a design issue but there are solutions. We are also asking the microgrid people to come out and make sure there are no conflicts. Enron will be joining the weekly phone calls. We need to see where everything is going on a plan. Lots
of questions still need to be answered but it is important not to take the simple approach to compare power purchase prices because there are other aspects like natural gas use volume, reduction in demand charges and waste heat generation that also generate savings. Matthew O’Brien said he would like to see more information on virtual net metering. John said that we gave the microgrid committee the dates of the upcoming Council meetings. He asked if the Council wants to consider signing the contract in a joint setting or individually. Consensus was that a joint meeting would be beneficial. John will talk with the School Superintendent and Joan will discuss it with the Board of Education Chair so a date can be locked in. The deadline to sign the contract is September 29th.

7. Unfinished Business:
A. 18/19-88: Consideration/possible action: Augmented Reality Advertising Agreement: John noted that Carolyn Arabolos had one other suggestion which was included in the Council packet. Matthew O’Brien noted that Carolyn’s concern is already covered in the language of the agreement. John said that the firm has agreed that they can accept the changes. They would like for us to approve the agreement because they are pitching other towns and this would be helpful. Motion #19/20-23: Matthew O’Brien moved to approve entering into an advertising agreement with Nucleus Augmented Reality as proposed in the agreement amended by the Town Attorney. The motion was seconded by Jonathan Hand and carried on unanimous vote.

8. New Business:
B. 19/20-6: Consideration/possible action: authorize the Town Manager to execute agreements for submission for virtual net metering related to solar arrays at CHS/CNHMS: John said there is information in the Council packet. There are two solar arrays. We will take that power and feed it into the microgrid. It establishes a chain for power to be applied. We would become a solar farm so as not to negatively affect the microgrid. It’s complicated but we net out better. We need to get going because it is a first-come first-served funding opportunity and things start falling apart if we don’t get this. Motion #19/20-24: Lisa Conant moved to authorize the Town Manager to execute agreements for submission for virtual net metering related to solar arrays at Coventry High School/Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School. The motion was seconded by Jonathan Hand and carried on unanimous vote.

C. 19/20-7: Consideration/possible action: Donations of Property to Town: A) Linnbrook Trail – Laban; B) Manor Drive – Bower: John Elsesser said both of these properties have been offered and the Planning and Zoning Commission recommends acceptance. The parcels are surrounded by other Town land. One is near Olson Farm Road and the other is on a paper road near other parcels that we may wish to acquire to increase open space in that area. John recommends acceptance of both. Motion #19/20-25: Matthew O’Brien moved to accept donations of the properties on Linnbrook Trail and Manor Drive as presented. The motion was seconded by Jonathan Hand and carried on unanimous vote. Matthew O’Brien expressed his thanks for these donations. John Elsesser said a thank you will be sent. We also closed on the tax sale property on Cross Street. There was a title issue but it was worked out.

10. Executive Session:
Motion #19/20-26: Matthew O’Brien moved that the Town Council enter into Executive Session at 9:12 PM 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: Town Council members present, the Town Manager and the Finance Director. The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant and carried on unanimous vote.

Motion #19/20-27: Motion to leave Executive Session at PM. The motion was seconded by
and carried on unanimous vote.

6. Adjournment:
Motion #19/20-28: Motion to adjourn the meeting at PM. The motion was seconded by _____ 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.
Fire Transition Study Committee
Interim Update
August 5, 2019

Committee Members
Steve Pacholski, CVFA (Chair)
Craig Malan, ToC (Vice-Chair)
Josh Ziel, NCFD (Secretary)
Chuck Beecher, NCFD
Ken Boutin, CVFA
Ray Eldridge, ToC
Jim McLoughlin, Fire/EMS Admin

SWOT Analysis of current environment

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<th>Internal</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Harmful</th>
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<td>Energetic young members</td>
<td>Public Perception</td>
<td>Communication between Town BOFO &amp; members</td>
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<td>NCFD Officers</td>
<td>Personal egos</td>
<td>Training program/curriculum</td>
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<td>CVFA EMS personnel</td>
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<td>Apparatus fleet</td>
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<td>Lack of succession planning</td>
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<td>Main stations</td>
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<td>Points &amp; Pension programs</td>
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<td>Gossip</td>
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<td>NCFD SOG’s</td>
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<td>Morale</td>
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<td>Movement towards town-wide operations</td>
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<td>Associations impact on operations (inactive members)</td>
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<td>Dialog between NCFD and Town</td>
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<td>Burnout</td>
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<td>Professionalism on scene</td>
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<td>Lack of strong leadership</td>
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<td>NCFD Mutual Aid &amp; RS agreements</td>
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<td>Small group of dedicated volunteers</td>
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<td>Substations</td>
<td>Lack of dedicated volunteers</td>
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<td>Operational consistency between departments</td>
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<td>Training</td>
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<td>24/7 ambulance coverage (EMS-only members)</td>
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<td>Combination of departments</td>
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<td>Dropped calls</td>
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<td>Engagement with Scout groups</td>
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<td>Resistance to change</td>
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<td>Public education</td>
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<td>&quot;Us vs. Them&quot; mentality</td>
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<td>Recruitment and Retention</td>
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<td>Funding/Budget constraints</td>
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<td>Marketing &amp; rebranding</td>
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<td>Lack of affordable housing in town</td>
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<td>Auxiliary</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Single mission, vision, &amp; uniform standards</td>
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Committee approved Mission Statement
The Town of Coventry Fire-EMS Department is always committed to providing the best fire suppression, training, and emergency medical services to protect the residents, businesses and visitors of Coventry. The department provides accountability, safety, education and the best customer care in a fiscally responsible manner. We take care of our own so we can take care of you.

Committee approved Vision Statement
In the next 2 years, the Town of Coventry Fire-EMS Department will operate as one cohesive, efficient organization reporting to a single fire chief. Our organizational structure will be designed to enhance our operation through training, fire and emergency medical services. We will increase our public education program, continue to participate in community events and provide mutual aid assistance to our regional partners all while striving to improve our image and reputation.
Committee approved organizational structure

Subcommittees
Administration (Beecher, Boutin, Malan, McLoughlin)
- Chain of Command
- Leadership requirements
- Residency requirements
- Job responsibilities
Training (Eldridge, Pacholski, Ziel)
- EMS requirements
- Fire requirements
- Driver requirements

Next Steps
1. Complete subcommittee work
2. Continue to revise and consolidate SOG's (policies)
3. Discuss Financial & Recruitment and Retention items from Phase 1 of the Committee Charge