Minutes  
Coventry Town Council Meeting  
October 21, 2019  
Town Hall Annex

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

2. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Audience of Citizens:

Tim Ackert. 67 Deer Hill Lane, was present on behalf of Veterans Day Patriot Race to provide information about the event. This year’s event takes place on November 9, 2019. The purpose of the race is to honor Connecticut’s veterans. It includes a 4-mile run, a display of military equipment, and sponsor tents. Wendy Rubin and the Parks and Recreation staff have been a great help in planning the event. The race has donated over $14,000 over last few years to a variety of veteran support organizations and we hope to donate more. We are grateful for the support of the Town of Coventry and the Police Department.

Joe Jankowski. 3899 South Street, is a trustee of the Booth & Dimock Memorial Library. He thanked Coventry for supporting the Library’s mini golf event on October 13th. He especially wanted to recognize the support of several sponsors and donors. Eversource was the main sponsor and Wicked Slice was the pizza sponsor. A good time was had by all. We invite everyone to stop by the library to see a display board or the website to see list of sponsors.

Christine Pattee, 98 Brookline Road, thanked the Council for forming the Senior Housing Alternatives Study Committee. She has been appointed to serve on the committee and is familiar with the issue in other towns as they seek to add moderately priced multi-unit housing for seniors. She believes Coventry is the only town to address this on town-wide issue. Issues of sewer expansion and exclusion of housing in the lake residential zone are some of her concerns. It could be time to expand the sewer system to avoid discharging too much nitrogen into the lake. One possibility might be to identify areas in the sewered district for multi-unit senior housing. (See Ms. Pattee’s full remarks attached to minutes.) John Elsesser made a correction on the statement about nitrogen discharge, saying that concern is actually about the Willimantic River, not the lake.

4. Acceptance of minutes:  
Motion #19/20-63: Lisa Conant moved to accept the minutes of the Town Council meeting on October 7, 2019, seconded by Jonathan Hand. The following corrections were requested:  
• Page 3, first paragraph, 4th line from bottom: change “an organization that people will be ready to join” to “a single cohesive organization that more people will want to join.”  
• Page 4, first paragraph, 2nd line: add “Football” before “Field.”  
• Page 5, last paragraph, 8th line: change “one-phase” to “single-phase.”  
• Page 8, 3rd paragraph, 2nd line: change 5013c to 501 (c) (3).  
The motion to accept the minutes as corrected carried on unanimous vote.
5. Consent Agenda:
   Motion #19/20-64: Carolyn Arabolos moved to accept the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Jonathan Hand and carried on unanimous vote.

8. New Business:

B. 19/20-19: Update Report Of Library Renovation And Improvement Committee: Deborah Walsh, Chair of the Library Renovation and Improvement Committee, said that the Committee looks forward to updating the Council on the progress we have made. The committee has been meeting every two weeks since March. She introduced the other committee members present, including: Tim Ackert, Dudley Brand, Joe Jankowski, James Parda, and John Twerdy. Bill Bonney is not able to be here tonight and he is out of town on business. Town Manager John Elsesser and Library Director Margaret Khan also serve as staff support to the committee. John Elsesser said that early in the process the committee did some interviews and secured the firm of Ken Best, DRA Architects. The charge to the committee was outlined. It was extensive and took a lot of time. We paid attention to all of the items in the charge. Ken Best will address those in detail. The Library is well used and is a little gem that genuinely contributes to Coventry’s quality of life. We are trying to find the best solutions for the building within our budgetary means.

Tim Ackert provided an update on the library’s grant process. A Renovation grant is traditionally a $250,000 matching grant. Because the decision was made to enclose the courtyard to address the water infiltration issues, it was determined to award $850,000 to the project. Thanks for work done by Ken Best and others to submit our application in time for the deadline. Lisa Conant asked if the work that was already done will satisfy the match. John Elsesser replied that grants don’t generally look back. We froze the funds for the elevator work with that in mind. Another strategy is to move the elevator to make it more efficient and will also cost less. Those funds would match. We could ask their opinion on the other expenditures that were already made, but guess they would say no. Carolyn Arabolos asked if there is an end date to the $850,000 grant. Margaret Khan replied the deadline is November 2020. John said we would have to have our share of the funds lined up and sign a contract by then. Lisa asked if there are any thoughts toward looking at federal funds. John said yes, we have contacted Congressman Courtney’s office and Margaret has pursued the Klein grant which is a $250,000 grant. Tim noted that Margaret did a great job of getting the Klein application submitted.

Ken Best presented a PowerPoint slide show with an overview of the project (attached to minutes). Margaret gave background about library and programming. Booth & Dimock is designated as the Town’s principal public library. The Town is obligated to provide support in whole or in part. The library is managed by a Board of Trustees which is common throughout New England - 43% of libraries in CT are association libraries. We are a nonprofit 501(c)(3). Statistics for 2019 were provided. It was a great year for the library and contrary to state trends. Programs increased by 15% and attendance by 42%. We answered more reference questions than ever. We hosted over 120 internet sessions. People use the library in a variety of ways every day. Carolyn asked who is coming to programs - is it townspeople, or people from out of town? Margaret replied that the majority are town residents, especially teens and adults. Children’s programs get a little wider reach. Carolyn asked for the reasons for that. Margaret replied that some people just prefer us. Carolyn noted that 57% of libraries are not association libraries and asked what the reason is reason behind remaining an association vs. moving away from that. Margaret replied that most municipal libraries began as an association. The association becomes absorbed over time.

John Elsesser reviewed key points of the committee’s charge, which include review of the CIRMA building inspection report, energy audits, mold reports, capital budget requests for maintenance and other pertinent reports. Additionally, the committee is able to utilize funds appropriated for the
project to assist in the development of concept plans and cost estimates. We had a modification of the current grant instead of having to apply for a different grant. We interviewed architects. Ken had the most knowledge and was the best prepared. We were charged to work within the existing footprint including the courtyard. Carolyn asked if there is a difference in municipal responsibility for an association vs. municipal library. Margaret replied that public libraries generally receive some support. Municipal is generally 100%. Associations vary. We receive 97%. John noted that municipal libraries often cost more due to employee costs. Carolyn asked if we were a municipal library if there would be a larger line item in our budget. John said yes, significantly more.

An overview of grants and fundraising was provided. The Trustees did a fundraising event. An energy grant through Eversource might offset some costs. The Board continues to seek other grants. Carolyn asked if there will be a report of the mini golf event in terms of money raised. Joe Jankowski said yes. It will be reported to Board of Trustees and then made available to the public. John Elsesser said there has been a lot of talk about the $250,000 that was given to the school building committee. He outlined the projects that were completed with those funds, including the air chiller, boiler, and oil tank. The chiller died before we could replace it. The elevator upgrade is on hold while the concept plan is under review. If the elevator fails, we will have to deal with it for ADA compliance. Mike Sobol asked how much funding remains. John replied we have spent $150,000 so there is about $10,000 left. Carolyn asked if the elevator is used often. Margaret said yes. John said that the current site of the elevator is not logical. It is hard to find the way downstairs. The space could be used better.

Ken provided an overview of building efficiency and code concerns, including siting of the elevator and water intrusion issues. We have been working with the Town to get on the roof and get a leak fixed before repairing electrical. The building we are in now was built in 1989 before widespread use of computers. We haven’t had the opportunity to properly address that issue. Carolyn said she understands when there are water issues, it is the librarians who take time away from their duties to address the vacuuming. This was confirmed by Margaret. Photos were shown of other areas off the courtyard where water intrusion is an issue. Water comes into the children’s room. After significant storms staff has to shut off portions of the children’s room. Carolyn said she has heard that portions of the carpet have to be replaced. Does staff do that as well? Margaret said yes. Mike Sobol asked if dehumidification helps. Margaret said yes, there is less of a musty smell. John said that mold was found in one closet but it was not as bad as feared.

Space issues were reviewed. Ken showed a photo of a children’s program where there was no room for parents. We can’t do as much programming in the community room as we would like. Mike Sobol asked what the capacity is for the space. Margaret replied 75. A comparison to 17 other libraries was provided. John Elsesser will email this to the Council as the slide is difficult to read. 58% of the Coventry population has library cards, which is high compared to the state average. A program attendance comparison shows that Coventry is on par with other towns.

Ken showed the existing floor plan and number of restrooms. Currently there are only two toilets for the entire building. One of the big items we wanted to reconfigure was the work room. The layout of the adult library is a barrier to finding things. There are spaces toward the front of the building that are a little under-utilized. The children’s library is a good size space but it is a bit cramped in areas. The diagonal shelving is a little confusing. The water issue in the courtyard needs to be addressed. We are looking to build into the courtyard area, using the existing retaining wall area, and change the drainage to eliminate the drainage under the courtyard area to the outside of the building. If enclosed, the current roof area could have the elevator where the current canopy is now.

The proposed upper floor plan puts the new entry point on the side under the roof and relocates the
display case from the vestibule area. The stairs would not be useable. As they enter the vestibule people would have the choice to enter the library, go down the stairs to the lower level or take the elevator. The book return area would be there also. We moved a major portion of the stacks and put them where the young adults and director office is. Seating and AV materials would be in the center area. We doubled the size of the work space and have a room dedicated to IT. The Fiction area stays where it currently is. We would use the alcoves from original space as quiet study spaces or conference rooms. We are also dealing with code issues because the building is not sprinklered to provide an area of rescue. Also some quiet study areas would be located where the stair currently is. Quiet study is in the highest demand for libraries today. The addition would be the Mysteries collection with seating. Restrooms would be added to this level. Carolyn asked if the original stairs could be accessible. John replied for staff only. They are too narrow and too steep.

On the lower level, the elevator and stair are at the front of the building. This allows the program room to be used after library hours. Carolyn asked how many will that room hold. Ken replied over a hundred. We are adding restrooms to that area and another area of rescue. We moved the children’s area to where the current program area is. The desk was moved to provide a reasonable sightline to all the kids areas. The preschool area and juvenile stacks were moved to the central area. The young adult area is now in the bottom section where the current staff room is. There were a few other code issues: the door near the area of rescue needs to be taller – it is only 6 ft. high. The elevator would be self-contained so everything is in the shaft. The current machine room for the elevator becomes usable space. The program area will have sinks at dual heights for adults and kids and economical placement of utilities. Carolyn asked if the changes will add space for books? Ken said yes. Carolyn said she noticed books on the tables at her last visit. Margaret said there is an issue of sinking of shelves in the front parlor areas. It was recommended to remove the weight from the shelves in those areas. Ken said we don’t have a budget for furniture but we should be able to fit furniture to the spaces. There is chair storage in the program room so chairs can be moved if tables are needed for programs.

Exterior elevations were shown with the historic space vs. infill of the courtyard. The windows at the lower level would get daylight into the lower level children’s space. Windows are worked around shelving to get light into the space and the stairway area so it’s not a dark space. The choice of infill material is brick.

Cost estimates were reviewed. Ken said we had an independent cost estimator do a detail on the project. After looking at it, some of the things like electrical and mechanical were based on unit pricing. Ken looked at what we really needed to do in those areas and shrank those items down. We cut down on some other elements like built-in cabinets to get the budget down. The parking lot work was not included. There is some space in the back where 8-10 parking spaces could be added. John said we might be able to do some simple gravel along the back line of the parking lot or do some work as originally defined in the previous project. We would want to work with PZC and get guidance from the Council. Ken continued with a review of costs. The flat roof area is not included. After grants and other funding sources we are down to a cost of $1.5 million. We know the Town has had success in the past with a construction management approach to gain other efficiencies and value engineering, which would reduce the costs by possibly another $350,000 to $450,000. This is pretty bare bones pricing based on what we know today. We tried to keep everything as low as possible. Joan Lewis said we want to do it right and correct everything that needs to be corrected. Ken said we cut back quite a bit on mill work - cabinets, circulation desk, etc. We are compromising. The hard construction has to be high quality. We have to address water intrusion, and meet energy codes. Carolyn asked happens with code concerns if this doesn’t get taken care of. John said we will have to look at the area of rescue and address the door that is too small. We would have to address things on a piecemeal basis. We talked to a construction firm and looked at how to mitigate water in the
courtyard. They said putting a roof over it is the most cost effective way. Otherwise you are doing a lot of excavation trying to address the drainage. There was a lot of discussion at the Council level about how to make the building more usable. We think moving the elevator makes the building work much better. It allows the building to be used for different functions. It is not a huge space. When you start putting tables in you lose half the capacity for people. Carolyn said if the project is not approved would the code work still need to be done without benefit of the grant? John said yes. Julie Blanchard asked how much square footage will be gain by enclosing the courtyard. Deborah Walsh said 432 square feet. Julie asked if the library have to close during the work? Ken said we looked at phasing. The courtyard would have to be built in two phases. On the lower level there needs to be a second area of egress for the kids. The thought was to build the elevator and stairway first and leave the courtyard open. Then once that is complete the kids can use it as an exit and then we can finish off the enclosure. John said there likely will be some closures for things like carpeting, etc. We might consider reserving Millbrook Place as a temporary space for a few weeks. There will be some interruptions and inconveniences but generally we don’t have to abandon the building and move out.

Julie asked when you plan to go to the Town for borrowing more money? John replied that the next steps would be for the Town Council to authorize the committee to go to the PZC and Inland Wetlands for input. That could be done in December or January at the earliest depending on how schedule fits. Then after that process the Town Council shall determine whether it proceeds. After that, if favorable, there would be a public forum, possibly in February.

Building ownership was discussed. The Library Board of Trustees has reaffirmed their commitment to turn over the building to the Town as previously agreed to. Carolyn if it then becomes a municipal library. John said no, it would remain an association library. We have to remain true to the original deed that the building remains a library. Mike Sobol asked what the scope was of the 1989 renovation. Ken showed an outline of original building on floor plan. Mike said given the year that it was constructed, has any consideration been given to the crumbling concrete foundation issue? Ken said he has seen no evidence of that. John noted that the issue of ownership was discussed back then, too. There was reaffirmation that the library was a Town library at that point. Booth & Dimock was declared to be the Town’s principal library. The town attorney said not to worry about ownership because it would revert to the town anyway, but people feel we should take care of it now like we did for the firehouse. Fire departments are a good example of this type of arrangement. They provide a service and we give them money. We are building a building, but we are also buying it. Mike said he would want to verify that pyrrhotite is not an issue. John said we can check the records to see who supplied the concrete. We can also do testing. Carolyn said that water acerbates the crumbling concrete issue. She thinks we would see it with all the water that is coming in.

Jonathan Hand said that there has been a lot of chatter about the library expansion being brought up again. He wants to make it clear that this is to renovate the existing space. It is a complete and separate project, not a big expansion. People are not seeing that. This is different than the expansion that was voted on and failed. Carolyn said this came after that - so we could focus on what we have and address what needs to be repaired.

Joan Lewis thanked the committee for their work. There are talented individuals in the group and we appreciate the work that has been done in a short amount of time. What they brought back seems very thorough and meets the charge that was set forth. It seems like the Council needs to authorize moving forward to PZC and Inland Wetlands.

**Motion #19/20-65:** Carolyn Arabolos moved to forward the Library Renovation and Improvement Committee’s proposal to the Planning and Zoning Commission and Inland Wetlands Agency to get feedback. The motion was seconded by Jonathan Hand and carried on unanimous vote.
Reports:
A. Council Chairwoman – Joan Lewis: We have a citizen who turned 100 recently and is still active, Angela “Chick” Bowen. Her husband passed away several years ago but was a doctor and used to have office hours in her house. Congratulations to Angela on this milestone.

An agenda has been prepared for the inauguration of the new Council and retirement of the current Council on November 6, 2109 at 7:30 PM. John said the agenda is fairly standard but we wanted to notify the public. We hope there is no recount because the charter stipulates that the new Council must be sworn in that night. Lisa Conant asked if the Registrars are prepared.

Joan reminded Council members to read the revised personnel policies that the Steering Committee has been working on in sections. We plan to adopt them at the next meeting. If you have questions get them to Jon at Steering so we can get them answered.

B. Council members:
Lisa Conant wished a happy birthday to Chick. Chick taught her children religious education at St. Mary’s. Lisa was talking to a resident over the weekend who said that there are trash receptacles at the parks, but no recycling and was wondering if they could be included. John Elsesser replied that the issue is that trash in parks is generally a staffing issue. We have it at several parks. He will talk with staff to see if something can be done.

Jonathan Hand attended a Vaping 101 forum put on by Yale. It was really interesting and he learned a lot about why people are getting ill. It is not really vapor; it is oil. The session was not very well attended so he wanted to try to get the word out. People have become very creative in designing the devices to conceal what they are doing. One of them looks like an Apple Watch. They are very difficult to spot. Also it was surprising to hear the population that is doing this. It is a whole different group including athletes who do it to get pumped up before events. He hopes that the public begins to pay more attention about it.

C. Finance Committee – Carolyn Arabolos:
We covered quite a bit at our meeting. The September minutes had a wrap up for FY 19. Carolyn had asked Amanda and John if the surplus was standard. She was told that was what we want in terms of being able to build fund balance. She went back and looked. FY 19 was 1.2%. FY 18 was .5% overage and FY 17 was 1.2%. It seems like that tends to be around the typical range.

We looked over the monthly financial reports and discussed COVRRRA and Recreation numbers. Amanda believes that the increased COVRRRA collection is due to diligence in the Tax Office. The Recreation numbers look better because we believe some of the expenses were overstated. The Tax sale will take place January 14th. There were six 6 reductions from the Board of Assessment Appeals.

Our bond rating upgrade to aa+ reduces our cost of borrowing, resulting in a savings of $95,000 this fiscal year. We can apply that to future debt or offset the cost of a future project. The debt schedule is available for review. Next year will have a decrease with several sizable items coming off debt service. The Town is positioned well for most investments. We are doing an IT upgrade to cloud based software, and were offered fixed asset software at half price. The computer upgrade is underway; we collaborated with the Board of Education and achieved some savings. There are some issues with the new scale for the transfer station. John Elsesser said that the new scale was too short. The contractor is addressing it at their expense. We don’t have a timeframe yet. Mike Sobol asked if it would it make more sense to get the right size scale vs. pouring more concrete to make it fit. John replied that it won’t matter to us that much, but it won’t work in the present configuration. The alternative is to go back to the vendor to get right length.
Girl softball complex: John Elsesser reached out to Mr. Desiato regarding an easement or acquisition of his property. John said we have not gotten a response yet. Staff has talked to one engineering firm already. We will get an RFP out to talk with several firms.

The Finance Committee review a report prepared by Amanda Backhaus on homes affected by crumbling concrete foundations. The figures show the losses for FY 18 and 19. Some houses are off the tax rolls for years. This will have impact for years as more houses come off and are reduced in value.

We discussed the financial impact of the recent Registrar of Voters issue, which amounted to $4,335.82. Not included in these costs were the cost of a legal ad and poll workers for the primary because those costs would have been incurred anyway. The Registrars will be over budget. Staff hours to address the issue were not included as they are unquantifiable. There is also the potential cost of legal action for not having the IBS machines needed for impaired individuals at the polls. Fines would be to the individual, not the town. There is also an issue about issuing W9 forms for poll workers. They should not work until we receive them. Amanda held up an entire batch of payroll because these were not received. It has been over a month and we finally received the last batch. Mike Sobol asked if that is standard practice. Amanda said no. No one should be working without submitting a W9. Carolyn asked if it is in place for the November election. Amanda replied that the Democrats have put a package in place, but we haven’t heard from the Republicans. Carolyn asked when we need them. Amanda said Monday. Lisa Conant said lack of IBS machines is a federal issue.

Julie Blanchard asked why are we using the attorney we use for the tax sale. John replied that it is a specialty area. It is very complicated. It doesn’t cost us any money. This area has a lot of litigation and the attorney has been successful at avoiding that. We believe one of the homes will be purchased which will put us down to two for the sale. It is good if they are cleared up. We started with 11 and are down to three. Going through the tax sale process works.

**D. Town Manager – John Elsesser:**

1. **Projects Update:**
   - Jones Crossing culvert: The water has been sent back through the culvert into its original channel. Railing is going in this week. The binder coat is paved, backfilling, curbing and landscaping is being done this week. There will be a gap between when the pavement is being done and when the final paving is going in. We are debating whether to open it for a couple days and then close it again. If it is really close, we will leave it closed because it will just cause confusion. We encourage people to sign up for road alerts for an announcement of when it is open. It looks like we will be slightly under budget. A change order reduced the cost of the project by about $50,000-$60,000.
   - The Wrights Mill Road drainage project is starting the end of this week. Materials are on site.
   - The Town Hall flagpole project is starting this week. The granite will be moved here later this week. It will be cut into 4-ft sections to create the curve. We ordered a second bench to match the one being donated that can be dedicated to someone in the future. It will be delivered in December. Ackert Electric is donating some time and resources to get electricity underneath to shine lights on the flags from the front and allow low lighting. Jonathan Hand asked about the cost for the bench. John replied it will cost $1100 including shipping and $400 for a plaque. Mike Sobol asked if this has anything to do with a remembrance of past community volunteers. John said no. We had discussed that at Steering and it became very complicated. The scale of the project has also been reduced. Mike asked if there has been any thought to doing a donation initiative to have the bricks engraved. John replied that does
not work as well with the granite pavers. We might be able to do a ribbon cutting before the next Council meeting.

- The community center floor project is starting this week.
- Revaluation change notices are scheduled to go out the second or third week of November. We will have the Assessor come to a Council meeting that month as notices are going out.
- Eric Trott will be sending a memo out to both political parties regarding zoning laws on election signs and right of way issues. If signs are in the right of way on State roads, the State will just remove them. There are maximum size recommendations as well as positioning. Those notices are sent out every election. Some of the signs might not be put out by the parties but you might know who put them there. If you have questions regarding the regulations contact Mark Landolina in the planning office.
- Mike Sobol asked for an update on the disc golf project. John said we spent some time down there today because we received a complaint that we were cutting down trees. We removed two rotting birch trees. The rest was brush cutting of saplings along the path. We appreciated the call. The Town crew was there today with the Tool Cat and a machine to do some of the grubbing. It is hard to get volunteers to show up. We had a break in our schedule so our crew was there to do some work on the last 3 holes. The signs are on order. The first five holes around the pond and the 6th practice hole should be done this fall. The three holes in the woods won't be finished this fall. Stream crossings and footbridges need to be built. We are using the funds earmarked for Camp Creaser improvements - getting moss off the roofs, staining the pavilion, and doing some power washing. We will evaluate the condition of the roof once the moss is removed. If roof repair is not needed, we will work to get the wood stablized. Carolyn asked if the person who complained about the trees understands. John said he called her back and provided the information - she didn't take the call so he left a message. She was under the impression that it was a $5,000 grant and it was $10,000. She also asked how much was left and it is about $685.
- Julie asked if power is back on in town after the storm? John said for the most part it was restored by Friday night. Communication with Eversource was poor. It could be because our representative was away. Also towns to north of us were in worse shape. Carolyn asked about an area on Broadway between South River and Tedford where a large branch has come down for the second time. Should we address that area more? John said it would be extremely expensive. We don't have enough money to address all the areas that need it. We did have a tree crew in town and they did some work on Brigham Tavern where the trees were leaning over the road. We are not alone in dealing with tree problems. There is major discussion throughout the state about what needs to be done.

2. Micro grid/co-gen update: John said we had a good discussion on Friday. Coventry Microgrid is still working through issues with Eversource and working through plan design. They are here every Wednesday working on specs. Some of the lenders are balking at the new contract terms set by the state. We may need to get the senators on the Energy Committee involved which includes Rep. Ackert. Mike Sobol asked about the difference between micro grid and co-gen. John said there is a lot of financial difference. Natural gas charges would be waived with co-gen. Mike said maybe we should change what we are calling it on the agendas. Joan asked if you think Eversource supports the project. John replied they are going to make money. They don't really sell power anymore - they are a pass through. We can also talk to Kevin Witkos who is also a representative.

3. Folly Lane Bridge replacement: A reminder about the public information meeting on Folly Lane Bridge replacement on 10/23/19. There are no big surprises. The bridge will be slightly longer and wider, and the project should be fairly simple.
8. New Business:
A. 19/20-18: Consideration/Possible Action: Ratification Of Collective Bargaining Agreement And Authorization For Town Manager To Execute: To be discussed following Executive Session.

C. 19/20-20: Consideration/Possible Action: Approach to Facilitate a Merger of Each Volunteer Fire Department With Town Of Coventry Fire/EMS: Memorandum of understandings with Coventry Volunteer Fire Association and North Coventry Volunteer Fire Department were reviewed. John Elsesser said that this is detailing a process that we would go through. We don’t want to spend a lot of time drafting the ordinance changes that would be done but our Town Attorney has drafted those. We want to make sure we are all on the same page before we do too much more work. The Fire Transition Study Committee would need to forward job descriptions. We would need to change ordinances to reflect changes in the positions and the organization chart for how the department functions. Then we would go through a process to select the personnel and finalize the Town’s relationship with the associations, assuming they will want to continue as associations. There is a lot of good civic duties that these organizations do. We need to determine who will do what for the buildings. In-depth lengthy discussions would need to take place. The Town would still be able to give grants. The MOUs would be two separate agreements to merge into the Town department. Carolyn noted that the word “are” is missing in the second paragraph of the CVFA document. Julie said in the memorandum of understanding, both departments are volunteer departments. Should the Town department also be specified to be volunteer? John replied that the current ordinance just says Coventry Fire and EMS department. The word volunteer could be added in the third “whereas” paragraph. Motion #19/20-66: Jonathan Hand moved to authorize the amended memorandum of understandings with Coventry Volunteer Fire Association and North Coventry Volunteer Fire Department, subject to agreement by the departments. The motion was seconded by Julie Blanchard. Mike Sobol said this is a nice big step in the right direction toward a unified department. Motion #19/20-66 carried on unanimous vote.

9. Executive Session:
Motion #19/20-67: Julie Blanchard moved 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 subsection (b) of Section 1-210 with the following people in attendance: Town Council members, the Town Manager and the Finance Director. The motion was seconded by Jonathan Hand and carried on unanimous vote.

Motion #19/20-68: Julie Blanchard moved that the Town Council enter into Executive Session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 1-200(6)(D)-discussion of the selection of a site or the lease, sale or purchase of real estate by a political subdivision of the state when publicity regarding such a site, lease, sale, purchase or construction would cause a likelihood of an increased price until such time as all of the property has been acquired or all proceedings or transactions concerning same have been terminated or abandoned with the following people in attendance: Town Council members, the Town Manager and the Finance Director. The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant and carried on unanimous vote.

Executive Session commenced at 10:07 PM.

Motion #19/20-69: Carolyn Arabolos moved to leave Executive Session at 11:02 PM. The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant and carried on unanimous vote.
10. New Business:
A. 19/20-18: Consideration/Possible Action: Ratification Of Collective Bargaining Agreement And Authorization For Town Manager To Execute:

Motion #19/20-70: Jonathan Hand moved to ratify and authorize the Town Manager to execute contract with Police: United Public Service Employees Union / COPS Division, July 1, 2019-June 30, 2022. The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant and carried on unanimous vote.

Motion #19/20-71: Jonathan Hand moved to ratify and authorize the Town Manager to execute contract with Public Works: Local 1303-05, AFSCME Council #4, July 1, 2019-June 30, 2022. The motion was seconded by Carolyn Arabolos and carried on unanimous vote.

11. Adjournment:
Motion #19/20-22: Carolyn Arabolos moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:03 PM. The motion was seconded by Jonathan Hand 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.
Christine Pattee, presentation on Senior Housing Study Committee
Town Council Public comment period 10-21-19

Hello, I'm here to thank the Town Council for forming the Senior Housing Study Committee, point out that this town-wide effort is unique in the state, and list the difficult issues that the committee will have to address.

I've been looking at senior housing for a very long time, and am familiar with efforts in Wallingford and Old Saybrook, spearheaded by Church supported groups, to bring this kind of moderately priced affordable housing to a town. However, I believe that Coventry is the only town in the state to address these issues from a town-wide perspective. Ten years ago, Coventry's Plan of Conservation and Development concentrated on Open Space and our rural heritage. Now, for 2020, we're looking to balance the rural heritage that we all cherish with the growth and development that is happening all around us. The best platform to honestly and rationally discuss these issues is this town-wide committee.

Nobody is opposed to housing for seniors, but let me just mention the contentious areas that we don't like to talk about. First, money. Who are the two most pinch penny groups on God's green earth? Republicans and seniors. Who needs housing? Seniors. Who builds housing? Republican developers.

Moving right along, and skipping the lecture that this Doctor of Public Health has always wanted to give on "water, sewers and the fall of the Roman Empire", the two issues that the town has successfully avoided for the past decade are sewer expansion and the exclusion of multi-unit housing from the Lake Area Residential Zone, which almost completely overlaps the sewered area around the lake.

We have long known that our unique in the state sewer system, essentially a giant septic field, is bumping up against the state-mandated capacity limit of 90%. Our highly competent WPCA staff spend most of their time tracking down every little sump pump illegally discharging into a sewer grate. Recently, the state just handed us another mandate, saying our processed sewer water is discharging too much nitrogen into the lake. As the old Chinese proverb says, every crisis is also an opportunity. If we're going to be forced to do some work on our current sewer system, maybe we need to bite the bullet and expand it. I've often been asked why affordable housing needs to be on a sewer line. The answer is quite simple if you look at the difference in sale prices between two upscale over 55 condo developments in our town: Bidwell Village, which is on the sewer line, and Flanders Woods, in which each residence has its own separate septic system, and costs about $100,000 more than a Bidwell Village condo.

As for zoning restrictions on multi-unit housing in the Lake Area Residential Zone, this is a topic that the small committee discussing the 2020 POCD update is just beginning to consider. When we first started talking about changing Lake Area zoning, the immediate response, from left to right across the spectrum, was, "We can't have lake front owners selling to developers who will build Taj Mahal condos!" This caused us to take a closer look at the topic. Several properties of enough acreage to support multi-unit, apartment-style housing have been identified. At this point, we don't know how many units would be appropriate on a given acreage, but we do know that age-restricted housing allows a greater number of units in a given area because seniors are a smaller family unit. I stress that this is just a possibility that we talked about for the first time last month. The possibility raised was to identify areas off the lakefront, but in the sewered area, that might be appropriate for a special zoning District allowing multi-unit housing in that area alone.

I would like to conclude with one final statement for the record. On the day that a developer brings a preliminary application for this kind of housing to the planning and zoning office, that will be the day that I resign from the PZC, throw up my hands shouting "Hallelujah my work is done" and put my name first on the waiting list.
Library Grants/Fundraising

Improvement Committee Charge
LIBRARY RENOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

Coventry Town Council Meeting
Oct 3, 2019

Update Report of the Library

Memorial Library
Overview of Booth & Dimock
Space Issues

Concerns
Building Efficiency and Code

Water Damage

Work completed with prior funding
Building Ownership

While not in the charge of the Committee the Library

CONSTRUCTION COST ESTIMATES

$1/32,000

NEXT STEPS: PER THE COUNCIL CHARGE

ELEVATIONS
QUESTIONS/FEEDBACK

- Thank you for the opportunity to present the committee's status report.
- We welcome requests for suggestions for revisions and to answer additional questions prior to making a final request to the next Council for consideration of next steps.