Increasing State Minimum Wage & Its Impact:

As many of you know, a proposed bill to increase the minimum wage to $15/hour by 2023 was passed by the General Assembly, and subsequently signed into law by Governor Lamont in May, 2019. The minimum wage will increase by $1 every year until reaching $15 in 2023, with the first increase as of October 1, 2019 to $11/hour. This new state mandate will have a dramatic impact on municipal budgets, and Coventry is no exception. This is a nearly 50% increase, which will have detrimental effect on our payroll budget necessary to maintain our current roster of programs and services.

The vast majority of our 40+ seasonal employees are between the age of 16 and 22, and serve in positions such as Camp Counselor, Gatekeeper, Lifeguard & Park Maintainer, earning at least minimum wage. The impact of this change is not just at the entry level however; it has and will continue to have a tremendous “domino” effect on proportionate wage increases necessary for veteran and supervisory seasonal employees. We have estimated an additional $110,000 in labor costs alone to meet the $15 threshold.

Staff are currently evaluating ways to accommodate this increase in ways that are both thoughtful and practical, with the least possible impact to our ability to remain affordable. However, as a Town Agency that is approx. 85% self-supporting, unfortunately, there will be some impact to user fees that we simply cannot avoid. In addition to increasing program fees, other cost-savings we are also considering include, possible reduction in services/decreases in hours of operation, a decrease in park & facility maintenance funding, to name a few. Stay tuned for updates as we continue to monitor and work on this issue.

Seasonal Highlight:

Arts on Main 2019

Held on Saturday, August 24th, this year’s event was once again planned and coordinated by the Coventry Village Partners, in conjunction with the Town of Coventry (Land Use and Parks & Recreation), and our many local & regional sponsors. Guests were treated to FREE concerts, kids performances, arts & crafts vendors, art activities, Sidewalk Chalk Contest, a David Hayes Sculpture exhibit and much more! Activities were held at various locations throughout the village, beginning at the Pocket Park at Monument Hill Road, all the way down to the Booth & Dimock Library. The First Congregational Church parking lot served as the location for both the Food Court & musical performances!

The planning committee will be meeting throughout the off-season to determine next year’s offerings and other activities for the community. Stay tuned for more, and be sure to follow @artsonmaincoventry on Facebook to stay updated.

Lisicke Beach

QUARTERLY REPORT

SUMMER 2019
JULY – AUGUST - SEPTEMBER

Thank you!

To the Coventry Lions Club for their generous donation of $1000, which has helped us purchase new Picnic Tables, to be installed at Patriots Park in Spring 2020!
**Project Updates:**

**Softball Field Planning Committee Update:**

The Coventry Softball Field Planning Committee has been busy this quarter, meeting with both the Town Council and Town Council Finance Committee. The Committee presented the Council with their Needs Statement, and their preliminary findings on viable locations for new Softball Fields. Four potential options have been discussed, and the Town Council subsequently approved funding to conduct an Engineer’s Report to determine the best course of action.

The Softball Planning Committee meets every Third Thursday of the Month, at 6:30pm at Town Hall, and all interested parties are encouraged to attend to learn more and offer feedback.

**Community Center Flooring:**

A contractor was commissioned to inspect the flooring at the Patriots Park Community Center, as it continues to sink. It was determined that many of the joists are rotting and several concrete blocks are crumbling.

The project to replace the flooring in the affected area went out to bid in September, and the Town Council began looking for ways to fund this project. Staff began planning to make accommodations for the Recreation Daze, Before & After School Program which is the primary user of the Community Center, while construction is underway. We also began brainstorming with Coventry Human Services to find an alternative location/share space for their overflow Food Bank storage.

**Creaser Park Disc Golf Update:**

This season saw a lot of discussion on social media, regarding the Fall 2019 Town Newsletter where it was reported that the Course was completed, which was incorrect. As a result, there has been a big push to complete the project, and DPW has been working diligently to move it along. They have since dug the holes, installed the basket sleeves and the tees are all set and ready to go in. We are starting with 6 holes this round. Work parties are currently being organized, in which volunteers can help to install the out of bounds lines with bricks, clean up debris and other projects as needed.

Lastly, we are working on designing signage for each hole; they could not be ordered in advance as the holes have to be in so certain info can be determined, such as Par & distance, which is printed on the signs. In fact, a local disc golfer/graphic designer has reached out, and has offered to design and print the signs at no cost to us! Once the course is ready for play, we will begin discussions on a ribbon cutting event. Additionally, we have equipment for loan, at the Parks & Recreation Office for those interested in trying disc golf for the first time.

**Another GREAT Summer at Camp W!**

The 2019 Camp Wangumbaug season was one for the books! On average, approximately 135 kids per week enjoyed swimming, sports & games, arts & crafts, special guest performers and field trips.

Staff did report an influx in behavioral issues amongst our campers that in some cases, required some policy/procedural changes. We worked very closely and collaboratively with Youth Services to evaluate these instances and determine proper action. Staff will continue to evaluate during the off-season, in preparation for the 2020 session.

**Update to Facility Rental Alcohol Policy:**

Following an issue involving an organization selling alcohol at their rental of the Patriots Park Lodge, the Parks & Recreation Commission passed the following at their Regular Meeting on September 12th, 2019:

- **Non-Profit Groups** must do all of the following:
  - Purchase a 1-day Special Event Liquor Permit from the State of CT Liquor Commission OR Hire a Licensed Bartender, who is required to notify the State Liquor Commission of the event;
  - Submit and pay the fee for the Town’s Alcohol Use Permit;
  - Purchase a 1-day special event insurance policy through the TULIP Insurance Program.

- **Individuals/Groups** must do all of the following:
  - Purchase 1-day special event insurance through the TULIP Insurance Program (Homeowners Policy is no longer acceptable);
  - Submit and pay the fee for the Town’s Alcohol Use Permit;
  - Groups who do not meet the criteria for non-profit status as deemed by the CT State Liquor Commission must also hire a bartender.

- A Fine of $500 will be applied for any violations of the terms of this policy.