

Coventry Town Council Goals 2020-2021

The State of Connecticut has suffered and continues to suffer from the negative effects of its immense financial disorder; including \$100 Billion of unfunded liabilities, mishandling of the Special Transportation Fund, and ever-growing debt burden. Because of this mismanagement, the State Legislature has proposed and implemented numerous tax increases and is now exploring even more taxes on Connecticut residents and business owners including highway tolls. It is prudent to plan for large budget cuts to Coventry's State grants in the immediate future beyond the planned ECS cuts. The Town Council's top concern is to protect the interests of our taxpayers, and to mitigate the threat of real damage to Coventry's public schools, town services, and the general well-being of our Town because of irresponsible State management and the expected funding cuts to municipalities. Through proper planning and by aligning our efforts with this critical concern in mind- we present the following goals to preserve and protect The Town of Coventry:

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

1) Prioritize town projects on "Needs" vs. "Nice to have" without negatively affecting long-term planning.

- Redirect the library renovation project towards solving the water intrusion problem in the most reasonable way possible, maintaining and stabilizing the building while working to assess and recommend improvements for computer and internet technical issues. Once we get firm costs, we will consider matching the \$850,000 grant if we feel the proposal is warranted.
- Complete the projects paid for in the already passed in the recent bond referendum.

2) We will work to maintain the current tax rate or lower it while providing sufficient resources for needed services and projects.

- Gather information from surrounding towns regarding joint fiscal environments. Evaluate the information and consider hiring a consultant to study the feasibility of combining the Town and BOE Finance Departments. If a study is undertaken, share results of study and have an open dialogue with the Board of Education on results and recommendations.
- Communicate with our elected State Legislators and encourage them to pursue spending cuts at the State level with the least negative effect to municipal governments, eliminate unfunded and burdensome mandates on the Town and Board, and streamline efficiencies in government departments.

- Ensure continued excellence in fiscal reporting resulting in award-winning, clean audits and continued increases in our positive bond rating with the goal of reaching the highest rating possible.

INFRASTRUCTURE

3) Support infrastructure projects to support residents and existing businesses, encourage and attract new businesses, fix insufficiencies/construction errors and improve town services and ability to respond to emergencies. Oversee the protection of the Town's investments by maintaining all town equipment, buildings, and infrastructure.

- Evaluate the final offering for a Micro-Grid project to determine the value of the offer and recognize the value of the increased capabilities. Move forward with the Micro-Grid project if the final offer makes sense economically for the town. If the town does not move forward with this proposal, we will continue to explore other options.
- Work with our electrical provider to remove as many trees as possible that threaten our town electrical service and focus additional State, Town, and Grant resources on identifying and removing any trees (that the town is responsible for) that may represent a problem for Coventry citizens.
- Secure the promised TAR funds from the state and put in place a plan to enable the town to catch up on the postponed road work due to the delay of state funding.
- Develop a short-term maintenance plan for the Community Center at Patriots Park.
- Study the current community center, evaluate the building, and determine if a future replacement would be the most fiscally responsible solution to pursue.
- Work with the CHS Walls Code Compliance Building Committee to resolve the high school walls structural deficiencies for the safety of Coventry students in the most cost-efficient manner.
- Encourage the Senior Housing Options Committee to identify the scope of the need for alternative senior housing options and to consider market-based solutions. Ask the Planning and Zoning Commission to review regulations to address affordability.
- Maintain current Town properties and assets, and explore having the Town take the lead for building facilities maintenance and janitorial care of all Town and School buildings.

- Work to complete projects for the realignment at the intersection of Swamp Road and Route 44, South Street LOTCIP project, Main Street Community Connectivity sidewalk and both Folly Lane and Hop River Road Bridge replacements.
- Pursue grants for Orchard Hills Senior housing renovations and upgrades.

4) Continue our efforts to improve sports facilities. Conduct a study to determine additional needs.

- Work to provide short-term solutions to the immediate needs for Girls' Softball fields and determine the most advantageous and economical way to find suitable permanent fields for their use.
- Continue to improve the other sports fields through increased water availability, rest room facilities where appropriate, and continue the coordination of maintenance and care with the Recreation Department, Board of Education and various town sport leagues.

ENVIRONMENT

5) Continue lake management treatments to contain and eradicate the Hydrilla and fanwort invasive species. Work with the State's new program that provides a dedicated stream of funding for invasive plant treatments and secure the maximum amount of funding we can through this program.

6) Protect our rural character while working to support our existing businesses and create an environment that will help attract new business.

7) Support striving toward Sustainable CT Gold Certification, when available.

8) Continue to support our Open Space Stewardship Committee in efforts to continue to improve and maintain Town-owned land.

9) Support continued investment in Forestry management for public safety.

10) Continue to explore partnerships for open space acquisition.

PUBLIC SAFETY

11) Work with the Board of Education to continue to improve security in our schools including consideration of one or more resource officers.

- 12) Continue to support the police department. Continue to support their technological capabilities that enhance their ability to perform their duties more efficiently and safely.**
- 13) Continue to work with our Volunteer Fire Departments to develop a single Volunteer Fire Department serving the entire Town of Coventry. Work with the Fire and Emergency Service Department to retain current members, attract new members, and make certain they have the resources needed to properly train them, and support the equipment and apparatus needs of the department while managing costs effectively.**
- 14) Explore, when appropriate, opportunities to work with other towns including possibly providing Public Safety services to other towns for appropriate fees.**

GOVERNMENTAL TRANSPARENCY

- 15) Increase transparency where possible and ensure that the Council has the proper time to review and/or vet what is proposed.**
 - Educate the public on the budget and mil rate setting process. Consider creating educational videos regarding the budget process to assist in the education.
 - Review and repeal unnecessary or obsolete ordinances or policies.
 - Reduce local government regulatory roadblocks for citizens, when possible, and streamline services.
- 16) Continue joint Town Finance/BOE fiscal committee meetings and have an open dialogue with the Board of Education to obtain comprehensive information for the Town Council and community.**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 17) Continue to work with Bolton/Vernon and the State to secure permission for the extension of the Bolton/Vernon sewer line into Coventry along Route 44. Focus on the need to improve failed septic issues and the potential for future economic development.**
 - Continue to work with WPCA to determine how we can increase capacity and meet any new requirements that the State places on the operation of the sewer plant.
 - Continue to support Main Street business development.
 - Work to promote/educate small and home businesses.

- Review the Regional Economic Development Plan and implement as appropriate.
- Continue to support both Farmers' Markets and develop and strengthen linkages to local businesses.