

MINUTES
SELECT BOARD MEETING
TOWN OF COVENTRY
MONDAY OCTOBER 26TH, 2020 AT 4:30 P.M.

Board Members Present:

Scott Briere/ Chair; Phil Marquette

Town Officials Present:

Amanda Carlson / Town Administrator

David Barlow / Town Treasurer

Kate Fletcher / Assessing Clerk

Sherry Bradley / SWIP Committee Chair

Guests:

Joe Gay / Waste USA

Kathleen Ahearn / School Board Director

Press:

Robin Smith / Caledonia Record

This meeting was offered to the public via Zoom video conference.

1. **Chair Scott Briere called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.**

2. **Allow for public comment**
 - No public comment noted.

3. Approve the unofficial minutes of the October 12th, 2020 meeting.

- Phil Marquette made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 12th, 2020 meeting at written. Seconded by Scott Briere and approved by the Board quorum.

4. Waste USA / Casella update on landfill operations

- Engineer Joe Gay from Casella provided an update on the Coventry Landfill operations stating that the new cells were under construction with an anticipated completion of one year.
- Until the new cells are opened, Joe stated the landfill is using all available space where previous trash had settled creating places for disposal.
- Joe stated that residential trash had increased during the year and commercial trash had decreased due to COVID shut downs.
- After questioned on the new ACT 250 permit conditions, Joe stated that Casella had submitted a proposal to the Agency of Natural Resources and once approved they will proceed with hiring a dedicated, third party, person to handle odor complains and follow-up.

5. 2019 Solid Waste Implementation Plan – Review draft and allow for public comment

- SWIP Committee Chair Sherry Bradley reviewed the proposed five-year Solid Waste Implementation Plan with the Board quorum which outlines the mandatory outreach and education efforts for the Town.
- No further public comment on the plan was noted.
- Phil Marquette made a motion to adopt the 2019 Solid Waste Implementation Plan for the Town of Coventry as presented by SWIP Committee Chair Sherry Bradley. Seconded by Scott Briere and approved by the Board quorum.

6. SWIP Committee

- SWIP Committee Chair Sherry Bradley stated that there were currently only two SWIP Committee members – herself and Margaret Maxwell. Sherry stated she has been handling the technical reporting, while Margaret has been working with the Coventry Village School.
- Sherry stated that more members were needed to comply with outreach to residents and businesses.
- The Board quorum agreed to post an ad in the local papers asking for community members interested in volunteering.
- Sherry Bradley stated she will reach out to the neighboring Towns to see efforts can be combined.

7. Solar feasibility project discussion.

- Treasurer David Barlow reviewed the financial options provided in the Solar Feasibility Study conducted by Wolfe Energy.
- As a municipality does not qualify for tax credits, the option to build using loans and credits is not financially beneficial to the Town.
- David Barlow stated that he calculated the long term costs and benefits of the Town using savings money to purchase a solar array to be constructed at the Town gravel pit. With an approximate \$333,000 startup cost, David estimated that if the Town invested that money long term, in 14 years it could potentially grow to almost \$900,000. David noted that this scenario had a lot of variables with maintenance costs, fluctuations in energy prices and long term investment gains; however, even with the noted variables David stated that monetarily, purchasing a solar array did not make sense for the Town.
- The Board quorum and Treasurer all agreed that the conversation about finances was separate from the benefits of green energy and the overall impact on the environment.
- David Barlow recommended that if the Board would like to proceed with a green energy project, the most beneficial would be to offer the land to a company that would construct and own the solar panels. The Town would receive credits against their energy bill. This

option would promote green energy but also save the Town some money on electricity bills for the Town Office and School.

- The Board agreed to continue discussions. No action taken.

8. Coventry Village Church building update

- David Barlow stated that the steps towards the transfer of the Village Church building to the Town was progressing but he did not anticipate it being completed for another month or more.
- David stated that after meeting with the Engineer hired with assistance from a grant by the Preservation Trust of Vermont, it was evident that the leaky roof was an immediate concern and should be addressed before the approaching winter.
- As the Town does not yet own the building, it cannot expend money for repairs. David Barlow agreed to discuss with the Church Conference to request assistance in mitigating further damage to the Church Building.

9. Other Business

- School Board Director Kathleen Ahearn stated that the Coventry Village School Principal was requesting a written agreement from the Town for disbursing funds from the Edmund Douglas Price fund. The fund is currently in the form of Microsoft shares, however the Town had accumulated dividends over the many years the fund had not been utilized.
- The Edmund Douglas Price fund was a gift to the Town to support the Coventry Village School library and literacy programs.
- Kathleen Ahearn requested an amount up to \$10,000 for the first year to support the costs of new books for the library as well as the cost of implementing a new digital book system for the students.
- The Board quorum agreed to prepare a draft letter outlining the procedure for disbursing funds to be reviewed at the next meeting.

- Phil Marquette stated he had submitted his resignation as a member of the Planning Commission, explaining he felt that some projects could create a conflict of interest as a deciding Select Board member in the future.
- The Planning Commission members will offer the Select Board their recommendations for a replacement after their next meeting; the Board will then make an appointment to the vacant seat to serve until the next Town meeting election.

10. Sign orders

- The Board quorum approved the Treasurer to sign checks totaling: \$44,833.63
- The Board quorum agreed to invite the Coventry Town Foundation to the next meeting for further discussion on the appropriation payment and requests made by the Board.

11. Meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

The next Select Board meeting will be held on Monday November 2nd, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.

Scott Briere / Chairman

David Gallup

Phil Marquette

Amanda Carlson / Town Administrator