

MINUTES
SELECT BOARD MEETING
TOWN OF COVENTRY
MONDAY JUNE 29TH, 2020 AT 4:30 P.M.

Board Members Present:

Scott Briere/ Chair; Phil Marquette

Town Officials Present:

Amanda Carlson / Town Administrator

Kate Fletcher / Assessing Clerk

David Barlow / Town Treasurer

Guests:

John Miller; Mary Ellen Linton; Amirita Parry; Cecelia Parry; Sue Harkey; Jeffrey Kemp; Martha Sylvester; Jana Lovejoy

Press:

Robin Smith / Caledonia Record; Meghan Wayland / Barton Chronicle

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

- Martha Sylvester commented that the Lady Bird Park canoe/kayak launch was a great addition to the Town.
- Martha stated her disapproval with the Select Board's leadership and concern for community participation and transparency. She also requested meeting minutes that reflected the decision to change the Assessing Clerk Office hours.
- Martha requested that VLCT be asked to host an Open Meeting Law training at the Community Center for the local officials and that this be an agenda item for discussion at the next meeting.
- Mary Ellen Linton stated that she felt the vote on the ATV Ordinance should address the approved routes, noise levels and speed limits as these recreational vehicles are interrupting common walking paths for residents.

- Amirita Parry stated that the ATV signs on the road still indicated an open date and should be changed. Sue Harkey stated the signs were put up by residents and they would work together to change.

3. Approve the minutes of the June 15th, 2020 meeting

- Phil Marquette requested a correction to the June 15th, 2020 meeting stating that under the agenda item “Other Business”; a resident requested speed limit signs be added to Heermanville Road which the Road Commissioner agreed to.
- The Board quorum agreed that this decision should be added to the minutes which will be amended and presented to the Board for approval at the next meeting.

4. ATV Ordinance Vote – Discussion on possible dates and procedures for voting

- The Board quorum reviewed a draft Warning to hold the ATV Ordinance Vote on August 11, 2020. This is the same day as the Primary Election and ballot counting officials will already be working.
- The Board discussed the options of voters requesting ballots versus mailing them to all registered voter; and concluded that the Board would receive a more accurate account of how the residents feel by mailing all ballots.
- Phil Marquette made a motion to approve the Warning for a Special Vote on the proposed ATV Ordinance for August 11, 2020. Seconded by Scott Briere and approved by the Board quorum.
- Phil Marquette made a motion to mail ballots to all registered voters which will include information on voting options. Seconded by Scott Briere and approved by the Board quorum.
- Information meetings will be held for the public by Zoom video conference on: Wednesday August 5th, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. and Monday August 10th, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.
- Mailed ballots can be returned by voters in the prepaid envelope to be provided; dropped off at the Town Office or on site during the Primary Election day.
- Ballots and informational materials will be mailed no later then July 10th, 2020.

5. Coventry Town Foundation financial request for disbursement of funds

- Phil Marquette made the motion to amend the agenda and move the Town Foundation Request after agenda item #9: Other Business. Seconded by Scott Briere and approved by the Board quorum.

6. Review request for fall fireworks

- Due to gathering restrictions the fall festival was cancelled; however, the event committee made a request to continue with the fireworks to be held on September 12, 2020. Total proposed cost of fireworks \$7,000.

- Scott Briere stated that he was hesitant to spend so much money on fireworks when there was no other activities bringing people together to watch the display.
- The Board quorum agreed to ask the event committee to attend the next meeting to discuss what options there were for activities that complied with the social distancing restrictions.
- Scott Briere made a motion to approve the contract with NorthStar Fireworks in order to hold the date but to discuss options at the next meeting. Seconded by Phil Marquette and approved by the Board quorum.
- After discussing possible cancellation and the required deposit; Phil Marquette made a motion to amend the previous motion and approval of the contract with NorthStar Fireworks subject to confirmation that any possible cancellation would include a full deposit refund. Amended motion seconded by Scott Briere and approved by the Board quorum.

7. Review and discussion on draft personnel and financial policies

- The Board quorum agreed to review all policies in more detail and send any suggested changes to the Town Administrator to be noted on the document for full Board review at the next meeting.

8. Discussion on upcoming reappraisal and plans for informing the public

- With the Town wide reappraisal starting in the coming weeks, the Board discussed a public meeting with the Assessors giving the residents an opportunity to ask questions about the process and understand how site visits will be conducted during social distancing requirements.
- Phil Marquette made a motion to facilitate an information meeting with the Assessing firm New England Municipal Consultants on Wednesday July 8th, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. by Zoom electronic conference; and to send postcards to all property owners regarding the meeting. Seconded by Scott Briere and approved by the Board quorum.

9. Other Business

- The Board accepted a letter of resignation from Planning Commission Chair Josh Griffes who will no longer be a resident of Coventry.
- The Board agreed to discuss potential candidates for Planning Commission at the next meeting; as well as potential candidates to replace Josh as the Coventry representative on the NVDA Board of Directors.

5. Coventry Town Foundation financial request for disbursement of funds

- Scott Briere stated that the Board had received some information from the Town Attorney that needed to be reviewed.
 - The Board quorum agreed in the finding that premature public knowledge of the items for discussion would be detrimental.
 - Phil Marquette made the motion to enter into executive session in accordance with 1 V.S.A. § 313 (1) (f) relating to legal matters to include the Select Board members present and the Town Administrator. Seconded by Scott Briere and approved by the Board quorum.
 - The Board entered into executive session at 5:24 p.m.
 - The Board exited executive session at 5:50 p.m.
 - Scott Briere stated that a draft letter to the Coventry Town Foundation will be prepared and sent to the Town Attorney for final review.
 - Scott noted that since the process was new, the Board was ensuring legal compliance by the Town prior to issuing the voter approved appropriations funding of \$250,000.
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- Kate Fletcher stated she had been attending a Coventry Fire District meeting during “Other Business” and requested the Board allow her to speak which was granted by the Board quorum.
 - Kate stated she had received the Boards instructions to change the Assessing Clerk’s Office hours to Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Kate stated that she was not available Fridays due to her private business and will amend her schedule to Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday with the Boards approval.
 - The Board quorum agreed to amend the Assessing Clerk Office hours to Monday through Wednesday at a total of 24 hours per week.

10. Sign Orders

- No orders to sign. Item tabled.

11. Meeting adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

The next Select Board meeting will be held on Monday July 20th, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.

Scott Briere / Chairman

David Gallup

Phil Marquette

Amanda Carlson / Town Administrator