

MINUTES
SELECT BOARD MEETING
TOWN OF COVENTRY

Monday January 9, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.

Board Members Present:

Michael Marcotte / Chairman; Bradley Maxwell; Scott Morley

Town Officials Present:

David Gallup/ Road Commissioner; Amanda Carlson/Select Board Clerk

Guests:

Jeff Graham; Jeanne Desrochers; Deb Tanguay; David Barlow

Press:

Elizabeth Trail / Barton Chronicle; Robin Smith / Orleans County Record

1. **Mike Marcotte called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.**

2. **Approve the minutes of the January 2nd, 2017 meeting**
 - Bradley Maxwell made the motion to approve the minutes of the January 2nd, 2017 meeting.
 - Seconded by Scott Morley. The Board signed and approved the minutes as written.

3. **Allow for public comment**
 - Resident David Barlow inquired about the house on Main Street that was subject to a fire in December. He is concerned about the left over wreckage and the health hazard that it could carry if left abandoned.
 - Mike Marcotte replied that it is not the Town's responsibility to fund the clean up after a house fire. It is the responsibility of the owner. As far as the Town is aware there are legal issues surrounding the ownership of this property.
 - Mike Marcotte assured residents that the Board will investigate the property ownership and what clean-up efforts can be made for the safety of the Town.

4. Jeanne Desrochers from the Coventry Fire District

- The Board received a \$1500.00 invoice from the Coventry Fire District for the water used during the house fire on Main Street in December. The Board questioned why the Town was responsible for paying these fees; stating that the larger percentage of tax payers are paying for the select group that benefit from the water supply.
- Jeanne Desrochers stated that the water supply was designed for drinking water only and with strict budgets they cannot afford to cover the cost of fire protection. If the Town cannot cover the cost then the Fire District might decide not to offer water supply for fire protection.
- The Board replied that the water was sourced from a fire hydrant furnished by the Fire District and if the hydrant is available then the cost should be covered by the users benefiting from the service.
- The Board agreed unanimously to contact the Newport Fire Department who used the water for fire protection. The Town pays the Fire Department for services and in all other locations not accessible to a hydrant, the service fee includes a water supply. The Board would like to discuss with the Fire Department how everyone can work together without burdening tax payers.
- A representative from the Newport Fire Department will be asked to attend the next Board meeting.

- The Board was questioned on the maintenance of the dry hydrants in the Town and who performs routine maintenance and inspection on them. Mike Marcotte stated that this will also be discussed with the Newport Fire Department.

5. Select Board PO Box Update

- Mike Marcotte reported that PO Box 8 will now be the mailing address for all Select Board correspondence.
- The Board granted Amanda Carlson authority to contact vendors and State agencies to forward all Select Board mail to the new address.
- All Town Clerk mail will continue to be addressed to PO Box 104.

6. 2017 Town Meeting Warning Review

- The Board reviewed the draft warning and discussed various formatting changes to be made.
- Amanda Carlson notified the Board that in the past the Town has elected School Board Members during the Town Meeting elections. After confirming with the Vermont Secretary of State's Office, Amanda informed the Board that by Statute all school business must be conducted during the School meeting.
- The Board granted unanimous authority for Amanda Carlson to contact the Coventry Village School for their preferred option of proceeding. The School can decide to hold all

elections at their meeting which is typically held the evening before Town Meeting. Alternatively the school can request to have their meeting on the same day as Town meeting.

- The Board discussed including an article in the 2017 meeting warning asking to change the position of Delinquent Tax Collector from an elected position to an appointed position pursuant to 17 V.S.A 2651(d).
- After discussing the benefits and disadvantages to the change, the Board agreed unanimously to include the article asking the voters to make the decision.

7. 2017/2018 Budget Discussion

- Scott Morley stated his concern that the Orleans County Sherriff's Department appropriation request had increased significantly over the previous year. The Board budgeted \$9000.00 for services for the 2016/2017 fiscal year. The request was submitted to appropriate \$12,227.80.
- The Board agreed unanimously to level fund the payment and approved a budgeted amount of \$9000.00. The Sherriff's Department will be invited to Town Meeting to discuss the requested difference.

- Scott Morley reported that the 911 Coordinator for the Town is Cynthia Diaz with a yearly budgeted payment of \$250. The Boards previous decision was to remove all duties not statutorily obligated to be performed by the Clerk or Treasurer from Ms. Diaz.
- The Board agreed unanimously to remove the title of 911 Coordinator from Cynthia Diaz and temporarily assign the duties to Amanda Carlson as the Select Board Clerk. No additional compensation was awarded beyond her current approved hourly rate.
- The Board asked Amanda Carlson to contact the State 911 Board to notify them of the change of contact information.

- Scott Morley explained that under the Boards unanimous consent to work on budget reports with Amanda Carlson, they will continue to do so later in the week.

- Reports are expected to be ready for review and approval at the next meeting.

8. Delinquent tax report requested from Delinquent Tax Collector. Report to include outstanding delinquent taxes due for all prior fiscal years.

- Delinquent tax report provided to the Board from the Delinquent Tax Collector showing 2016 totals with no prior years listed. The Delinquent Tax Collector was not present to comment.
- After review, Jeff Graham stated that the total delinquent taxes was significantly different then the report generated from his audit.

- The Board asked Amanda Carlson to update all income in the NEMRC system and produce a delinquent tax report based on payments listed on the deposit reports provided by the Community National Bank.
- Once completed the Board will compare all three reports and consult with the Attorney on how best to proceed.

9. Request Treasurer's report to include detailed list of Town revenue for preceding calendar week including all source documents.

- The Board reviewed the income report provided by the Treasurer with all attached source documents.
- The Board questioned the system for 2017 dog licensing and noted there may be tags unaccounted for.
- The Board granted Mike Marcotte unanimous authority to speak with the Treasurer to confirm the process for animal licensing and the reporting of tag sales on income reports.

10. Update on bank account signing authority

- Mike Marcotte confirmed that the forms have been returned to the Community National Bank granting Brad Maxwell signing authority on all checks.
- As previously decided by the Board, checks will continue to be signed by the Treasurer and Board Chairman. Brad will be asked to sign only in Mike Marcotte's absence.

11. Graham update

- Jeff Graham presented the Board with the draft audit for review at the last meeting.
- Jeff asked the Board if they had any questions about the audit or requests for changes to be made.
- Jeff reviewed the reports and how the information was presented, noting that the Town has not had a complete financial audit in 16 years and the information might be overwhelming for readers.
- Scott Morley thanked Jeff Graham on behalf of the Board for his services. He stated the Town needed to take all of the recommendations and implement them as not to put the Town in this position in the future. The Town needs to take corrective action and focus on the solutions moving forward.
- Now that the financials are corrected and the audit report completed, Scott stated that although the contracted services with Graham & Graham are completed, he requests the Board maintain an open channel with Jeff Graham and retain his services as needed.
- Jeff Graham explained that the FBI has contacted him for information and he will continue to work with them providing information on behalf of the Town as required.
- Scott recommended that Jeff's future involvement with the Town be changed in the budget from audit services to litigation support.

- Scott Morley made the motion to retain Jeff Graham for litigation support services to the Town as required. Seconded by Brad Maxwell.
- The Board agreed unanimously to add a line item to the budget for litigation support for Jeff Graham's services.
- Brad Maxwell made the motion to accept the 2015/2016 Financial Audit Report as presented by Jeff Graham. Seconded by Scott Morley.
- The Board agreed unanimously to accept the audit report as written.
- The Board asked Amanda Carlson to contact Attorney Paul Gillies for advice on posting the Audit Report Document, as well as the Forensic Audit Report previously accepted, in their entirety on the Town website.
- Scott Morley requested that Jeff Graham's office provide the Town with a breakdown of costs associated with services provided by Graham & Graham. The Board agreed unanimously that the residents should be provided an explanation on request regarding the necessity of the high cost. This was due to the unexpected need to have books recreated and the high volume of transaction testing required by the audit firm.

12. Policies

- Item tabled until further review of policies can be completed by the Board.

13. Other Business

- The Board reviewed the Certificate of Highway Mileage provided by the Vermont Department of Transportation for 2017.
- No changes were listed. The Board requested that Road Commissioner, David Gallup, review before the Board signs the approval.
- Amanda Carlson requested up to \$500 to have Tech Patrol connect the Select Board computer to the copier/scanner and to update the Microsoft Office License.
- The Board unanimously approved the request.
- Orleans County Record reporter, Robin Smith, asked the Board if they could provide an update on the Civil Count case against the Town Treasurer and the Treasurer's non-compliance with the Judge's requests to produce documents.
- The Board stated that there are no updates to report at this time.

14. Sign Orders

Accounts Payable	01/09/17	\$ 34,025.73
Accounts Payable	ACH Transfer to IRS & State	\$ 3,749.37
Payroll	Week ending 01/07/17	\$ 2,475.57
Signed by the Board for the Treasurer to draw checks totaling		\$ 40,250.67

15. Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday January 16, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.

Michael Marcotte / Chairman

Bradley Maxwell

Scott Morley

Amanda Carlson / Select Board Clerk