

MINUTES

SELECT BOARD MEETING

TOWN OF COVENTRY

Monday October 17th, 2016 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:

Mike Paradis; Jeff Graham; Jeannie Desrochers; Leo Piette; Pat Sloan; Charles Pronto; Amber Lucas; Melissa Gallup; Richard Lussier; Barbara DeVost; Don Deudero; Gail Dondero; Barry Allison; Raymond Giovano; Sherry Brady; Carol Simmons; Chris Whiting; Don Whipple; Israel Sanville

Press:

Elizabeth Trail / Barton Chronicle; Chris Roy / Newport Daily Express

1. **Mike Marcotte called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.**
2. **Approve the minutes of the October 10th, 2016 meeting.**
 - Brad Maxwell made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Scott Morley. Minutes of October 10th, 2016 meeting approved unanimously.
3. **Allow for public comment.**
 - No public comment.
4. **Michael Paradis to discuss contract with Newport Ambulance Service Inc.**
 - Charles Pronto spoke to the Board on behalf of the Newport Ambulance Service. Copies of the draft contract were reviewed by the Board.

- Charles noted that a change was made from the previous draft to *Nature of Services* on page 1, item 1.1. The term “*fully staffed facility*” was added to the description to qualify the services that are being provided.
- The Board requested a change to *Notice* on page 5 item #13. All information should be sent to the attention of the Coventry Select Board c/o Coventry Town Clerk. Charles noted the change and will make the amendment.
- The Board noted for the attending residents that the negotiations of the agreement moved the fiscal responsibility of the contracted amount of \$24,880 from the voted appropriations to a line item in the Select Board’s budget for the following year.
- The Board requested amended language be included in the section on *Exclusivity* page 3 item 7.1. This should be re-worded to include service areas, and situations which would require the Orleans Emergency Unit responders to provide services.
- The Board agreed to review the contract again when amendments have been made. Charles noted that the contract would need to be approved no later than December 31, 2016.

5. Amber Lucas from the Coventry Parents Club request to use tables and chairs.

- Amber Lucas requested from the Board to borrow the Town’s table and chairs for two upcoming school fundraising events.
- Turkey Bingo to be held on November 19, 2016 with access needed for set up on November 18th, 2016.
- Craft Fair to be held on December 3, 2016 with access needed for set up on December 2nd, 2016.
- The Board agreed unanimously to allow the school use of the tables and chairs for both events.
- The Board appointed Israel Sanville as the contact person for providing access to the furniture. Israel will be responsible for ensuring all items are properly stored before and after each event.

6. Review amended draft of Building Use Policy with Facility Coordinator, Richard Lussier.

- Richard Lussier requested that the gym sign in sheet be amended to read “address” vs. “Town of Residence”. The Complimentary use should only be used by residents of Coventry. The sign in sheet will be amended and posted by the gymnasium.
- Brad Maxwell made the motion to accept the Building Use Policy as written, Seconded by Scott Morley. The Board agreed unanimously to adopt the Building Use Policy as presented and signed the copy provided by Amanda Carlson.
- Amanda Carlson to scan and copy adopted policy to be issued by the Facility Use Coordinator Richard Lussier.

7. Fireworks contract for 2017.

- North Star Fireworks refund for the 2016 event has been issued.
- The Board instructed Amanda Carlson to notify North Star Fireworks of the proposed 2017 rain date of July 9th, 2017.

- The Board agreed unanimously to keep the same amount spent consistent with previous years at \$5000.00.
 - Pursuant to the Board's decision to allow Amanda Carlson to notify North Star Fireworks to request the 2017 contract for Board review at the next meeting.
- 8. Update on upstairs community center cleaning.**
- No update at this time. No action taken by the Board.
- 9. Bridge discussion update**
- No update at this time. No action taken by the Board.
- 10. Update on gym floor tiles.**
- No update at this time. No action taken by the Board.
- 11. Update on Tech Patrol contracted services.**
- No update at this time. No action taken by the Board.
- 12. Update on cash receipts printer.**
- No update at this time. No action taken by the Board.
- 13. Select Board continued request of Delinquent tax collector to provide complete accounting of those issues. The reports should be from NEMRC software.**
- No reports provided by the Treasurer. Treasurer not present at the meeting to comment.
- 14. Review income report from town treasurer from 10/10-10/16 complete with copies of corresponding bank deposit slips.**
- The Board reviewed the NEMRC software based reports provided by the Treasurer. Deposit slips were not provided with the report as requested. Treasurer was not present to comment.
 - The Board stated the reports showed income of \$41,550.70 in checks received. No cash was recorded as received.
 - The Board will request future income reports be provided by the Treasurer in an electronic format to the Board Clerk, and 3 copies provided to the Select Board for review.
- 15. General Counsel update**
- Pursuant to the Board's unanimous decision to allow Scott Morley to act on behalf of the Board to contact general counsel; Scott stated that on the recommendation of Jeff Graham and Ernie Saunders, he contacted Attorney Paul Gillies from Tarrant, Marks & Gillies Office located in Montpelier.
 - Scott Morley, Ernie Saunders and Jeff Graham met with Mr. Gillies at the Coventry Town Offices on Thursday October 13, 2016.

- After providing an overview of the current situation, Paul Gillies verbally expressed his desire to assist the Select Board moving forward.
- Mike Marcotte noted that Mr. Gillies has an excellent reputation with municipal affairs and made the motion to retain his services going forward. Brad Maxwell seconded the motion. The Board agreed unanimously to retain the services of Attorney Paul Gillies from Tarrant, Marks & Gillies Office located in Montpelier.
- The Board agreed unanimously for Scott Morley to continue Attorney discussions on behalf of the Board. Scott Morley will follow up with Mr. Gillies and notify the Board if a special meeting is required to discuss issues before the next Select Board meeting.

16. Graham update

- Jeff Graham stated that the records found in the boiler room the previous week were in fact many of the records his office has been requesting the past year. Most notably was a request letter issued by Lereta Tax Services to the Tax Collector asking for verification on approximately 100 property owners and if tax payments had been made in a timely manner. The copy of the report showed handwritten answers that were not consistent with other findings from Mr. Graham's Office.
- Jeff also stated he is still in the process of matching up deposit slips and verifying information on payments made for other licensing such as dog tags and marriage fees. He will update the Board when those findings are verified.
- Jeff Graham showed the Board a binder containing copies of all 576 tax invoices sent out for the July 2015 to June 2016 tax year. He noted that there were 221 tax bills that he cannot verify payments for. The letter to residents requesting payment verification will be sent to the 221 property owners.
- Residents of the Town expressed concern for the collection of taxes and the safety of funds received in the office. Jeff Graham recommended that residents not pay in cash and to always ask for copies of the receipts.
- Mike Marcotte stated that a sign will be made for the Clerk's office to remind residents to always ask for a receipt for any financial transaction made in the office.
- The Board agreed unanimously to have Scott Morley speak with the Attorney on behalf of the Board to find out their best recommended course of action moving forward, and what authority they have to relinquish any duties involved in collection of taxes. Until recommendations can be made from the Attorney then no action can be made to change the system of collection.
- The Board noted that the VLCT- PACIF insurance provider is aware of the current situation and concerns of the Board, however, no claim has been filed as of yet.
- Jeff Graham also reported that when Ernie Saunders from NEMRC was performing his analysis of the software it was discovered that there was no 2012 Grand List in the system. Ernie will be checking the back-up files held off site to verify. If the file is not recovered, then the Town will need to contact the State of Vermont Division of Property Valuation & Review to obtain the official copy submitted to them by the Town.
- The Board stated unanimously that they need to consult general counsel before acting on any recommendations to make procedural changes. Pursuant to their unanimous decision, Scott Morley

will speak with the Attorney on behalf of the Board. Once the legal recommendations are clear on how the Board can and should proceed then they will discuss options for office changes and re-division of financial responsibilities.

17. NEMRC update

- Jeff Graham explained in his conversations with Ernie Saunders the week prior, that Ernie's recommendation was to have a second computer and set of software installed at the office. There are currently no internal verification or control systems in place and the Board needs to take action and have a secondary person controlling functions of the accounting software under their direction.
- Jeff Graham emphasized to residents that the software is accessible and available, but is subject to the use of the Treasurer. If it is not being used to its potential, then it is not performing the functions it is designed for.
- By statute the Treasurer is responsible to collect monies, process deposits and work with the Select Board on the Town's investment portfolio. All other accounting procedures, including but not limited to, account reconciliations, payroll, accounts payable, Board warrants and reporting can be handled by a Board hired bookkeeper.
- The recommendation by Jeff Graham and Ernie Sauders is for the Board to hire a bookkeeper to perform all functions not statutorily obligated to be performed by the Elected Treasurer.
- This person could be set up across the hall with their own computer software and work in conjunction with the Treasurer to ensure all financial obligations are performed for the Town in a satisfactory manner.
- The Board agreed unanimously that they will need to consult general counsel for advice on how to move forward and what their options are for limiting the Treasurers duties and for shifting responsibility to a hired person. Pursuant to their earlier decision Scott Morley will act on behalf of the Board to discuss with Attorney Paul Gillies.

18. Law enforcement notification

- Scott Morley stated that on recommendation from Attorney Paul Gillies, he contacted the Vermont State Police on behalf of the Board to notify them that based on the financial reports received from the Auditor Jeff Graham, there is a possibility of monies missing from the Town.
- The Police will be assigning an officer to the case who will be contacting the Town for further information.
- The State Police will then need to determine if the situation is within their scope of work or if further law enforcement will need to be consulted.
- No further action taken by the Board at this time.

19. Select Board Accountant

- As stated in Agenda Item # 16 and #17 the Board will discuss the addition of another person to assume financial duties in the office.

- All contracts sent for review by Accountant Eva Hayes from Hayes Accounting will be put on hold until the Board can determine the best long term situation for the Town.
- The Board agreed unanimously to allow Scott Morley to act on behalf of the Board and discuss the situation with the Attorney Paul Gillies.

20. Review of internal financial policies

- The Board stated they still had not received confirmation from the Treasurer that she is willing to cooperate with the Board on adopting internal financial policies.
- No action taken by the Board at this time.

21. Other business.

- Mike Marcotte is not available for a Monday meeting next week. The Board agreed unanimously to move next week's meeting until the following day. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday October 25, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.
- Last week's payables included a check to Blue Cross Blue Shield. The invoice was not in accompaniment of the check. The Board agreed unanimously to allow Amanda Carlson to call Blue Cross on behalf of the Board to verify that the payment was posted to the Town account.
- The Board was presented with a check and statement for Pick & Shovel. This check was omitted from being sent last week because the payment did not match the statement. The Board agreed unanimously that they were unclear on the account status and will hold the payment until a new statement can be issued and amounts can be verified.
- Amanda Carlson told the Board she is representing the Town of Lowell as the Solid Waste Coordinator at an Agency of Natural Resources Haulers forum on November 18th, 2016. She asked the Board for permission to attend the meeting as a dual representative from the Town of Lowell and the Town of Coventry. The Board agreed unanimously to allow Amanda to attend as an employee of Coventry and report back to the Board and the Coventry Solid Waste Committee.
- Mike Marcotte was presented with the Community National Bank forms to confirm signing authority on all bank accounts. The Board is unclear if the Treasurer can and/or should be removed from signing checks. Forms were not signed as the Board agreed to allow Scott Morley to speak with Attorney Paul Gillies for recommendations prior to implementing changes so they can examine who should be granted signing authority going forward.

22. Sign orders.

Payroll	Week ending 10/15/2016	\$1,517.74
Signed by the Board for the Treasurer to draw checks totaling		\$1,517.74

23. Meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday October 25, 2016

Michael Marcotte / Chairman

Bradley Maxwell

Scott Morley

Amanda Carlson / Select Board Clerk