

Minutes
Town of Coventry
Wednesday February 26, 2022

Order

Matt Maxwell started the meeting and outlined the voting procedure.

School Articles for Discussion

Article 1: To elect a **Moderator** for the year ensuing.

There is no name on the ballot but Matt M would act as moderator for the informational meetings.

Article 2: To elect a **School Treasurer** for a 1 year term.

Deb Tanguay- on ballot. Deb is the only name on the ballot and was not present for comment.

Article 3: To elect a **School Director** for a 2 year term.

Kathleen Ahearn- on ballot. Kathleen has been active on the school board for 4 years and is seeking another 2 years to help contribute with the addition project as well as helping to plan for the future and supporting the literacy program. She believes that this position should be filled by someone with the time and experience on the School Board who can work closely with the Town to elevate the school and is ready to fill that position and make these things a priority.

Robert Walls-Thumma- on ballot. Not present for comment.

Article 4: To elect a **School Director** for a 3 year term.

Praneet Menon- on ballot. Praneet spoke of his work with the defense department engineering for the Armed Forces as well as his experience leading public meetings with large attendance. He would look forward to closely overseeing the addition project and helping the school expand the literacy programs.

Article 5: Shall voters of the school district approve the school board to expend **\$3,881,536** which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$18,513, per

equalized pupil. This projected per equalized pupil is 16.33% higher than spending in the current year.

Matt Maxwell explained that the increase in the budget is due to the inclusion of Covid-19 funding as well as an increase in high school tuition and a 3% increase to the teachers' (union) salaries.

Article 6: Shall the voters of the school district approve the school board to borrow up to **\$3,200,000.00** over a period of 30 years for the proposed building addition at Coventry Village School.

Matt Maxwell explained that the Coventry Taxpayers will only be responsible for 20% of this spending, 80% will be received from the State Education Fund.

Town District Business

Article 7: To elect a **Town Moderator** for the ensuing year.

No name is on the ballot but Matt Maxwell would serve as Moderator for informational meetings.

Article 8: To **ELECT** the following officers required by law:

A. Select Person for a 3 year term

David Gallup-on ballot. Not available for comment.

Amanda Jensen-on ballot. Not available for comment

Praneet Menon-on ballot. Praneet is interested in working closely with the funding from the Landfill agreement to help support the Town into the future. He looks to work closely with the Planning Commission on accomplishing the goals set forth in the current Town Plan as well as to help create an ambitious new plan when the time comes. Praneet would also like to see an increase in safety measures to keep the Town safe.

Martha Sylvester-on ballot. Not available for comment.

B. Town Clerk for a 3 year term

Deb Tanguay- on ballot. Not available for comment.

C. Town Treasurer for a 3 year term

David Barlow- on ballot. David stated he is happy to be running again and appreciates your votes.

Kathleen inquired on the Town audit history and David's involvement in them.

David reported that an audit has been conducted for the Town every year since 2017. He works closely with the auditing firm, which has vast experience with the process and regulations.

D. Collector of Delinquent Taxes for a 1 year term

Kate Fletcher- on Ballot. Not available for comment.

Kerry Keement- on Ballot. Kerry spoke about her good communication skills. She has been active with the Fall festival committee and holds a seat as a justice of peace. Kerry has been a longtime resident and is looking to be more involved in the town.

E. Cemetery Commissioner for a 3 year term

Jerry St. Sauveur- on Ballot, Jerry was unavailable for comment.

F. Cemetery Commissioner for a 2 year term

No names are listed on the ballot.

No comments were offered.

G. 1st Constable for a 1 year term

No name is on the ballot

Pedro Grondon fills the position currently and was said to be willing to serve as a write in but was unavailable for comment.

H. 2nd Constable for a 1 year term

No name is on the Ballot.

I. Trustee of Cemetery Funds for a 1 year term.

David Barlow- on Ballot. David currently serves in this position, is knowledgeable of the finances and is happy to continue the work.

J. Planning Commission Member for a 2 year term.

No name is on the ballot.

Amanda Hussey- Write-in. Matt Maxwell mentioned that Amanda would continue to serve as a write-in.

K. Planning Commission Member for a 2 year term.

No name is on the ballot.

Zach Patridge- Write-in. Matt Maxwell mentioned that Zach would also continue to serve on the planning commission as a write-in.

L. Planning Commission Member for a 1 year term.
No name is on the ballot.

M. Planning Commission Member for a 1 year term.
No name is on the ballot

Article 9: Shall the legal voters of the a town of Coventry vote to appropriate the sum of **\$836,294** for the support of the fiscal year **2023 Town Liabilities & General Fund Expenses** of which all shall be raised by non-tax revenues received through the Landfill Host Agreement?

Showing an increase of 10% from the prior year.

Article 10: Shall the legal voters of the Town of Coventry vote to appropriate the sum of **\$274,000 plus** the Vermont State aid funding for the support of the fiscal year **2023 Highway Fund** expenses for the summer and winter road maintenance, of which all shall be raised by non-tax revenues received through the Landfill Host Agreement?

No further comment was offered.

Article 11: Shall the legal voters of the Town of Coventry vote to split the **Roads Infrastructure and Equipment Reserve Fund** into two reserve funds to be called the Roads Infrastructure Reserve Fund and the Roads Capital Investment Reserve Fund to enable better allocation and management of funding by placing \$100,000 of the existing fund balance into the **Roads Capital Equipment Reserve Fund** and the balance of the existing fund, approximately \$272,000, into the **Roads Infrastructure Reserve Fund** in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 2804?

Further information was given on division of reserve fund accounts.

Article 12: Shall **Excess Revenues** received in fiscal year 2021 into the Highway Fund of \$70,000 and into the General Fund of \$762,000, totaling **\$832,000**, be **Transferred** to the **Roads Infrastructure Reserve Fund**, if said reserve fund described in Article 11 is approved by voters, or if not, into the existing

Roads Infrastructure and Equipment Reserve Fund to fund future road infrastructure projects?

Kathleen Ahearn asked how this budget compared to last year. Ned Connell explained that this increase in spending is due to an increase in paving of roads.

Article 13: Shall **Excess Revenues** received in Fiscal Year 2021 into the General Fund of **\$100,000** be transferred to the **Roads Capital Equipment Reserve Fund** if said reserve fund described in Article 11 is approved by voters, or if not, into the existing Roads Infrastructure and Equipment Reserve Fund to fund future roads capital equipment requirements?

No further explanation was needed.

Article 14: Shall **Excess Revenues** received in Fiscal Year 2021 into the General Fund of **\$35,000** be **Transferred** to the **Reappraisal Reserve Fund** to fund future reappraisal requirements?

No further explanation was needed.

Article 15: Shall **Excess Revenues** received in Fiscal Year 2021 into the General Fund of **\$4,800** be **Transferred** to the **Edmund Douglas Price (EDP) Fund** to make up for Microsoft Dividends paid to the Town for the EDP Fund from 2003 through 2013 but not entered into the Town's financial accounting system?

David Barlow explained how the fund was started with a donation of Microsoft shares from the Price family. Funds have been used to help provide school library materials. Approval of this article would make the account whole, correcting records.

Kathleen Ahearn stressed the need for the fund and asked the residents for their support approving the article.

Article 16: Shall the legal voters of the Town of Coventry authorize the Select Board to appoint the Town Treasurer as provided in V.S.A. § 2651f whose elected term will expire in accordance with 17 V.S.A. § 2651f(c) if this article is approved?

The passing of this article would allow the Select Board to appoint the Town treasurer as this position should be skill based and not politically driven.

David Barlow stressed the need for consistency and to be filled by a knowledgeable employee regardless of politics.

This article would not affect the budget or time required for the position.

Article 17: Shall the voters of the Town of Coventry vote to appropriate the below expenditures for the **Services Agencies** in the amount of **\$16,507**? (Service agencies reports are printed in the back of this Town report under the Services Agencies section.)

- \$500.00 to American Red Cross
- \$300.00 to Felines & Friends Foundation
- \$3,000.00 to Goodrich Memorial Library
- \$600.00 to Green Mountain Farm to School
- \$2,000 to Jones Memorial Library
- \$330.00 to Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging
- \$2,172.00 to Northeast Kingdom Human Service, Inc.
- \$500.00 to Orleans County Children's Advocacy Center/
Special Investigations unit (new)
- \$500.00 to Orleans County Fair Association
- \$550.00 to Orleans Historical Society
- \$3,000.00 to Orleans Essex VNA & Hospice Inc.
- \$750.00 to Pope Memorial Frontier Animal Shelter, Inc.
- \$850.00 to rural Community Transportation Inc.
- \$1,125.00 to Umbrella
- \$130.00 to Vermont Center for Independent Living
- \$100.00 to Vermont Green Up, Inc.
- \$100.00 to Vermont Symphony Orchestra, Symphonykids Program
- Total for above appropriations- \$16,507.00

Casting separate votes for each appropriation was discussed for future years.

Ned Connell reminded the residents that the next meeting to be held Monday February 28th would be located at the Coventry Village School.

Moderator Matt Maxwell adjourned the meeting.