

**MINUTES**  
**SELECT BOARD MEETING**  
**TOWN OF COVENTRY**  
**MONDAY DECEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup>,**  
**2019 AT 4:30 P.M.**

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**Board Members Present:**

Mike Marcotte / Chair; Scott Briere; David Gallup

**Town Officials Present:**

Amanda Carlson / Town Administrator

Kate Fletcher / Assessing Clerk & Delinquent Tax Collector

Phil Marquette / Planning Commission Member

**Guests:**

Charlie Pronto / Newport Ambulance Service

Martha Sylvester; Brittany Marquette

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**1. Chair Mike Marcotte called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.**

**2. Approve the minutes of the November 18th, 2019 Meeting.**

- Scott Briere made the motion to approve the minutes of the November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 meeting as written. Seconded by David Gallup and unanimously approved and signed by the Board.

**3. Allow for Public Comment**

- Kate Fletcher referred to the Board's decision last meeting to obtain bookcases for the upstairs boardroom to house the remaining Reiley E Wright Library books.
- Kate produced several examples of the books for the Board noting the condition and that housing them would be a big cost for unusable materials.
- The Board unanimously agreed to hold on purchasing bookcases until the books can be sorted and determined if they are worth saving and housing in the Community Center.

#### **4. Newport Ambulance Service – Jeff Johansen to Discuss 2019 Proposed Budget and Town Contribution Amounts**

- Charlie Pronto was in attendance to represent the Newport Ambulance Service in place of Jeff Johansen.
- Charlie provided the Board with the Newport Ambulance Service budget with an appropriation request of \$33,188 from the Town of Coventry for 2020. This is a 3% increase over 2019 at \$32,221.
- Charlie noted that the largest increase was due to health insurance rates and employee wages. He stated that it has been difficult retaining trained employees in the past and raising their wages has aided in keeping good staff in place.
- Charlie Pronto reviewed the progress of the ambulance service with acquiring additional territories over the past year and the successful purchase of a substation for quicker response times.
- The Board unanimously agreed to include the Newport Ambulance Service appropriation of \$33,188 to be included in the FY2021 proposed budget.
- The Board thanked Chair Pronto and the Newport Ambulance Service for their successful changes in the past year.

#### **5. Review Proposal from Sansoucy for Future Assessing of Power Generating Facilities – Assessing Clerk Kate Fletcher**

- Assessing Clerk Kate Fletcher stated that the revised proposal was reviewed by Assessor Bill Krajewski who recommended the Board table the item and not make any decisions until the current utility appeals have been settled.
- The Board unanimously agreed to table the proposal from Sansoucy for future discussion.

#### **6. Review Proposed Policy for Tax Sales – Delinquent Tax Collector Kate Fletcher**

- Delinquent Tax Collector Kate Fletcher provided the Board with a draft tax sale policy.
- Kate stated that the tax sales have been a learning process and the policy was drafted with the Treasurer.
- The Board unanimously agreed to have the Town Attorney review the draft tax sale policy.
- Kate Fletcher stated that the delinquent tax interest has been calculated on the third of each month which has caused problems with month end reconciliations.
- Kate stated she would like to move the interest calculation date to the first of each month for easier financial procedures in the office.
- The Board unanimously agreed that the Attorney's at VLCT should be consulted prior to any changes being made.

#### **7. Road Naming – 911 Coordinator Phil Marquette**

- E911 Address Coordinator Phil Marquette stated that letters were sent to homeowners for name suggestions for the private road coming off of Reservoir Road leading to Kidder Pond.
- A road name and numbering system is essential for emergency services to be able to locate the camps if needed.
- Several suggestions were submitted and reviewed by the Board.

- David Gallup made the motion to approve the road name of Cobblestone Trail. Seconded by Scott Briere and unanimously approved by the Board.
- In his role of Emergency Management Director, Phil Marquette stated that grant funding had been awarded for costs to attend seminar on creating an emergency plan for the Coventry Village School on December 12 and 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019.
- Phil Marquette stated that he will be attending the seminar with the Coventry Village School Principal Todd Rohlen.
- Phil also stated there was a need to identify vulnerable populations to be aided in an emergency situation.
- Phil recommended a town wide survey be created and noted in the Town Report and at Town Meeting.

#### **8. Discussion on Regional Impact Fees Proposal**

- Casella Waste Management received a proposal from the Northeast Kingdom Solid Waste Management District regarding the implementation of a regional impact fee to offset the cost of recycling for the district; such an arrangement would need to be facilitated by the landfills host town.
- Town Administrator Amanda Carlson stated that she had met with representatives from Casella to discuss how feasible this would be and how the Town might be able to assist.
- Amanda stated that there are a lot of concerns with funding one district which competes with other local haulers who are also experiencing the cost demands.
- The Board reviewed a draft response from Casella to the NEKWMD stating that at this time they would not be able to proceed with the proposal as there are many concerns.
- Mike Marcotte stated that he agreed but it should be stressed that the conversation should continue to examine other ideas that would assist the Northeast Kingdom with recycling requirements and costs.
- The Board unanimously authorized Amanda Carlson to work with Joe Gay at Casella to revise the draft response to the NEKWMD care of Director Paul Tomasi.

#### **9. Community Center Coordinator Update – Amanda Carlson**

- Amanda Carlson reviewed the revenue reports with the Board noting that there was a \$225 drop from the same period last year in Community Center rentals.
- Amanda stated that there was no explanation for the drop and that it should be increasing over the next couple of months as most weekends are already booked.
- With community wrestling groups and basketball teams using the gym most every night of the week; Amanda emphasized that any committee or group scheduling meetings outside of their usually need to contact her in order to ensure space availability.

#### **10. Discussion on Economic Development Plan Recommendations Relating to the Community Events Coordinator Position**

- The Board reviewed information provided by Economic Development Consultant Peter Fairweather stating his support for the Board to proceed with creating and filling a full time Community Events Coordinator position for the Town.

- A comparison of recreation positions and salaries showed that typically this type of position has only been implemented in larger Towns.
- David Gallup stated that he would like to see the full economic development plan before proceeding.
- Mike Marcotte stated that he was unsure if this is a full-time position for Coventry and questioned if it could start as part time.
- Resident Kate Fletcher agreed that she did not feel the position warranted full time and should be viewed as a part time project.
- Scott Briere stated he felt that the Town would only get the results it was willing to put in and warned that with rebuilding a community it will take several years to see the return on any investments.
- Amanda Carlson stated that she had been part of all of the meetings with the community for the economic development plan and the common theme was a lack of community spirit and enthusiasm. She stated that this position would be the start of creating that and bringing people together in the community as well as from the surrounding areas; the fear being that if these ideas were put aside then the momentum would be lost.
- The Board discussed waiting until Town Meeting and present to the voters.
- Martha Sylvester added that it would take several months to create the policies as well as apply for grant opportunities which meant a person starting now would just be ready to implement programs in the spring.
- Brittany Marquette agreed that waiting until March would cut in to valuable time to write grants and prepare for a season of events.
- Mike Marcotte and David Gallup agreed that they still do not have enough information or specifics on the position or the intended role in the community.
- The Board unanimously agreed to ask consultant Peter Fairweather to attend the next Board meeting on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019 for further discussion.

#### **11. Other Business**

- Thursday December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 6pm the property owners in the Village have been invited to meet at the Community Center with the Economic Development Consultant Peter Fairweather for discussion on the future of the Village and creation of incentive programs for upgrading properties.
- Received: Warning of Orleans County Meeting for Tuesday December 10, 2019 at 8am at the County Courthouse in Newport.
- The Board asked Town Administrator Amanda Carlson to request further detail on the budget and prior year expenses.
- The Board unanimously agreed to schedule Kathrine Sims, Director of the Northeast Kingdom Collaborative at an upcoming Board meeting for a presentation on joining a communication union district that would increase broadband access to the area.
- Martha Sylvester, Clerk of the Coventry Fire District, stated her concerns of the internal control procedures of the CFD and its potential effect on the Town under the shared services contract for bookkeeping services.

- With concerns on improperly warned meetings, absence of legally required ratifying meetings, lack of access to financial and permanent records, and increasing concerns with the audit that has yet to be completed due to insufficient information.
- Martha stated her concern for the future of the Coventry Fire District and the financial stress it has been put under due to Prudential Committee members acting outside of their statutory authority.
- Mike Marcotte stated that the Shared Services Contract for bookkeeping services by the Town was executed by the prudential Committee and if there are concerns on the practices and procedures by the Town then a Prudential Committee member needed to address the Board immediately.
- No action taken or requested by the Board. Martha stated that the information presented was provided as an update only.



**Meeting Adjourned at 7:10 p.m.**

**The next Select Board meeting will be held on Monday December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 4:30 p.m.**

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**Michael Marcotte / Chairman**

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**Scott Briere**

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**David Gallup**

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**Amanda Carlson / Town Administrator**