

Minutes
Town of Coventry
Wednesday February 23,2022

Order

Matt Maxwell outlined rules for informational meetings and Australian voting guidelines.

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 as write in.

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

Deb Tanguay- on ballot. Deb is the only one running on the ballot and waived her time to speak.

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

Kathleen Ahearn- on ballot. Kathleen described her 4-year experience on the School Board and spoke to her work elevating the school library and her unique perspective.

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 recent experience on the Planning Commission as well as attending Select Board and School Board meeting. He offered his history with the defense department and as a flight instructor and has interests in making the school a large priority within the town to help make Coventry an even better place to get a great education.

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.

Moe Jacobs asked about the budget increases.

Todd Rohleen and Jamie stated that these increases were mainly due to increases on high school tuition and teacher 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.

Skip Gosselin asked about why the school was looking to borrow that amount when the actual cost to the school should be less.

Jamie explained that the \$3,200,000.00 would need to be borrowed by the school to complete the project. Then a percentage of each loan payment, presumably about 80%, would be made from State funding after the project is complete.

Skip Gosselin asked if the completion of the addition would include a heating upgrade for the entire school.

Jamie confirmed that yes the price would include the addition of a whole school outside wood pellet boiler heating and hot water system.

Moe Jacobs inquired on the original idea to add a second floor to the existing school

Jamie explained that the school board had looked into the cost of renovating the second floor of the existing building and the cost would have been greater than the proposed expansion.

Todd Rohleen reiterated that the school will only be responsible for paying back around 20% of the investment cost.

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.

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

A. Select Person for a 3 year term

David Gallup-on ballot. David was unavailable for comment.

Amanda Jensen-on ballot. Amanda J spoke to her experience of 8 years on the school board. She is looking to expand her influence and help the town move forward.

The question was posed by Tami Jacobs if Amanda was elected to the Select board would she keep her seat on the school board and the answer was that she would finish her term with the School board and then dedicate her time to the Select Board.

Praneet Menon

Praneet hopes to assist the town in finding ways to profit long term from the income from the landfill as well as better utilize the funding the town has now. Some other areas of interest would be following the Town Plan to add value to the Town. He would also like to better utilize the town funds to make the environment safer and more prosperous.

Martha Sylvester

Martha was unavailable for comment.

B. Town Clerk for a 3 year term

Deb Tanguay- on ballot

Deb spoke of her experience working as the town Clerk since 2017 and has enjoyed working with the town to update and excel as a growing town. She aspires to bring better information to the towns people to keep everyone informed as well as expanding her knowledge. Deb will receive her State and National recognition for municipal clerk Certification within the next few years.

C. Town Treasurer for a 3 year term

David Barlow- on Ballot

David spoke of his experience of holding the Town treasurer position for 3 years and has enjoyed his time working with the town and making sure the financial information is correct.

D. Collector of Delinquent Taxes for a 1 year term

Kate Fletcher- on Ballot

Kate spoke of her experience as the Towns delinquent tax collector from 2017. Kate has closely monitored the accounts to rectify book keeping and digitize information. Kate has also worked for a correctly written and signed tax agreement.

Kerry Keement- on Ballot

Kerry spoke as a longtime resident of the town and is looking to get more involved in the town. She works as a Physical Therapist and enjoys working with the public.

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

Donald 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.

Israel Sanville was said to have interest as a write I but was unavailable for comment.

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

David Barlow- on Ballot

David currently serves in this position 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. Amanda spoke of her current position on the Planning Commission and would continue to serve if written in.

K. Planning Commission Member for a 1 year term.

No name is on the ballot.

Zach Patridge - Write-in. Zach mentioned he would continue to serve on the planning commission as a write in for the 2 year term.

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

Moe Jacobs spoke on the importance of the planning commission for the Town and encouraged residents to get involved.

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?

Skip Gosselin asked about the amount of state aid expected. Ned connel answered with approximately \$83,000.

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?

David Barlow explained that the increase over the years is mostly due to paving roads and updating culverts.

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 Towns financial accounting system?

David Barlow explained how the fund was started with a donation of Microsoft shares from Edmund Douglas Price. Funds have been used to help provide school library materials. 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 Selectboard 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?

Select board stressed the need to have a treasurer that is appointed by the Select board as opposed to voted in yearly for consistency and the length of time it takes to become knowledgeable of 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.

The importance of the Library funding was emphasized. Residents were also encouraged to join the library board if interested in contributing in that way.

Residents stressed the need for an in person Town Meeting to better inform the town and make elections more clear for people running as well as voters.

Moderator Matt Maxwell adjourned the meeting.