

MINUTES
SELECT BOARD MEETING
TOWN OF COVENTRY
MONDAY DECEMBER 21ST , 2020 AT 6:00 P.M.

Board Members Present:

Scott Briere/ Chair; Phil Marquette; David Gallup

Town Officials Present:

Amanda Carlson / Town Administrator

Deb Tanguay / Town Clerk

Martha Sylvester / Planning Commission Vice Chair

David Barlow / Town Treasurer

Guests:

Jen Harlow / Orleans County Sherriff

Rory Merrit

Press:

Allison Barlow / Newport Daily Express

This meeting was offered to the public via Zoom video conference.

- 1. Chair Scott Briere called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.**
- 2. Allow for public comment**
 - No public comment noted.
- 3. Orleans County Sherriff's Office to discuss fy 2022 budget**
 - Orleans County Sherriff Jen Harlow requested the Baord consider increasing the annual budget assigned for their services.
 - The Town currently budgets \$10,000 per year, billed for actual time worked for approximately 3.5 hours of services per week. Jen requested this be increased to 15 hours per week for a total annual budget over \$40,000.
 - Sherriff Harlow stated that she felt a bigger presence in Town would be beneficial for the community.
 - Current fiscal year billing showed less than the anticipated 3.5 hours per week being billed and questioned the Sherriff on the need to increase.
 - Sherriff Harlow agreed to review the numbers and provide information for the Board to consider and continue discussions at the next meeting.
- 4. Assessor's Office Report of Errors & Omissions**
 - Town Assessor Matt Krajeski from New England Municipal Consultants presented the Board with a 2020 Errors and Omissions report for Board approval.
 - Property OTH04011 – 760 Alderbrook Road, Coventry removed 248 acres from the State Current Use program increasing their taxable value.
 - Scott Briere made the motion to approve the report of Errors and Omissions presented by Assessor Matt Krajeski in relation to parcel OTH04011. Seconded by Phil Marquette and Unanimously approved by the Board.
 - Matt provided the Board with an update on the Town wide reappraisal which is anticipated to be completed in the summer of 2021.

5. Consider request from Martha Sylvester to include proposal to voters at 2021 Town Meeting in regards to Act 164 pertaining to retail cannabis.

- Martha Sylvester requested the Board include an article on the 2021 Town Meeting Warning regarding Act 164 which would allow retail cannabis stores within the Town limits.
- Board members stated they were not personally supportive of the State proposed Act but would allow the voters to make such a decision for the Town; however, they did not feel there was enough information at this time to present to the voters at the 2021 Town Meeting.
- The Board will work with the Town Attorney and VLCT to better understand the legal aspects of such a vote.
- The Board denied the request to include the proposed article on the 2021 Town Meeting warning in relation to Act 64 and stated that a petition from the voters would be required in order to have it included.

6. Town Clerk for discussion on 2021 Town Meeting election procedures

- The Town Clerk stated that the Secretary of State's Office was still making decisions on the upcoming annual Town meeting and how to best facilitate with the current public gathering restrictions. Deb will continue to research and changes and provide the Board with information at the next meeting.
- The Board unanimously agreed to hold all elections by Australian Ballot and have informational meetings by Zoom electronic conference on the following days:
- Saturday February 27th, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.
- Wednesday February 24th, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.
- Monday March 1, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.
- Town Clerk Deb Tanguay discussed the items needed from the Board to complete the Warning and annual Town report.

7. Town Administrators Office offer of employment update and discussion

- Scott Briere stated that Caden Gillespie has declined employment with the Town of Coventry based on the compensation package.
- The Board unanimously agreed to offer the position to candidate Ned Connell.
- David Gallup made the motion to allow Chair Scott Briere to make the offer of employment as the Town Administrator to Ned Connell and negotiate the compensation package. Seconded by Phil Marquette.

8. Review 2021 Annual Contract with Orleans Fire Department

- Requested fee from the Orleans Fire Department increase from \$15,480.35 in 2020 to \$16,643.55 in 2021. Totals are based on a three year rolling average of costs.
- David Gallup made the motion to approve the annual contract with the Orleans Fire Department as presented. Seconded by Phil Marquette and unanimously approved by the Board.
- The contract will be signed and sent electronically.

9. FY22 Draft budget review

- The Board reviewed the draft FY22 annual budget.
- No decisions made.

10. Other Business

- Phil Marquette made the motion to appoint Treasurer David Barlow and Select Board Chair as the new administrators on the Town Blue Cross Health Care plan. Seconded by David Gallup and unanimously approved by the Board.

- Unanimous authority granted to Select Board member Phil Marquette to approved all Accounts Payable and distribute the warrants electronically for Board quorum approval while electronic meetings are still being held due to social distancing.
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- David Gallup stated that he would like to discuss legal aspects of land acquisition.
- The Board unanimously agreed in the findings that premature public knowledge of the items for discussion would put the Town at a disadvantage.
- Scott Briere made a motion to enter into executive session in accordance with 1 V.S.A 313 (f) for legal discussion to include the Board and the Town Administrator. Seconded by Phil Marquette and unanimously approved by the Board.
- The Board entered into executive session at 7:17 pm
- The Board exited executive session at 7:44 p.m.
- Scott Briere made the motion to authorize Select Board member David Gallup to proceed with pursuing land acquisition agreements under the guidance of the Town Attorney. Seconded by Phil Marquette.

11. Sign orders

- Warrants approved as presented by the Select Board Bookkeeper.

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12. Meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.