

MINUTES

SELECT BOARD MEETING

TOWN OF COVENTRY

Monday October 3rd, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.

Board Members Present:

Michael Marcotte / Chairman; Bradley Maxwell; Scott Morley

Town Officials Present:

David Gallup/ Road Commissioner; Cynthia Diaz/Town Clerk & Treasurer
Amanda Carlson/Select Board Clerk

Guests:

Barry Allen; Carol Simmons; Christopher Whiting; Kathleen Ahearn; David Barlow; Richard Lussier;
Raymond Girouard; Isreal Sanville; Leo Piette; Melissa Gallup

Press:

Elizabeth Trail / Barton Chronicle; Chris Roy / Newport Daily Express;
Robin Smith / Orleans County Record

- 1. Meeting called to order at 5:03 p.m. by Michael Marcotte**
- 2. Approve the minutes of the September 26th, 2016 meeting.**
 - Brad Maxwell noted a correction. Page 6 Item #17 should read "\$47,000 per year" (*not per month*).
 - Brad made the motion to approve minutes with the correction to item #17 as noted. Seconded by Scott Morley. The Board signed the minutes with noted correction.
- 3. Allow for public comment.**
 - No public comment.
- 4. Kathleen from Coventry Village School to discuss removal of books from upstairs library.**
 - Kathleen has been sorting through the books upstairs and determining which can be donated and which need to go to recycling. With 10 full bookcases and approximately 63 full shelves of books, it is a lengthy process. She has reached out to local libraries, schools and other organizations,

however they all declined the materials. Mike Marcotte suggested donating to community fundraisers. Kathleen will continue to sort through the books, bringing some to the school and disposing of the rest. If other organizations or community groups express interest, then it will be discussed at the time.

5. Town Clerk to provide each Selectboard member with a key to upstairs of Community Center.

- Keys were provided to all Board members by the Town Clerk as requested.

6. Upstairs Community Center cleaning.

- Scott Morley contacted Bobbi Jo Cleaning who agreed to do a one-time cleaning of the upstairs library space. Before a fee can be determined she will need to come back and inspect the space. Scott to follow up.

7. Review draft of Building Use Policy and discuss Facility Coordinator position with Richard Lussier.

- Richard Lussier reviewed the draft of the Building Use Policy with the Board. Revisions were made to make the policy more specific and detail the process of rental. All revisions on both the policy and the rental agreement were noted and Amanda Carlson will amend for review at the next meeting.

8. Bridge discussion update

- Scott Morley and David Gallup will be meeting with Tim Ruggles at the Hi-Acres Bridge site on Monday October 10th at 3:00 p.m. Scott and David to report to the Board their work with Mr. Ruggles.

9. Gym floor tile testing

- Scott Morley will be contacting David Mack with Catamount Environmental, Inc who was recommended for the tile testing. Scott will follow up by providing a sample piece of tile. The results will determine the options for replacement.

10. Fireworks refund.

- Amanda Carlson contacted North Star Fireworks who responded that the \$5000 deposit made is subject to a 10% restocking fee. If the Town contracts North Star for the 2017 event, then they would be willing to waive the 10% restocking. The Board agreed unanimously to book the 2017 Coventry Day event with North Star Fireworks for July 8th and request the 100% refund for the 2016 event. Amanda Carlson to contact North Star to arrange refund payment.

11. 2015/2016-year end Listers Office budget status report.

- Cynthia Diaz provided the Board with the Listers budget report for the last fiscal year – July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016. The report showed \$2500 was budgeted for the Listers Office and

\$480 was spent. The detail of those expenses was not specified but will be investigated. Scott Morley asked if there was an estimate on what was used this year so far but these figures were unavailable.

- Scott Morley stated that his concern with Cynthia working for the listers was the potential conflict of offices. Scott would like to do more research on the implications to see what the best situation is for the Town. There are considerable differences between a voted official and a hired employee and there may be conflicts that could arise. The Board will discuss in the future when potential issues are researched.

12. Selectboard continued request of Delinquent Tax Collector to provide a complete and detailed report of all delinquencies and associated details.

- Cynthia Diaz provided the Board with an excel based file detailing the delinquent taxes. Scott Morley stated that these reports should be provided in the NEMRC based software and be a more complete and detailed account of the situation.
- Cynthia was questioned as to the status of properties qualifying for small claims court and replied that she has not proceeded and had not decided when she would be.
- The Board felt that these decisions needed to be made as the Town was entering into another tax year.
- Mike Marcotte expressed concern that there were land owners on the list showing four year delinquencies. He felt these people should be on payment plans otherwise they would never have a chance to catch up and could lose their homes to tax sale.
- It was questioned if there was a statute on rules for timelines of tax sales. The Board explained that it is up to the Delinquent Tax Collector's discretion only as it is a standalone office.
- The report showed 35 delinquent properties with an approximate total of \$78,000 in outstanding taxes owed. This amount is educational tax only and the Town has been responsible to pay this amount to the School Board even when not collected.
- The Auditors Graham & Graham had been told that much of the delinquent tax information was not being kept on site, but at Cynthia's home. Scott Morley reminded Cynthia that this information needs to be brought into the office when the onsite audit is being done.

13. Request Town Treasurer supply weekly income report and copies of bank deposit slips from July 1 to Oct. 3.

- Treasure, Cynthia Diaz, provided the reports to the Board as requested. After reviewing the Board commented that they would like to have seen bank deposit slips provided to match with the computer reports. No action or further discussion by the Board.

14. Audit engagement letter Graham and Graham.

- Up until now, all work performed by Graham & Graham has been pre-audit work. The firm has been assembling the financials so that they have enough information to conduct a full scope

audit. The letter presented to the Board contracts Jeff Graham to continue with the full scope audit now that they pre-audit work is completed.

- Scott Morley explained that Jeff Graham could potentially have the audit completed by October 31 but this will depend on how easily he can gain access to the records and the Town Clerk's Office. He expressed that he would need the Town's assistance and cooperation to complete the process quickly.
- The Board unanimously approved the Audit Engagement letter provided. Mike Marcotte signed on behalf of the Board.

15. Graham work schedule: requesting site work 10/04 and 10/05.

- Scott Morley has been in communication with Jeff Graham and explained that the work schedule has been altered and is not allowing for the originally proposed dates. Dates will be rescheduled and Scott will follow up.

16. Review Graham & Graham letter to residents for tax payment verification.

- Graham & Graham does not have an exact number of people who will be receiving at this time. In addition to the tax payments they are not able to verify they would also like to include a random statistical sampling of residents who will receive the request.
- The Treasurer has not been able to provide the CoreLogic mortgage company payment detail to narrow down the number. After the previous request from the Board to release the files, CoreLogic is now stating that they will not release the detail of information without a court subpoena.
- Scott Morley expressed his concern over the letters and is not happy with the process but understands it is necessary.
- The Board agreed unanimously that the content of the letter was acceptable and recommended some formatting changes. Amanda Carlson to make changes and send to Jeff Graham when completed.
- It was questioned by the public if this letter should be sent to every tax payer for payment verification. Jeff Graham had recommended that this action seemed inappropriate. The Board agreed unanimously to take the recommendation of the auditors.

17. Letter to Community Bank, Hunts Financial, Jim Jarvis and Investment Firm in Massachusetts related to freeze in asset movement.

- Jeff Graham recommended to Scott Morley that this step be taken by the Board. Scott explained that there is a concern that assets could be moved without the Boards knowledge and that nothing should be done without written authorization from the Board.
- Jeff Graham offered to draft the letters for the Boards review that will detail the current situation and reason for the request to each institution. The letter to Community National bank will be independent as it will have separate circumstances for daily banking procedures.

- The Board agreed unanimously that they would like to review the sample letters before any action is taken.

18. Review of internal financial policies.

- Scott Morley read the response from a staff attorney, Sara Jarvis, at the VLCT as follows:
 - *First, policies are not enforceable. Policies are just statements of how internal operations will function. This is in contrast to ordinances which, once adopted according to statutory process, become local law that is enforceable.*
 - *Second, an elected treasurer is legally independent from all other elected or appointed officials of the town and cannot be told or forced to do or sign anything (except by a court of law). So the selectboard cannot make the treasurer sign or adopt a policy, nor can they discipline the treasurer for not doing so. That being said, there are many things over which the treasurer and the selectboard have overlapping authority and/or responsibility. For that reason, it often makes sense for the treasurer and the selectboard to adopt a policy together -- assuming that they can come to agreement about the substance of that policy. As such, we have included signature lines for both treasurer and selectboard.*
- The Board agreed unanimously that based on this reply, proceeding with the policies without the Treasurers cooperation would not benefit the Town. The Treasurer, Cynthia Diaz, had departed the meeting and was unavailable to offer input.
- Mike Marcotte will speak with Cynthia in the office during the week to see if she will cooperate and work with the Board on developing some internal financial controls and procedures.
- Financial Policies are incorporated in the Towns full scope financial audit. If the Town does not have policies in place, then it will be noted negatively on the final reports. Mike Marcotte stated that it is the Select Board's job to ensure the Town is being run efficiently and that it is adhering to good standards in accounting practices to achieve a clean audit. The Board cannot force Cynthia to adopt policies as the Treasurer, however, they agreed unanimously that they would like to work with her on them to ensure the Town meets the standards it is capable of.

19. Discussion of bookkeeper/accountant update

- Scott Morley has contacted four possible accounting firms for the position. Three declined and there is one that is willing to discuss the position.
- The potential candidate is aware that this is a short term contract and not expected as a long term employment situation.
- The candidate will be invited to the next Board meeting to discuss the specifics of the job. The position is expected to encompass a weekly visit, but the details of what items are to be focused on and where they are to begin, will need to be decided.

20. Other business.

- Mike Marcotte asked if there had been any communication with Ernie Saunders regarding the receipt printer as discussed. Tax payments are coming in and it would be a good time to implement the system. Scott Morley responded that there has been no communication back yet but he will follow up with Ernie for more information.

- Scott Morley had received a call a few days' prior that there had been a service van at the Town Clerk's Office from Tech Patrol. Scott contacted the IT service company for a detail of the work performed at the office. The list included many standard computer software and hardware issues that could arise, however, Scott asked the company to cease all work for the time being until the Board could review and discuss. The concern is that the Town does not have a contract with the company and the Board is unaware of ever using their services in the past.
- Scott will request the company to attend a future Board meeting to discuss their services. The Board will review references and make a decision at that time.
- Tech patrol was able to provide the Board will samples of Computer Use policies for existing customers for their review. Amanda Carlson to check with the VLCT regarding sample computer policies for consideration.
- Mike Marcotte spoke with one of the Listers Larry Broe who stated he had resigned from the position several months back and provided a letter to Cynthia. Cynthia had been unable to locate the letter. Until a resignation is received then the position remains filled and the Board cannot appoint a replacement.

21. Sign orders.

Payroll	Week Ending 10/1/16	\$1,517.74
Signed by the Board for the Treasurer to draw checks totaling		\$ 1,517.74

22. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: Monday October 10th, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.

Michael Marcotte / Chairman

Bradley Maxwell

Scott Morley

Amanda Carlson / Select Board Clerk