

Minutes

Select Board Meeting Town of Coventry Monday August 21, 2023

This meeting was recorded on Zoom and then posted to YouTube. The link to the Town's YouTube channel is at www.coventryvt.org.

Board Members Present

Scott Morley
Daniel Webster
Scott Briere

Town Officials Present

Matt Maxwell, Town Administrator
Dave Barlow, Treasurer
Deb Tanguay, Town Clerk
Israel Sanville, Planning Commission

Public Present

Chris Roy
Kerry Keement

1. Order

Matt called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm. Persons present introduced themselves.

2. Changes or Additions to the Agenda

None

3. Allow for public comment

Chris Roy asked about a lip on his driveway from the recent paving of Maple Ridge. The town Road Crew will add some gravel.

4. FY 2025 Coventry Town Budget

There was some discussion on how the town budget has been prepared over the last few years. Scott B stated that Matt and Dave B would work on the budget outside of meetings and then bring to the select board for adjustments and approval. Scott M asked the other board members how they felt about the concept of creating a budget without the use of special funds. The town would start at \$0.00 and build the budget up from there based on the needs of the town for FY2025. Scott M would like to meet with the new auditors prior to building the budget so that the four revenue checks from Casella all reflect in the same Fiscal year. There was then some discussion amongst the board members on various budget preparation scenarios that would utilize a line-by-line approach. This would enable the town to send a specific dollar amount to the long-term investment accounts. There was some further discussion on how to go about dissolving the special funds before town meeting. Scott B suggested a special meeting sometime prior to town meeting.

5. Casella Tax Dispute

Select Board member Scott Morley met with John Casella and Jeremy Labbie and had a good conversation on how to resolve the tax dispute between Casella and Coventry. Scott M spoke with many officials both state and local over the past couple weeks and the overwhelming majority of those people expressed an interest in Coventry resolving this dispute without having to go to court. Scott M gave a history of the dispute and how we came to be at the point where we currently sit. Scott felt that his next step would be to speak with the PVR department in Montpelier, but was informed that the town had already taken this step and nothing meaningful was provided by the state. Scott M stated that the approximate cost in legal services to the town would be \$250,000 if we were to proceed on the current course. There was some discussion by the board about whether they preferred to proceed with the court process or attempt further mediation with Casella. Scott B and Dan W both felt it would be in the best interest of the town to reach a settlement without having to go to court. There was some discussion between the board and Dave B about possible liability to the town if the State of Vermont felt Coventry settled at an unfair value. Dave B informed the board that should the state deem the assessed value too low they would recoup through the town education tax. After some further discussion on tax values and their implications the board decided to reach back out to Casella in hopes of reaching a settlement and avoiding a court date. Scott M will let Matt know what that meeting will look like in the next few days. Dave B reminded the board to be aware of Executive Session Statutes when planning for the next steps in the negotiation process.

6. Insurance for Full Time Employees

The board had a discussion about employees who choose not to take the town's insurance package and whether they should be compensated a certain percentage. Scott M made the motion to adjust the town's personnel policy to reflect that employees hired by the town may choose to not enroll in the health insurance provided by the town, but that there will not be any supplemental compensation given to such an employee. Dan W made the second and the vote was unanimous. Dave B informed the board that by signing a warrant for Jeff Young's bonus they are giving their approval and no motion is needed.

7. Town Paving Projects

The board discussed future town paving projects. Scott B would like to see the Glen Road get paved next summer and would like to meet with Road Foreman Nathan Standish to discuss other possible roads for paving. Scott M said that Airport Road will need a top coat and that it might be wise to pave the Coventry section of Cleveland Farm Road. The board asked Matt to contact Vtrans and see which roads in town may be eligible for paving grants.

8. ARPA Funds Update

There is currently \$4,478.58 of town ARPA funds remaining. There was some discussion on possible items that could be purchased with this money for the Road Department. The board would like Matt to meet with the Road Foreman to discuss possible needs.

9. Treasurer's Report

Dave Barlow presented the July Treasurer's Report to the Select Board. It was a normal month with money spent from the Road budget on a culvert replacement for the Lane Road. The town has a grant that will reimburse the majority of this cost. Dave B has reconciled the majority of the outstanding checks by applying them to current year tax bills. There will be a small number of checks reissued to clear out the rest. The board thanked Dave B and there were no questions.

10. Other Business

Deb T explained the current oil contract that the town has with Oil Supply Corp. Their price of \$3.00 per gallon was the best price that the town received. Deb T stated that the town is looking into converting from oil to all propane and she would update the board once she knows if this is feasible. For the propane AmeriGas had the best price of \$1.48 per gallon and Deb recommends the town switch from Fred's to AmeriGas. Scott M would like to see a document that lays out the cost of converting to propane. Deb explained how the changeover from Fred's would work. Scott M made the motion to accept the Oil Supply bid for no.2 heating oil. Scott B made the second and the vote was unanimous. Scott M made the motion to switch to AmeriGas for propane. Dan W made the second and the vote was unanimous.

Approval of Minutes, 8-7-2023

Scott B made the motion to accept the minutes with a correction to the amount of OCSD contract. Scott M made second and the vote was unanimous.

11. Warrants

Scott M made the motion to accept the warrants. Dan W made the second and the vote was unanimous.

12. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:25pm

DRAFT