

Minutes

Select Board Meeting

Town of Coventry

Monday November 20, 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
Scott Briere
Dan Webster

Town Officials Present

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

Public Present

Matt Wilson, Chronicle
Phil Marquette
Jaime Stenger
Praneet Menon
Jason Lees

1. Order

Matt called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm. Persons present introduced themselves.

2. Changes or Additions to the Agenda

None

3. Allow for public comment

None

4. Emergency Services – Newport Fire

Matt M told the board that he spoke with interim Newport Fire Chief, Kevin LaCoss. Kevin was not able to attend the meeting. Matt also spoke to Rebecca Therrien in the Newport City office and explained to her what Coventry was looking for in a 2024 fire contract. The board discussed the total amount paid in 2023 for fire service from Newport and Orleans. Phil M did not agree with a 50/50 split of the town and felt that the Village should still fall under Newport Fire's area or response. Deb T felt Newport should have the bigger area as they have a larger department and more equipment. Scott M will contact Newport City Officials to finalize the contract.

5. CVS – Australian Ballot

School Board Members Jaime Stenger and Praneet Menon along with Principal Jason Lees were present to speak to the select board. Jaime outlined how the town had voted to conduct all school elections via Australian Ballot and that the school needs the approval of the select board to mail out ballots to residents. Scott M did not understand why the school needed the town's approval if the voters had already given them the authority to conduct Australian Ballot elections. Jaime S read the state statute that deals with school districts and their governing bodies, in this case the Coventry Select Board. Praneet M explained that CVS is its own school district and needs the approval of its governing body to distribute ballots via mail. Jaime and Praneet both said that the reason for Australian Ballot was increased voter participation. Many parents with children at CVS cannot attend town meeting and this at least gives them an opportunity to weigh in on school decisions. Scott B made the motion to allow CVS to mail ballots to Coventry residents for their annual budget and elections. Dan W made the second and the vote was unanimous.

6. Cleveland Meeting House

Matt M and Dave B explained to the board how rain water from the roof of the Cleveland Meeting House is ending up in the basement. The perforated pipe that runs along the side of the church needs to be replaced with a solid pipe. Scott B will meet with Road Foreman, Nathan Standish, to dig up and inspect the pipe at the meeting house.

7. Purchasing and Reimbursement Policy

The board discussed applying for an increase to the spending limit on the town credit card. Deb T explained to the board how credit card purchases are handled through the town's accounts payable. Scott B felt that a credit card is a safe way to make purchase and would be useful in an emergency. Scott M stated that he did not want to see the town use the card in place of purchasing goods and

services from area businesses. Scott M felt it is important that the town supports local merchants. Scott B made the motion to increase the credit card limit to \$10,000. Dan W made the second and the vote was unanimous.

8. Wednesdays on the Waterfront

WOW had four levels of contributions for their 2024 appropriation. The board discussed the various levels and all felt the WOW was very positive for the community. Scott B made the motion to set the WOW appropriation for the voters at \$2500. Scott M made the second and the vote was unanimous.

9. Treasurer's Report

Dave B presented the October Treasurer's Report to the select board. Dave pointed out some added columns on the report that detailed fund balances and money that has been put into CD's. Dave B shared the Treasurer Report on the screen at the meeting and went through the months various changes. Dave B used the Community and Economic Development Fund as an example of where some money has been moved in to CD's to earn between 5% and 5.5% interest. The EDP fund is now in a single mutual fund as per the donor's original request. Dave B said that it was a normal year for tax collection and a normal amount of delinquent tax, around \$50,000. The board thanked Dave B and there were no questions.

10. Town Truck – Road Crew

Scott B thanked Dave B for providing him with the money spent percentages out of the Road Budget. Scott B and Scott M discussed surplus funds from the FY2023 budget and how they could be best spent. The surplus number was generally agreed to be around \$60,000. Scott M and Scott B talked with Dave B about the ongoing audit and how numbers could shift in the transition from accrual basis to cash basis accounting. Scott M made the motion to expend excess funds from FY 2023 up to \$60,000 for the purchase of a truck from the Road Crew. Dan W made the second and the vote was unanimous.

11. Other Business

Matt M asked the board how they would like to proceed with the budgeting process as we prepare for Town Meeting. Scott M asked Matt to find out if the board could legally meet for a budget workshop without having to warn a meeting. The board discussed budget considerations such as Capital Equipment and a depreciation schedule.

12. Approval of Minutes – 11/6, 11/9

Scott M made the motion to accept the minutes from both 11/6 and 11/9. Dan W made the second and the vote was unanimous.

13. Warrants

Scott M made the motion to approve the warrants. Dan W made the

second and the vote was unanimous.

14. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:23pm.

DRAFT