

Minutes

Select Board Meeting Town of Coventry Monday January 8, 2024

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

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. CTF Appropriation- Coventry Town Foundation

The Select Board stated that the CTF request of \$250,000 will be a stand-alone article on Town Meeting Day. Scott M talked about the goals of the CTF as he had attended the previous two meetings of the CTF. Scott M believes they are looking for about 2.1 or 2.2 million in total capital in order to self-fund themselves. Scott B asked if it was in the best interest of the town to pay the CTF all at once or over the next few years. Scott M said he would like to pay it all at once, but that the funds may not be available for that this year. Deb T told the board about current CTF investments and the spending they are doing to help Coventry residents.

5. FY 2023 Audit Status

Dave B told the board that adjusting journal entries have been completed to bring 2023 to cash basis accounting from accrual accounting. Dave B is waiting on the auditors to finish work on FY 2023 and anticipates that the audit will be completed by the end of January. Dave B said that he is much more comfortable going before the residents at Town Meeting with an audited number. Scott M expressed a desire to speak with the auditors and make sure they are aware that we would like to have the audit completed before Town Meeting Day, March 5. Scott M, Scott B, Deb T, and Dave B had a discussion on the Casella revenue checks and which fiscal year they fall under. Dave B stated that predicting the Casella revenue is the same process for both cash and accrual accounting.

6. Photocopies at Town Office

Scott M feels that the charges for photocopying need to go away. Dave B explained to the board why he enacted the charge in the first place. Dave B said that people ask for copies a lot around tax bill time and it's not the copying, but the sending of emails and other tasks associated with the copying that can become time consuming. Dave B said that most of the people that ask for copies are the same people every year and that the dollar charge has been effective in reducing the number of people seeking copies. Dave B does not have anything against free copies, but asked the board that he be able to implement a process that doesn't force him drop everything he may be working on to make and send copies of tax bills. After further discussion there will no longer be a charge for copies at the Town Office.

7. Appointed Town Officials

The Select Board looked over the list of appointed town officials and asked that the list be updated and made current for Town Meeting. Residents that are currently serving in appointed positions should be asked if they wish to continue and new interested people should be sought out before Town Meeting Day to ensure that there are not as many vacancies.

8. Town Meeting Updates

The Planning Commission grant request for sidewalk improvements in the village was discussed by the board. Scott B felt that with the recent flooding and the fact that many village properties are seeking buyouts from the state, it may be in the best interest of the town to postpone the sidewalk project. The Select Board would like to have the Planning Commission at the next Select Board Meeting to discuss options. The Declaration of Inclusion will have its own article and residents can choose if they would like to adopt it.

9. Road Crew – Clothing Stipend

Scott B talked to the board about providing the Road Crew with a stipend to purchase work clothes instead of continuing with Unifirst. Scott B felt that \$400.00 twice a year should be a sufficient amount for the Road Crew to get what they need for work. Deb T told the board that the town currently pays about \$140 per month to Unifirst for the three-man road crew. Scott M is worried that if we allow the road crew to purchase their own uniforms that eventually a situation will occur where someone is not dressed properly for work in the town. Scott M and Scott B both felt the select board should have authority over what town employees are wearing, especially when visible to the public. Scott B asked that a decision on this matter be tabled until he could speak with Unifirst

10. Unemployment Benefits

A former town employee will be receiving unemployment benefits from the town for the winter months of 2024. Deb T explained to the board how it works when the town pays out unemployment. Deb T told the board how the amount of unemployment is calculated and why Coventry is liable for the largest portion this year. Dave B added the auditors will have recommendations on unemployment payments at the conclusion of their audit.

11. Treasurer's Report

Dave B presented the December 2023 Treasurer's Report to the select board. Dave mentioned a new column for invoiced grants and explained an error in the general fund number. Dave B made the board aware of a \$250,000 payment to the CTF and a payment made to Newport Fire Department. Dave said that he paid for the new town truck out of the reserve fund as he needs something in writing from the auditors in order to use the surplus from last year. Scott M asked Dave how the town investment portfolio performed for the year and Dave stated that overall, there was a 12% increase in investments. Dave B is still waiting on the January check from Casella to add to revenue. The Board thanked Dave B for the report.

12. Other Business

The Select Board signed the 2024 Town Mileage Certificate. It also needs to be signed by the Town Clerk and then filed.

13. Approval of Minutes – 12/20/2023

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

14. Warrants

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

15. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:43pm.