

Minutes

Select Board Meeting

Town of Coventry

Tuesday February 20, 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
Israel Sanville, Planning Commission
Kate Fletcher, DTC

Public Present

Phil Marquette
John Buchanan
Chris Lantagne
Rick Brigham, Sullivan and Powers

1. Order

Matt called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm. Persons present introduced themselves.

2. Changes or Additions to the Agenda

None

3. Allow for public comment

Matt M thanked Scott Briere for his service on the Select Board over the last six years. All present thanked Scott for his dedication to the town.

4. Sullivan and Powers – FY 2023 Audit

Rick Brigham, representing Sullivan and Powers, went over the FY 2023 Draft Audit with the Select Board. Rick talked about the change to cash basis accounting and discussed switching back to accrual-based accounting. Rick went through the major funds with the board and explained the correlation between fund balances. Rick next moved on to the notes on the financial statements in the report and how they give a more in-depth explanation as to the workings of the funds. Rick gave the board a breakout of the current assets that the town is holding through cash and investments, along with a brief synopsis of the VMERS retirement requirements. The next section of the draft that Rick went over was the budget actuals throughout the year with all adjustments added. Rick next talked with the board about changes in current town policies that should be made to better facilitate a complete audit and the cash versus accrual method of accounting was also mentioned as something that should probably change soon. Scott M thanked Rick for his presentation and for attending the meeting. Scott M had a question about the 4th paragraph on page 20 of the draft audit. It had to do with restricted versus unrestricted funds. Rick responded that restricted money is typically spent first. Rick said that he will reword the paragraph for the final draft. Scott M's next question came from page 32 and had to do with anticipated revenue versus expenses. Rick explained that the town had budgeted itself for a loss of approximately \$450,000. Scott B was under the impression that the town ended FY 2023 with a surplus of approximately \$60,000. Scott M, Scott B and Rick discussed the discrepancy. Rick agreed to ask Treasurer Dave B if he was missing anything. Scott M and Rick B discussed whether the town should consider hiring an accountant to help manage the finances of the town. Rick agreed the Coventry is different from most towns based on the size of our investment portfolio. Rick said it may be beneficial to look into a financial manager/accountant, but the day-to-day practices within the town will remain the same. Rick will next update the engagement letter and will need a response letter from the town.

5. Emergency Management Plan

Scott M spoke of about ways that the town can improve its emergency preparedness. The Select Board will make policy on emergency response of the town and Phil M as Emergency Management Director will work with town volunteers to enact the policies in an organized way. Phil M will create a community action group of Coventry residents that will meet once a month to discuss and plan for emergencies within the town. Scott B suggested that the group liaise with other town committees such as the Planning Commission in order to have more people involved and educated in the town emergency plan. Scott B also suggested that Phil look into some initial funding from the Coventry Town Foundation. Phil M said there are other funding sources such as the Red Cross that will also contribute. Scott M said that there is lot of work involved, but he is confident

Phil effectively coordinate the group and come up with new ideas and proposals to benefit the town. Good feeling moving forward on town Emergency Planning.

6. Summer Paving Projects - 2024

Scott B reviewed fixed priced paving bids from Pike and Hutchins for work to be completed in the Summer of 2024. Scott B recommended waiting until the Paving Article at Town Meeting is voted on before officially awarding any bid. The Select Board discussed the two bids and what difference it would make if they decided to take a road out and not pave it this year.

7. Recreation Director

Scott M made the motion to appoint Brittany Marquette as town recreation director. Brittany will continue to organize the Fall Festival for the town. Dan W made the second and the vote was unanimous. The board thanked Brittany for all she has done in past years for the Fall Festival.

8. Town Accounting

Scott M stated that he had been compiling thoughts and opinions from people that either still do or have previously worked in municipal finance. Scott shared that most believe in the importance of town accounting and the Coventry finances require accountant level work. Scott recommends that the town revert to accrual basis accounting that enable the board to receive monthly and quarterly reports. The select board needs to be having better conversations about investments. Scott stated that money makes money if used smart enough and the town is not currently being smart enough. Scott M said that after town meeting he would like the select board to look into hiring a town accountant. Scott and Dan W agreed with Scott M that town needs better reporting for budget planning.

9. Jeff Young Resignation/Road Crew Vacancy

Scott B read the letter of resignation. Scott B made the motion to accept the resignation of Jeff Young. Dan W made the second and the vote was unanimous. Two candidates for the Road Crew Vacancy will be interviewed in the upcoming executive session. John Buchanan and Chris Lantagne.

10. Other Business

None

11. Approval of Minutes – 2/5/2024

Scott M made the motion to approve the minutes of 2/5/2024. Dan W made the second and the vote was unanimous.

12. Anticipated Executive Session

Scott B made the motion to enter Executive Session for personnel reasons in order to conduct interviews for the vacant Road Crew position. Dan W made the second and the vote was unanimous. The Select Board, Matt M, and the two candidates entered into executive session at 6:08. Executive Session was exited at 6:48 pm

Scott B made the motion to offer the Road Crew position to John Buchanan at \$28/ per hour and full reinstatement of the time and service he has rendered to the town. Dan W made the second and the vote was unanimous

13. Adjourn

The Meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:50pm