

Minutes

Select Board Meeting Town of Coventry Monday August 5, 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
Kerry Keement
Dan Webster

Town Officials Present

Deb Tanguay, Town Clerk
Matt Maxwell, Town Administrator
David Barlow, Treasurer
Israel Sanville, Planning Commission
Kate Fletcher, DTC
Brian Monaghan, Attorney

Public Present

Chris Roy
Martha Sylvester

1. Order

Matt called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. Persons present introduced themselves.

2. Changes or Additions to the Agenda

None

3. Allow for public comment

Everyone wished a very Happy Birthday to Kerry Keement

4. Coventry Fire District Business

Scott M opened the discussion on the Fire District by going over what has been talked about in previous Select Board Meetings. Scott invited the town attorney to this meeting to speak with the full Select Board on his experiences with other Fire Districts in the state. Kerry and Dan were both interested in what Brian had to say. And Kerry mentioned that Dom Gervais will be at the next Select Board meeting. Kerry and Scott discussed the possibility

of the town taking over the Fire District and how something like that would happen. Kerry stated that if this is something that needs to be discussed at Town Meeting, what do we do in the meantime. Scott explained to the Select Board his reasoning for not wanting to appoint a Select Person to the Prudential Committee. Scott stated that such appointments should only occur under normal operating conditions, which the Fire District does not have. Brian M explained his interest in helping the town with the fire district. Brian stated that small towns often have trouble getting people to serve on boards and committees, which hinders any process where there may be conflict. Brian felt it would be best to resolve the CFD issues without litigation, as that would be costly everyone. Brian said that whether Dom Gervais is a Prudential Committee Member or not does not really matter because even with Dom they do not have the required number of Members to conduct any business. Scott thanked Brian for his thoughts on the CFD. Kerry and Brian talked about options the town has in dealing with the CFD. Brian stated that the town has the authority to appoint Members to the Prudential Committee. Any other forms of change would need to come from the CFD itself. Brian explained the steps for the town to absorb the CFD and what that would mean for the town and the CFD. Brian's remarks included the statement that the Town cannot use taxpayer funds, which include the landfill tipping fees, to pay for CFD obligations. Brian M added that the (CFD) ratepayers have to pay for the operation of the water system through an enterprise fund, and this would be the same case if the Town takes over the CFD. Scott M added that before the town moved in that direction it would need to see some documentation from the CFD. This would include minutes, budgets, check book reconciliation and others. Dan W and Scott talked about the best way to get Fire District Members to come to meetings and help the Select Board work through some of the issues. Kate F mentioned the lack of financial records for the CFD over the last four years and that the CFD received a grant that required a yearly audit be done. Kate suggested the town look into an asset purchase from the CFD and stated she is in favor of redistricting the village or dissolving the CFD. Martha S explained the difficulties in trying to get work done with the CFD and that it is in such disrepair that no one wants to serve on the Prudential Committee. Scott thanked Kate and Martha for their words and then spoke briefly with Dan about some of the personal problems that may be affecting the CFD. Dave B asked the Select Board what the reasoning was behind not paying the Community Center water bill that is past due to the CFD. Scott M stated that as the CFD currently has no officials, the Select Board chose to withhold payment until members of the CFD came to talk to the Select Board. Dave B felt that this tactic was counter productive and could potentially make the workplace for town employees not fit for use. Scott M and Dave B talked about some town ARPA funds that were obligated to the CFD for water meters. Chris Roy asked who does the maintenance for

the CFD. Pedro Grondin is the person who is normally contacted. The Select Board and Brian recapped the night's discussion and promised to continue with CFD business at every meeting until a good solution is reached.

5. Dry Hydrant Maintenance

Orleans Fire inspected the town's dry hydrants and found that three were not functioning properly. Parts have been ordered and Orleans will make the repairs. Starting next year Newport Fire will maintain the hydrants in their service area.

6. Emergency Management Plan

The Local Emergency Management Plan has been updated and was presented to the Select Board for signatures and approval. Kerry K made the motion to accept the LEMP. Dan W made the second and the vote was unanimous.

7. RFP for Hazard Mitigation

The town's current Hazard Mitigation Plan expired at the end of June 2024. The Emergency Management Director has provided an RFP for approval that will seek to hire a consultant for a new Hazard Mitigation Plan. Kerry K made the motion to approve sending out the RFP. Dan W made the second and the vote was unanimous.

8. MERP Energy Assessment

Dan and Kerry talked about the report and some of the things that they thought would make beneficial upgrades to the Community Center. There were discussions with Dave B about solar panels, an electric vehicle charging station, and different insulation methods. Jim Cobb has had some contractors in to look at the Community Center and the two town garages. This is potentially an item for Town Meeting Day as the town expressed an interest in building upgrades at the 2024 meeting. This item will be discussed at a future Select Board Meeting.

9. Budget Report

Dave B presented two budget reports to the Select Board. There was the end of FY 2024 budget report and a report from the first month of FY2025. The General Fund looks good and was under spent slightly. The Highway Fund had the new Plow Truck and paving expenses moved to FY 2025. Dave will leave the excess revenue as it may be needed after the audit. For the first month of FY2025 the town is in receipt of the first Casella payment and has a big bill coming for the work on Coventry Station Road. David will seek

guidance from the auditors on how the FEMA grant reimbursement will work with cash basis accounting. The town has received all of its Town Highway aid from the state totaling \$100,000. The Select Board thanked David for his report.

10. Other Business

The Road Crew will inspect a driveway culvert on Coventry Station Road that receives large amounts of runoff due to the pavement and corn fields above it. The town will look into reestablishing a right of way for a resident on the River Road.

11. Approval of Minutes

Kerry K made the motion to approve. Scott M made the second and the vote was unanimous.

12. Warrants

Dan W made the motion to accept. Kerry K made the second and the vote was unanimous.

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:03pm