

**UNOFFICIAL MINUTES**  
**Coventry Town Council Meeting**  
**January 20, 2026 7:00 PM**  
**Town Hall Annex**

**1. Call To Order, Roll Call:**

The Meeting was called to order by Council Chairwoman Lisa Thomas at 7:00 PM

Members Present: Lisa Thomas-Chairwoman, Peter Larson-Vice Chairman, Matthew Kyer-Secretary, Jon Hand, Robyn Gallagher, Mark Wheaton, and Julie Blanchard (remote).

Members Absent: None

Also Present: James Drumm-Town Manager, Cherie Trahan-Finance Director (remote).

**2. Pledge Of Allegiance:**

Town Council members stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Audience Of Citizens: (30 Minutes - 5 minutes maximum per citizen):**

Katie Martin, 107 Camilleri Drive: (A copy of her submitted statement is at the end of the minutes)

Martin spoke on behalf of the Actors Colony Estate Association. This Association, established in the 1950s, is located on the back side of the lake and features private roads and a private beach. Due to lack of interest in the Association and Board Membership, along with financial insolvability, the Board has expressed interest in terminating the Association. However, they do not want to do so without a solution for the roads or beach. Martin proposed to the Town Council to make the roads public becoming a responsibility of the town but making the private beach a public resource for the entire town to use in return. Martin explained she has met with both Town Manager Drumm and Town Engineer Todd Penney about this proposal but wanted to share this proposal with the Town Council as well.

Thomas requested that Town Manager Drumm put together a memo about this proposal based on his meetings with Martin and other Association Board Members, to be shared with the Town Council. She explained that it cannot be discussed at this time as it is not an agenda item, but it will be looked into and discussed further among Councilors once the memo is received. Thomas noted that she will inform Martin when the information has been shared to keep her up to date on the status of discussions.

Nan Kyer, 4 Wall Street:

N. Kyer shared a poem she wrote in response to the shooting of Renee Nicole Good. Her poem titled "Common Ground" expressed her desire to live in a better society. A society grounded in good outside of political affiliations and beliefs, where humans are treated with respect, free speech is respected, education and science are valued, working families are supported, the environment is cared for, and people feel safe in their communities. She shared that she hopes everyone else dreams of a better society as she does, and a place where we can all sow common ground.

Mary Ann Hansen, 74 Avery Shores: (A copy of her submitted statement is included at the end of the minutes)

Hansen shared her disappointment surrounding an issue regarding the sale of her property, and zoning issues that resulted in legal action by the town. Hansen stressed that she spoke to the Town Manager,

Town Planner, and ZBA Chair to explain she wants to do what is necessary to resolve the problem. She reminded that she even came to the Town Council last month to ask for the court case to be dropped or postponed allowing for the corrective action to be taken, but nothing was done. Hansen stated she expedited the necessary actions required as explained to her by the Town Planner. At last night's Planning and Zoning Emergency Meeting, they voted that Hansen and her buyer are now required to get an A2 survey of the lots to confirm compliance. She expressed confusion that the town continues to expend town funds on something her and the buyer would work out.

Hansen stressed that this whole situation has been ridiculous, and shared the following reasons of concern:

1. Zoning Regulations are outdated and need to be revised.
2. Better communication among town departments and staff is needed.
3. Appointed Committee/Commission members should be properly vetted.

She hoped that these things could be addressed by the Town Council moving forward.

Patti Cronin, 99 Sean Circle: (A copy of her submitted statement is included at the end of the minutes)

Cronin expressed concerns that there seems to be a silent push, with the formation of a School Building Committee, towards an expensive School Building Project before residents are fully informed. She requested honesty, transparency, and a full understanding of consequences for the residents of Coventry before they are asked to take on more debt, because this is what Coventry residents deserve.

Cronin added that with declining school enrollment and new build homes being out of financial reach of young families, Coventry needs to examine the actual needs and not aspirational hopes. She requested that the process be paused, and work be shown to let residents decide what happens in town.

Thomas explained that this is an item later on the agenda for the Town Council to review sending a request from the BOE to the Steering Committee for a further review as the 1<sup>st</sup> step in the process. There is no process underway at this time, as the Council has just received information from the BOE. She added that at this time, the request is to establish a School Building Study Committee. She emphasized that there is no project or predetermined outcome with an associated cost as the Study Committee has not even been established yet. She added that the information spread through the chatter in town is often not always correct.

Tim Timberman, 1194 Main Street: (A copy of her submitted statement is included at the end of the minutes)

Timberman shared that he is the President of the Coventry Arts Guild, an arts organization that celebrated 10 years as a 501(c)3 non-profit in 2025. He shared that the organization consists of 65 members who share a variety of art skills and talents. Timberman gave highlights from 2025 including Art Workshops, Music Performances, Open Mics, and the very popular events: Arts on Main and Christmas in the Village and informed of the available activities supplied by the Coventry Arts Guild at these events.

Timberman also shared all the upcoming events in 2026 including a Winter Poetry Festival, Watercolor Workshops, and a Poetry Open Mic which are scheduled to take place in the next 2 months.

Timberman expressed the need for increased membership and funding for the Arts Guild. He reminded that \$2,750 is raised for Arts on Main by local sponsors, but they would like to increase this amount to improve the free community event. The goals of the Arts Guild are to increase sponsor raised funds to \$3,500 and request \$1,000 of town funds to be supplied by the Town Council.

Thomas asked Timberman to put his request in writing to the Town Manager for review, so that it can be shared with the Town Council for consideration during upcoming budget deliberations.

**4. Acceptance Of Minutes, January 5, 2026:**

**Motion:** I move to accept the January 5, 2026, Town Council Meeting Minutes.

By: Hand

Second: Kyer

Discussion/Edits:

- Pg. 4, Under 6.A, 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet, 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence, change “part of transit” to “part on transit”.
- Pg. 9 Under 8.A, 7<sup>th</sup> paragraph, last line, change “their” to “there”.
- Pg. 12, Under 8.B., 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph, last line, change “apart” to “as a part”.
- Pg. 13, Under 8.C., 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, 3<sup>rd</sup> line, “, higher than a commercial CDL,”

For: Kyer, Hand, Gallagher, Thomas, Larson, Wheaton, and Blanchard.

Against:

Abstain:

**5. Consent Agenda:**

All items listed with an asterisk (\*) will be acted on by one motion. There will be no separate discussion on these items unless a Council member so requests, in which case, the item will be removed from the consent agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda.

**Motion:** I move to accept the consent agenda.

By: Hand

Second: Kyer

Discussion: None

Voting:

For: Kyer, Hand, Gallagher, Thomas, Larson, Wheaton, and Blanchard.

Against:

Abstain:

**6. Reports:**

**6.A. Council Chairwoman: Lisa Thomas:**

Thomas read the following report:

- Monthly Conversation Hours on Thursday Jan. 22
  - 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 at the Senior Center
  - 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. at Booth and Dimock Library
- I attended the January staff meeting to share with Department Heads the adopted Town Council goals. Everyone seemed excited to have an opportunity to get the word out about their departments during a Citizens Government Academy, as well as to create strategic plans to address infrastructure and facilities needs.
- I am pleased to share that last week I was elected to Chair the Capitol Region Council of Governments Legislative Committee. I look forward to collaborating with the elected leaders and staff of the 38 CRCOG

communities to move our priorities forward. I have given you copies this evening of the adopted priorities for the 2026 legislative session. A link to the full document will be provided in the minutes from tonight's meeting. I want to specifically highlight:

- CT Fastrak expansion east of the CT River - I will be advocating that the expansion go at least to UConn, preferably traveling along rt 44.
- Expansion of micro transit programs that use services similar to Lyft and Uber in order to have mobility in communities that lack the population density to support traditional fixed route service such as buses and trains.
- Expand the uses of STEAP grants to allow regional or inter-municipal projects, and simplify the STEAP application and reporting requirements for small towns with limited administrative capacity
- In alignment with CT Conference of Municipalities (CCM), support increasing special education funding and adopting reforms that deliver sustained, predictable relief for municipalities
- LINK TO FULL DOCUMENT: <https://crcogct.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/11.-AIS-2026-CRCOG-Legislative-Agenda.pdf>

#### **6.A.1. Discussion of Budget Meeting Dates:**

Thomas discussed the following proposed budget meeting schedule which included dates, times, and departments that will be met with: [18915](#)

She highlighted the following:

- March 2<sup>nd</sup>-At the regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting, the Town Manager will present his proposed budget to the Town Council, and Councilors will receive their budget binders.
- March 5<sup>th</sup> at 7PM- Annual Town Meeting with presentations from Superintendent of Schools David Petrone and Town Manager Jim Drumm. The budget shared by Petrone will be the proposed BOE budget approved by the BOE. The budget shared by Drumm will be his proposed Town Budget. Neither of which will have been reviewed in depth or been deliberated on by the Town Council. Thomas emphasized the importance of residents attending this meeting to share their input that the Town Council can refer to during deliberations.
- Thomas encouraged citizen involvement throughout the budget process by attending the upcoming meetings, sending emails, and speaking at Audience of Citizens (AOC). She reminded that town staff is also working on a Citizen's Budget Guide that will be made available.
- All upcoming regularly scheduled and special Town Council meetings will begin at 7PM and have an AOC (3/2, 3/12, 3/16, 3/30, and 4/6).

The Town Council had consensus to adopt this budget meeting schedule.

#### **6.B. Council Members:**

Larson reported:

- Issues that arose recently regarding the PA490, legislation that allows farmlands/agricultural fields to have their land assessed in a fairer way (based on what it is used for, not its best value). PA490 is revised every 5 years and was recently revised in November of 2025. The new values released were astronomical, especially with a state as small as CT, where the farms are equally small compared to others across the nation. The assessments were at a level that would put farmers out of business fairly quickly as farming does not have a high profit margin. The state came back and revised the assessment numbers so they were better, but slightly lesser numbers were not low enough to make a lasting difference. The CT Farm Bureau put a lot of time and energy to lobby with and for farmers and has worked with legislators as well to pressure the Governor to recognize the impact this has. He shared that

the system is flawed and hopes that a better system is created that recognizes the needs of farmers and municipalities. He also shared hopes for a push for fair action for farmers and for more CT grown.

- Tolland County Farm Bureau, an organization Larson is involved in, is holding a Friends of Agricultural gathering on January 31<sup>st</sup> from 10AM to 12PM at Rockville High School. Local leaders and legislators will be in attendance, and everyone is welcome.

Kyer reported:

- Kyer gave a shout out to the Winters Farmer's Market that takes place on Sundays at CHS from 10AM to 12:30PM, and local farmers are represented.

**6.C. Finance Committee: Robyn Gallagher, Chairperson:**

Gallagher shared that the Finance Committee met on 1/12/26 and highlighted the following from the meeting and discussions:

- Thanked Finance Director Cherie Trahan for providing all the Admins financial reports. Some financial data is still being caught up to date, so they were not 100% but still helpful to review town financials.
- Received updated report on the CNREF balance. The current balance is \$69,949.
- Trahan informed that updated reports will be sent to the BOE soon in order to reconcile accounts.
- Trahan provided a report on the debt service schedule which was reviewed.
- Received an Audit update. Audit work had slowed due to other department responsibilities but is still underway and moving forward.
- Discussed the budget process, how it is going with town departments, and the reimplementation of ClearGov budget software.
- Discussed Citizen's Budget Guide.

Questions:

After reviewing the financial reports related to the sewer service, Wheaton questioned if the wastewater treatment was self-funding based on collections from those utilizing the service. Drumm explained that it is for day-to-day operations, but not for capital expenditures.

6.C.1. \* Monthly Financial Report:

6.C.2. \*Finance Committee Minutes: 1/12/2026:

**6.D. \*Steering Committee: Jonathan Hand, Chairperson**

**6.D.1. \* Steering Committee Minutes: 12/22/2025**

**6.E. \* COVRA**

**6.F. Town Manager: James Drumm:**

**6.F.1 Projects/Issues Update:**

Drumm highlighted the following updates:

- The Assessor plans to have the Grand List certified by January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026, which is ahead of schedule.
- The ECHIP (Town of Coventry's Current Insurance) Board of Directors have voted to draft a separation agreement for towns to pull out of ECHIP and resolve the funds. This will take some time, and ECHIP will keep going until the mechanisms are determined by attorneys (Robinson and Cole).
- DEEP Resiliency Fund Grant- This grant was applied for to get funding to locate and inventory the town's stormwater basins and outfalls as well as their condition to identify improvements. If awarded, Coventry

would receive up to \$650,000 and does not require a town match. Additionally, these funds would allow Coventry to build a database needed to fulfill upcoming requirements from the state of CT to submit geo spatial files to OPM. This information is also required for the NPDES permit that will be required once the state declares Coventry an MS4 town. Having this information on file will also help the town seek grant funding for needed repairs and replacements.

- The Pension Committee has begun meeting again. They reviewed the plan and determined that both the pension plan and market is in good shape. However, during their review they realized the Financial Advisor being used has been in place for 17 years, and determined it is in the best interest to go out to bid for other options.
- The Charter Revision Commission's work is still underway. At their last meeting, they had discussions with the Registrar of Voters and the Town Clerk. The most recent substantial proposed change is going from 2 voting districts to 1. This would allow for a more streamlined voting process, ease and efficiency, as well as cost savings. The CRC has been making good progress and will be reviewing difficult sections of the Charter regarding finance in their upcoming meetings.
- A Maintainer 2A position was hired for the DPW to fill a staffing vacancy. Drumm explained this is a great addition as in the past any DPW employees hired were coming in at an entry level. He explained concerns have been raised that there will be an inevitable skills gap given the amount of entry level staff being hired with more experienced DPW staff reaching retirement age.
- Thomas added that the Town was notified they were awarded a \$446,000 Community Projects Congressional Grant through Congressman Courtney. An application for these funds was submitted by Police Chief Peterson for Police Equipment, including dispatch equipment, body cams, and dashboard cams. It has been known for some time that the current equipment is outdated, and Chief Peterson has requested replacements for the past few budget cycles, and the equipment hasn't made the final cut. This grant funding will allow the Police Department to get new equipment, and it will not need to be funded with tax dollars from Coventry residents.

#### Questions/Comments:

- ECHIP- Wheaton commented that disbanding ECHIP seems counterintuitive as larger groups typically get better insurance rates. Drumm agreed that it is often the case. However, there has been discussion around this in the past, as there were issues with one of the ECHIP members (EastConn). There is a scheduled special meeting with the entire Town Council and the Board of Ed coming up to discuss other insurance options and the related savings to pulling out of ECHIP.
- CHS HVAC- Wheaton commented that Drumm's memo lists the final cost of the CHS HVAC as \$12.6M, but he was under the impression it was much higher. Drumm explained that \$12.6M is the max the project would end up at, but they are not there yet. He reminded that the current cost is lower than this (around \$12.4M), but the project has not been closed out yet.
- Radio Tower Contract- Wheaton questioned if the town is any closer to closing contract negotiations or are we still continuing with legal back and forth. Drumm explained that Special Project Coordinator Alex Taylor has been working on the negotiations between the company, attorneys, and CIRMA. He continued that after lengthy back and forth, and last-minute additions, the town has finally just received a final clean version that all parties agree to and can be signed off on. Drumm shared a few details about the new contract but will be able to explain more at a future Town Council meeting after a more in-depth review of the contract.

#### 6.F.2. \* Winter 2026 Town Newsletter:

**7. Unfinished Business:** None

**8. New Business:**

**8.A. 25/26-32: Consideration/possible Action: Resolution: Janette Smith 50 Years of Service as Library Assistant:**

**Motion:** I move to approve Resolution 2026-1, honoring Janette Smith and her 50 years of service as a Library Assistant at Booth and Dimock Library.

By: Kyer

Second: Hand

Discussion: Thomas shared that the Library Director Margaret Kahn brought Smith's years of service to her attention and asked the Council to consider a resolution for her many years of service. They will be having a separate ceremony for her at the library. If the resolution is approved, it will be sent over to the library for her recognition ceremony.

Hand commented that this is an impressive amount of time to stay in 1 workplace, especially through all the changes the library has experienced over the years from building changes, construction projects, and COVID, etc. He continued that her dedication is amazing.

Voting:

For: Kyer, Hand, Gallagher, Thomas, Larson, Wheaton, and Blanchard.

Against:

Abstain:

**8.B. 25/26-33: Consideration/possible action: Establishment of School Building Committee to evaluate current and future facility needs for Coventry Public Schools:**

**Motion:** I move to send the Board of Education's request for a School Building Committee to evaluate current and future facility needs for Coventry Public Schools to the Steering Committee for review and recommendation.

By: Larson

Second: Wheaton

Discussion: Wheaton explained that Blanchard and he discussed this prior to the meeting and wanted to make sure ways to improve citizen awareness were discussed in advance of forming a new building committee. Thomas agreed that this is important and reminded that the 1<sup>st</sup> place to start these discussions is at the Steering Committee level. She reminded that there are a lot of steps in the process, including Steering creating a charge for the Study Committee, that will need to be reviewed by the entire Council.

Hand commented that one of the things that can be pushed to the community for awareness is the purpose of establishing this committee as stated in Drumm's memo to the Council, which states: *"To evaluate current and future facility needs, engaging in long range planning, and ensuring that any proposed solutions are thoughtful, fiscally responsible, and aligned with the educational needs of our students and community."* He added that this is step 1 of the process.

Gallagher stated that she agrees with community awareness. However, she highlighted times in the past she has tried to share information publicly regarding the budget, along with the various communication methods

utilized by the town to share information and community involvement is still lower than she hopes to see. She reminded that they could do all they can to get the information out there but cannot force community engagement.

Kyer questioned the status of the existing School Building Committee. Drumm explained that they will continue with their work on the CHS HVAC project until it is complete. Once everything is fully finalized, they will be discharged. He added that they did not want to assign the study work onto the existing committee but wanted to create a new one to keep the work separate, which the BOE agrees with. Both committees can exist simultaneously for a short period of time.

Hand shared the importance of getting information out to the community, but reminded that it is equally important not to miscommunicate information. Larson agreed and added the importance of maintaining consistency in the information.

Blanchard commented that she is not opposed to forming the School Building Study Committee in order to meet the needs of students in town but urged that the Town Council be cautious on how they proceed.

Voting:

For: Kyer, Hand, Gallagher, Thomas, Larson, Wheaton, and Blanchard.

Against:

Abstain:

#### **9. Miscellaneous/Correspondence:**

**9.A. \* CCM In Your Inbox: Your Weekly CCM Digest - January 7, 2026:**

**9.B. \* Fire and Police Dept. Statistics, December 2025:**

**9.C. \* Senator Murphy 2025 End of Year Report:**

#### **10. Adjournment**

**Motion:** I move that the Town Council adjourn the meeting at 8:38 PM.

By: Larson

Second: Gallagher

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 8:38 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Nicole Archambault**

Nicole Archambault, Minutes Clerk

**PLEASE NOTE: These minutes are not official until approved by the Coventry Town Council at the next Town Council meeting. Please see the next Town Council meeting minutes for approval or changes to these minutes.**

**Audience of Citizen's Written Statements:**

ACTORS COLONY ESTATES ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 363

COVENTRY, CT 06238

contacts

Mckenna Considine [mckconsidine@gmail.com](mailto:mckconsidine@gmail.com) or Katie Martin [kmartint10@outlook.com](mailto:kmartint10@outlook.com)

01/20/2026

Town Council Meeting, 7:00pm

Town Annex 1712 Main St Coventry CT 06238

Re: Actors Colony Estate Association Beach and Roads

To Chairperson Lisa Thomas and members of the Coventry Town Council and James Drumm Town Manager:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you tonight regarding the status of the Actors Colony Estate Association. My name is Katie Martin and I am a member of the Board of Directors for the Association which is located on the back side of Coventry Lake in between the Nathan Hale Homestead and South Street.

We were established sometime in the 1950's as a special districting neighborhood that has private roads and a private beach which is located at the end of Beebe Farms Road.

I have lived in Coventry for 21 years and have served on the Association's Board of Directors on multiple occasions during that time. The Association has approximately 140 members and a budget of approximately \$13.5K. As a special district we are required to collect taxes in addition to town/state taxes for liability insurance, and funds to maintain a handful of private roads and the association beach. While the Association provides a lovely recreational beach for its members in a quiet neighborhood, over the years interest in the Association and the beach has dwindled.

We are a 5-member board and often are unable to fill the board seats. Annual meetings may only have 5 members show up, this has been a chronic issue. As such the Association held a special meeting in September 2025 to discuss terminating the Association due to lack of interest and financial insolvency. At that meeting, we had the highest attendance of members in years. Members want the board to terminate the association. Additionally, the Association wants to be a responsible steward and ensure that the beach will be available for public use and turn over private roads that are used by residents to the Town ensuring safety and residential access.

ACTORS COLONY ESTATES ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 363

COVENTRY, CT 06238

contacts

Mckenna Considine [mckconsidine@gmail.com](mailto:mckconsidine@gmail.com) or Katie Martin [kmartint10@outlook.com](mailto:kmartint10@outlook.com)

In November 2025, we had a preliminary meeting with Todd Penny the Town Engineer and James Drumm to discuss options for the beach and roads. We were interested in exploring if the Town would be willing to take the beach in exchange for taking over some of the roads within the Association.

There were concerns raised about the Town taking the beach but ultimately it was our understanding that it would be the Town council that would make that decision. The beach is located at the end of Beebe Farms Rd it includes a gate and parking area, two picnic tables, and a storage shed with kayak rack. Would the Council be interested in making Association beach a resource for the whole town?

At that meeting we also reviewed the Town's Special Requirements for Acceptance of Lake Association Roads Policy dated April 02, 2007, which expired September 1, 2017. Given this policy has expired we were wondering is there any flexibility in all the requirements given that sewers are not involved and the roads up for consideration are already established with gravel or pavement. All our roads are on the south side of South Street where sewers are already established and not near the lake.

Currently the Town is plowing all the roads necessary for the safety and welfare of our residents and access of emergency services. Residents also receive trash pick-up on the roads being considered. We greatly appreciate the Town providing this service.

The expired Lake Association policy indicated that the Town would require A-2 surveys which would be extremely costly in addition to the making modifications to the roads such as clearing trees. This year alone we have 55 accounts of the 140 that are unpaid, this does not include previous years that have gone unpaid. We have placed liens on properties, but it does not resolve meeting overall expenses.

As an association we do not want to terminate without resolution to the roads and or the beach and we are looking to partner with the Town to find a solution that would not overburden either party.

We have a total of 27 roads within our Association, 16 of which are listed as private. There are several that are called "paper roads" which are not maintained because there is no value in doing so i.e. no access to residential buildings etc. As such we would like to transfer only the roads that are necessary for residents. The following roads we would like to turn over to the town with their current material status.

ACTORS COLONY ESTATES ASSOCIATION  
P.O. BOX 363  
COVENTRY, CT 06238  
contacts

Mckenna Considine [mckconsidine@gmail.com](mailto:mckconsidine@gmail.com) or Katie Martin [kmartint10@outlook.com](mailto:kmartint10@outlook.com)

Upper Gable gravel

Camilleri Dr gravel

Barry Rd paved

Healy Rd paved

Briston Rd paved

Newton Rd paved

Kenneth Ave paved

Swanson Rd paved

We would like to know if the Town's interest in the beach as well as working with the Association to turn over the roads.

We are requesting to work with a point person on the Town council in coordination with Todd and Jim to move forward on this. As a board we need to be able to report to members the Town's position and next steps towards terminating the Association in a responsible manner.

Thank you for your consideration

Katie Martin Secretary on behalf of the Board

Mckenna Considine President

Nick Considine Vice President

Mike Mangiafico Road Foreman

Elizabeth Carson Treasurer

Anthony Skut Beach Foreman

Map of roads attached





Mary Ann Hansen, 74 Avery Shores

January 20, 2026

How does Coventry welcome people into town? You send a sheriff to their door with a subpoena ordering them to appear in Superior Court.

My neighbor, the P&Z chair, blindsided everyone, using her role as P&Z chair to expend town funds to orchestrate an appeal of a unanimous ZBA decision with overwhelming community support. I had told the town manager, the town planner and the ZBA chair I wanted to do what was necessary to resolve the problem. I even came to you last month to ask you to drop the case or postpone the court order until after the holidays so we could do that. You did nothing. I rushed to sell the buyer the additional 4525 sq. feet to make up the 40,000 sq. ft., and the buyer filed it with the town before the January 8 court appearance deadline. The town planner had told me TWICE that all I had to do to resolve the issue was sell her the additional sq. feet. Still the town didn't drop the case. Was the remaining lot over 40,000 sq. ft.? It's inconceivable that the town planner would tell me to correct one problem by creating another illegal lot. Using simple math, I calculated 42,248 sq. ft. Last evening, P&Z imposed yet another hurdle. We must provide a new A-2 survey of both lots and parcel history to prove both lots are compliant. It's beyond common sense why you kept expending town money for something the buyer and I said we would work out.

Anyway, what's done is done. I'd like to address three issues of great concern that have come out of this ridiculous episode so things can be corrected for the future. You asked for town input in your latest newsletter.

First, the need to revise zoning regulations. Second, the need for better communication among town departments and with the public. Third, the vetting of town commission appointees.

FIRST. One of the charges of the Town Council for 2025-2027 is to “review existing boards and commissions’ establishing charges or ordinances to determine whether they are up to date, still active, or duplicative.”

I spent two years writing regulations for the Connecticut Department of Education. I can tell you with some authority, the Coventry zoning regulations are incomprehensible, contradictory, and out of date, particularly in the lake residential zone. The guiding idea of the lake residential zone is to protect the water quality of our beautiful lake. What’s happened is the town is allowing 5- and 8-bedroom houses on 15,000 sq. ft. lots. One huge mistake was increasing lot coverage from 10% to 15%. The result of this over-development according to the scientists is that oxygen levels in the lake are going down. It makes no sense that the town would deny approval for building a house on a 35,000 sq. ft. lot with a responsible 5% lot coverage. Moreover, it makes even less sense since lots with 30,000 sq. ft. normally don’t even have to go before ZBA, and new state law could potentially allow six affordable houses to be built on a 30,000 sq. ft. lot. At the same meeting where P&Z voted to appeal the unanimous ZBA decision, it approved a condominium application that didn’t comply with zoning regulations, saying the regulations need to be changed! YES THEY DO.

SECOND. I don’t know if I got caught in the transition of town staffing last year, but the communication among departments and with me and the buyer

was lacking. I sold the land in November 2024. It still wasn't recorded in the assessor's office in 2025. The buyer and I both talked to the assessor's office. They said they would take care of it. It still wasn't corrected. It wasn't until a year later that the buyer found out from the planner the lot "had red flags." This whole thing was poorly handled by the town. Why doesn't the assessor's office talk to the planner's office, and if there was a question, why did no one talk to me or the buyer for over a year?

THIRD. I believe the P&Z appeal of the unanimous ZBA decision was personal. The P&Z chair is a neighbor with whom I have had run-ins over the years, starting 30 years ago when she and her husband cut three large trees on my property without permission to get a better view of the lake. They have been running a construction company from their home in the lake residential zone. Evidently the storage container in their yard is illegal and possibly two of their trucks. Their house in the lake residential zone on an 18,750 sq. ft. lot is not connected to the sewer, defying the court order that everyone else had to obey. Why is the town enforcing the laws and regulations for some and not for others? Why is someone who openly flaunts the zoning laws and regulations appointed by you over and over to serve on P&Z?

CONCLUSION: Long-term, I hope the town will adopt responsible and fair zoning changes, particularly in the lake residential zone, that better address the protection of the lake water quality; that town departments communicate better among themselves and become more user friendly with the public; that you pay more attention when vetting the people you appoint to town commissions.

## **Why Coventry Residents Should Pause the Push for a New School**

To My Fellow Coventry Residents,

There appears to be a quiet but steady push underway toward forming a building committee for a new school — a step that may sound harmless, but in reality signals momentum toward a **\$70 million project** long before residents have been fully informed or meaningfully engaged.

Let's address something head-on, because it matters.

In discussions like this, people often resort to saying that a town or its children "deserve" a new school. That word is not neutral. It is used to shut down debate, to imply that anyone who asks questions is somehow heartless, anti-child, or immoral.

**No one deserves a \$70 million project.**

What residents deserve is honesty, transparency, and the right to fully understand the consequences before being asked to take on decades of debt. Using moral language to short-circuit financial scrutiny is not leadership — it's pressure.

So far, residents have been told the headline number — roughly \$70 million — and reassured that the state would cover about 70% of the cost, with the possibility of additional contributions if early childhood education is included.

**What does that \$70 million actually include?**

Does it cover just the building shell, or also waste and water infrastructure, electrical systems, HVAC, kitchen and cafeteria infrastructure, classroom furniture, technology, fixtures — down to every desk, chair, whiteboard, and eraser?

Residents deserve to know whether the number being discussed represents the true, all-in cost, or whether significant expenses will appear later as "additional," "unanticipated," or "outside the scope" of the bond.

Even if state funding reduces the local share, the remaining bond still represents a very real and lasting burden for Coventry taxpayers — one that cannot be discussed in isolation.

Coventry is experiencing declining enrollment, not growth. Housing prices for new construction are starting around \$700,000, putting the town increasingly out of reach for young families.

If enrollment continues to decline, the town may eventually find itself bussing in out-of-town students to fill capacity. That raises a fundamental question: **are we building for projected need, or for aspirational hope?**

Without clear public information, forming a building committee creates inevitability. Once committees form and consultants are hired, the question quietly shifts from "Should we do this?" to "How do we sell it?"

**Pause the process. Show the work. Let residents decide — not inertia.**

*Patti Cronin*  
*99 Sean Circle*

## Coventry Arts Guild 2025

I am the President of the Coventry Arts Guild which in 2025 we celebrated ten years as a 501(c)3 non-profit arts organization. We have 65 members, a ten member board of directors and have our own website and FaceBook pages.

Our members are painters, potters, sculptors, photographers, poets, play writers, authors, musicians and educators

### **Highlights from 2025:**

Art Workshops - 6 - 60 attendees

Artist of the Month - 10 at BDML

Members Show 2 at BDML

Music Performances at BDML - 2

Make Music Day - at MBP June 21st 4-9PM - 12- 20min acts

Music - Arts on Main - 6 acts

Poetry Open Mic - 8 - 150 people in attendance includes 100 readers

Coventry Play writers Cooperative

4 One Act Plays during Arts on Main - 20 attendees

Play writer's Fall Festival - Three evening performances of self written plays. 40 attendees

### **Arts on Main** - Funded by local business sponsors (\$2,750 in 2025)

CAG Member show

Music Venues

Dance

Poetry Readings

Interactive Children's Art Installation

Take home children's art at BDML

Face painting

Musical instrument petting zoo

Arts and Crafts Vendors

Food Trucks

Sidewalk chalk art

Shuttle bus

1,500 attendees

# Coventry Arts Guild

## Christmas in the Village

CAG Winter show BDML

Poetry Readings

Lions Club Christmas Tree Decoration

## Upcoming Events for 2026

**Artist of the Month** - January - Barbara Timberman,

February - Nancy Bunnell

March - Patricia Naegelli

April - Adam Palozie

May - Coventry Arts and Antiques

**Winter Poetry Festival** - January 31, 2026 at 6PM at MBP

**Watercolor Workshops** - February 21, March 21 & April 18 at MBP

**Poetry Open Mic** - February 13, March 13, April 10, & May 8 at BDML

**Make Music Day** - June 21st MBP 5 - 9PM

**Arts on Main** - August 29th - Main Street

**Play writer's Fall Festival** TBD MBP

**Christmas in the Village** - Village

## Needs

Members

Additional Funding for Arts On Main (Free Community Event)

\$3,500 local sponsorship goal

\$1,000 Town Funds (EDC?)

Sponsoring funds are generally late in coming in and make contracting musicians and other acts difficult to commit in a timely fashion.