

**MINUTES
COVENTRY TOWN COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 16, 2021
7:30 P.M. – REGULAR MEETING
TOWN HALL ANNEX & VIRTUAL**

1. Call To Order, Roll Call:

The meeting was called to order by Blanchard at 7:30 p.m.

Members present:

Julie Blanchard – Chair – remote

Lisa Conant - remote

Jonathan Hand – remote

Matthew O’Brien, Jr. - remote

Matthew O’Brien, Sr. - Vice Chair – remote

Lisa Thomas - remote

Richard Williams – Secretary – remote

Members absent:

Also present:

John Elsesser – Town Manager

2. Pledge Of Allegiance:

Council members and Staff stood to recite the pledge.

3. Audience Of Citizens:

(30 minutes)

Submit comments to be read aloud to: audience@coventry.org

Blanchard read a comment from the following citizen. The statement is attached to these Minutes.

Linda Blakesley, 27 Berry Avenue – Coventry must declare racism a public health crisis. We owe it to our children to create equitable systems.

4. Acceptance Of Minutes:

- **January 19, 2021**

Motion: I move to accept the minutes of January 19, 2021 meeting.

By: O’Brien, Sr.

Seconded: Thomas

With the following corrections:

- Page 4, first paragraph after signatures, seventh sentence – add “rights” after “amendment”.
- Page 5, second paragraph, second sentence – change to read “O’Brien, Sr. asked can we get the statement in writing before we adopt it?”.
- Page 9, item 6.F.2., third paragraph, seventh sentence - reverse “all” and “not”.
- Page 11, item 6.F.7., first paragraph, third sentence – remove “something”.
- Page 12, item 7.A., fourth paragraph, fifth sentence – change to read “O’Brien, Sr. and O’Brien, Jr. agreed.”.
- Page 14, first paragraph, first line – reverse “operating” and “capital”.

Voting:

For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Williams, Thomas, Conant

Against: None

Abstain: None

4.A. Approval Of Minutes, Executive Session: February 1, 2021

Motion: I move to accept the minutes of January 19, 2021 meeting.

By: Hand

Seconded: O’Brien, Sr.

Voting:

For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Williams, Thomas, Conant

Against: None

Abstain: None

Thomas said we don’t typically approve Executive Sessions minutes – why are we doing this? Elsesser said because this was a stand-alone meeting and it shows the Council took the steps of going into and coming out of Executive Session.

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 members 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: O’Brien, Sr.

Seconded: Hand

Discussion: Thomas asked for item 9.B. to be removed from the Consent Agenda. Conant asked that item 6.F.11. be removed from the Consent Agenda.

Voting:

For: O’Brien, Sr., O’Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Williams, Conant, Thomas

Against: None

Abstain: None

6. Reports:

6.A. Council Chairwoman: Julie A. Blanchard

Blanchard shared the passing of another very active citizen of Coventry – John Lavoie. He was active in the Coventry Volunteer Fire Association from 1960-2021. He served as the Chief, EMT instructor, Drill Master, and Chief Engineer. He served with the Knights of Columbus. He served the Coventry Catholic Men’s Club and was past president and permittee of CCMC. He was the Tree Warden for the town for a long time. We thank him for all of his service to us and our community. We send condolences to the family.

The next Human Services drive-through food distribution will be on February 26, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. – noon in front of Town Hall. Enter at the left entrance, use the driveway loop at the front, and exit the right entrance. Any citizens interested can contact the Human Services department with questions. There are 2-3 people volunteering from Town Hall and Public Works. Barring a snow storm those volunteers enjoy doing these types of things.

6.B. Council Members:

O’Brien, Sr. shared that Chester Chase passed away. He was a longtime volunteer for the town; he and his wife served the community in various capacities. He served on the Town Council in the early 90s, was a veteran and active in the Seabees as an instructor. Chester was a great guy. He helped Coventry in the early days with information on how to build roads and the best way to do so. O’Brien, Sr. was sorry to hear that Chase had passed away from cancer. O’Brien, Sr. wants to give Mr. Chase a salute from the Town Council. Elsesser added Chase hooked the town up with Jacobson Engineering for high quality engineering; we still use them today. He really improved the PZC subdivision standards.

Thomas asked if the Council could get a presentation on the highlights or key pieces of the POCD update. She also asked that information items for the agenda be sent earlier than the afternoon of the meeting. There is not enough opportunity to look at the items enough to have conversations around them.

Conant hoped that people had the chance to catch the Legacy List program on the David Hayes Sculpture Field. Elsesser did a wonderful job of representing the town. Conant recommends a visit to the field.

6.C. Steering Committee: Matthew O’Brien, Jr., Chairperson

O’Brien, Jr. said the last meeting was on January 25th. At the meeting the supplemental charge of the Human Rights Commission was discussed. Also discussed was the combining of the Human Services and Youth Services Advisory boards; it is felt these two boards can work together and operate efficiently. The Steering Committee also worked on the Town of Coventry’s Affirmative Action plan.

6.C.1. * Minutes, January 25, 2021

6.D. Finance Committee: Matthew D. O’Brien, Sr., Chairperson

O'Brien, Sr. read his report into the record:

**Coventry Town Council Finance Committee Meeting
February 8, 2021
Report to the Town Council at the February 16, 2021 meeting**

Our committee discussed the Town's reports.

Amanda Backhaus reported that our property tax collections were higher than reported and our collections are ahead of last year. This was due to one bank that did not forward property tax payments on behalf of their customers until after February 1st. The Town's total expenditures, including encumbrances is at 65.64% of the adjusted budget which compares favorably to 67.31% last year. The Board of education has expended 49.83% of their approved budget which compares favorably to 52.79% last year.

We discussed the COVRRRA fund. Amanda said that she would take another look at the numbers reported, which now reflect that the \$200,000 that had been held to possibly upgrade the transfer station or relocate it have been added back into the operating fund of COVRRRA. The Sewer Fund is in good shape.

Amanda presented her analysis of the last three plus years of MSW tonnage, recycling and other aspects of our waste management system. Her analysis showed that there has been a significant increase in the amount of waste being generated in the past year and the committee discussed how the pandemic and more people working from home, etc. may have impacted those numbers. The committee will continue this discussion to try and determine how the ongoing vaccinations and possibly more people returning to work and students to schools may impact the 2021-2022 numbers as we consider setting the COVRRRA rates during our budget deliberations.

We then discussed the current staffing situation in Inland/Wetlands. Currently they are paying for a contractor who works 10 hours per week. We discussed if this is the most cost effective way to provide that service. The committee recommended that John Elsesser explore other options to determine if it would make sense to hire a part time person in that department who may be able to provide more hours and service that are needed.

The committee discussed the report we received from Michael D'Amicol, our Assessor, that shows that the 2020 grand list has increased by 1.6% from the 2019 net Grand List. This is an increase of \$16,325,767 in assessed value. Amanda reported that at the current collection rate and mil rate this increase would result in an additional \$498,141. Amanda also reported that if the Council decides to restore the collection rate to the historical weighted average, it would generate approximately an additional \$245,324 at the current mil rate.

We discussed the monthly reports and spent time on the budget overages that we are experiencing in the police budget. We will be discussing this further.

Then we discussed the Board of Education's December Management Report. Amanda reported that she believes the Board has accounted for a part of the \$53,000 the Board received from the first round of CRF funds but there is over \$20,000 that was not included. We also noted that the Board also received \$47,500 at the end of December from the second round of CRF funding and that those funds have not been reflected in this management report either. Future reports should remove the associated Covid expenses from this report and move them to a grant fund report that also reflects the revenues received to offset them. The committee then discussed the recent report that the Coventry will receive \$521,667 of ESSER II funds that were appropriated in the most recent federal relief package. The committee discussed how those funds would help the Board meet this year's expenses and hopefully reduce their 2020-2021 budget for any items related to Covid relief. Lisa Thomas reported that she has had discussions with the Board Chairwoman, Jenn Beausoleil, and the Board was going to discuss these potential impacts at their next meeting. The chair asked that a note be sent, on behalf of the committee, reflecting our discussion to the Board.

The Food Service Profit and Loss Statement shows the Board is continuing to generate surplus revenues each month through the federal meals program.

We discussed the Munistat Municipal Advisor Services Agreement. After our discussion with Amanda and John, the committee recommends that the Town Council enter into this agreement.

We discussed the possibility of establishing a Library Renovation Donation Fund. This is a direct result of the very generous gift of \$75,000 that Sandra Astor Stave has offered to support the Library Renovation with the hopes it will spur matching donations from the community. John explained that by having this be a Town fund rather than a fund of the Library Board, the funding will be better able to be accessed and used during the project. Based on our discussion, the committee recommends that the Town Council establish the Library Renovation Donation Fund.

We adjourned.

Respectfully,

Matthew O'Brien Sr.
Chairman, Finance Committee

Blanchard asked how crumbling foundations affected the Grand List and what is Munistat? O'Brien, Sr. said four houses have come back onto the rolls. Elsesser said the total range is likely 150-170 houses. The number of houses is still growing. Munistat is the bond financial advisor. The former advisor has closed the Connecticut office. Munistat covers New Jersey and New York and they are setting up a new office in Connecticut.

6.D.1. * Minutes, 01/11/2021

6.D.2. * Monthly Financial Reports

6.E. COVRRRA – John A. Elsesser:

Elsesser reported we are still waiting for the State to come through with STEAP grant award. The waste tonnage went up substantially kicking in in March of last year. O'Brien, Sr. added we pay \$35 per ton for recycling and urged people to recycle whenever possible as that will save some of the waste system money we pay.

6.F. Town Manager – John A. Elsesser

6.F.1. Projects Update

Updates to Elsesser's distributed report are:

- Swamp Road plans are in for final review. These will go out to bid in April with construction from June through December. One issue that has come up is that the chosen traffic signal poles with a slightly decorative fixture are a longer order time. These will not be available until next spring and the roadway cannot be opened until they are installed. It was asked if we could change to a simpler pole standard but that cannot be done without going through the review process again.

- The next Human Services Food Drop is scheduled for February 26th from 10:00 a.m. – noon.
- The annual report and capital budget are being uploaded this week. The report will show workloads and issues affecting departments. The capital budget had major reductions to it last year which cannot be restored this year; it will take a while to get back to that funding level.

Blanchard asked why the bathroom trailer at Laidlaw Park was discussed with Coventry Soccer when this is a town recreation field. Elsesser said this was done as a courtesy as there has been a change in leadership of Coventry Soccer and they were not aware of the plan. The current leadership said a picnic pavilion would be a priority rather than bathrooms. The LOTCIP money for the bathroom trailer has to be used there or elsewhere on a similar project. The Porta-pottys are adequate for the soccer leadership and no maintenance is needed by Town staff for these. A bathroom trailer would be locked when soccer is not be played so people using the park for other activities would not have access to toilets.

Blanchard asked about the information meeting held on January 14th about the curve warning signs. Elsesser said there are only a handful of signs going in and correction of some signs in place. Elsesser said this is being run by the State and he does not have a recording of the meeting nor has he seen a report from the meeting.

Blanchard asked who the “all” refers to in the paragraph about the Annual Lake forum. Elsesser that refers to the three consultants the Town uses for lake health, including Dr. Kortmann. Their plan has been shared with the Council and the Council can decide to fund the plan or not.

Blanchard confirmed with Elsesser his report about the HVAC engineering at the schools and COVID air standards is regarding the project at the high school and middle school. Elsesser said the plan is to see if the changes work at those schools before doing the same at the Grammar and Robertson schools. The money the BOE is requesting from their 1% fund is for an emergency repair at the Robertson school.

Blanchard asked about the State paperwork for the library renovation – does this mean the State Library department the grant money was received from or another State department? Elsesser said the State Library department’s regulations do not allow a design/build plan.

Conant asked about the information about finding suitable land for a research center of autonomous vehicles. Elsesser said UConn does not seem to be enthused about having such a center on their land. This could be an exciting project in Coventry with having a Research Technology Lab, including bringing in people in need of housing. The Lee Farm tract has both hills and flat areas and UConn would be exempt from local zoning regulations. Coventry is trying to go after things that don’t seem obvious. Mansfield and UConn don’t seem interested in housing a research center for autonomous vehicles. Conant said a link between UConn research and Coventry would

be fantastic. The president of the university said he wants to double research in ten years. Hand echoes Conant's comments. Such a project sounds exciting.

O'Brien, Sr. asked what changes are being required of our police force because of the Police Accountability Act. Elsesser will gather that information.

6.F.2. COVID-19 Update

Elsesser said the good news is that numbers are down a bit as a region. There have been 31 cases in town in the last week and we are up by 8 deaths. People must continue to pay attention. Seventy percent of people over 75 years of age in town have been vaccinated. In the age groups of 18-70 Coventry is consistent with the number of cases in other towns. The cases of children under 10 is one-third the rate of the other groups. We are doing okay but must stay diligent.

6.F.3. Microgrid Update

Elsesser said the plans are in final review with DEEP. There are continued discussions with their financial people to get firmer construction prices and pricing guidelines for our consideration.

6.F.4. Proposed Crumbling Concrete Foundation Bills

Elsesser said there is good news including \$10 mill. more in funding and the extension of the timeframe with the insurance corporation.

O'Brien, Sr. asked if the \$10 mill. is coming from the fee on home insurance. Elsesser said it is in the bond budget and is in addition to the insurance fee. When the bond agenda comes up for discussion letters from people that have used the funds or need to use the fund could be helpful. Having someone tell a personal success story of replacing a crumbling foundation is important. Representative Courtney is pushing to extend the look back period for losses from replacements before the fund was in place. O'Brien, Jr. asked where Coventry is in terms of how many houses with problem foundations we are aware of. Elsesser said we are in the 60s with the number of houses but there are probably more than 150 houses that have the issue. The walking away or selling the home has stopped because there is hope if people have patience. This is a case of people power working on government and results happened fast.

6.F.5. ALICE Report, 2020

Elsesser said this is a whole different way to look at the cost of living by looking at all of the expenses a family has to bear; this shows the real cost to live in a house. Twenty-three percent of Coventry households are at the poverty level. That is better than our neighboring towns other than Tolland.

Thomas said 23% might be less than some of neighbor towns but that is still almost a quarter of our population that is income restrained. Most of these are families headed by women.

Conant said the federal poverty line has not been updated in decades. The report is more accurate of poverty and its struggles. Nearly a quarter of our population is huge. With one health event they are defaulting on their mortgage. This has an impact on the town.

O'Brien, Sr. asked if Mansfield's count includes students in the number. Elsesser said students are included.

6.F.6. Lake Invasive Species Management Plan, 2021

Elsesser has shared the plan. This plan is part of the full grant application that has been submitted. The three consultants are working together on this treatment plan. Two are meeting with neighbors on Woodland Road to look at stream patterns. Elsesser said we have the best team in New England.

O'Brien, Sr. asked if the grant is utilizing money from the boat licensing fee. Elsesser said yes and no; we are applying for those funds from the license stickers. These are competitive grants; Coventry has applied for \$50k. Hopefully, the awards will be made during the budget season. We are continuing the federal grant that we got last year which is \$30k-\$33k. The other grant maximum is \$50k and they may not want to award both of these to Coventry. Conant asked if the \$50k grant requires a match to which Elsesser said yes. The entire treatment plan is \$128k per year. A grant is being applied for, Mansfield is the lead applicant, for Eagleville Lake for a river management study. There will be \$7,500 in kind services provided by the two towns. The boating license fee is new and does not have a lot of money. We think we submitted a good grant application. We are doing research to identify by sonar if the tubers in the dirt are being killed in order to have fewer treatment applications. Conant said this is leading edge research in the nation. That may make the grant more successful. We are looking for long-term solutions with lessons that can be learned by others.

O'Brien, Sr. expressed appreciation of the Town staff for recognizing, pursuing, and getting many of these grants. Elsesser said Eric Trott did much of the grant writing along with Mansfield staff.

6.F.7. Public Notice: Use Of State CDBG Program Income For Different Activity

Elsesser said we are looking to divert money to a rebuild of touchless bathrooms at the Senior Center and Orchard Hills which is an objective for the Federal Department of Housing. Also to use \$50k towards museums in town to be made handicapped accessible, such as at the Hayes property, Strong Porter House if the Historical Society is interested, and the Glass Museum.

6.F.8. 2020 Grand List

Elsesser said O'Brien, Sr.'s report went over a lot of this information. There is \$500k in new revenue. The additional revenue will help in next year's budget. O'Brien, Sr. said it is nice to see some growth.

6.F.9. * Robbins – Response To Coventry Traffic Authority Re Truck Restriction On Swamp Road

6.F.10. * Quarterly Report: October-December,

6.F.11. * J. Nelson: Important Of Social Motivations To Attendance At Coventry Markers' Market

Conant asked for this item to be removed from the Consent Agenda because she was interested by this research paper and is curious to know if the student is one of the agriculture school or one of the Psychology or other departments. Conant thinks the report can be used for gearing up for the next season and for doing some planning. She hopes we can get back to the former Farmer's Market format as much as we can. The vendors were frustrated by the format in 2020. People love to support farmers and market but last year's format was very different and it was understood why. However, the market was turned into a sterile experience. Elsesser said Jean Nelson is employed at UConn and is taking advantage of the benefit of taking some classes. It was his intern from UConn that created the Farmer's Market. The motivation of attending became much more of a social event with being able to buy some quality vegetables. The planners want to try having some market format in the field with limitations of how many people can attend at once. It may be less spontaneous than it was previously. The goal is to have an open field Market; traffic patterns and spacing issues are being explored.

6.F.12. * CCM: ProAct Prescription Drug Discount Program Report, December 2020

7. Unfinished Business:

7.A. 20/21-29: Consideration/Possible Action: Modifications To Charge, Human Rights Commission

Steering went through the proposed modifications. Page 4 of the document included in the packet related to this item has the supplemental charge that includes four items.

Motion: I move that the Council adopt the supplemental charge for the Human Rights Commission.

By: Hand

Seconded: Thomas

Discussion: Thomas said she would like to see a reference to the LGBTQ community in the supplemental charge and would like number 2 to reference a community forum to be held 'on at least an annual basis' so the Commission is not limited to one per year. Conant said LGBTQ is referenced on another page of the document.

The proposed change to number 2 on page 4 was accepted by Hand and Thomas.

Voting:

For: O'Brien, Sr., O'Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Williams, Conant, Thomas
Against: None
Abstain: None

Elsesser said Olivia has done a phenomenal job on this. She has been very helpful in catching up with some tasks. Elsesser was asked to tell Olivia the Town Council is pleased with her work.

8. New Business:

8.A. 20/21-46: Consideration/Possible Action: Creation Of Forestry Advisory Committee

Elsesser said this is for consideration so Coventry can quickly gain more points for Sustainable CT. The town has worked with an ad hoc team made up of some Staff members. To gain points we need to document existing practices and formalize the team to be called the Forestry Advisory Committee.

O'Brien, Sr. asked if the Committee would be making recommendations, such as thinning forests to maintain a healthy forest and removing diseased trees. Elsesser said this group would be overseeing the town-owned woodlands and would not substitute for the Tree Warden. Best practices of forestry management does include thinning out of trees. Hand said he is in support of creating the committee.

Motion: I move that the Council create the Forestry Advisory Committee as described in the memo dated December 25, 2020 (typo of 2021 acknowledged).

By: Hand

Seconded: O'Brien, Sr.

Discussion: O'Brien, Sr. asked if this should first be sent to Steering; Blanchard would like to see a citizen on the committee. Elsesser said Staff are already doing this function and to add a citizen would mean night meetings; Elsesser cannot ask Staff to attend additional night meetings. The Stewardship Committee will be working in partnership with this committee. Changes include adding 'Town owned woodland', change 'advice' to 'advise', and change '2021' in the memo date to '2020'. The 'town owned woodlands' phrase is to be inserted in the Objective Statement.

Voting:

For: O'Brien, Sr., O'Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Williams, Conant, Thomas
Against: None
Abstain: None

8.B. 20/21-47: Consideration/Possible Action: Adoption Of Watershed Health Pledge

This item also pertains to objectives of Sustainable CT. This have been seen by the Lake Advisory Committee. They will take care of getting people to sign the pledge with July being targeted as that is Lake month.

Motion: I move that the Council adopt the Watershed Health Pledge that meets a Sustainable CT goal.

By: Thomas

Seconded: Hand

Discussion: O'Brien, Sr. asked if signing the pledge is voluntary? Elsesser said yes. Blanchard asked if the pledge is per household? O'Brien, Jr. said it is per person. There is a typo in the last sentence of the letter – 'health cold' instead of 'health code'.

Voting:

For: O'Brien, Sr., O'Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Williams, Conant, Thomas

Against: None

Abstain: None

8.C. 20/21-48: Consideration/Possible Action: Acceptance Of Conservation Easement Conveyance, Wheaton Subdivision, Grant Hill Road

Elsesser said the last page of the documentation about this item shows the map with the gray area representing the conservation easement. This easement will be protecting the major core of the wetlands. O'Brien, Sr. said the impact of the easement is that the owner cannot cut stuff down and it can't be built on. Elsesser said this places a restriction on this part of the property, taxes on that part of the property are less, and it stays with the land forever.

Motion: I move that the Council accept the conservation easement conveyance of the Wheaton Subdivision on Grant Hill Road.

By: O'Brien, Sr.

Seconded: Hand

Discussion: Elsesser said this easement abuts some Town owned open space of the Liberty Croft subdivision. This adds more protected space in town; there is value in that. Blanchard confirmed with Elsesser that this conservation easement is owned by the property owner.

Voting:

For: O'Brien, Sr., O'Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Williams, Conant, Thomas

Against: None

Abstain: None

8.D. 20/21-49: Consideration/Possible Action: Adoption Of Updated Affirmative Action Plan Dated January 2021

Elsesser said some time has been spent on this. The Goals was the last section worked on. The police department had a correction there and this is a follow up to that. This will end up being part of the personnel plan.

O'Brien, Sr. said there is a lot here. What is the impact of Coventry hiring the best person? Elsesser said he rarely sees two equal candidates; we generally don't have pools of people applying for positions. We hire the best candidate. O'Brien, Sr. said updating the plan and bringing those changes to attention may attract diverse people. This is making people aware

of what our needs are and have people present themselves as candidates.

Motion: I move that the Council adopt the updated Affirmative Action Plan dated January 2021.

By: O'Brien, Jr.

Seconded: Hand

Voting:

For: O'Brien, Sr., O'Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Williams, Conant, Thomas

Against: None

Abstain: None

8.E. 20/21-50: Consideration/Possible Action: Merger Of Human Services Advisory And Youth Services Advisory Committees

Motion: I move that the Council approve the merger of the Human Services Advisory and Youth Services Advisory Committees.

By: O'Brien, Sr.

Seconded: Williams

Discussion: Conant said the Audience of Citizens letter had her wondering if that is something that should be addressed by the Human Rights Committee or should it be sent to Steering. Blanchard can forward the matter to Steering. Blanchard thinks it is a good idea to merge these committees.

Voting:

For: O'Brien, Sr., O'Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Williams, Conant, Thomas

Against: None

Abstain: None

8.F. 20/21-51: Consideration/Possible Action: Appointments To 4-Town Economic Vitality Team

Elsesser would like to Council to approve the appointments of the Staff people who have been on this team. The meetings happen during the day. There could be a representative from the EDC or a citizen-at-large on the team at some point but they would have to be able to meet during the day.

O'Brien, Sr. asked if there is a regular meeting time? He would like to see a citizen representative or someone from the Council on the team. Elsesser said he thinks the regular meetings are on the third Thursday of each month.

Thomas said the Council is being asked to at least formalize approval of the three Staff people to start with; there is the potential to add more people.

Motion: I move that the Council to approve the appointments Eric Trott, Wendy Rubin, and Erica Pagliuco to the 4-Town Economic Vitality Team.

By: O'Brien, Sr.

Seconded: O'Brien, Jr.

Voting:

For: O'Brien, Sr., O'Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Williams, Conant, Thomas

Against: None

Abstain: None

8.G. 20/21-52: Consideration/Possible Action: Adoption Of Drought Management Plan

Elsesser said this is another item for Sustainable CT. Much of the plan was borrowed from Glastonbury.

O'Brien, Sr. asked if this is for the water utility only or for those with wells also. Conant said we all need to conserve water. The intent is about sharing the public aquifer even if you have a private well. The plan does not specifically say that. Point three is about promoting and advocating water conservation. Elsesser said this is an educational tool versus a regulatory one.

Motion: I move that the Council adopt the Drought Management Plan.

By: O'Brien, Sr.

Seconded: Conant

Discussion: Blanchard said this has a lot of good stuff for our town.

Voting:

For: O'Brien, Sr., O'Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Williams, Conant, Thomas

Against: None

Abstain: None

8.H. 20/21-53: Consideration/Possible Action: Authorize Execution Of Contract With Munistat For Municipal Advisory Services

Motion: I move that the Council authorize the execution of the contract with Munistat for Municipal Advisory Services.

By: O'Brien, Sr.

Seconded: Hand

Discussion: Elsesser said historically the Town has used banks to do the bond issuances, namely Connecticut National Bank but they have gotten out of that business. Coventry went with IBIC and Mike McKinnon. Due to insurance costs IBIC has sold out to Hilltop Securities who are now closing the office in the state. Munistat is setting up a CT office; we know the people, they advise us, and they help with refinancing. It would be advantageous as this business revolves around relationships.

O'Brien, Sr. asked if refinancing bonds is much more work than issuing new bonds. Elsesser said you have to track those bonds down. We can no longer put bonds in escrow. We have to wait longer to refinance bonds. There is more work and more risk in refinancing.

Voting:

For: O'Brien, Sr., O'Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Williams, Conant, Thomas

Against: None

Abstain: None

8.I. 20/21-54: Consideration/Possible Action: Donation Of Anderson Parcel On Evergreen Trail from Walter J. Anderson

The PZC has looked at this. This Evergreen Trail parcel abuts the Frederick White Trust property.

Motion: I move that the Council accept the donation of the Anderson parcel on Evergreen Trail from the estate of Sylvia Anderson.

By: Thomas

Seconded: Conant

Discussion: Thanks were expressed to the Anderson family for the donation.

Voting:

For: O'Brien, Sr., O'Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Williams, Conant, Thomas

Against: None

Abstain: None

8.J. 20/21-55: Consideration/Possible Action: Establishment Of Library Renovation Donation Fund

Elsesser said the Finance committee reviewed this and has recommended establishment of the fund.

Motion: I move that the Council establish a Library Renovation Donation fund.

By: O'Brien, Sr.

Seconded: Hand

Discussion: Hand said the town is lucky to have a generous donor in Sondra Astor-Stave. He hopes the community responds well to the fund. O'Brien, Jr asked who will have oversight of the fund, who reviews statements, and is it being set up so the only allowable expenditures will be for the library renovation project? Elsesser said this will be under the control of the Finance Director, will be in the monthly reports from Finance, and set up for use of the library renovation project only. If there are leftover funds a discussion will take place to repurpose any remaining funds.

Voting:

For: O'Brien, Sr., O'Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Williams, Conant, Thomas

Against: None

Abstain: None

8.K. 20/21-56: FY 2021/2022 Budget

Blanchard said this pertains to the budget meeting schedule and the groups invited to the meetings to discuss their proposed budget. Are there any particular groups that Council members want to add in?

Thomas suggested Annmarie Sundgren may want to present the Human Services budget as she is new and has not had the opportunity to present previously. Elsesser said the Human Services department did not present last year. We can try to add them in for this year. Thomas said it may be important this year as their demands may have changed that they have to meet.

O'Brien, Sr. noticed these meetings need to be done by April. Elsesser said the budget is to be discussed in a public hearing on March 11, 2021. We can't do a live presentation but we do have to have a presentation and allow questions to be asked. Thomas asked why we can't do a live meeting. Elsesser said because the Council and Board of Education are not holding live meetings right now. It will be live over Zoom but not in person. There are still rules in place about the number of people gathering. Thomas said this meeting would be in a school and the schools are used every day. Thomas would be comfortable with having an in person meeting. Elsesser said this is not the Town Meeting and the Executive Orders end before that meeting. Elsesser would have a person to monitor the Zoom call to help with attendance and questions from attendees. Elsesser if the Council wants to it can vote on having this meeting in person and then ask the BOE to attend the meeting too. O'Brien, Sr. said he does not mind either way. This is for the presentation of the initial budget not what is sent to referendum. Blanchard said controlling the flow of questions is going to be challenging over Zoom. Not everyone has used Zoom. Williams said we could allow for questions to be emailed and let people know how to do that. The questions at this meeting usually are about what citizens hope to have in the budget and gives them a chance to bring their ideas forward. Thomas said people ask about specific line items in the budget. Conant said a compromise might be to extending the period to ask questions and get those answered. Emailed questions could be shared publicly. This manner would be sensitive to those who are not comfortable going to a public meeting at this time.

Elsesser said he will have a meeting with Dr. Petrone about this concern. Thomas said people can be masked and speaking at a microphone. Hand said we can have someone monitor the Zoom meeting and take questions via the Chat feature. Williams said not everyone is involved in Zoom. Email or phone call questions can be asked after watching the presentation on TV. O'Brien, Sr. said we can set up an email address like we did last year. O'Brien, Jr. said telephone calls would work too during the presentation.

8.L. 20/21-57: Consideration/Possible Action: Adoption Of Resolution Denouncing Violence (To Be Distributed)

TOWN OF COVENTRY

AUTHORIZING RESOLUTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL OF COVENTRY HEREBY RESOLVES to adopt a resolution denouncing all forms of political violence committed within the United States of America as follows:

Whereas; The attacks on American cities, businesses, government buildings, and human lives have intensified and become more frequent over the past several months, including but not limited to the attack on the U.S. Capital building by groups of dissidents who charged police barriers and gained access to Congress; and
 Acknowledging; Politically motivated violence is committed by individuals and groups identifying as left leaning, right leaning, and anything in between, and that violence has been utilized as a method of intimidation and to achieve political objectives; and
 Recognizing; Political violence endangers the right of all Americans to peaceably assemble, to petition the government for a redress of grievances, to speak freely and without fear of threat of injury or death, shuts down the dialogue between opposing viewpoints completely, and destroys the fabric of a peaceful society; and
 Emphasizing; The rule of law and the duty to obey the law are integral to the proper function and preservation of our free society, that the Constitution protects peaceful protest, but political violence is wrong and un-American and endangers both innocent life and the process of governance by the people, for the people; and
 Declaring; That politicians and other influential political figures must make it perfectly clear that they both condemn and disavow supporters who commit acts of violence and intimidation in their name, take care to frame their words in such a manner as to clarify that the political action they call for is always peaceful, and reaffirm their commitment to maintaining law and order; and
 Now, therefore, be it resolved; that the Coventry Town Council condemns all forms of political violence committed by anyone: be it here at home, or anywhere in the United States of America, being mindful that all those who engage in violence hurt the very cause they claim to support; be it further
 Resolved; that we urge our citizens and all Americans to reaffirm their support for the rule of law, peaceful protest, and the advancement of liberty and justice for all.

Motion: I move that the Council continue this item to the next meeting.

By: Thomas

Seconded: Hand

Voting:

For: O'Brien, Sr., O'Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Williams, Conant, Thomas

Against: None

Abstain: None

9. Miscellaneous/Correspondence:

9.A. * Letter To Elected Officials Re: COVID Relief Funds (Rev. 1-26-2021)

9.B. * Letter To Elected Officials: Request For Boat Launch Monitoring
 Thomas thanked John for following up. Any response? John – no.

9.C. * Response to Alyson Averett Re Economic Development Concerns

9.D. * Board Of Education: 1/14/2021, 1/21/21 & 1/28/21 Minutes; 2/11/21 Agenda

9.E. * TEC Associates: NECR 2021 Vegetation Control Program

10. Executive Session

- **Labor negotiations**

Executive Session not needed per Elsesser.

- **Manager evaluation**

Executive Session not needed per Elsesser.

11. Adjournment:

Motion: I move that the Council adjourn at 9:49 p.m.

By: Hand

Seconded: O'Brien, Jr.

Voting:

For: O'Brien, Sr., O'Brien, Jr., Hand, Blanchard, Williams, Conant, Thomas

Against: None

Abstain: None

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne B. Filip

Yvonne B. Filip, Town Council Clerk

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

Laura Stone

Subject: Declare Racism a Public Health Crisis

From: Linda Blakesley <lindablakesley@outlook.com>

Sent: Tuesday, February 9, 2021 8:11 PM

To: Julie Blanchard <jblanchard@coventryct.org>; Lisa Catanese <lisacata@aol.com>; Lisa Thomas <lthomas@coventryct.org>; Matthew O'brien Jr. <mobrienjr@coventryct.org>; Matthew OBrien <MattOBrien@coventryct.org>; Richard Williams Jr. <rwilliamsjr@coventryct.org>; Jon Hand <jhand@coventryct.org>; John Elsesser <jelsesser@coventryct.org>; Coventry Audience <Audience@coventryct.org>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Declare Racism a Public Health Crisis

Dear Council Members,

The Town of Coventry must declare racism a public health crisis. As local PowerUp Connecticut leader and founder, Keren Prescott, says, 'you cannot cure what you cannot diagnose.'

Just because we live in a majority white town, does not mean that racism is not impacting our residents. In fact, we owe it to all the children in this town who will one day be global citizens, to create equitable systems in which all children can thrive and outcomes are not determined by race. They are watching. They are learning. One day they will be making decisions in the world that impact all people including the most marginalized and disenfranchised populations.

Health inequities affect millions of black people and people of color through systemic barriers and social determinants. We are all a part of this system. If we are not doing everything we can to dismantle it, then we are upholding it and perpetuating it.

So, I ask all of you, will you uphold or break down? First thing first. Name the problem!

Racism is a public health crisis!

Please look at our neighbors in Manchester whose Board of Directors made this declaration last summer. We are late.

I anticipate that this will be addressed at the next Town Council meeting. Thank you.

Regards,

Linda Blakesley
27 Berry Avenue
Coventry, CT 06238
860-888-2122

