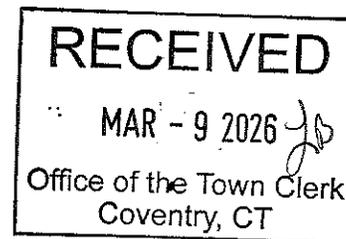


**UNOFFICIAL MINUTES**  
**Coventry Town Council Meeting**  
**March 2, 2026 7:00 PM**  
**Town Hall Annex**



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

The Meeting was called to order by Council Chairwoman Lisa Thomas at 7:02 PM

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

Also Present: James Drumm-Town Manager, Alex Taylor-Special Project Coordinator, and Cherie Trahan-Finance Director.

**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):** None.

**4. Public Hearing: Adoption Of Firearms Safety Ordinance Recommended By Firearms Safety/Home Shooting Range Study Committee:**

Thomas opened the Public Hearing at 7:03 PM, and Hand read the legal notice that was published ahead of the hearing. Thomas reminded those in attendance that the comments made during the public hearing must address the ordinance warned for public comment, as this is not a forum to express personal grievances.

**Cheryl Kuhn, 70 Riley Mountain Road:**

Kuhn spoke in opposition of the draft ordinance citing the following reasons:

- Inadequate citizen representation throughout the process.
- Restrictions indicating existing, previously inspected berms are unsafe (including her own).
- Even with a 250 ft restriction, noise will still be an issue.
- Lack of 'Grandfather Clause'.
- Ordinance has no clear indication of the responsible party to determine the adequacy of a backstop. She recommends that an RSO (Range Safety Office) be the responsible party, not the police department.
- Time restrictions and limits are unfair, when there are no restrictions for gun clubs, who shoot all day, and during nighttime for special events. As well as hunting, which is allowed to start at 7AM.
- Feels that the ordinance is simply rewriting CT State Laws that are already on the books for hunting and applying them to home ranges.

**Chris Kuhn, 70 Riley Mountain Road:**

Kuhn spoke in opposition of the draft ordinance for the following reasons:

- Lack of consistency, honesty, accountability, and reliability from the Town Council throughout the process.
- Lack of concern for citizens' rights
- Ordinance consists of hunting bylaws being applied to a home target range.
- Flaws in the structure of the committee and in the draft ordinance have been ignored.
- Lack of 'Grandfather Clause'.
- Draft Ordinance is open to vague interpretation.

- No clear indication of the responsible party to inspect private ranges.

Jennifer Beausoleil, 1040 Cedar Swamp Road:

Beausoleil spoke in support of the ordinance for the following reasons:

- The committee was made up of a good combination of experts in the field and those interested in recreational firearms use.
- The committee focused on a solution to balance community safety and the right to bear arms and conducted research from various sources.
- An accidental fatal shooting occurred in town in 1998, in her residential neighborhood.
- State laws only apply to hunting. There is nothing to regulate the discharge of firearms for non-hunting use.
- There are very few laws regarding target shooting or recreational, non-hunting, use of a firearm.
- Supports the right to own guns and bear arms. The ordinance does not take away the right to own a gun, or the right to protect themselves.
- Ordinance outlines common sense safety guidelines.

Tim Kollars, 24 Beaver Trail:

Kollars spoke in opposition of the ordinance for the following reasons:

- CT statutes do not allow the discharge of a firearm within 500 ft from occupied buildings.
- A noise complaint has turned into a gun control ordinance proposal.
- Felt sections of the ordinance were vague, including determining what qualifies as an occupied structure.
- Felt that neighbors could put sheds, garages, and other structures on the edge of their property to prohibit neighbors from shooting on their own property.
- Felt that the 4-hour window requirement would result in costly admin fees in order to keep track of start and end times, and verifying compliance.
- Felt definitions were unclear, determining “sunset” and an “adequate backstop”.
- Felt air guns should not be included, as this is limiting for teaching children gun safety.
- Concerns with police officer discretion, especially surrounding property owner permission notes.
- Concerns with the cost of ordinance enforcement and home range evaluations.
- Concerns with the ordinance being challenged, resulting in costly legal fees.

John French, 392 Pucker Street:

French spoke in opposition of the ordinance for the following reasons:

- Definition of “sufficient backstop” is vague, and the ordinance does not list a responsible party to verify whether a backstop is sufficient or not.
- Concerns that homeowners who oppose the use of recreational firearms have the ability to build on their property line in order to make it more difficult or in violation of the ordinance for their neighbors to shoot.
- Concerns with who is responsible for enforcing the 4-hour time window.
- Concerns with fraudulent reports from disgruntled neighbors.
- The fine amount is not clearly defined.
- Shared plans to start a petition to force the Town Council to call a special town meeting where Coventry voters could decide to have this ordinance revoked.

Tracy Underhill, 112 Gardner Tavern Road:

Underhill spoke in opposition of the ordinance for the following reasons:

- Wished that the ordinance was more widely publicized, as she was not made aware until the last minute. She believes a majority of town residents are not even aware of this proposed ordinance.
- Concerned that the ordinance is vague and should at least be redrafted.
- Believes having immeasurable items on an ordinance gives too much power to an individual.
- Feels this is a tax on police department time, on town resources, and town finances.
- Feels that the ordinance is an infringement on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Right.
- Feels that the ordinance was created under the guise of town safety and well-being, when it is a deeper-rooted desire for a noise ordinance.
- Believes the ordinance does nothing to address safety.
- Concerns with the party responsible for determining whether a backstop is sufficient.
- Feel that neighbors have different opinions, but that should not affect constitutional rights.
- Feels that these situations could be avoided by simply being a good neighbor, which seems to have gone out the window.

Frank Masse, 320 Swamp Road:

Masse spoke in opposition of the ordinance for the following reasons:

- He is in agreement with many of the statements already made.
- Feels the ordinance is mainly to address noise.
- Town demographics have changed over time.
- Feels having quiet hours in regard to gun control is a better solution
- Feels there should be more clarity in the ordinance, specifically around the time of day when shooting is allowed.
- Commented he is in favor of safety and noise control.

John Westlake, 507 Pucker Street:

Westlake spoke in opposition of the ordinance for the following reasons:

- Feels the 'word' surrounding the ordinance has not gotten out very well.
- Stated there is a large difference between hunting and target shooting.
- Feels that there is no difference in noise with the distance requirements listed in the ordinance.
- Explained that he has made it a practice to call the police department to notify of his recreational shooting. Now, is concerned that if he calls to notify of his shooting activities, that police will come out to inspect the range, distance, backstop, and the possession of written permission.
- Feels the more access an individual has to a safe firing range, the better one would be with self-defense, limiting accidents, and becoming a more responsible gun-owner.
- Feels the town is already over-regulated.

John Burchard, 2883 Main Street:

Burchard spoke in opposition of the ordinance for the following reasons:

- Neighbor disagreements should not dictate the passing of laws that restrict the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment of freedoms granted by the US Constitution.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment is not a privilege; it is a right.

Bill Glenney, 664 Silver Street:

Glenney was unable to attend the public hearing but submitted a written statement in opposition of the ordinance for Town Council consideration, and to be entered into public record. *His written statement can be found attached at the conclusion of these minutes.*

**5. Public Hearing: Excess Tax Payment Ordinance:**

Thomas opened the Excess Tax Payment Ordinance Public Hearing at 7:50 PM. Larson read the legal notice that was published ahead of the hearing. No speakers were present, and the hearing was closed.

**6. Acceptance Of Minutes, February 17, 2026:**

**Motion:** I move to accept the February 17, 2026, Town Council Meeting Minutes with Thomas’s suggested edits:

By: Larson

Second: Kyer

Discussion/Edits: Continued to the next Town Council meeting.

**7. 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: Gallagher

Discussion: Thomas requested to move Agenda Item 11.C.

Voting:

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

Against:

Abstain:

**8. Reports:**

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

Thomas read the following report:

- I had the pleasure of attending the Coventry Historical Society’s presentation by Dan Gorka titled “The Search for Coventry’s Enslaved: After Freedom”. It was a fascinating and eye-opening presentation. Big thanks to Dan for the many hours of research he has put into this topic. Understanding our history is critical to understanding our present and future. I encourage everyone to attend the Historical Society’s programs.
- My office hours were well attended this month. Topics residents wanted to discuss included:
  - A request for a Town resolution for autism awareness month 2026
  - Concerns about land use issues
  - Discussion of funding towards the annual Arts on Main event organized by the Coventry Arts Guild
  - Discussion of adding hours that the Booth and Dimock Library is open

- Questions about the staging of equipment for the planned Swamp Rd and South St reconstruction project
- Progress update on the Veterans Commission's fundraising efforts to add additional monuments on the Veterans Green and a reminder that Coventry will host an event at the Viet Nam Veterans Memorial monument on March 29 in recognition of National Viet Nam War Veterans Day.
- Please remember that Thursday is the public hearing on the Town Manager's proposed budget. The meeting starts at 7 in the high school lecture hall. This is a critical time for residents to share their thoughts and questions. Also mark your calendars for next Monday, March 9 at 7 pm. The Town Council will meet with the Board of Education to discuss its proposed budget.

**8.A.1. Testimony to Education Committee on H.B. 5033:**

**8.B. Council Members:**

Gallagher reported:

- Congrats to the CHS Girls Basketball team, who is playing for the championship tonight.
- CHS's production of Annie is coming up, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 7PM.
- A non-profit has been created for individuals to donate to Veterans memorial efforts, tax free. More information will be shared and posted to the Veterans Memorial and Events Facebook page.

Blanchard reported:

- Thomas's testimony to the Education Committee on H.B. 5033 was on behalf of the whole Town Council, but she does not remember the entire Town Council discussing it. Thomas responded that the whole Council approved the CRCOG legislative priorities, one of which is to advocate for increased school funding. Blanchard wished more information was shared prior.

**8.C. Steering Committee: Jonathan Hand, Chairperson:**

Hand reported that the meeting was shortened due to it being before the scheduled Town Council meeting. However, there were good discussions on the creation of a School Building Committee. This item was continued to a future steering meeting, as was the rest of the agenda, due to time.

**8.C.1. Steering Committee Recommended Appointments:**

8.C.1.a. Energy Conservation/Alternate Energy Committee: Castillo:

**Motion:** I move to appoint Julie Castillo to the Energy Conservation/Alternate Energy Committee for a term to expire 3/1/2029, as recommended by Steering.

By: Hand

Second: Kyer

Discussion: Gallagher shared that Castillo's background is ideal for this committee; Hand agreed and commented that was mentioned during the Steering meeting.

Voting:

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

Against:



Discussion: Hand explained that Hecht brings a lot of experience working with Coventry Little League. With the things happening at Miller Richardson Park, it would be good to have this experience on the Commission.

Voting:

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

Against:

Abstain:

Larson was curious about the names listed who did not get appointed. Thomas explained that with only a few seats available, not everyone could be appointed, but it was discussed at Steering for the Chair to reach out and notify them of this and explain other opportunities available for their knowledge and skill sets.

8.C.1.c.: Veterans Memorial and Events Commission: Zetterstrom:

**Motion:** I move to appoint Carl Zetterstrom to the Veterans Memorial and Events Commission for a term to expire 1/1/2028, as recommended by Steering.

By: Hand

Second: Kyer

Discussion: Hand commented that Zetterstrom is the Post Commander of American Legion Post-52, bringing a knowledgeable skill set to this Commission. Gallagher added that after speaking with him recently, he seems very interested in helping in veteran related events, making this a perfect position for him and appreciates him stepping up to serve. Thomas stated that he is taking on the courageous task of filling the shoes of previous Post 52 Commander, Manny Rodrigues.

Voting:

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

Against:

Abstain:

**8.D. \*Finance Committee: Robyn Gallagher, Chairperson:**

**8.D.1. \*Finance Committee Minutes: 2/9/2026**

**8.E. \*COVRRRA**

**8.F. Town Manager: James D. Drumm:**

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

Town Manager Drumm shared the following highlights:

- Charter Revision Commission- Their next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>. During the meeting they are expected to interview the Finance Director and Collector of Revenue.
- Committee/Commission Review-Town Staff continues to work on this project. The Parks and Recreation Commission review was completed last meeting. The next committees being looked into are the Softball Field Committee and the Human Services Advisory Committee. Both committees have not met since 2022. Findings and recommendations will be brought to Steering.

- Assessor Vacancy- The position has been advertised in CCM, the CT Association of Assessing Officers, and on the Town Manager’s Facebook page. No applications have been received. Extra measures have been taken to reach out to every Assessor in the State of CT via email with a link to the job advertisement. The deadline is March 4<sup>th</sup>, which will likely need to be extended.
- Human Services Administrator Anne Marie Sundgren has given her resignation. Her last day is March 24<sup>th</sup>. The position is being posted to the union members, with a deadline of March 9<sup>th</sup>. If no applications are received, it will be advertised to the public.
- Mechanic 1 position is being advertised as well.
- CHS Roof Project-With the project completed, the town is working on getting state reimbursements. An old state law did not allow the town to request reimbursement, as too many bidders were interviewed. Coventry interviewed 5, when the limit was 4. The state realized the law was bad and has since amended it. Coventry requested Rep. Ackert to put up a special law that would waive the requirement, in order for Coventry to get reimbursed.
- CHS HVAC-2<sup>nd</sup> reimbursement has been submitted and approved. Payment of \$2.9M has been received by the Finance Office.
- Radio Tower Contract-Staff has worked to negotiate a contract with T-Mobile. This was initially expected to be a short 3-month project, but turned into 2 years of back-and-forth communications between attorneys. At the last Town Council meeting the contract was renewed, which is good for a maximum of 20 years.
- Plains Road Water Line Project- Still waiting for the DPH to approve the town’s bid package. However, they have reached out with proposed amendments. Town Engineer Todd Penney is working on those amendments. Once amendments are made, the DPH will have the remaining 30 days to complete their review. The hope is to go out to bid in March, with construction starting in July. Construction is anticipated to take 2 months.
- Patriots Park Improvements- Construction began in December with tree removal. Town Staff is looking at bid documents to be completed, and for construction of the playground to begin in March with a summer completion.

Questions/Comments:

Patriots Park- Kyer questioned if his previous suggestion of removing trees across from the boat ramp to redirect geese has been looked into, as it might eliminate the need for some water circulators. Drumm was unsure and will speak with Penney.

**9. Unfinished Business:**

**9.A. 25/26-30: Consideration/Possible Action Adoption Of Resolution 2026-04, Adopting Ordinance #267, establishing Regulations For The Discharge Of Firearms As Recommended By The Firearms Safety/Home Shooting Range Study Committee:**

**Motion:** I move to approve Resolution 2026-04, adopting ordinance Number 267, a resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Coventry, Connecticut, amending the Town of Coventry Code of Ordinances, Chapter 66, “Offenses and Miscellaneous Provisions”, Adopting Article 3, “discharge of firearms and air guns”, providing severability, repealing ordinances in conflict, and providing an effective date.

By: Hand

Second: Gallagher

Discussion: Thomas shared that comments were received during the public hearing for Council consideration, many of which were heard prior to the hearing. The Firearms Safety and Home Shooting Range Study Committee had heard these comments as well and took them into consideration during their work.

Thomas reminded that the ordinance was the result of a committee charged by the Town Council to look at multiple situations in Coventry.

A proposed amendment was added to the draft in order to exempt firearms use for agricultural purposes and functions. Taylor read the proposed language included in the draft, under Section 66-79 Exemptions, Sub-section J and references CT General Statutes Section 1-1Q.

Thomas read a constitutional analysis and legal opinion of the ordinance provided by town attorneys, which determined the ordinance to be defensible under any constitutional or statutory challenge.

Hand commented that the charge of the committee was never to simply create an ordinance; it was to study the issues and provided remedies could be put forward. After their research and study of what other towns do, they ended up recommending an ordinance.

Wheaton commented that the majority of people who spoke during the public hearing were not in favor of the Town Council passing the ordinance. Blanchard agreed and reiterated similar sentiments. She added that with the addition proposed to include an exemption for agricultural purposes, there should be more time allowed for review.

Gallagher questioned if the addition led to compliance issues with legal notice. Drumm responded that it is his understanding it does not, as the addition was an exemption not further limitations or regulations.

Hand and Gallagher shared thanks to both the citizens who came to speak tonight, as well as for the committee.

Blanchard expressed that she is not in support of this and feels that the community should vote on it along with the budget referendum in May. She reminded that they had the opportunity to speak on it but not vote.

Blanchard also reminded the Council of the email from Bill Glenney, which Thomas read into record.

Thomas clarified the following key points:

- The charging of the Firearms Safety Home Shooting Range Study Committee was not based off any 1 complaint or concern. Several complaints were received from various parts of town.
- There are no state statutes that address recreational shooting on personal property. Other towns have ordinances in place for this reason.
- Range practice in your own backyard is not the same as hunting and comes with different safety needs and sensitivities.
- She does not believe that the Town Council has wasted time, as listening to the community and forming committees are part of the Town Council's responsibilities.
- The committee was filled with Coventry residents with Planning and Zoning background and firearms shooting and instruction knowledge. They did not waste their time and made the choice to serve on this committee and give their time.

Hand added that there was a very good response from the community to fill seats on this committee, and the town ended up having very qualified individuals with extensive experience, one of whom is a Chief Range Safety Officer. All members on the committee were individuals who support the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Right and partake in the hobby of hunting or recreational shooting.

Larson spoke in favor of the ordinance stating that many of the exemptions are reasonable, and there is a good balance from his view of being a gun owner/recreational shooter, and as a responsible neighbor. He shared concerns with comments made during the public hearing about language being vague and that tightening the language. He stressed that in doing so, personal responsibility would be taken away from citizens. The end goal is to be a good neighbor and having the personal responsibilities that come along with that.

Blanchard agreed with being a good neighbor. However, she feels this ordinance takes away from citizens enjoying their personal property in a manner that they want to, which bothers her more than anything.

Thomas explained that there are many ordinances on the books that dictate what can and can't be done on personal property in terms of building, wetlands, etc. Many of which are for safety purposes. She explained that there needs to be balance between everyone's rights and competing needs. She continued that she views the ordinance as a tool to remind neighbors of safety and neighbors co-existing. However, many calls come to the Police Department and Zoning Enforcement Office, where neighbors are not communicating or getting along. Often, these departments do not have a tool to help resolve the issue. This ordinance can provide guidelines to help resolve issues. She reminded that there were other incidents besides noise that this ordinance addresses.

Hand added that in Glenney's email he mentioned that Tolland has not used their ordinance. Hand reminded that this is a good thing, and likely because the creation of the ordinance created balance and 'drew a line' on violations.

Gallagher spoke to Blanchard's point about enjoying one's own personal property. She agrees to a certain extent but reminded that in situations of a drought, you can't have a bon fire. She reminded that there are things that don't respect property boundaries, like sparks from a bon fire or stray bullets. In certain instances, this becomes a safety risk, which becomes an infringement upon someone else's enjoyment of their property. Gallagher also shared hopes that this ordinance is educating people on safe boundaries and encouraging conversations between neighbors that should already be happening. She added that the analysis from the attorneys indicates that this ordinance is not an infringement on anyone's rights at constitutional levels.

Kyer shared his experience shooting as a boy scout and boy scout counselor. He explained that firearms safety was instilled in him from early on and focused on it even more being a counselor responsible for those boy scouts learning to shoot. He respects everyone's opinion and understands the difference between shooting a gun and having a bon fire, as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment is a Constitutional right. However, he is in support of this ordinance due to the safety aspects it addresses.

Thomas also shared that there is no intent to be punitive with the ordinance. There will be no one proactively inspecting properties and recording how long someone is shooting. It would be put in place to have safety provisions and allow staff to address concerns should they arise. She anticipates a visit from the police department for a concern about recreational firearms shooting on personal property would be conversational and educational.

**Hand amended his motion to include the proposed amendment, Section 66-79 Exemptions, Subsection J, adding agricultural purposes and functions.**

Voting:

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

Against: Blanchard and Wheaton.

Abstain:

**9.B. 25/26-35: Consideration/Possible Action: Adoption Of Resolution 2026-05, Adopting Ordinance #268, Establishing A Policy For Excess Tax Payments And Incomplete Tax Payments:**

**Motion:** I move to approve Resolution 2026-05, adopting ordinance Number 268, a resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Coventry, Connecticut, amending the Town of Coventry Code of Ordinances, Chapter 94, "Taxation", providing severability, fulfilling ordinances in conflict, and providing an effective date.

By: Hand

Second: Larson

Discussion: Wheaton commented that this is a commonsense item, that is balanced both ways. Hand agreed and added that this has been past practice for several years. Gallagher reminded that the memo states that this does not apply to the Vision Government overpayment/underpayment scenario.

Voting:

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

Against:

Abstain:

**10. New Business:**

**10.A. 25/26-39: FY 2026/7 Budget**

- Presentation of Proposed Budget by Town Manager

Drumm passed out budget books, which included the BOE's proposed budget. Drumm read the following letter: Town Manager's Letter. Drumm then reviewed the budget by section.

Drumm discussed key budget drivers and challenges as described in the abbreviated budget:

- EMS Department savings has allowed the general fund transfer supplementing this fund to be decreased to under \$75,000. The EMS department continuously puts forth efforts to recruit volunteers for further cost savings.
- Trash/recycling crisis the state is in with the trash treatment plant closing over 3 years ago. While the Governor pushes for a new plant to open, even if the process was initiated today, completion would be years away. Currently, the town's solid waste contract calls for a 3% increase annually, with recycling charges constantly changing. However, recycling disposal costs have exceeded trash disposal. During COVID, the COVRRRA fund dropped into the negative, and the town has been working on financial recovery for that account without raising fees for fiscal year 2027/27.
- Wastewater treatment plant upgrade is necessary as the facility has been operating without a permit for over a decade. The WPCA has been researching solutions for over 5 years, and any solution will require heavy

funding, with the anticipation of state and federal aid. The WPCA has not raised fees in the past several years but will need to do so this year to cover increased operating costs. Increases are expected to be \$2.92/month or \$35/yr for connected households.

- A switch will be made with the Recreation Department, as a General Fund Transfer will help cover administration fees, and the Parks and Rec fund covering general park maintenance expenses.
- Workload on town staff has increased, which has led to requests for additional staffing or for additional hours. The Town Manager's proposed budget does not include an additional full-time town staff.
- The Police Chief has requested the promotion of one of his officers to a supervisory sergeant position. This would allow for better coverage for the Police Department and more hours when a supervisor is available.
- The town will need to negotiate 4 collective bargaining agreements that expire on July 1, 2026. Negotiations are underway, but salary information will be unknown prior to budget adoption. Funding for these salaries will come from a contingency account.
- The Booth and Dimock Library is managed independently but funded annually by the town. The Library's Director and Board of Trustees have requested that funding be increased in order to expand operating hours until Monday. This request was not included in the Town Manager's budget due to increased cost, but it is proposed that the Booth and Dimock Library receive a 4% spending increase.
- The 2026/27 Budget accounts for over \$28M to be received in grant funds to be used for things like design and construction of new bridges, traffic improvements, and facility and infrastructure improvements.
- Grant funding does not cover all municipal projects, and the general fund will need to be used to cover capital improvement needs

Drumm commented that he understands that many in the community cannot easily absorb tax and fee increases. He explained that they try to balance the level of service the residents want versus the level of service residents can afford. Town staff and the Town Council are well aware of economic conditions. Fortunately, the Grand List for Coventry has grown this year. The median house in town would see taxes at \$6,299.

The 2026-2027 budget calls for an increase in spending of \$2,247,047, which is an .76% increase over the previous year. This puts the new mil rate at 25.17, which is an increase of 1.41 mils or a 5.95% increase over the current mil rate.

Charts were reviewed that showed the total increase by budget, a budget breakdown for the median house, and comparisons of FY 2025/26 to FY 2026/27. Drumm feels the Town and BOE have put forward responsible budgets with a goal of better, more cost-effective services.

#### Questions:

Wheaton was curious as to why the spending increase is going up 5%, with the Grand List growing by 1%. However, the mil rate is going up 6%. He asked for clarification on how that makes sense. Gallagher explained there are revenue decreases in other areas that equate for the differences. Trahan also commented that there is no recommended use of fund balance this fiscal year as well.

Thomas encouraged Wheaton and Larson to really go through the budget book and take some time to understand how it is laid out.

Gallagher asked for a memorandum of items within the budget that are increasing over a certain threshold, whether it be percentage wise or dollar amount. Trahan commented that there are a few items with over a 5% increase or over a \$10,000 increase that can be easily explained.

Gallagher questioned why the EMS general fund transfer line item, that has been separate since COVID, has now been included in General Government. Trahan explained that the transfer falls under the general fund as an operating expense. She felt that it distorts the operating budget by pulling it out separately. However, she noted it can still be tracked separately. Additionally, the reduced amount of the transfer this year shows a reduction in operating expenses. Keeping the transfer as its own separate line item, would require the budget to be cut another \$75,000 in order to get the same percentage budget increase. Trahan agreed with tracking it separately but felt it needs to be included with operating expenses since that is what it is. She believes doing it this way will be clearer. Gallagher explained that she wants it to be as clear as possible so that residents can see the Fire/EMS savings that Fire Chief Bud Meyers has been able to produce. Drumm agreed and explained that this shows dependence on the general fund going down with cost recovery from increased fees in the same trend. He added that he will highlight this during the budget presentation.

Drumm reminded that the amount in Capital Improvement has increased significantly (double), as last year the Town Council reduced Capital by \$400,000. However, debt service has dropped significantly, balancing out the increase. Gallagher requested a chart of Capital history over the past 10 years, which Trahan explained is already included. The Council was concerned to see that Capital spending is in the same place it was 10 years ago.

#### **11. Miscellaneous/Correspondence:**

##### **11.A. \* Office Of Rep. Courtney Re: Legislative Update:**

##### **11.B. \* Office Of Sen. Murphy Re: February Update:**

##### **11.C. \* Praise For Department Of Public Works:**

Thomas read a letter from a resident praising a kind gesture of the DPW crew, having large trucks drive by a house in town for a child's birthday. The gesture was well received, and the resident spoke to the kindness and selflessness of DPW staff, in such a negative world.

The resident also spoke on the hard efforts of the DPW in keeping the town of Coventry running smoothly.

##### **11.D. \* Sen. Gordon And Rep. Ackert Re: Legislative Update:**

##### **11.E. \*Sen. Jeff Gordon Re: Senate Bill 151:**

#### **12. Adjournment:**

**Motion:** I move that the Town Council adjourn the meeting at 10:05 PM.

By: Kyer

Second: Wheaton

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 PM by unanimous vote.

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.**

**Bill Glenney-Firearms Safety/Home Shooting Range Ordinance Opposition:**

Coventry Town Council,

As you know, on Monday, 02 March 2026, the Coventry Town Council will hold a public hearing seeking approval of an ordinance that will tell legal gun owners when, where, and the duration that they can discharge their firearms. This ordinance is intended to ensure safe use of firearms and for the well-being of residents of Coventry. This ordinance is a solution for a non-existent problem and represents a waste of precious time and attention of Town Councilors and Town Staff.

What started off as a disagreement between neighbors on Riley Mountain Road in 2023-2024, the Town Council turned into a demand for action. A Firearms Safety/Home Shooting Range Study Committee was formed and within a few months, the Committee determined that an ordinance constraining discharge of firearms was needed. This determination was based on anecdotal information that over a period of about 3 years, the Coventry Police Department (CPD) received 30-40 calls related to discharge of firearms. According to the CPD, "a high percentage of the . . . complaints are due to noise." The Committee reviewed existing Connecticut State statutes and ordinances from at least four towns, including Tolland. When the Committee asked Tolland how many times they had to use their ordinance in response to any complaints, the answer was none since the ordinance was approved, some 4 years or more in the past. There is no good reason to have an ordinance when one isn't needed.

To reach this point and to generate this solution for a non-existent problem has consumed 13 months of time and energy of the five committee members, Town staff, and the CPD Chief. Furthermore, nearly 24 months of time and attention by the Town Council and Council Steering Committee have been distracted from more urgent matters facing our Town, including taxes, budget, and quality of education, all certainly more important than infrequent complaints of noise from lawful discharge of firearms.

Please stop wasting your limited time and energy. Stop any further efforts to pass this unnecessary ordinance.

Bill Glenney  
Coventry, CT.