

**UNOFFICIAL MINUTES**  
**Town Council Finance Committee Meeting**  
**March 9, 2026      6:00pm**  
**Town Hall Annex**

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

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Robyn Gallagher at 6:04 PM.

Members Present: Robyn Gallagher-Chairwoman, Julie Blanchard, Peter Larson, and Lisa Thomas - Council Chairwoman & Ex-Officio Member.

Absent: None

Also Present: James Drumm-Town Manager, and Cherie Trahan-Interim Finance Director.

**2. Acceptance of Minutes: February 17, 2026-Special Meeting:**

**Motion:** I move to accept the February 17, 2026, Finance Committee Special Meeting Minutes.

By: Larson

Second: Blanchard

Discussion/Edits:

- Pg. 2, 3<sup>rd</sup> line up from the bottom, change “the Drumm” to “that Mr. Drumm”.
- Pg. 3, Under Agenda Item 5, Under “Software Upgrade”, 5<sup>th</sup> line down, change “the use” to “they use”.

Voting: Unanimously in favor

**3.Reports:**

**3.A. Committee Chair - Robyn Gallagher:** None

**3.B. Committee Members:** None

**3.C. Monthly Financial Reports:**

Trahan reported on the following Finance Department highlights:

- The February Financial report is not available, and the Finance Committee has already reviewed and received the previous one. Trahan is working on an updated report.
- Snow removal costs have significantly impacted the budget. The next report will have projections and what the town can do about it. The line item is expected to be \$115,000 over budget.
- The town is in good shape with the energy market and gas costs. Contracts are locked in until December 2027 at current prices. Electricity is in a 4-year contract.

Questions and Comments:

Gallagher questioned how much of the COVRRRA hauler and disposal fees are encumbered, as based on the report it appears this account will go way over on expenditures. Drumm explained that it would be hard to track. Trahan stated that as payments are made, encumbrances are drawn down. Trahan continued that COVRRRA expenditures excluding encumbrances are \$838,515. Gallagher commented that expenditures are at

approximately \$800,000 for ½ the year, which will offset the balance of \$766,000 in the general fund, just about breaking even at year end.

Gallagher asked if the EMS transfer had been done yet, which Trahan informed it had not. Gallagher shared some concern that, in previous years, the transfer has typically been made by this point. Trahan explained that she would prefer to do a quarterly transfer, but she is still working on getting caught up with her normal procedures. She explained that she is going to get that done this month so that she can more accurately know where the finances are.

Gallagher asked if the EMS Department does not need the entire general fund transfer, if the town is legally required to transfer the full amount since that was what was approved at referendum. It was determined that the town can transfer only what is necessary. Moving forward, the EMS Department will no longer be a separate line item. Trahan stated that before reducing the FY 25-26 transfer, she wants to make sure that FY 26-27 is covered.

The Finance Committee asked if the general fund is up to date. Trahan informed it is not up to date yet, but it is being worked on. She continued that the office is about halfway through revenues, and waiting on some information from the Collector's office. She expects revenues to be caught up by the end of the week, and transfers to be wrapped up in about 2 weeks. She stressed that she understands the importance of this, especially during budget discussions.

**3.D. Board of Education Reports - January 2026:** No discussion.

**3.E. General Fund Accounting Update:**

Trahan reiterated that the Finance Office is working on bank reconciliations and getting caught up with the BOE. She explained that there has been a lot of retirement paperwork and personnel things to process that take a lot of time.

Gallagher questioned if the town owed the BOE any more reconciliation paperwork. Trahan replied yes, as the last set was sent in December, and she hopes to get another round of paperwork by the end of March.

**3.F. Status Update on Referendum Information - Bond Counsel Progress:**

Drumm highlighted the documents for the resolution of Capital Projects to be bonded. He explained that if the resolution was pushed to the next Town Council meeting for adoption, there could be a vote on this before the budget referendum. However, the Bond referendum with the budget is less expensive.

Gallagher pointed out that the formatting on the resolution is bad, as numbers in the total cost columns are cut off. Drumm confirmed it will be fixed before coming to the Town Council.

Blanchard commented that during previous discussions, she thought it was considered to have the items listed individually on the bond referendum instead of grouped together. She shared concerns that residents would vote no if they did not agree with all items.

Thomas shared that if the Town Council and Town Staff both agreed that these are priority items that the town needs, and things that need to happen, then they should be voted on as a whole, instead of pitting the schools against the town. Thomas shared concerns that the voters may vote ‘no’ on something that they don’t know or understand what it’s for.

Gallagher agreed with both sides but explained that she doesn’t feel that they should be separate unless they were all thematically different. Gallagher felt that all of the items to be on the bond referendum fall under the ‘safety’ umbrella.

Drumm shared a different perspective that if they were all separated out, groups of people could vote for the things important to them, and against the others leading to none of the items to pass.

Gallagher stated at this point they are guessing the will of the people, and there is no way to know. However, with everything being safety related she is comfortable with it grouped.

**Motion:** I move to move the Capital Projects Resolution forward to the full Town Council.

By: Gallagher

Second: Larson

Discussion: None

Vote:

In Favor: Gallagher and Larson

Against: Blanchard

Abstain: None

**3.G. Discussion of Anticipated ECHIP Reserve:**

Gallagher questioned if there were any updated numbers from USI. Drumm responded “No”, as that is something they have indicated will need to come from ECHIP, and may be being audited. Trahan explained that she has a rough estimate of the reserves from Coventry, but final numbers are unknown, because it is difficult to project claims. She assumes everything will stay on track, but things happen.

Drumm stated that ECHIP is looking to determine what everyone’s amount should be at the end. Trahan explained that as a pool between the town and BOE there is about \$1M. Gallagher felt that amount should be enough to cover any claims that come in the next 3 months. Trahan agreed but reminded that there should be a healthy amount to start a new reserve going forward with the changes to insurance.

Gallagher asked if the past April, May, and June insurance claim history could be looked into, to see if there was a pattern they could try and plan for. Thomas advised against that, as the information is so variable. She reminded that employees are still paying into it as well.

Gallagher also asked if information could be provided about how much the town has been paying in, including employee contributions to ECHIP, and how much the BOE is paying in, including employee contributions to

ECHIP. She explained that she wants to look into this to compare the per employee basis bases on census between the BOE and the town to make sure the town is paying appropriately. Trahan stated that we are, and that ECHIP and USI have run the numbers based on the individual census. She explained that the BOE's contribution is much higher in total because they have more employees. Trahan also explained that all insurance rates are the same for both the BOE and town by coverage (family, single, 2-person). The amount that goes into the reserves is based on what each organization is paying in, less the claims that are going out.

Drumm shared that if it was separated, the BOE has a very healthy reserve, where the town would need to make up the difference to over fund the reserve. The contributions and claims are tracked separately, but it is viewed as a pooled fund. Trahan expressed comfort that the town is paying in the right amount and being charged accurately. She noted that there were times that they needed to be adjusted during budget periods, which is very common. Thomas commented that it is mutually beneficial getting the budget passed.

It was confirmed for this year that the town is paying an appropriate amount based on census. Thomas suggested Drumm and Trahan think through the insurance/ECHIP issues to see if there is a way to provide more information in a report and represent what the BOE and the town have done historically.

Trahan reminded that she could do this but needs to know the priority. She explained she has not finished the audit, they are in the middle of budget, and she is working on reconciliations and financial reports. Gallagher shared concerns that the information could impact the Council's budget thoughts. Thomas commented that she feels the only thing that would impact budget thoughts are the rates of the new plan in FY 26-27. Drumm noted that those are known and are included, and covered, in the budget proposal. He explained the only concern is that the BOE feels that the town should be strengthening the reserve as they have pulled from it in the past. Blanchard felt that she feels the BOE is more concerned with how they are going to get 'their' portion from ECHIP, if the town chose to move away from a 'self-funding' insurance plan.

Trahan explained that she has experience and procedures for handling self-funding insurance plans with reserves servicing more than 1 organization to ensure everyone gets the same benefit.

**Motion:** I move to move up Agenda Item 4, to take place immediately after Agenda Item 3.G.

By: Blanchard

Second: Larson

Discussion: None

Vote: Unanimously in favor.

#### **4. Citizens Budget Guide:**

Drumm explained that both draft guides have the same information but in 2 different formats.

The Finance Committee agreed that the 2-page guide was the better format and will look more familiar to Coventry residents. It was requested that it be cleaned up and put on the next Town Council agenda. Thomas requested that once it is cleaned up, it be sent to all Councilors to have extra time to review before the meeting.

