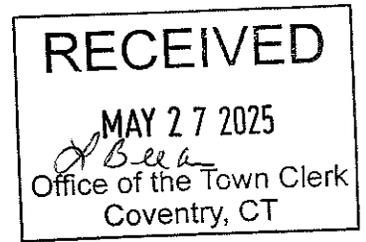


**Town of Coventry
Firearms Safety/Home Shooting Range Study Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday May 15, 2025**



1. Call To Order, Roll Call:

By: Murray Time: 6:33 p.m. Place: Conference Room B & Zoom

		PRESENT	ABSENT
REGULAR MEMBERS:	Brian Murray, Chairperson	X	
	Kenneth Stein, Vice Chairperson	X	
	Dudley Brand	X	
	Mike Mangiafico	X	
	Carolyn Batz-remote		X
STAFF:	Jana Roberson, Director of Planning & Dev't.	X	
	Chief of Police Eric Peterson-Joined at 6:47 PM	X	

Also present: Special Projects Coordinator Alex Taylor, and Town Manager James Drumm (Joined 6:54 PM)

2. Approval Of Minutes:

A. Minutes, April 17, 2025:

Motion: I move to accept the April 17th, 2025, Firearms Safety/Home Shooting Range Study Committee Meeting Minutes.

By: Brand Second: Mangiafico

Discussion: None

Vote: Unanimously in favor

Agenda Items 3 & 4 were discussed simultaneously

3. Draft of Firearms Ordinance:

Taylor explained that the newest version was attached as a clean document, and a version that showed the edits that were made from last meeting, in which changes were minor. He reviewed the changes briefly. He explained that the latest version has been reviewed by the town's attorney, and they felt that the draft ordinance was in line with similar ordinances, and there appear to be no issues or legal dilemmas with how it is currently written. However, it was noted in the memorandum from the attorney that courts have not dealt with such an ordinance, and this should be kept in mind should the ordinance be legally pursued in the future.

Mangiafico felt that the ordinance seemed to make the matter over complicated and wished there was a simpler way to address the issues that have come up in town. There is a lot that has been involved and covered by this committee. It shows that a lot of thought and effort has gone into this, but it's too bad that it has gotten to this point. Mangiafico shared concerns that people don't like change, and this ordinance will be a hard sell to the community. He added that he expects quite a bit of push back on this. He noted that when presenting this to the community, the language should be simplified to spell it out for the community

Taylor agreed these were legitimate concerns, but the committee has spent a considerable amount of time and effort to put this together. All those who would be impacted were considered, and exceptions were included as seen fit. Taylor also reminded that ordinances were reviewed from several other towns. Tolland's ordinance was developed due to a specific incident, and since its adoption in 2010 it has not had to be enforced. There could be a few reasons as to why this is the case, but it is similar to what is going on here in

It was reminded that moving forward is ultimately up to the Town Council. The Council and Police Chief will also have a part in explaining the purpose of this ordinance to the community, should it be adopted.

The committee did not have any further questions or issues with the ordinance as presented. Brand stated that the draft ordinance, as written, would likely cover any future problems and there is little gray area. It was thought that the ordinance would prove itself worthwhile. Chief Peterson felt it looks good and thinks it will work well as a reference tool for officer. He was happy to see that the attorney reviewed and made no revisions.

Murray questioned if there was anything Chief Peterson is aware of that is not included in the ordinance that should be. Chief Peterson stated no and explained that the main issues he encounters is the closeness of a range or firing is to someone's house, and the duration of shooting. It was noted that 4 hours is more than reasonable, and most people will not go that long. Chief Peterson also explained that officers will approximate the time frame and be reasonable. He reminded that the best thing is for everyone to have a mutual understanding.

It was stressed that the goal of this committee is to solve issues in town, not to be activists. The items included in the ordinance, are based on actual situations that have happened in town.

Chief Peterson commented that he thinks 250 feet is too close. However, it was discussed that moving the distance to 500 feet would exclude a lot of people. Since the Town Council still has to review, and public feedback is wanted, it was suggested to leave the 250 feet, and it can be changed if there is an issue. Chief Peterson explained that he liked 350 feet better. It was noted that this section can be highlighted on the draft

as a specific area to get feedback on from the public. It was suggested to add language that if the distance is less than 350 feet, an individual could get written permission from their neighbor. Brand also reminded that flammable materials should be included. He reminded that per hunting regulations, there is a required distance from flammable materials. The ordinance does not currently include this, it shooting may be required to be more than 250 feet from these materials.

It was discussed that another town ordinance had a restriction that there could be no firearms discharge within a half mile of a school during school hours. The committee felt that this would not likely be an issue and decided to not include it in the ordinance. The committee noted that most people are reasonable, and only a few situations have been difficult. Chief Peterson explained that there have been no calls or concerns that were close to the schools in the last 2 years. The committee felt that a half mile radius may be too large.

Safety concerns were brought up regarding accidental discharge. It was suggested to include the distance from property lines. Taylor explained that this was intentionally left out as property lines are invisible and it is difficult to know where they are. The committee also discussed how the layouts of different properties, will impact the need for different distances and safety measures.

Taylor summarized the additional changes to make to the draft ordinance:

1. Look at including being more than 250 feet from flammable materials
2. Increase shooting/range distance to 350 feet, pending public feedback. Also include that if the shooting distance is less than 350 feet it can be done so with the written permission of the neighbor(s).
3. Reach out to the town attorney and FOIA regarding releasability of names/addresses of people who call to notify the PD that they will be shooting. Chief Peterson explained he would handle this task. It was noted that other towns have this included in their ordinance and requests for recordings are rare.

4. Review of Questions for Chief Peterson:

Concerns were expressed about the Police Department taking calls. Chief Peterson explained that the department receives these types of calls already and prefers that people do call to notify the department of this activity.

Stein state that the pistol permit information is protected by state law. He expressed concerns that this information could be made available if someone requested copies/recordings of phone calls to the police department under FOIA. He stressed that if the individual's name, who is calling to inform the department they will be shooting, cannot be redacted under FOIA then he is against having the potential shooter calling to notify the police department. Chief Peterson stated that he thinks that information would be releasable. He explained that there would be no violations of laws, as they are not giving out the pistol permit information. However, he explained that this is something he can request the attorney look into further. Stein continued that it is implied that if a person is shooting, they would have purchased a firearm and ammo, both of which require a permit to do. If that person's name and address are available on the call that it is not protecting the rights of the permit holder. He shared concerns that this would lead to an increase of stolen firearms if bad guys knew where to find the guns.

Chief Peterson still stated that having individuals call before shooting is a good idea and that it would be good for the department to have a heads up. This saves department resources. He explained that if it had to come out of the ordinance, it would not be a big deal. Roberson reminded that the call to the Police Department is what started the clock on the 4-hour shooting window. Chief Peterson explained that the timing can be approximate. The responding officer can get the start time from the caller or shooter. He stated that if there was an issue where there was an extreme discrepancy (5 mins vs 5 hours), whoever is lying will be caught through a simple investigation speaking with neighboring properties.

Murray questioned situations in which the ordinance would be referenced versus a criminal charge. Chief Peterson explained past situations that involved recklessness, that warranted a criminal charge. He explained that most situations in which people are firing at their homes can be resolved by talking to the resident, education, and explaining the ordinance. He stated that his officers will use general common sense during investigations and to verify safety.

5. Ordinance Background Presentation Progress Review:

The committee discussed preparing a presentation that will be used when the results of the study and suggestion for a solution is presented to the Town Council. Additionally, this presentation could be used to inform the public as well. Murray commented that he has started working on it.

It was questioned whether the committee should bring their findings to Steering first. Roberson explained that their charge simply states to report back to the Town Council, so she explained that there is no need to go to Steering. Taylor read the charge of the committee.

The presentation should include the reasoning why the ordinance was created, and why it is the recommended solution. Drumm explained that he Town Council will review and determine next steps/direction. At that time, the Town Council may decide to extend the life of this committee and/or request them to host the public meeting/feedback session. After hearing from the public, the Town Council may have changes they want this committee to make.

6. Discussion of Future Agendas/Citizen Feedback:

The next Firearms Committee meeting is scheduled for June 19th. At that meeting, the committee's goal will be to make final changes to the draft ordinance and polish the draft presentation for the Town Council. The committee will then be on the Town Council's 1st meeting agenda in July (July 7th) to share their presentation. The committee will need to have consensus or a motion to move the presentation and draft ordinance forward to the Town Council. This can be done at the June meeting.

Stein shared concerns with whether there will be enough time to extend the life of the committee, if this is the decision at the July meeting. Drumm assured that it is a simple amendment to the resolution to extend the time allowed to the committee. It was reminded that the copy of the presentation will need to be submitted no later than July 3rd to be included on the Town Council agenda, as well as to allow Councilors adequate time to review it prior to the meeting. The hope is to have the presentation draft completed at the June 19th Firearms Safety/HSR meeting. It was suggested the Chief Peterson be in attendance to the

July 7th Town Council meeting for the presentation and to help with any questions the Town Council may have. He stated that he would be in attendance.

It was reiterated that the goals of the June 19th meeting are to have a final draft presentation and a clean draft ordinance.

7. **Other Business:** None

8. **Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 8:10 PM.

Submitted by,

Nicole Archambault

Nicole Archambault

Minutes Clerk

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