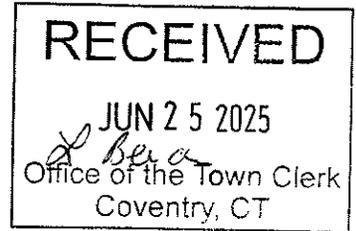


**Town of Coventry  
Firearms Safety/Home Shooting Range Study Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday June 19, 2025**



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

By: Murray                      Time: 6:34 p.m.                      Place: Conference Room B & Zoom

		PRESENT	ABSENT
<b>REGULAR MEMBERS:</b>	Brian Murray, Chairperson	X	
	Kenneth Stein, Vice Chairperson	X	
	Dudley Brand	X	
	Mike Mangiafico-Joined at 6:53 PM	X	
	Carolyn Batz		X
<b>STAFF:</b>	Jana Roberson, Director of Planning & Dev't.		X
	Chief of Police Eric Peterson-left at 7:04 PM	X	

Also present: Special Projects Coordinator Alex Taylor, and Town Manager James Drumm.

**2. Approval Of Minutes:**

**A. Minutes, May 15, 2025:**

**Motion:** I move to accept the May 15, 2025, Firearms Safety/Home Shooting Range Study Committee Meeting Minutes.

By: Stein                                      Second: Brand

Discussion: None

Vote: Unanimously in favor

**3. Draft of Firearms Ordinance:**

Taylor explained that the draft ordinance has had only 1 change from the previous meeting, as suggested by the committee. In Section 66-77, Subsection C, the distance was changed from 250 ft. to 350 ft. As a restriction for shooting near occupied structures, unless given authorization from the neighbor(s) to be within a lesser

distance. Also, it was added that this distance should apply when firing near a structure/area that serves as storage for flammable materials.

Murray questioned if there was any sense of how this distance change would impact existing ranges. Chief Peterson was unsure.

Different factors were noted that could impact each situation in terms of noise, including distance, gun caliber, lay of the land.

Mangiafico commented that there was some conversation on Facebook regarding the distance requirement of 250 ft. There were concerns that this would lead to pushback, but it also seemed like the concerns were baseless. Taylor reminded that if any citizens want to see any of the meeting recordings, they can be requested and distributed.

The start time of 9:00 AM was discussed, to be able to field questions should they arise, on why this time was selected. It was noted both gun clubs in town have a self-imposed 10:00 AM start time and this is an hour earlier. Shooting is likely to occur on weekends, and it is thought that if there was this noise before 9:00 AM, it could be disruptive. It was clarified that this time restriction is only in place for home shooting ranges and does not apply to hunting. Additionally, Murray wanted to clarify why the committee settled on the distance of 350ft over 250 ft or 500 ft. It was reminded that 500 ft would be too restrictive for a home range. It applies for hunting, as there are no backstops when shooting at a live target. Having 250 ft as the distance might not address the noise concerns. 350 ft is in the middle and preferred by Chief Peterson. It was reminded that residents are allowed to shoot at a distance closer than 350 ft, with written permission from neighbors, and as long as there are no additional safety concerns.

It was felt that the ordinance was a good thing for the community to have, and it is relatively cut and dry. Residents are encouraged to read it all the way through, to realize that this is not to restrict anyone's rights, but to establish safety and peace in the community.

#### **4. Discussion of Ability to Redact Shooter Names:**

Chief Peterson explained that he reached out to get information about FOIA requests. He shared that if anyone comes into the Police Department requesting records, they must be made available. However, if a resident calls in as a courtesy to notify that they will be shooting on their property, there is no electronic record made, or case number assigned. Case numbers are only assigned when an officer needs to be dispatched to a call.

Chief Peterson suggested that the requirement of calling the Police Department remain in the ordinance, as it will be more likely to avoid a problem, and people's information has a higher chance of being protected. He reminded that officers are only dispatched if there is a concern or problem. If there is knowledge ahead of time that firing will occur in a particular area, it saves department resources by not having to send an officer out, and there will be no case number pulled for the "heads up" call. The dispatcher will make note on their pad, which is disposed of at the end of the night. Additionally, the call will start the resident's time window for their shooting.

Chief Peterson expressed that if the requirement to call the department to notify of shooting activity is left out of the ordinance, he felt there would be more calls with concerns that would require an officer's response. He

added that the calls received for this activity are sporadic, and they don't typically get a lot at one time. However, there is usually an increase of calls with concerns in the fall.

It was discussed that there is no need to log the courtesy calls, as they are only good for the day the call was received. A resident giving notice of their shooting activity does not pose any public safety concerns and there are no benefits from having those specific calls logged.

Chief Peterson also mentioned that he spoke with the Police Chief of Newtown, that has a similar ordinance, and their Chief informed they have not received any FOIA requests for information regarding home ranges. It seems the process is working, and the Newtown Police Chief has no concerns or complaints. It was discussed that both Chiefs were in agreement that the ordinance gives them something to use to address calls, giving cops and the community some relief.

## **5. Draft Committee Presentation:**

Murray shared his draft presentation that will be used to present to the Town Council.

Taylor shared that this is good to show the highlights, and it does not need to be too in depth since the ordinance will be presented as well. Any questions from the Town Council can be answered by the Committee during the presentation.

### Edits/Suggestions for the PowerPoint:

- Add to the “Current Regulatory Framework” page that the Town has reached out to the Attorney for legal opinion, and it was reported back that there are no known conflicts with how the ordinance is currently written and is well within the ability of local government.
- Add a “Members” page, to show who served on the Committee.
- Add to “Committee Recommendations” slide:
  - Proposed ordinance
  - Request an extension of the life of the committee, to 3 months max.
  - Hold public comment, prior to finalizing the ordinance.

It was agreed that August would be a good time to hold the public comment meeting. The committee requested that once the Town Council gives them the go ahead, that this meeting be advertised as soon as possible.

## **6. Discussion of Presenting Proposed Ordinance to Council:**

The next steps would be to give the Town Council a report and presentation from the Committee. The committee will be added to the Council’s first meeting in July. The current plan is to submit a report from the committee, with a status update and the draft ordinance, by July 3<sup>rd</sup>, to then be put on the Council’s July 7<sup>th</sup> agenda. During the Committee’s report to the Town Council, an extension of their charge will be requested, to a maximum of 3 more months.

At the meeting the Committee Chair, and any members who want to attend, will give a presentation of their study, in terms of what they studied and why they have made the decisions they have made.

Should the Town Council choose to adopt this ordinance, the Home Shooting Range Committee will suggest that public comment meeting be held (by the Committee or Town Council) to get feedback from the

community before finalizing the ordinance. A separate public hearing will also be held prior to adoption. The committee has expressed interest in being involved in the public comment, to answer questions and give a briefing to the community on the purpose of ordinance and what it means.

Drumm suggested that the Committee can hold the public comment at their July 17<sup>th</sup> meeting, or that meeting could be used to plan the public comment, which could then be held in August or later. August was noted as a better time, since families might be away for the summer.

**Motion:** I move to present the draft ordinance to the Town Council for their review.

By: Stein

Second: Mangiafico

Discussion: None

Voting: Unanimously in favor

### **7. Volunteer Handbook Update:**

Taylor distributed copies of the updated volunteer handbook, and an acknowledgement receipt form for committee members to sign and return.

He explained that the Town Council updated the handbook with some changes to the handbook. Most notable is the addition of an attendance policy and inclusion of the Town's Ethics Ordinance.

Drumm explained the attendance policy and noted that these changes don't really impact this committee since it has a limited lifespan.

### **8. Other Business:**

It was noted that at the July 7<sup>th</sup> Town Council meeting, all members are welcome and encouraged to attend for the committee's presentation.

### **9. Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 7:48 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.***