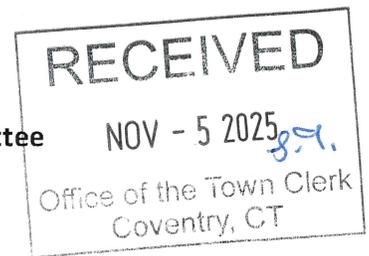


**Town of Coventry
Firearms Safety/Home Shooting Range Study Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 16, 2025**



1. Call To Order, Roll Call:

By: Murray Time: 6:35 p.m. Place: Town Hall Conference Room B

		PRESENT	ABSENT
REGULAR MEMBERS:	Brian Murray, Chairperson	X	
	Kenneth Stein, Vice Chairperson	X	
	Dudley Brand	X	
	Mike Mangiafico-Joined at 6:43 PM	X	
	Vacancy		
STAFF:	Jana Roberson, Director of Planning & Dev't.	X	
	Chief of Police Eric Peterson-excused		X

Murray explained that he spoke with Jon Hand about filling the vacancy, and it was determined unnecessary with the Committee's charge expiring in the near future.

2. Approval Of Minutes:

A. Minutes, September 30, 2025:

Motion: I move to accept the September 30, 2025, Firearms Safety/Home Shooting Range Study Committee Special Meeting Minutes.

By: Stein

Second: Brand

Discussion: None

Vote: Unanimously in favor

3. Draft of Firearms Ordinance:

Draft 6 is the most recent version and is attached to the agenda. Only minor changes were made from draft 5, with modifications to the language in subsections c and d, of Section 66-77 and the addition of paintball guns to Section 66-79 Exceptions, as subsection g.

Murray was curious if there was a way to strengthen the Air Gun definition, so that the ordinance did not need such a long list of exceptions. Roberson felt the more details in the ordinance would allow the average citizen to have more clarity. Stein agreed and felt that the current language allows for the ordinance to apply to future variations of air guns.

Murray explained that he reviewed the public comment meeting recording, and the draft ordinance. He made the following suggestions for changes, which were agreed upon unanimously by Committee Members:

- Change title: Article III-Home Shooting Ranges to Article III-Discharge of Firearms and Air Guns
- Change purpose: To read “The purpose of this article is to establish regulations surrounding the discharge of firearms and air guns on private property to provide for the safety and well-being of the residents of the Town of Coventry.” Removing the “for target-shooting purposes” previously included after “air guns”.
- Remove “capable of killing, injuring, or inflicting physical damage” from the end of the definitions of both Firearms and Air Guns.
- Suggested to change the definition of backstop, but the Committee had consensus to leave it the way it was already written.
- Commercial Shooting Range Definition: Strike section c, “Individuals discharging firearms are adequately trained in firearms safety; and”
 - It was reminded that this can’t be measured and most people, especially at a range, have some degree of training.
- Recreational Shooting Definition: Change “shooting a Firearm.” to “the discharge of a Firearm.” and remove “at an inanimate target” from the end of the definition.
- Remove Section 66-77, subsection d. This referred to being 50 ft off the property line for shooting. The Committee felt it was unnecessary, as Firearm discharge on, or close to, a neighboring property line could be considered reckless endangerment or disorderly conduct which would need to be addressed by the Coventry PD.
- Section 66-77, subsection c: add “discharge a Firearm at a lesser distance” at the end for clarity.
- Remove Section 66-77, subsection e, as this is already state law and a hunting regulation. It is unnecessary to include it in the ordinance.
- Remove Section 66-77, subsection f, as secondary reaction targets (i.e. exploding targets) were not in any of the police reports, and it was deemed to be an unlikely issue.
- Section 66-78, subsection b: Remove the requirement to call the Coventry PD 15 minutes prior to shooting. The 4-hour time window will remain. Add “per calendar day” after “(4) hour window” and remove the last sentence, “One such window shall be granted per calendar day.” for clarity and conciseness.

****All subsection letters will be properly adjusted and in order for the final draft****

Additional Discussions:

Stein and Roberson discussed the definition of a range, to identify starting and ending points for measurement purposes. Last meeting it was settled that the position of the shooter would be the starting point for the distance requirements. Stein noted he looked into this further and found that the NRA has a specific definition for a shooting range, which he shared with the committee, which clarified the area referred to as a range, not the boundaries. It was agreed that a home shooting range definition was not needed in the ordinance, and the NRA definition more so applies to a Commercial Shooting Range.

Murray reminded that if a person is doing something beyond what is included in the ordinance (i.e. unlawful discharge, disorderly conduct), it would become a police department matter, in which an individual would likely be charged with something rather than being subject to an ordinance violation fine.

Section 66-77, subsection a, was discussed, and it was clarified that in the case of an LLC, anyone who is a managing member/owner of the LLC would have the authority to give permissions regarding the discharge of firearms on the property belonging to the LLC.

Section 66-78, subsection a, was discussed for editing time. It was reminded that hunting starts earlier but is usually the firing of only 1 or 2 shots. Recreational discharge of a firearm is typically rapid fire, or multiple shots. Roberson also noted that changing the time to sunrise or earlier than 9 AM wouldn't be a concern for visibility, but rather if it is appropriate to engage in recreational shooting at that time of day. The Committee agreed that the 9 AM start time is better for that purpose.

Mangiafico discussed removing the requirement to notify the PD prior to shooting. He explained that a resident explained to him that they call the PD every time they plan to shoot, and the Police still show up regardless, because a neighbor calls to complain. Roberson reminded that the call was also being used to start the 4-hour time window "clock". Murray also discussed that this was an issue brought up during the public comment meeting. He stressed that he wants the public to recognize that their comments were heard by the Committee. The Committee felt that it would be difficult for the Police Department to keep records and track the calls efficiently and effectively. There were concerns about tracking the 4-hour window with the call to the PD removed, but it was reminded that the PD would track the time window reasonably, not to the minute. It was suggested to have a responding Officer recommend to shooters, to call the PD ahead of time, if their neighbors are calling the PD with complaints. The thought was that it would eventually work itself out, as at the core of this matter is a "neighborly" issue.

Murray called Chief Peterson to discuss removing the requirement to call the PD prior to shooting. Chief Peterson clarified that it would not impact the services of the Police Department. He noted that sometimes the department gets calls, and sometimes they don't. He stated that if they explain to the concerned caller that the noise is from legal firearm discharge, they will recognize it over time and stop calling eventually. He also stated that the goal for the PD with this ordinance is compliance, not enforcement. The 4-hour time window will be a guideline used on a case-by-case basis. The responding officer would use an estimate based on the information provided by both the complainant and the shooter. He reminded that there is only 1 area in town that has a consistent issue with lengthy shooting.

It was questioned if the 4-hour window will need to be defined by property. Roberson explained that the way the Ordinance currently reads, with "Persons", covers however many people are engaging in firearm discharge at a particular address.

The Committee also discussed comments made during the Public Comment meeting, that stated this document would not be enforceable because of the penalty section. Roberson reminded that the courts do enforce ordinances when necessary. Stein explained that this person's comments seem to be purely speculation. Any offenses of the ordinance would be of civil nature, not criminal. Roberson felt the penalty needs to be there but reminded that Tolland has never had to enforce their penalty and hopes Coventry will not need to enforce it either.

Mangiaficio questioned if the penalty language in Section 66-80 should read “shall be subject” or “may be subject”? He felt the way it currently reads suggests a person will definitely get a fine. Roberson reminded that all ordinance violation penalties are discretionary. Chief Peterson had previously explained that he would prefer to give a warning 1st, before ordinance enforcement. It was suggested to have the town attorney weigh in on using “shall be” or “may be”.

Motion: I move to approve the Firearms Ordinance draft 6 with changes made during this meeting to be forwarded to the Steering Committee for review.

By: Brand

Second: Mangiaficio

Discussion: None

Vote: Unanimously in favor

4. Discussion and planning of Second Public Comment Meeting:

It was discussed that if the Town Council chooses to move forward with the current draft of the ordinance, including tonight’s edits, then a public hearing will need to take place, where Coventry residents can provide additional commentary.

The revisions to the draft ordinance made tonight incorporated most, if not all, things mentioned during the 1st public comment.

The draft ordinance will need to go to the Steering Committee first, where it can be recommended to the Town Council, should that be their direction. Roberson explained that she will edit the draft ordinance with the voted-on changes from tonight and redistribute.

There were concerns that any further action made by Steering or the Town Council will be after the Committee’s dissolution date, and to keep that in mind. The Committee expressed desire to remain apart of the process moving forward, especially for a public hearing, should that be necessary.

The only pending question is the matter of use of the term “shall” or “may” in the penalty language. Stein suggested that this be reviewed by the attorney to determine the best language. The committee had consensus for the attorney to review the language in order to include the appropriate term.

5. Discussion and Planning of Future Meetings: No further discussion.

6. Other Business: No further discussion.

7. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 8:39 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.