



Through our participation in the ProAct Prescription Savings program, Coventry residents can save on prescription drug costs. The program is free. Simply download your card at this link and present it at any participating pharmacy.

TOWN MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

Now that we have had snow, I can say it feels like winter in Coventry. Our Public Works crews have been busy preparing roads and keeping our streets cleared from snow and ice over the last few weeks. February is here and your Town management team is still working through our budget expenses to see where we can save money and to see how we can keep up our current levels of service that everyone has come to expect. Last month I shared that the Town is in "Budget Season" and that Coventry, and most every town in Connecticut, has a challenge in handling the disposal of solid waste. This challenge began with the closure of the waste-to energy plant in Hartford last year. We continue to work on this issue and to seek workable alternatives. Unfortunately, every community in our State is spending more to dispose of our solid waste by shipping it off to other states.

This month I wish to discuss another community service and major budget challenge we are facing in Coventry: the loss of new volunteers willing to step up and serve their Town as a volunteer Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and/or a volunteer firefighter. We have been well served by the volunteer ambulance and the volunteer fire departments (North and South) for many decades. They are still active today in the now combined Coventry Fire /EMS Department, but the numbers of those that serve is in decline. They are working selflessly in serving their fellow citizens. If you are interested in serving, please visit www.firefighterapp.com and look for Town of Coventry Fire & EMS.

This challenge I have seen before in my career in Florida and now more recently in Pennsylvania. Volunteerism is something that is in decline nationwide. With the change in the interest of new generations and American society in general, we have seen a change in volunteerism. This applies to all types of volunteerism. Even service clubs have lost their membership, and many have unfortunately closed down. I know in Coventry, the Rotary Club was once a great a strong service organization that is fondly remembered, but that is now gone.

In Florida, I saw volunteerism die off in the late 1990s. That State has had for decades a transient population with many new people that come from somewhere else. Volunteerism has since declined in many states. States like Pennsylvania, Indiana and Connecticut have continued to have strong levels of community spirit and volunteerism until recent years. If we look back many years ago, you volunteered for the ambulance or as a firefighter because your dad was one, and he took you by the firehouse, and it was exciting. He became a volunteer because his dad or uncle was one too. In recent decades sons and daughters became volunteer EMTs and firefighters. We have had many women volunteers compared to other towns. In many communities it became a family tradition. Your training was on the job, and there was little State regulation. When the bell rang, your boss understood you needed to go, and it was possible they too were volunteers. They closed the store or office if they needed to. Everyone understood because they were serving our neighbors or perhaps the people we knew from the Lions Club or perhaps our church. Today, many people work elsewhere than where they live. If you work in Manchester at Walmart, it is not easy to walk off the job and come back to Coventry to respond to a call. If you did, would your boss really support this constant interruption? How well could you really respond timely to an emergency? Think about our own circumstances, as many people don't work where they live anymore. Additionally, it is often that younger generations move away to other communities where they do not have the same sense of community attachment that they and their parents had in their "hometown."

Times have changed, and there is new technology and new opportunities that compete for the spare time of our younger residents. The decline in the numbers of volunteer EMTs or firefighters is not a result of just the lack of interest, it is the addition of State laws and regulations requiring hundreds of hours of training. This increases the competence and professionalism of the volunteer EMT and/or firefighter but reduces interest and the ability (time) for those that may have served. It is very time-consuming. The few that complete extensive training love the work, they love the challenge, but more and more they want to be paid. They often will leave volunteerism almost immediately for a full-time job, once they gain certification. They have proved their competence with their State certification, and it is their professional gain and the loss of the small town that counts on their volunteerism.

Today in Coventry we have nearly half the volunteers we did 15 years ago. Average ages of volunteers are in the mid-50s-60s. Our Fire Department is in better shape with the number of volunteer firefighters than our volunteer EMTs in the Ambulance service (EMS), but their numbers are still heavily declining as well.

This isn't new for Coventry. Our budget challenge began nearly ten years ago, when our Town started supplementing ambulance volunteers with paid EMTs from an outside private firm. This paid service filled in the gaps on the calendar. Slowly our costs went up as more volunteers retired. Expenses grew more than the revenue we brought in through Medicare, Medicaid and insurance payments. During COVID-19 we saw more losses in volunteers, the cost of service grew further beyond our revenue, but the Town supplemented the volunteer ambulance with paid EMTs using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to get us through. Companies contracted by the Town to supplement our volunteers have faced staffing issues as well and they have sharply raised their rates, sometimes by more than 20% annually. This is not sustainable over time. In our budget it is now a challenge to fund these uncontrollable rates from private firms and we are looking at other ways to provide the service. People want to keep the professional level of

service we have. Some might say, "Let's go back to the way it was in the 1970s, it worked for us then." Even if we wanted to, it's not like we have the choice to go back to the 1900s and to provide services with uncertified firefighters and ambulance drivers. Today, ARPA funds have all been expended and we will need to explore the cost of a combination volunteer-paid EMS service. Cost comparisons show it is less than privatization. With staff on-board that are trained we can control our costs better. We will continue to supplement their work with the volunteers that remain. Further, we can work to cross-train some of these paid staff members to be firefighters as well as EMTs. When the bell rings, staff members could be able to answer either emergency. If we can do this, we can get ahead of the continuing decline in volunteer firefighters. In Florida and in Pennsylvania, I worked with my Fire/EMS management team, my elected leaders, and my communities to develop a combination volunteer-paid Fire /EMS Department. There was a cost to be paid, as the all-volunteer model of the 1970s was no longer viable to serve the needs of the community today and to meet growing State regulations. The paid-volunteer combination department also continues to recognize that there are still volunteers that are trained and still willing to serve on an on-call capacity. This issue is not exclusive to Coventry and some towns have already crossed over to a combination volunteer-paid Fire/EMS Department. Unfortunately, it is not a self-funding service. There will be a need for additional taxes to maintain our level of service. Unfortunately, we cannot stick with the all-volunteer model, as that means we need more of you all to step up and serve. Again, if you wish to serve, visit www.firefighterapp.com and look for Town of Coventry Fire & EMS. We continue to work on alternative solutions and to look to the State to assist in providing funding solutions to provide EMS services that operate under state guidelines, but with limited income.

It is never my goal to reduce our level of service or to increase costs if we do not have to. I will share more budget challenges and possible solutions in the months ahead. We welcome you to our [Budget Hearing](#) on March 7th at Coventry High School to learn more about our budget challenges and how we plan to move forward.

As you are out shopping for Valentines Day or just for everyday home goods, remember to support our local businesses as they help support our community. I hope to see you at the Winter Farmer's Market and out around Town this month. Should you wish to contact me, please email JDrumm@coventry-ct.gov or call the office at 860-742-6324. Frequent updates are also posted to the Town Manager's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/CoventryCTTownManager>.

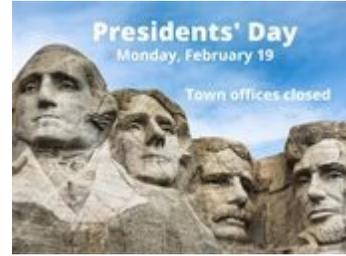
Sincerely,

James Drumm

UPCOMING TOWN MEETINGS:

- Mon, 2/5: [Town Council](#) meeting, 7:30 PM. Town Hall Annex.
- Thurs, 2/8: [Board of Education](#), 7:00 PM, School Admin. Building
- Mon, 2/12: [Planning & Zoning Commission](#), 7 PM, Town Hall Annex
- Tues, 2/20: Town Council meeting, 7:30 PM
- Mon, 2/26: Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 PM
- Thurs, 2/29: Board of Education, 7:00 PM, School Admin. Building

For a monthly calendar of other Board & Commission events, click [here](#).



HOLIDAYS:

- Mon, 2/19: **Presidents' Day holiday**. Town offices closed. [Trash collection](#) on normal schedule.



COMING EVENTS:

Fri 2/2 & 2/16: **BINGO Night**, first and third Fridays of the month, doors open at 5 PM, BINGO starts at 6 PM. First Congregational Church, 1171 Main Street. Presented by the American Legion Post 52. 50¢ entry fee, must be 18 or older to play. Raffles, prizes and refreshments available. [Email](#) for info.

Fri 2/2: **Quiet Corner Contra Dance**, 7:30-10:30 PM, Patriots Park Lodge, 172 Lake Street. Newcomer workshop at 7:15. Adults \$13, Students \$6. Partner not necessary. Live music by Headwaters and caller Bill Fischer, all dances taught. Bring water, wear soft-soled shoes, and dress in layers. For more information contact Dennis: knowdj@frontier.com. or see [website](#).

Sat 2/3: \$10 **Stuff-a-bag Sale**, 9 AM - 1 PM, Noah's Closet, 1746 Boston Turnpike. Noah's Closet is a children's second-hand resale shop, offering clothing, toys, books, games, puzzles, DVDs, CDs and furniture. Info at 860-742-1616. [Website](#).

Sun 2/4: **Coventry Winter Farmers' Market**, 10 AM - 12:30 PM, Coventry High School, 78 Ripley Hill Road. Now in its 9th year with 36 vendors featuring local products, fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, artisan-made baked goods, honey, maple syrup, hot sauces, ethnic foods, coffee roasters, handcrafted soaps, jewelry, pottery and more. Season runs through March 17, 2024 (no market on 12/31). [Website](#).

Fri 2/9: **Famous Baked Fish Dinner**, 6 PM, 1171 Main Street. Presented by First Congregational Church & American Legion Post 52. Featuring baked cod, baked potato, coleslaw, Italian bread & drink. \$15 per plate. Take-out available. Info: 860-742-8487 or email firstchurchcoventryct@gmail.com.

Sun 2/11: **Coventry Winter Farmers' Market**, 10 AM - 12:30 PM, Coventry High School, 78 Ripley Hill Road. Now in its 9th year with 36 vendors featuring local products, fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, artisan-made baked goods, honey, maple syrup, hot sauces, ethnic foods, coffee roasters, handcrafted soaps, jewelry, pottery and more. Season runs through March 17, 2024 (no market on 12/31). [Website](#)

Weds 2/14: **Mobile Foodshare**, 10-10:30 AM, First Congregational Church @ St. Mary's, 1600 Main Street. An outdoor food distribution service for persons of low income. Text FOODSHARE to 85511 to receive the mobile schedule and cancellations directly on your phone. More [info](#).

Thurs 2/15: **The Search for Coventry's Enslaved**, 7 PM, Second Congregational Church Community House, 1746 Boston Turnpike. Join the Coventry Historical Society as we observe Black History Month by exploring how slavery affected Coventry, which will include direct quotes and discussion of those enslaved in the town. We look forward to meeting you and discussing this little-known but important chapter in Coventry's history. Free and open to the public. Details and any related weather updates at <https://www.facebook.com/coventryhistory/>

Sat 2/17: **Drive-thru/take-out dinner**, Second Congregational Church of Coventry, 1746 Boston Turnpike. Pot Roast, potatoes, gravy, carrots, bread, and dessert. \$15. Place orders by calling 860-742-1616 or [email](#) and indicate pick up time of 5, 5:30 or 6 PM. Correct amount of cash or check is required. Drive down from church parking lot to the Community House located across from Highland Park.

Sun 2/18: **Coventry Winter Farmers' Market**, 10 AM - 12:30 PM, Coventry High School, 78 Ripley Hill Road. Now in its 9th year with 36 vendors featuring local products, fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, artisan-made baked goods, honey, maple syrup, hot sauces, ethnic foods, coffee roasters, handcrafted soaps, jewelry, pottery and more. Season runs through March 17, 2024 (no market on 12/31). [Website](#).

Sun 2/25: **Coventry Winter Farmers' Market**, 10 AM - 12:30 PM, Coventry High School, 78 Ripley Hill Road. Now in its 9th year with 36 vendors featuring local products, fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, artisan-made baked goods, honey, maple syrup, hot sauces, ethnic foods, coffee roasters, handcrafted soaps, jewelry, pottery and more. Season runs through March 17, 2024 (no market on 12/31). [Website](#).

Weds 2/28: **Mobile Foodshare**, 10-10:30 AM, First Congregational Church @ St. Mary's, 1600 Main Street. An outdoor food distribution service for persons of low income. Text FOODSHARE to 85511 to receive the mobile schedule and cancellations directly on your phone. More [info](#).

Thurs 2/29: **Office Hours with Town Council Chairwoman Lisa Thomas**, 6:30 PM, Booth & Dimock Memorial Library, 1134 Main Street. Share a concern or ask questions at

this monthly meeting. Also on 2/22 at Coventry Senior Center, 172 Lake Street, from 11 AM - noon.

COVENTRY PARKS & RECREATION:

Someone Special Valentine's Dance: Kids and their adult "someone special" will not want to miss this special, semi formal event where lasting memories are made! A professional DJ provides the music for dancing and refreshments will be sold.. Attendees will also have the chance to have their pictures taken as a souvenir of the evening (additional cost) by Capstone Photography. **Friday February 9th CNHS Gym.** The event is open to boys and girls in grades K – 5 (Coventry residents only). Preregistration is **REQUIRED!** No day of event registration. Space is limited. Register at <https://secure.rec1.com/CT/coventry-ct/catalog>

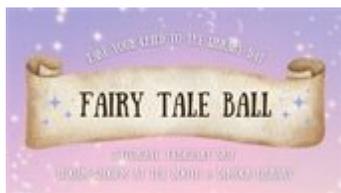


Accepting NEW GARDENERS for the Community Garden! Registration opens Feb. 1st!

Summer Jobs: Applications available NOW through March 30th

- Camp Counselors
- Lifeguards/WSI
- Park Maintainers
- Gatekeepers

Apply online at <https://www.coventry-ct.gov/Jobs.aspx>



BOOTH & DIMOCK MEMORIAL LIBRARY:

The Booth & Dimock Memorial Library is open Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 10:00-8:00, Friday from 10:00-6:00, and Saturday from 10:00-3:00. The Library offers an extensive collection of reading materials, one-on-one technology assistance, printing, copying, and faxing services, public computers and free wi-fi, reference assistance, and more!

Please note that the library has a new email address! bdlibrary@coventry-ct.gov

In the event of inclement winter weather, closings or delays will be announced on the Library's Facebook page @BDLibrary, website www.coventrypl.org, and WFSB.

The Library would like to extend a special thanks to our Silver Level donors who helped make the 2023 renovation possible. Our sponsors will be recognized for their support in the Library's winter and spring programs.

For the most up to date information on all of the wonderful programs offer at the Library, please visit www.coventrypl.org/events or www.facebook.com/BDLibrary.

Adult Programs

Mystery Book Club – February 2 at 1:30 – In this brand-new book club, we will read and discuss a mystery book from the Time Magazine's list of "The 100 Best Mystery and Thriller Books of All Time" each month. February's book is *Devil in a Blue Dress* by Walter Mosley.

Senior Center Book Club – February 14 at 1:00. Books are available to pick up at the library, but the discussion takes place at the Senior Center. February's book is *The Lioness* by Chris Bohjalian.

Wednesday Night Book Club – February 21 at 6:30 – Meets at 6:30 on the 3rd Wednesday of every month. For more information, contact Pat McDougall at pmcdouga@earthlink.net. February's Book is *People of the Book* by Geraldine Brooks .

Hijinks in High Society – February 9 at 1:00 – Are you a fan of Downton Abbey? Counting the days until there are new episodes of The Gilded Age? Join us for tea and learn about the real hijinks that took place in Gilded Age Newport. **Sponsored by Joseph & Dorothy Eaton**

Genealogy Club – February 15 at 11:30 – Join us at our new monthly club to talk research and trade tips. No registration is required. Bring research or questions you'd like to share with the group! **Sponsored by Betty, Kenneth, and Gaelen Hanson**

Tea Explorers – Members of Tea Explorers receive a new tea to try each month. Each tea comes with background information. Contact the library to register. **Sponsored by Carol Brigham**

Spice Life – Members of Spice Life receive a new spice to try each month. Each spice comes with background information. Contact the library to register. **Sponsored by Carol & Carl Brolin**

Teen Programs

Stop by and doodle on our **scribble table** – a whole table covered in paper – anytime in February in the Teen Program Room.

Open Gaming - Every Friday from 3:00-4:30 – Take the bus to the library and enjoy open gaming after school on PS5, PS4, Switch, PC, and tabletop.

Spaghetti & Marshmallows – February 6 at 5:00 – Today we play with our food. See what you can make out of dry spaghetti and squishy marshmallows. Maybe we'll discover the next marvel in modern engineering! **Sponsored by The Piotroski Family**

Just Dance Party – February 20 at 4:00 – We're eating popcorn and playing Just Dance 2024. Don't forget to stretch! **Sponsored by Colleen Robbins & Joseph Jankowski**

Children's Programs

Play Group – Every Wednesday at 10:30 – Encourage your child to socialize in an environment with lots of toys for free play!

Chapter Book Story Time – Every Friday at 4:30 – Join Miss Rachel after school to read chapter books. Perfect for school aged children!

Fairy Tale Ball – February 3 at 11:00 – You are cordially invited to our Fairy Tale Ball in honor of **Take Your Child to the Library day!** Come dressed up in your favorite fairy tale attire! Join us for fun and fantasy to take part in lots of library magic! **Sponsored by Tim & Barbara Timberman**

Sing, Stomp, Story – February 8 at 11:00 – Listen to music and dance around with Miss Christa! **Sponsored by American Legion Post 52**

All Day Valentine Making – February 13 – Stop by the children's room anytime between 10:00 and 8:00 to make your own Valentines! **Sponsored by the Coventry Arts Guild**

Messy Munchkins – February 16 at 11:00 – A multi-sensory playgroup that encourages participation from both caregiver and child. Make sure to wear your messy clothes! **Sponsored by Barbara & Tom Barry**

Sweet Dreams Story Time – February 22 at 6:30 – Relax before bedtime with a calming story read by Miss Rachel. **Sponsored by Dana & Kathleen Berger**

Booth & Dimock Memorial Library
1134 Main Street
Coventry, CT 06238
860-742-7606
www.coventrypl.org

bdlibrary@coventry-ct.gov

COVENTRY SENIOR CENTER:

Crafternoon, February 14th at 10:30am – Valentine Crafts, seating limited, FREE!

Veterans Coffee Hour, February 15th at 9:30; Meet Manuel Menese, Veterans Service Representative, with Congressman Courtney's office. RSVP is appreciated.



Book Club, Wednesday, February 28th at 1:30, The Mystery of Agatha Christie by Marie Benedict

Jewelry Class, February 20th at 11am, Beaded Eye-Glass Chains, RSVP is required, FREE!

AARP Tax Aide Program – FREE tax preparation assistance for your Federal and State tax returns. Appointments available for March 8, 22 and April 12 by appointment only. Please call the Senior Center for more information.

Coventry Senior Center
172 Lake Street
Info & RSVPs for Senior Center events: 860-742-3525.



REFLECTIVE HOUSE NUMBER SIGNS AVAILABLE:

The Town of Coventry Fire-EMS Department encourages all households to install reflective house numbers, so that your location will be visible more quickly during times of emergency. The cost is \$15. An order form is available at this [link](#).

VALENTINE'S DAY ROSES SALE:

The Coventry Lions Club is sponsoring a Valentine's Day Roses Sale. Place orders [online](#) through February 7. Orders will be delivered on Saturday February 10. Delivery on February 14 available for an extra fee. Red roses are \$35. All proceeds support Lions Club scholarships and other community service initiatives.





COVER PHOTO:

Patriots Park Beach in winter. Photo by Laura Stone.

To list your non-profit organization's event in this bulletin, contact Laura Stone by [email](#) by the 15th of the previous month.

[f Share on Facebook](#)

[t Share on Twitter](#)

[✉ Share via Email](#)

Copyright © 2021 Town of Coventry. All Rights Reserved.
1712 Main Street, Coventry, CT 06238

Powered by
 **CIVICSEND**
A Product of CivicPlus