



The Budget Hearing is an opportunity to hear proposed Manager and Board of Education budgets for FY 2024/25, and to ask questions or express concerns prior to Town Council budget deliberations.

## TOWN MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

Though spring is just around the corner, winter is very much with us still. Our Town Public Works crews responded very well to the winter storm that brought us a foot of snow just a couple weeks ago. That snow is still with us, though it is finally beginning to melt. We have some skilled and dedicated staff in our Public Works Department. Some of them have been plowing snow in Coventry for many years. I thank them all for their good work clearing the roads and making it safe for us all to pass.

This month Town staff continues to work on our fiscal year 2024-25 Budget. Looking at next year's revenues, the estimates are showing that we have had less than .05 % growth on the Grand List (total property values in the town). Building construction is down from previous years. Less development and renovations have

occurred, and perhaps that is tied to the increase in interest rates applied to loans. Usually, we have seen higher value within real estate that the Town can tax. That revenue from new construction covers some of the Town's increased expenses like electric, and gasoline heating fuel. Additionally, this year we are experiencing larger than normal increases in payroll with the rapid increase in minimum wage. This will make it harder to fund Recreation programs, Coventry Lake beach operations, and staffing at the library. In some cases, we will have to look at rate increases to cover our costs. In other cases, it is more challenging as some community services, like the library, don't charge user fees. As you can imagine, the 55% increase in minimum wage over the last five years has caused entry level employees (usually high school students in a summer job) to receive nearly the same pay as full-time staff members that have served for several years. This has forced the Town to reconsider and amend its compensation plan to retain staff. Currently it is not an "employer's job market," and we are struggling to fill staff positions that once had 40-50 applicants interested. There certainly are revenue shortages to keep programs going, which means services will be cut or taxes will be raised.

On the other hand, there is good news to share with our residents regarding our budgeting revenues brought into Coventry. In reviewing our projects, we are pleased to announce we have nearly \$35 million in grant projects lined up for design and/or construction this next year. Some of the projects are a new playground in Patriots Park; road/parking/ADA accessible improvements in Miller Richardson Park; a few bridge replacements (Bunker Hill Rd., Brigham Rd. and Depot Rd.); safety improvements to South Street and Swamp Road; safety improvements to Daly Road including sidewalks; flashing crosswalks on Main Street in the Village; HVAC improvements at CHS; a sewer extension from Bolton along Rt. 44 to accommodate existing and new businesses; and a water tower for the Village water system (Connecticut Water) to provide adequate water pressure and volume for commercial fire suppression systems.

This is great news for the Town, but it is unfortunate that grants don't exist for staff costs and the general operational costs I mentioned above. I have over 30 years' experience in municipal budgeting. It is clear we are good at getting grants and building things, but as the new Town Manager looking back at past operations, I have learned that we have not been able to afford the increased staff hours in our budget needed to properly maintain and repair the great things we have built. I understand that the voters during referendum over the years have been successful in keeping costs down by just voting "no," but it appears that many of these voters, not knowing the details within those budgets, may have been "penny wise, but pound foolish." There have been many needed repairs and needed equipment replacements that were proposed that have just been deferred year after year. The list is quite large, especially with our schools. Though Town finances may seem boring to many, I encourage all town residents to take an interest in the Town's revenues and expenses within our Budget. We are not a large town, and our resources are limited, and with our town's process of using a public referendum to approve the final budget, the electorate must be better informed and more involved in the process for the Town to be able to fund the essential services that we have all come to expect and rely on.

As we work to finalize our FY 2024-25 proposed Budget, we encourage you to attend our Budget Hearing at 7:00 PM on March 7<sup>th</sup> at Coventry High School to learn more about our budget challenges and how we propose to move the town forward.

Should you wish to contact me, please email [JDrumm@coventry-ct.gov](mailto: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

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## UPCOMING TOWN MEETINGS:

- Mon, 3/4: **Town Council Meeting**, 7:30 PM. Town Hall Annex.
- Thurs, 3/7: **Manager's Budget Hearing**, 7:00 PM, CHS Lecture Hall.
- Mon, 3/11: **Planning & Zoning Commission** meeting, 7 PM, Town Hall Conf. Room B.
- Mon, 3/11: **Town Council Budget Meeting**, 7:30 PM, Town Hall Annex.
- Thurs, 3/14: **Town Council Budget Meeting**, 6:30 PM, Town Hall Annex.
- Thurs, 3/14: **Board of Education Meeting**, 7:00 PM, School Admin. Building
- Mon, 3/18: **Town Council Meeting**, 7:30 PM, Town Hall Annex.
- Thurs, 3/21: **Town Council Budget Meeting**, 6:30 PM, Town Hall Annex.
- Mon, 3/25: **Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting**, 7 PM, Town Hall Conf. Room B
- Mon, 3/25: **Town Council Budget Meeting**, 7:30 PM, Town Hall Annex..
- Thurs, 3/28: **Board of Education Meeting**, 7:00 PM, School Admin. Building

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



## HOLIDAYS:

- Fri, 3/29: **Good Friday Day holiday**. Town offices closed. [Trash collection](#) on normal schedule.



## COMING EVENTS:

Fri 3/1 & 3/15: **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 3/1: **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 Dead Sea Squirrels and caller George Thompson, all dances taught. Bring water, wear soft-soled shoes, and dress in layers. For more information contact Dennis: [knowdj@frontier.com](mailto:knowdj@frontier.com). or see [website](#).

Sun 3/3: **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

saucers, ethnic foods, coffee roasters, handcrafted soaps, jewelry, pottery and more. Season runs through March 17, 2024. [Website](#).

Tues 3/5-3/26: **T.O.P.S. - TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY**, 5:15-6:45 PM, Second Congregational Church, 1746 Boston Turnpike (Rt. 44). A non-profit weight loss support group. See [website](#) or call 860-944-4945 for info concerning weekly dues (determined by each chapter) and yearly membership fee set by the TOPS organization.

Weds 3/6: **Special Education Resource Fair**, 6-7:30 PM, Booth & Dimock Memorial Library Community Room, 1134 Main Street. Sponsored by Elizabeth Bauch of Autism Speaks, in partnership with Coventry Human Services. Participants include TOPS SOCCER, Miracle League of Northern Connecticut, Vernon Special Olympics/Miss Amazing beauty pageant, Travelmation, Family Wise Behavioral Solutions, Coventry Public Schools RISE program, Autism Speaks, Ellington Unified, and literature from area day camps, information about sensory-friendly family activities, and more. Light refreshments will be provided. [Email for more information](#).

Fri 3/8: **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](mailto:firstchurchcoventryct@gmail.com).

Sun 3/10: **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. [Website](#)

Weds 3/13: **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](#).

Sat 3/16: **Drive-thru/take-out Dinner**, Second Congregational Church of Coventry, 1746 Boston Turnpike. Corned beef, cabbage, carrots, bread, and dessert. \$18. 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 3/17: **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. **LAST MARKET OF THE 2024 SEASON!** [Website](#).

Tues 3/19: **50% Off Winter Clothing** (newborn to size 10), 9-11 AM, 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. Also Saturday 3/23. Donations of clean gently-used items for children are welcome on Tuesday & Saturday mornings. Call for info 860-742-1616 on Saturday mornings. [Website](#).

Thurs 3/21: **Stew & Story - The Music & Story of Coventry's Hank Keene**, 6:30 PM, Second Congregational Church of Coventry, 1746 Boston Turnpike. Enjoy a variety of delicious soups, stews and chowders, breads, desserts, and beverages. Learn about this popular singer and songwriter from the 1930's and 40's, and hear many of his songs from the period. Sponsored by the Coventry Historical Society. Suggested donation for CHS members \$10, non-members \$20. Reservations requested, call 860-450-2331 and leave your name & number attending. [More info](#).

Sat 3/23: **Office Hours with Town Council Chairwoman Lisa Thomas**, 10-11:30 AM, Booth & Dimock Memorial Library, 1134 Main Street. Share a concern or ask questions at this monthly meeting.

Weds 3/27: **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](#).

Fri 3/29: **CT Vietnam War Veterans Memorial Monument Wreath-Laying Ceremony**, 5 PM, Veterans Memorial Green, Lake Street. A brief wreath-laying ceremony to honor our brave Vietnam War veterans on National Vietnam War Veterans Day. Info: Jamie, 860-985-2064.

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Early Voting  
Presidential  
Preference Primary  
March 26-28 &  
March 30, 2024  
10 AM - 6 PM  
Registrar's Office  
Coventry Town Hall  
3712 Main Street  
Curbside voting available  
Info: 860-742-4061



## EARLY VOTING FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY:

Early voting for this primary will be held from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm on the following days:

- Tuesday, March 26, 2024
- Wednesday, March 27, 2024
- Thursday, March 28, 2024
- Saturday, March 30, 2024

The location for Early Voting is the Registrars Office located in the Coventry Town Hall, 1712 Main Street. Curbside voting will also be available at the Early Voting location at the marked parking spaces located in the back of the building on the side adjacent to the School Administration Building. These locations are within view of the Registrars Office. Coventry residents can also call 860-742-4061 when they arrive to let the Registrars know that curbside voting is needed. A valid form of CT identification will be required for early voting.

**INFORMATION FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY:**

The Presidential Preference Primary **FOR BOTH DISTRICTS 1 AND 2** will be held on Tuesday, April 2, 2024 at the District 1 Fire House located across the street from Captain Nathan Hale Middle School from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm.

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**COVENTRY PARKS & RECREATION:**  
**Camp Wangumbaug 2024 – Registration opens March 4<sup>th</sup>!** To register and for more information [click here](#).



**Upcoming Spring Programs for Kids** – For more information & to register, [click here](#)

- April Vacation Daze, April 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> , 8am – 5pm, \$220 Grades k-5
- GHR After School Fitness Club, Monday’s and Friday’s 4/22-5/31 \$95
- Family Open Gym, Sundays in March 4pm-6pm, \$25 per family (Max 5 people per family pass)

**Community Garden plots still available**, \$30 per plot, [click here](#) to register

**Summer Jobs:** Applications available NOW through March 30th • Camp Counselors • Lifeguards/WSI • Park Maintainers • Gatekeepers Apply Online @ <https://www.coventry-ct.gov/Jobs.aspx>

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**COVENTRY SOFTBALL INC. & COVENTRY YOUTH BASEBALL ASSOCIATION TO COMBINE:**

Coventry Softball Inc. and Coventry Youth Baseball Association to combine. [Official press release](#).

It is with tremendous excitement that we announce the merger of Coventry Softball Inc and Coventry Youth Baseball Association. Starting January 1, 2025, the League will be known as Coventry Little League and will house both baseball and softball under one Little League umbrella.

1. How will this affect my player(s)? **We expect this merger to make the player, and family experience, much better. More coaching experience means better practice**

plans to expedite skill growth. Also, with two leagues running as one, there is less overhead. Centralized funding will allow us to purchase equipment needed and also make improvements to the park to better the experience for all.

2. Will donations go to baseball, softball, or both? What if I want to donate to just one? Both baseball and softball leadership have voted and decided to combine all of our sponsorship donations. This money will go directly towards all amenities at Miller Richardson Park that we will share. The main shared expenses will be Snack Shack, bathrooms, and dumpster service, along with others. Remaining funds will be put towards Park improvements. Fundraisers will still be run individually for baseball, as well as individually for softball, for the 2024 season.
3. Will this change the schedule? We don't foresee much of a schedule change.

This is just a small Q&A. Please reach out with any questions you may have.

We are really looking forward to growing this amazing community together!!!

Karl Koenig, League President  
Coventry Youth Baseball Association  
[coachkarlk@gmail.com](mailto:coachkarlk@gmail.com)  
203-305-7436



Blacklight painting  
teen program on March 27.

## 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!

The Lion's Club is accepting donations of used eyeglasses and hearing aids at the Library. Drop-boxes are located in the library vestibule.

Please note that the library has a new email address! [bdlibrary@coventry-ct.gov](mailto: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](http://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.

**Library Mini Golf is returning to Booth & Dimock. The newly renovated library will be transformed into an 18-hole mini-golf course on April 7 from 10-4. Suggested**

**donation of \$5 per family. Each player receives a round of mini golf, a slice of pizza provided by Wicked Slice, and a soft drink provided by Highland Park Market. This event is sponsored by Eversource.**

#### **Adult Programs:**

**Mystery Book Club** – March 1 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. March’s book is *The Maltese Falcon* by Dashiell Hammett.

**Senior Center Book Club** – March 13 at 1:00. Books are available to pick up at the library, but the discussion takes place at the Senior Center. March’s book is *The Mystery of Agatha Christie* by Marie Benedict.

**Wednesday Night Book Club** – March 20 at 6:30 – Meets at 6:30 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month. For more information, contact Pat McDougall at [pmcdouga@earthlink.net](mailto:pmcdouga@earthlink.net). March’s book is *Henry Himself* by Stewart O’Nan.

**Genealogy Club** – March 21 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 Karen Oellers**

**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 Stephen & June Clark**

**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 Steven & Tamara Cohen**

#### **TeenPrograms:**

**Drop by any time in March to grab a bag of air-dry clay and create a sculpture.** Enter your piece into our Mini Sculpture Contest. A winner will be announced in April.

**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.

**Mario Party** – March 12 at 4:00 – Mario Day is March 10<sup>th</sup>, but we’re celebrating on our own time! Bring a friend and join our game of Mario Party – there will be popcorn! **Sponsored by Cynthia & Robert Dee**

**Blacklight Painting** – March 27 at 5:00 – neon paint, black canvases, and black lights. There will be no cooler paint night here ever! **Sponsored by Colin & Ashley Dunnack**

## **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!

**Sing, Stomp, Story** – March 7 at 11:00 – Listen to music and dance around with Miss Christa! **Sponsored by the Breitenwischer Family**

**Sweet Dreams Story Time** – March 14 at 6:30 – Relax before bedtime with a calming story read by Miss Rachel. **Sponsored by Heather Battaly & Clifford Roth**

**Saturday Crafts with Miss Rachel** – March 16, all day– Use your imagination and explore new topics through hands on creativity. **Sponsored by Elizabeth Bauer & Marty Milkovic**

**Messy Munchkins** – March 22 at 11:00 – A multi-sensory playgroup that encourages participation from both caregiver and child. Make sure to wear your messy clothes!  
**Sponsored by Michael & Nicole Bingaman**

On March 8<sup>th</sup> at 1pm we have an all ages special event – **Taylor Swift Eras Tour Party!** Join us some fearless fun, where we'll be dancing like it's 1989 and embracing all things Taylor. It's a party you won't want to miss – so mark your calendar for an enchanted event!

**Sponsored by William Hall**

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

Booth & Dimock Memorial Library  
1134 Main Street  
Coventry, CT 06238  
860-742-7606  
[www.coventrypl.org](http://www.coventrypl.org)

[bdlibrary@coventry-ct.gov](mailto:bdlibrary@coventry-ct.gov)

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## COVENTRY CT CARES FUNDRAISER:

Coventry CT Cares, Inc. is holding an Easter fundraiser with Munson's Chocolates through March 23 to raise money for their various community initiatives.

Visit [this link](#) to order. Passcode Coventry123\$.

For more information about Coventry CT Cares, Inc. visit their website at <https://coventryctcares.com/>.



## DOLLARS FOR SCHOLARS ANNUAL FUNDRAISING:

Coventry Scholarship Foundation, Dollars for Scholars will be collecting donations for their annual fundraising mailing in March. Donations are accepted throughout the year as well. Visit <https://coventrydollarsforscholars.org> to make an online donation. Review the list of scholarships to designate your gift to a specific scholarship fund. Donations can also be made by mailing a check to Coventry Scholarship Foundation Dollars for Scholars, P.O. Box 3, Coventry CT 06238.

Email [csfdollarsforscholars@gmail.com](mailto:csfdollarsforscholars@gmail.com) with any questions. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. More than \$65,000 awarded annually to Coventry students seeking accredited post-secondary educational institutions. Please help support our future generations.



## COVER PHOTO:

*Coventry Town Hall in late 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.**

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