



TOWN COUNCIL & TOWN MANAGER

Right: The Town crest. The motto, Altiora in votis, in Latin, translates as "I pray for the higher things."

Town Council



L to R: Joan Lewis, Mike Griswold, Hannah Pietrantonio, Wayne Post, Jeff Shorts, Lisa Thomas, Micah Welintukonis.

The Town Council continues to work on developing the council goals. The goals were broken down into four sections.

Goal One: Enhance Town and School Safety. The Council continues to work with the Board of Education, and the Emergency Planning and Response Committee to make sure that best practices are in place. The sidewalks to the Middle School have been completed through the Safe Routes to School Grant, and are planned to be extended to Ripley Hill Road in the spring. A Fire Administrator was hired to oversee the new Coventry Fire Department with full cooperation from the Coventry Volunteer Fire Association and the North Coventry Volunteer Fire Department. The Town Council appreciates the efforts of both departments and their volunteer members.

Goal Two: Review Government Structure and Staffing levels. This goal was put on hold as we reduced the budget last year and funds were removed for the Town Charter review and the independent labor audit study. The Council continues to work on and implement sharing services with other towns in order to increase efficiency and reduce cost, such as through ICE grants. The Council and staff continue to work with the Board of Education and surrounding towns to reduce cost when available.

Goal Three: Protecting our rural character through land preservation and stewardship. The Council created the ad-hoc Open Space Oversight Committee, under the Conservation Commission, to help monitor and provide stewardship for open-space. The Town of Coventry continues to pursue grants for purchasing open space parcels identified in the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Goal Four: Assure Sound Fiscal Management of the Town. The Council continues to work toward its goal of a 10% balance in the Unreserved Fund Balance of General Fund Expenditures. We are working toward funding the Capital Non-Recurring Expenditure Fund to build reserves for the financing of depreciable assets. Also, the Council continues to strive to achieve an 80% funded ratio for Town Employee's Pension Fund. The Council continues to improve the communication with our residents. We publish quarterly newsletters, send out a monthly eblast, broadcast Council and BOE meetings and have a recast available on the Town website. Minutes from the Town Council meetings are posted promptly. The Council Steering Committee continues to recruit on an ongoing basis to fill vacancies for our Boards and Commissions. Coventry continues to lead in the area of green energy and was awarded an Energize Connecticut Clean Energy Communities Silver Award. Many town and school buildings now have solar panel installations and solar car ports have been installed at the Town Hall and Police Station. The Council has been very active with Town staff to go after grants that are available. This Council has worked hard to do what is in the best interest of Coventry and we look forward to serving the second year of our two year term.

Town Manager



*John A. Elsesser,
Town Manager
and Laura Stone,
Executive Assistant*

The annual report gives an opportunity to review the past year and create an historical record of the significant events and activities of the fiscal year. I am pleased to submit to the Town Council and citizens the Annual Report for the Town of Coventry for the period of July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015. Once again I want to first express appreciation to the hundreds of volunteers who not only call Coventry home but give of their time to do chores by serving on Boards, Commissions and many civic organizations. I also want to express appreciation to Town staff for working effortlessly toward a better goal in service to our town.

Several of the significant highlights for the year include a significant change with the relationship with our volunteer fire associations. The Town formally created a Town of Coventry Fire Department which will be served by both volunteer fire associations. Headed by a Town employee - the FIRE/EMS Administrator. The Town will be responsible for many of the financial and administrative tasks to allow the volunteers to continue to provide direct service.

Our Town infrastructure was greatly improved. Citizens authorized a \$3,000,000 Road and Hardscape Bond and our roads and parking lot projects were started and are planned for completion by spring of 2017. Safe Routes to School sidewalks from the Rt. 31 hill to the Middle School were completed. At Miller-Richardson Field, unsafe trees were removed, parking lots made safer and working with Coventry Youth Baseball fencing and scoreboards were installed. The Pucker Street Bridge replacement was started with a Fall 2015 completion date set. Solar panels and carports were installed at schools, Town Hall and the Police Station. We assisted the school administration in converting the modular classrooms at Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School into a preschool, taking advantage of a Smart Start grant obtained by the School District.

The Town became one of the first Purple Heart Towns and extended additional Town relief benefits to certain veterans with special housing needs.

The Town's finances remain strong and we once again were awarded the Government Finance Officers Association's Certificate of Excellence for financial reporting. Moody's Bond rating agency took note of our fiscal strength and upgraded us to an Aa2 rating in part due to our pension funded at an 85% level. We refinanced old debt at lower interest rates, saving \$338,073 over the remaining life of the debt.

After many years of administration by a non-profit, the Coventry Regional Farmers' market is coming home to be run by the Town for the 2016 season. We appreciate the efforts of Bridges Healthy Cooking School for making the Market a recognized Market of Excellence.

We had a very good year obtaining grants, including:

- STEAP: Lake gate replacement
- Community Development Block Grant: Housing rehabilitation
- Main Street Investment Fund: Main Street projects including Tracy Shoddy Mill, pocket park, sidewalks and Millbrook Park improvements
- LOTCIP to improve Lake and Cross Streets including pedestrian safety and drainage
- America the Beautiful: tree planting on Main Street
- Aquatic Invasives: to treat Fanwort in Eagleville Lake
- ICE: Joint computer purchase

- Catalyst: Arts in our community study
- Nutmeg Network: Fiber connectivity to Internet
- Historic Records Preservation: scanning vital records
- Bright Ideas: Solar park lights

Several additional grants are pending decisions.

Finally, the long-standing State Main Street Curve Realignment became a reality as property rights were acquired and bid documents prepared for a spring 2016 project start. The project will create a safer, walkable Village area and transform our historic district.

It continues to be an honor to serve the residents of the Town of Coventry. There are many things to love about our community.

John A. Elsesser
Town Manager