

**MINUTES
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
APRIL 27, 2024**

The Annual Town Meeting of the Town of Coventry was held on Saturday, April 27, 2024, in the Veteran’s Auditorium, Coventry High School, Ripley Hill Road, Coventry. The Meeting was called to order by Marty Milkovic, Vice Chair of the Town Council at 10:10 a.m. with 72 eligible voters in attendance. Also present were non-voting staff, members of the community and press.

Marty Milkovic called for nominations for Moderator of the meeting. Carolyn Arabolos was nominated by Cheryl Ann Resha, 42 Vernon Branch Rd., seconded by William Zenko, 18 Mary Anne Drive. Being no further nominations, Ms. Arabolos was declared Moderator.

At the request of the Town Clerk, Ms. Arabolos read the notice of this meeting and stated that said notice, signed by the Town Manager and the Town Clerk was posted on the Town Signpost on April 12, 2024 and a copy thereof was published in ‘The Chronicle’, a newspaper of general circulation in its issue of April 12, 2024

The Moderator explained that in accordance with Section 7-6 of the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut, as amended, only an elector of the town or a citizen of the United States of the age of eighteen years or more who, jointly or severally, was liable to the town for taxes assessed against him, based on an assessment of not less than \$1,000 on the last completed grand list of the town or who would have been so liable if not entitled to an exemption as a blind person or as a veteran or as a parent or surviving spouse of a veteran would be entitled to vote at this meeting and the Adjourned Annual Town Meeting to be held on May 7, 2024.

Item #1: To hear the Town Council’s estimate of expenditures for the fiscal year July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.

James Drumm, Town Manager, and David Petrone, Superintendent of Coventry Schools presented a brief review of their respective budgets.

Item #2: To consider and take action on the Town Council’s recommendation for the 2024-2025 fiscal year appropriation, pursuant to Section 9-1 of the Town Charter, the final vote shall be adjourned by the Moderator to May 7, 2024.

General Government	12,143,160
Board of Education	30,774,700
Debt Service	3,157,506
Capital Expenditures	765,748
Ambulance Fund Transfer	<u>363,920</u>
Total Appropriation	\$47,205,034

Motion: Lisa Conant, 173 Pucker Street moved, seconded by Suzanne Haviland, 155 Standish Rd. that the Town Council’s recommendation for the 2024-2025 fiscal year appropriation be approved as follows:

General Government	12,143,160
Board of Education	30,774,700
Debt Service	3,157,506
Capital Expenditures	765,748
Ambulance Fund Transfer	<u>363,920</u>
Total Appropriation	\$47,205,034

Moderator explained that pursuant to Section 9-1 of the Town Charter the final vote on Item #2 will be adjourned to May 7, 2024. The meeting continued for the purpose of discussion and possible amendments. The Moderator encouraged all those who wished to speak to remain on topic and keep their comments brief. Discussion followed:

Richard Williams, 508 Wrights Mill Rd., Wants to know when the expenses are going to stop. Asked about the current year grants and how much the Town is spending with these grants. Both Mr. Drumm, Town Manager and David Petrone, Superintendent responded. Talked about the number of houses in Coventry compared to what is being spent. He stated his math for the number of households was \$13,000 being spent a year. He stated that citizens can’t afford to spend this much. Mr. Drumm responded that he added grants into that total which does not come out of the citizens pockets.

William Zenko, 88 Maryanne Dr., Thanks the Board of Education, and the Town. He addressed Mr. Williams’ statement and appreciated the services the Town offers. Mr. Zenko mentioned that he was concerned that Capitol projects.

Marie Gall-Hall, 40 Old Tolland Tpke, referred back to Mr. Williams’ statement and also appreciates the services and schools in Coventry. We have a lot for a small town. Thanks everyone for their work.

John French, 42 Pucker St., Thanks everyone for their work on the budget. He mentioned the error in the budget and questioned Mr. Drumm about monies being moved, also about why the increase in Capitol budget. Mr. French also talked about mandates, debt service, fire truck. He addressed Mr. Petrone about teachers and arbitration.

Cheryl Reesha, 42 Vernon Branch Rd., She appreciates the benefits of this Town and supports the budget.

Nicolas Stancati, 54 Olde Tavern Lane, stated he has been in Town for 55 weeks. Questioned about the valuation of homes and the mil rate and reevaluation this year. Mr. Stancati also made comment that he hopes everyone who has anything to do with the budget is a Town citizen. Mr. Drumm, Town Manager, responded and Jennifer Beausoleil, Board of Education Chairman responded that anyone elected to a Board has to be a Coventry citizen.

Discussion was stopped with the interruption of Mr. Richard Williams abruptly approaching back up to the microphone. Moderator Carolyn Arabolos asked for Mr. Williams to sit down. He refused and started talking. Moderator asked for microphone to be shut off. Discussion resumed.

Dorothy Grady, 42 Cornwall Dr., Grateful for the fair budgets, and the services provided in Town. Ms. Grady stated she needed to call 911 for the first time. Ms. Grady stated that with all the years she has paid taxes it was worth having someone respond to her needs that day. She approves of the budget.

Joseph Malon, 777 Pucker St., directed a question on the ambulance to Mr. Drumm, Town Manager. Asked about a line-item form equipment, bandages, supplies. Mr. Malon questioned the increase in the police budget of \$262,000. Mr. Drumm stated it was an error in the first edition of the budget and it was corrected. He also asked the Board of Education about improving the gym.

Michelle Stancati, 54 Olde Tavern Lane, Praised the schools, but asked questions about the bus strike and if the Town has contracted with a different company for a better contract. Mr. Petrone answered and asked her to email him for more information. She addressed Mr. Drumm, Town Manager, on adjustment in next years budget with the mil rate. Mr. Drumm responded and Matthew O'Brien, Council member responded. Ms. Stancati talked about the median income of Coventry and how residents will afford the increase. She also wanted to know who paid for the re-mailing of the revaluation notices because of the mistake of no return envelope that was not enclosed. Mr. Drumm responded to that question and her question on insurance.

John Twerdy, 605 Pucker St., Thanked everyone for their work on the budget and praised the Board of Education. Mr. Twerdy mentioned his granddaughter graduated from Coventry Schools and she's on the Dean's List.

Discussion Closed.

Item #3: To authorize the Town Manager to enter into an agreement with the Commissioner of Transportation for Town Aid Funds for Roads available to the Town of Coventry under Chapter 240 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Motion: Lisa Conant, 173 Pucker St. moved, seconded by William Zenko, 18 Maryanne Drive, that this Annual Town Meeting authorize the Town Manager to enter into an agreement with the Commissioner of Transportation for Town Aid Funds for Roads available to the Town of Coventry under Chapter 240 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Voted

Motion Passed

Item #4: To take action on the Town Council’s recommendation for the FY 2024-2025 Capital Improvement Plan and to authorize the Town Manager to make application pursuant to Chapter 116b of the Connecticut General Statutes for funding for eligible projects under the Local Capital Improvement Program (LOCIP).

Motion: Lisa Conant, 173 Pucker St., moved, seconded by Richard Williams, 508 Wrights Mill Rd., that this Annual Town Meeting approve the Town Council’s recommendation for the FY2024-2025 Local Capital Improvement Plan and to authorize the Town Manager to make application pursuant to Chapter 116b of the Connecticut General Statutes for funding of

Patriots Park Improvements	\$25,000
Creaser Park Improvements	\$40,000
Guardrail Installations/Repairs	\$20,000
Lisicke Beach Improvements	\$21,000
Open Space Stewardship	\$10,000
Police Station Updates	\$25,000
<u>Small Bridge and Culverts</u>	<u>\$13,500</u>
	Total \$154,500

Voted.
Motion passed.

Item #5: To authorize the Town Manager and the Town Treasurer to borrow money from time to time in anticipation of tax collections to meet current expenditures.

Motion: Lisa Conant, moved, seconded by Marie Gallo-Hall, 40 Old Tolland Tpke., that this Annual Town Meeting authorize the Town Manager and the Town Treasurer to borrow money from time to time in anticipation of tax collections to meet current expenditures.

Voted.
Motion Passed.

Moderator stated that Item #2 on the call to this Annual Town Meeting will be submitted to the legal voters of the Town for a vote on Tuesday, May 7, 2024 during the hours between 6:00 o’clock (a.m.) and 8:00 o’clock (p.m.) (EDT); that the voting take place at:

District #1 & District #2
Central Fire Station
1755 Main Street

and that those voters entitled to vote by reason of section 7-6 of the General Statutes of Connecticut, revised to January 1, 2024, may vote in the Registrar of Voters office.

Absentee ballots will be available at the office of the Town Clerk as provided by law.

MODERATOR: Order the Town Manager and the Town Clerk to prepare, post and publish a proper notice with respect to the voting at said Adjourned Annual Town Meeting to be held on May 7, 2024.

Moderator adjourned the vote on Item #2 to May 7, 2024 and further adjourned this meeting at 12:15 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Received for filing
April _____, _____

Lori Tollmann, Town Clerk

Brooke R. Manning
Assistant Town Clerk