

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
January 10, 2011

6:00 p.m. Budget Workshop with School Committee

Presentation by Superintendent Michael Convery and Finance Director Robin Reasor. Discussion focused on areas where there is an expected increase: Certified full time educator projection, enrollment projection and capital requests.

Mr. Convery noted items which have been eliminated from the school department in the past few years, including the elementary gifted education program, high school freshmen sports, the high school interact program, closures of the Flat River Middle School in 2006 and Oak Haven in 2009, elimination of 16 teachers over four years at Feinstein Middle School, cuts to classified staff in 2010-2011, and the "give back" of a contractual raise from certified staff in 2009-2010. He added that the schools have been level funded the past three years.

Projected increases are found in contractual salary raises for certified staff (support staff receives no raise next year), step increases, health care and pension costs. There is no increase in staffing.

President Cote asked Mr. Convery that if the economy improves, what the cost would be to reopen Oak Haven. Superintendent Convery replied between \$450,000 to \$700,000.

Discussion also took place regarding health insurance, costs to belong to W.B. vs directly through another provider. Manager Hoover explained that the town hired Bottom Up Solutions, which operates under a contingent basis, being paid with a portion of savings that are made, but believe that if we opted out of WB, there would be some kind of a penalty.

Further discussion took place regarding capital requests. Superintendent Convery noted that there are seven buildings in states of disrepair (eight if Oak Haven is included). However, first priority is the fire code update at the high school, or the school won't be able to open in September. The school is safe now, but the fire code needs to be updated. We have already received a waiver of time twice.

President Cote asked about asbestos in the schools and Brian Steverman replied that the situation is safe, it is in the floor tiles at the high school.

Councilman Jendzejec asked what improvements are requested for the high school athletic facilities. Mr. Convery responded that the outdoor bleachers and the track need to be replaced, but first priority is the fire code.

School Committee member Nancy Sprengelmeyer added that there is a need for roof repair at the high school.

Discussion took place with regard to enrollment issues, classroom size, bussing children to other schools and the cost savings to bus out rather than add to classroom size. The classroom size limit per teacher contract is 23 children, then you have to pay the teachers a stipend for an overage. School committee member Judy Liner spoke of the benefits of having a smaller class size.

Discussion took place with regard to funding formula, student population, level funding or reduced funding if population drops significantly. Our student population has not declined enough to reduce funding, must continue to level fund.

Complete presentation in council folder.

7:00 p.m. TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Present: President Gary Cote, Vice-President Kerry McGee, Ted Jendzejec, Raymond Spear

Town Manager Thomas Hoover
Town Solicitor Frederick Tobin

Pledge of Allegiance led by Girls Championship Softball Team and Town Sergeant
Invocation by Pastor Auld
Review of Emergency Evacuation Plan

President's Comments

- President Cote announced Laura Flanagan's resignation from the Town Council, District 2, effective on January 1, 2011. A special election will be held on April 5 for District 2 residents. Residents may contact any council member, as the Town Council serves the entire town.
- President Cote commended DPW on the excellent job done on the roads during the last storm.
- The Council plans to rejuvenate our inactive Economic Development Commission. We would like to have small business owners serve on that board. If anyone is interested, contact the Town Manager's office to fill out an application.
- There will be an Executive Session on Wednesday night, January 12; the topic is collective bargaining for the police union.

Approval of December 13, 2010 Town Council Minutes

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to approve minutes of December 13, 2010. All voted aye.

PROCLAMATIONS

1. Recognizing former Probate Judge Steven Hart for his dedicated service to the Town of Coventry

Former Judge Hart was not present. Proclamation will be mailed to him.

2. Recognizing the Coventry Girls Softball Eight (8) and Under All Star Team in their winning the 2010 State championship

Councilman McGee presented certificates of recognition to the coaches and team players from the championship softball team.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Renewal of Private Detective license for Donald Ferrucci
2. Renewal of Private Detective license for Kevin Beese
3. Appointments to the Coventry Municipal Employee Pension Board
4. Approving tax abatements and additions for the month of December 2010

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to approve Consent Items #1, #2, and #4. All voted aye.

With regard to Item #3, the appointments to the Municipal Employee Pension Board are Town Manager Thomas Hoover, Finance Director Ted Przybyla and Union Representative Michael Savastano.

Motion made by Councilman McGee seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to approve resolution. All voted aye.

RESOLUTIONS

1. Requesting that the Town Manager investigate and report on the implementation of a paperless agenda management system for the Town Council

Councilman Jendzejec feels this would be a step toward becoming "green". President Cote commented on the tremendous amounts of paper the Council receives in their packets, and although Councilman Spear has reservations, he does feel the preparation of the agenda could be redesigned.

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to approve resolution. All voted Aye.

2. Approving an employment contract for the new Coventry Police Chief

Manager Hoover announced that Captain Bryan Volpe has been appointed the new Chief of Police and will be sworn in after the January 28 retirement of Colonel DaSilva. He asked the Town Council to approve Captain Volpe's employment contract.

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to approve and authorize the Town Manager to execute employment agreement. All voted aye.

3. Approving the award of Emergency Repair Contracts for the Town of Coventry

Manager Hoover explained that the town issued requests for proposals for emergency work. He recommends approval of the resolution with the stipulation to call the low bidder first. Emergency electrical services would go to LEV Electrical and Airhart Electric, Inc; Equipment Rental to Walter E. Reynolds General Contractor, Inc., N. Chapdelaine Excavating, Saccoccia Construction & Landscaping and D&D Construction; Plumbing to Dave Parrillo Plumbing & Heating and SB Carbone Plumbing & Heating.

Motion made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Councilman McGee to approve resolution, amending it to include D & D Construction. All voted aye.

Councilman Spear suggested that a record be kept of which contractors we use.

LICENSES

1. Renewal of Firearms license for Mid-State Gun Company, 15 Sandy Bottom Road

Motion made by Councilman McGee seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to approve license renewal. All voted Aye.

2. Application for a new victualling license for the Main Street Diner, 1532 Main Street

Motion made by Councilman McGee seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to table license application. All voted aye.

3. The Town Council sitting as a Liquor Licensing Board regarding the following establishments: (#10)

- (a) Chatermike Restaurant Corp – Nino’s
- (b) Sun Lee Inc.- Mai Tai

Nino’s

Solicitor Tobin explained that after sending letters, Mr. Cunha still failed to pick up licenses. Tonight’s hearing is being held to determine if these licenses should be suspended or revoked.

Mr. Charlie Cunha of Nino’s was sworn in by Solicitor Tobin.

Solicitor Tobin asked the clerk why the licenses could not be issued; she responded that Mr. Cunha lacked a letter of good standing from the RI Division of Taxation.

Solicitor Tobin asked Mr. Cunha if he could supply what was needed with more time and he replied that he could.

President Cote has had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Cunha and also spoke of his good reputation in the community. At this point, President Cote is inclined to issue a suspension for 14 days, with a stay, then if not in compliance after 14 days, Nino’s would have to close down.

Solicitor Tobin asked Mr. Cunha if he would accept a 14 day suspension with a stay. Mr. Cunha responded that he would.

Councilman Jendzejec stated that although this Council is business friendly, Mr. Cunha’s issue is a matter with the State of RI that needs to be cleared up.

Mr. Bob DiPadua urged the Council to give more time and opportunity to Mr. Cunha. Nancy Sprengelmeyer, 26 Taft St., spoke of Mr. Cunha’s stellar reputation, that he always takes the opportunity to help other people and organizations, sometimes absorbing some of the cost of the event himself. She hopes the Council would allow him the extra time that he needs.

Councilman McGee made a motion, seconded by Councilman Jendzejec, to impose a 14 day suspension of license, with a stay. All voted aye.

Mai Tai

Attorney Seth Perlmutter represented Mai Tai Restaurant. Ngar Lew, a principal shareholder, was present and sworn in by Solicitor Tobin. Attorney Perlmutter told Council that Mai Tai needs to comply with a few different issues and asked that this matter be continued to the next council meeting. Mr. Lew is faced with selling the restaurant and doesn’t want to do that.

Solicitor Tobin asked if compliance could be met within two weeks; Attorney Perlmutter was unsure if that would be enough time.

Mr. Hoover suggested that rather than suspend the license, to have the attorney and applicant come back at the next Town Council meeting. At that time they will have more information and Council will be more able to make a decision at that time.

Solicitor Tobin added that if adequate progress is not made, you could suspend his license at that point and he will have to shut down.

Motion made by Councilman Jendzejec, seconded by Vice-President McGee not to suspend license, but for Council to be updated of progress in two weeks at next Council meeting. Vote taken 3 in favor, one opposed (President Cote votes no). Motion passes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nancy Sprengelmeyer thanked Town Council members for listening to the School Committee, stating that she appreciates the Council's willingness to partner with the School Committee to find solutions to the financial issues that we all face.

Louis Diamonte, 283 S. Main Street, noted poor road conditions on Anthony Street and asked the Town Manager if KCWA could be pushed to repave that road. Mr. Diamonte also questioned the snow removal ordinance and no parking ban. He commented that the ordinance needs to be enforced, cars are parked all over the side streets, difficult plowing. Town should be removed from liability in case of accidents. Should enforce the tow rule.

Representative Lisa Tomasso, District 29, advised Council that although she cannot attend all council meetings, she is always available to the Town Council to help in any way she can.

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to recess into executive session. Individual voice vote: Ray Spear, Aye; Kerry McGee, Aye; Gary Cote, Aye; Ted Jendzejec, Aye.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

R.I.G.L. 42-46-5 (a) (1)

1. To review qualifications of applicants to Town Boards and commissions and to conduct any requested interviews

Upon motion of Raymond E. Spear seconded by Thaddeus Jendzejec, the Town Council unanimously voted to seal the minutes of the Executive Session of January 10, 2011.

Upon motion of Raymond E. Spear seconded by Thaddeus Jendzejec, it was unanimously voted to adjourn.

Town Clerk