

Town Council Meeting  
January 26, 2015 – 7:00 P.M.

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Present: Vice-President Carlson, Councilman McGee, Councilman Laboissonniere, President Shibley, Councilwoman Duxbury, Town Manager Thomas Hoover, Town Solicitor Nicholas Gorham

Pledge of Allegiance  
Invocation by Manager Hoover  
Review of Emergency Evacuation Plan

President's Comments

President Shibley announced the passing of Angelina Kiley, wife of Jim Kiley, former Town Council member and President of the Town Council. Mrs. Kiley passed away Saturday morning.

He advised that applications are being accepted for vacancies on the Sewer Subcommittee and for the District 3 position on the Tax Assessment Board of Review. Lastly, beginning this evening Public Comment has been moved to the beginning of the meeting, affording citizens the opportunity to comment on items before votes are taken.

Approval of Town Council minutes January 12, 2015

Councilwoman Duxbury requested two changes to the minutes of January 12, 2015 for clarification purposes:

The first change is on Page 6, Item 2, where Manager Hoover was talking about updating the municipal pension plan document. She asks that Manager Hoover's statement is amended to read "Manager Hoover recommended approval *by advising that the municipal pension plan document is out of date and both unions are in favor of updating.*"

The second change is on Page 7, the last paragraph, sentence before the last one, where she asked to reword sentence to "That way if one of the turbines is sold off to non-profits, such as a municipality, *we won't lose the revenue stream,*" rather than "*we won't be able to collect any taxes*". She felt that clarification was needed and Manager Hoover didn't have a problem with amending the sentence.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Carlson seconded by Councilwoman Duxbury to approve minutes with amendments. Vote taken: Four Aye; Councilman Laboissonniere abstained as he was absent from meeting.

Manager Hoover asked that Resolutions 1 and 2 be brought forward on the meeting agenda since DPW Director McGee has a lot going on with the storm.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no public comment.

RESOLUTIONS

1. Discussion and resulting action regarding the award of a contract to Hughes Associates to

provide engineering and fire code consulting services to the Town of Coventry to address compliance with findings of fact by the State of Rhode Island Fire Safety Code Board of Appeal and Review on the Town Hall Annex, 1675 Flat River Road at a cost of \$22,550

Manager Hoover previously mentioned in weekly reports that the town received about nineteen fire code citations from the Central Coventry Fire Marshal at the annex across the street from the Town Hall. We took care of a good portion of those citations, but there were several that couldn't be taken care of immediately. We appeared before the State Fire Board of Appeal and that board insisted that we get a consultant to make recommendations with regard to corrections that had to be made. The Board gave the Town until May 4 to come up with a plan to resolve the remaining issues. Mr. Kevin McGee met with and did a walk-through with the Chief and the fire inspector, went over what the problems were and discussed ways to try to eliminate some of the higher cost items. Hughes Associates will provide fire code consulting services and will report their findings with recommendations to the Safety Board of Appeals by May 4, 2015. The work must be accomplished by December 4, 2015 and will be performed by the Department of Public Works along with a contractor who will be hired after the bidding process.

Councilman McGee asked that if the town rents or leases out the building, if it would be the responsibility of who rents it to get it up to whatever code they would need and Manager Hoover replied that he would not recommend leasing or renting unless there was a stipulation that whoever leases it meet fire codes. Solicitor Gorham said it would be subject to negotiation and in the next lease there would be a stipulation that the town does not incur those expenses. Councilman McGee commented on Central Coventry Fire having their office in that building if they feel it is so unsafe. Manager Hoover stated that the State has taken over the operations of that fire district and has hired a new chief. So far we have had success with the new chief, and I have found him very professional. I have asked him to start paying rent, he is agreeable, will talk to the state and I suspect we will finally start getting rent on that space. Hopefully this district is back on a course to solvency again.

A motion was made by Councilman McGee seconded by Councilwoman Carlson to approve resolution. All voted aye.

## 2. Discussion and resulting action regarding the award of a contract to Santa Buckley Energy for supplying unleaded gasoline and to Superior Plus Energy for supplying diesel fuel to the Town of Coventry

DPW Director McGee explained that we have had Santa Buckley Energy for the last few years, and the contract has recently expired through the RI Municipal Purchasing Agents Association through the City of Warwick. Up until now, Santa Buckley has been providing both gasoline and diesel fuel, but they have not bid on the diesel this time. Of the bids received, with all bids meeting specs, Santa Buckley was the lowest bidder for gasoline with the bid on diesel fuel going to Superior Plus Energy

A motion was made by Councilwoman Carlson seconded by Councilman McGee to approve resolution. All voted aye.

## COUNCIL DISTRICT UPDATES

District 3 Councilman McGee had no news from his district, but acknowledged that the Tax Assessment Board of Review still needs a candidate from District 3, as the last successful candidate was unable to take the position.

District 5 Councilwoman Duxbury addressed the tire situation at 31 Reservoir Road, stating that Mr. Peabody, Zoning Official, is working on a permanent solution for where tires will be stored.

Also, she attended court today on the marijuana grows and we are going back to the Zoning Board next week. She thanked Ed Warzycha for getting the zoning and planning minutes on the website and for his efforts and focus on improving the sound system in the Council Chambers. Lastly citizens were reminded of the small business forum which will be held next Wednesday at 7 p.m. at Westwood Estates.

There was no news at this time from Districts 1, 2 or 4.

SCHOOL DEPARTMENT REPORT (Entire report below, submitted by School Committee Chairwoman Kathy Patenaude)

### Full Day Kindergarten

As you know, the Rhode Island Department of Education awarded Coventry Public Schools a grant to hire a consultant to research and develop a Full Day Kindergarten Implementation Plan.

The consultant worked with Dr. Almeida and Fred Schockaert, Assistant Special Ed. Director, throughout the process. Last Tuesday night, seven plans were presented as possible options for consideration. The School Committee asked the Dr. Almeida to explore the following Plans:

1. Plan A – Utilize current space in our buildings. Elementary libraries would become learning centers in our schools. All special subjects (art, music and library) would teach in core grade level classrooms, thus not having their own room. This plan opens up classrooms for full day kindergarten.
2. Plan B – Purchase modular classrooms to create more space. Approximately five would need to be purchased.
3. Plan D – Phase in full day kindergarten over a few years. Plan is to be determined. This plan may be as simple as opening one full day kindergarten classroom next year.

Any plan to implement full day kindergarten will likely require additional funding to the school department.

In FY17, the kindergarten students will be included in the funding formula like students in grades 1-12. Representative Gallo has legislation proposed to speed up the plan by one year – making it effective in FY16 which would offset the financial impact on the Town considerably.

Next year, Coventry may be one of only three districts in the State without full day kindergarten. It is imperative that the community understands how Coventry students will not be afforded the same opportunities as their peers throughout the State unless we transition to full day kindergarten. The School Committee has not committed to any plan and intends on exploring a phase in option for next year, if anything at all.

The Superintendent and School Committee will continue to keep the Town Council abreast of plans as we explore full day kindergarten.

### Wireless Classroom Project

The district received another grant for \$150,000 from Rhode Island Department of Education to expand the wireless internet services to our schools to cafeterias, auditoriums, gymnasiums, conference rooms and offices. Our schools will be 100% within the next couple months – at no cost to the taxpayer! The administrative team has worked diligently to seek grants and continue to find success.

#### Race to the Top Grant

Two other grants for Common Core Curriculum and Next Generation Science Standards curriculum development were awarded to Coventry Public Schools, a total of approximately \$50,000. The Superintendent is seeking an additional grant to continue this work.

#### Oak Haven Elementary

The School Committee has asked the Superintendent to explore the process and fallout of relinquishing control, back to the Town, of Oak Haven School.

The approximate annual cost of upkeep is \$15,000. The building is used for storage, primarily, and freshman basketball (gymnasium).

A decision on Oak Haven is expected sometime in February.

#### 3. Discussion and resulting action regarding the appointment of an Alternate Member to the Town of Coventry Board of Canvassers

Discussion ensued with regard to appointing alternate(s) to the Board of Canvassers as the current Chairman of the Board of Canvassers is injured and his expected return date is not known. The statute indicates that alternate(s) may be appointed and Attorney Gorham added that the alternate has to be of the same party as the person they are subbing for. Suggestions would be solicited from the Chair of the party.

Councilman McGee suggested appointing two alternates, one from each party, so that if someone is absent you have someone to replace them. Attorney Gorham agreed that you can appoint two alternates, it would not change the balance of the Board of Canvassers, and the most that would happen is that if the current Republican on the Board of Canvassers is out, the alternate would step in to serve, but you would never have a change in the balance of the board.

Councilman McGee made a motion seconded by Councilwoman Carlson to amend resolution and appoint two alternate members, one from each party. All voted aye.

#### 4. Discussion and resulting action regarding a Purchase and Sales Agreement, the deed and the lease for the purchase of the Town owned building located at 191 MacArthur Blvd.

Manager Hoover explained that this building is where the Comprehensive Community Action Program resides as well as the food bank, with the majority of the building occupied by CCAP. The former Town Council approved the sale of this building, however, after consulting with Attorney Gorham, and now that we are at the time of closing on this matter, he felt it would be appropriate for the current Town Council to approve this document. There is much maintenance to be done on this building and CCAP has sunk about a million dollars into this building as a lessee already. We are giving it to them for \$1.00 in consideration of the amount they have already spent. There is much more to do including a major roof repair and sewer hookups. The agreement will allow us to share the parking lot and an adjacent major recreational facility. The town will collect refuse and plow in the winter, and our food bank will remain in the building. Instead of the town owning the building,

CCAP will own the building and lease to us. CCAP provides services to the underprivileged of the town, offers free medical care and are a great asset to the community. Councilwoman Duxbury remarked that this is a non-profit with no tax dollars coming in and Manager Hoover agreed that the tax status won't change at all.

Attorney Gorham advised that the previous Town Council authorized the sale, all we are doing here is authorizing the Town Manager to sign the deed and the lease. The title attorney for CCAP requires this in order to get clear title to the property and that is all we are doing.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Carlson seconded by Councilman McGee to approve resolution. All voted aye.

### CONSENT AGENDA

1. Discussion and resulting action amending the calendar year 2015 Town Council meeting schedule to provide two meetings per month with the exception of June, July and August.

Manager Hoover said that essentially the Town Council schedule was changed as there were months with a Monday holiday, only giving us one meeting for the month. I have included some back to back meetings so that we are guaranteed two meetings a month; however if we find that we don't need a meeting, then we don't have to have the second one.

A motion was made by Councilman Laboissonniere seconded by Councilwoman Duxbury to approve resolution. All voted aye.

### ORDINANCES

1. Amending Chapter 113-5(A) of the Coventry Code of Ordinances, prohibiting year-round camping in recreational trailer parks and/or campgrounds, allowing operation only from April 15 to October 31

A motion was made by Councilwoman Carlson seconded by Councilwoman Duxbury to advertise for public hearing. Vote taken: Four Aye; Councilman McGee votes No. Motion passes.

A motion was made by Councilman McGee seconded by Vice-President Carlson to adjourn meeting. All voted Aye.

---

Town Clerk