

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

March 5, 2012

Present: Councilman Mattson, Councilman Spear, President Cote, Councilman Jendzejec,
Councilman McGee

Town Manager Hoover
Town Solicitor Tobin

7:00 PM – EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. For the purpose of discussing matters pertaining to collective bargaining and in accordance with RIGL Chapter 42-46-5 (a) (2)

1. For discussion and resulting action regarding a contract between the Coventry Teachers Alliance and the Coventry School Committee and as it pertains to Section 3.14 paragraph (o) of the Town of Coventry Home Rule Charter

Motion made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Councilman Mattson to recess to Executive Session. All voted Aye.

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Mattson to resume regular meeting. Individual voice vote. All voted aye.

Motion made by Councilman Mattson seconded by Councilman McGee to seal minutes of Executive Session. All voted aye.

Motion made by Councilman McGee seconded by Councilman Spear to vote to ratify the new Coventry Teachers Alliance contract. Individual voice vote. All voted Aye. President Cote signed on behalf of the Town Council.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Maria Duquette, 30 Lowell Street, believes that the Town Council is in violation of title 16 of the General Laws.

President Cote explained that the taxpayers passed a referendum question to give power to ratify binding arbitration powers on teachers' contracts to the Town Council. A bill was submitted and approved by the legislators reaffirming the vote taken by the taxpayers.

Councilman Jendzejec does not believe the school committee is in disagreement with allowing us to ratify the contract.

Charles Vacca, 124 Fairway Drive remarked that we are one of the few communities in Rhode Island that is governed by Home Rule Charter.

President Cote responded that Rhode Island State law dictates that under Home Rule Charter, as long as we are making decisions that only affect the community that we are in, the Charter takes precedent over state law because it only affects the community of Coventry.

Charles Vacca asked for details regarding the contract that was just ratified and where the \$600,000 was coming from.

President Cote replied that the contract that we just ratified calls for no increase to the school budget over the life of the contract. We will level fund the school department this year minus \$600,000. That will be the funding formula used

over the three year life of this contract. Last year the Town Council voted to approve a \$1.2 million dollar increase and \$600,000 of that was not going to be added to maintenance of effort, so what we gave them last year minus \$600,000 is what we will give them this year and that's what will be required over the three year life of this contract. As soon as we receive final wording, the contract will become a matter of public record.

Thomas Hetherman, 745 Whaley Hollow Rd., thanked the Coventry Teachers Association for stepping up and really helping the School Committee.

President Cote thanked the School Committee for inviting him to be a member of the negotiating team, representing the taxpayers. They were looking out for the best interest of the taxpayers in the Town of Coventry and well as the students.

Councilmen McGee, Mattson, Spear and Jendzejec also thanked and congratulated everyone involved in the development of this three year contract that provides an opportunity to continue to function as a professional staff without the need for asking for new money for three years. Councilman Jendzejec added that this contract has set a major precedent as far as people working together to accomplish a common goal.

Kelly Erinakes, President Coventry Teachers Alliance, remarked that the School Committee has been informed that the teachers have been level funded this year. We would expect that the schools and the kids would benefit from the money. Ms. Erinakes expressed that the schools are not level funded for three years; the teachers are level funded for three years.

Judith Liner, 20 Lynn Drive, commended and thanked everyone for setting precedent for other cities and towns.

Motion made by Councilman McGee seconded by Councilman Spear to adjourn. All voted aye.

Deputy Town Clerk