

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
April 9, 2012

Present: Councilman Jendzejec, Councilman Mattson, President Cote, Vice-President McGee

Town Manager Hoover  
Town Solicitor Tobin

Absent: Councilman Spear

Pledge of Allegiance led by Town Sergeant  
Vice-President McGee asked for a Moment of Silence for Jack Wellsley, a former School Committee Member  
Review of Emergency Evacuation Plan

President's Comments

President Cote announced that student choir members from Feinstein Middle School and Coventry High School were invited to attend this evening's Town Council meeting to receive certificates of recognition for their performances in the 2012 RI Music Educators Association All Star Music Festival. However, due to an event at the high school, they were unable to join us this evening.

Approval of Town Council Minutes from March 26, 2012

Motion made by Councilman McGee seconded by Councilman Mattson to approve minutes. All voted aye.

Consent Agenda

1. Approving the tax abatements and additions for March 2012

Motion made by Councilman Mattson seconded by Vice-President McGee to approve consent agenda. All voted aye.

Resolutions

1. Requesting the Rhode Island General Assembly to support the legislative package submitted by Governor Chafee to assist cities and towns

Councilman Jendzejec has concerns with the proposed legislative package. Since it consists of seven different bills, he would like to discuss each on its own merit, support it or not support it.

Motion made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Councilman McGee to hear and vote on each bill individually. All voted aye.

Manager Hoover advised that he attended a meeting with the Governor last week. The RI League of Cities and Towns as well as the RI Public Expenditure Council addressed and discussed this issue and supported all pieces of legislation, even though some of these will not directly affect Coventry, but will affect some towns and cities in critical status.

In attendance this evening are Susan Bernstein, liaison to the Governor for Municipal Affairs and Policies and Attorney Ken Allston, legal counsel for the Governor's Office. They are here to explain and answer questions regarding the proposed legislation.

Councilman Jendzejec inquired whether the Superintendent of Schools and the School Committee had studied the proposed bills affecting the School Department with regard to school district accounting compliance and state aid, and whether or not they support these. He also remarked that some of the bills in the package rely on the town getting funding only if they approve a Charter amendment or an ordinance. He was also concerned whether the town could be penalized or have funds withheld from the State if the town doesn't pass an ordinance or charter amendment.

Atty. Allston replied that there are some penalties in the bills, but the point of the penalty is to make sure that the towns and cities meet requirements, for example if a COLA is suspended, 50% must be invested back into the pension plan, so the idea encourages fiscal sustainability. If a town fails to do that, it is penalized.

Manager Hoover added that even if the General Assembly passes all of these bills, it is still a local option to approve and implement them.

President Cote clarified that if the Council were to vote and approve this package tonight, and even if it passed through the legislature, there is nothing holding our feet to the fire saying that we have to enact any of it. The bills were not crafted to take local control away.

Atty. Allston replied that is 100% correct, implementation is up to the town. With 39 cities and towns, some things will apply to you, some will not. Right now only four cities and towns meet the criteria. Coventry is critical, but not distressed.

Vice-President McGee feels this resolution should move forward.

After lengthy discussion, Councilman Jendzejec objects as he doesn't see these bills would help the town. In addition, he doesn't want to see the town in a position where it has to defend itself in court and possibly deal with years of litigation.

Manager Hoover said that ultimately, this is all up to the Town and City Councils. The municipalities are looking for tools to use, and we can't use these tools unless the General Assembly approves them. I would recommend total passage.

President Cote again stated that if we vote on this package, there is nothing holding us to enact any portion of it, this just pushes forward a resolution giving the legislature an opportunity to vote on it.

Councilman Jendzejec stated that he believes this package will only give us more problems and put money in other peoples' pockets, doesn't save or solve the problems of this or any town. He had concerns that the town would have the authority to break contracts, seemingly labor contracts that could lead to lawsuits. He believes that if you are going to vote on this package and support it, that you would have to see how it will help your town and he doesn't see that. He would like to hold off on a vote until more information and more research can be done.

Councilman Mattson asked if passage was needed this evening and Ms. Bernstein responded that they are trying to get support for the upcoming committee hearings, but there is not a specific deadline.

Motion made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by President Cote to table resolution to next meeting. Vote taken: Councilman Jendzejec votes aye; 3 Nay. Motion fails.

Motion made by Vice-President McGee seconded by Councilman Mattson to move forward as presented as we are not committing to anything. Vote taken 3 (Aye), Councilman Jendzejec votes nay. Motion passes.

2. Approving the award of a contract with The PFM Group for coordination of all aspects of the recent bond issuance process for the permanent financing of the Town of Coventry's Landfill Settlement Bonds at a cost not to exceed \$10,500

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

Motion made by Councilman Mattson seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to deal with Resolution Items #3, 4, and 5 at one time. All voted Aye.

3. Approving the award of a contract with Altrui Bros. Truck Sales Inc. for one (1) Refuse Truck Cab and Equipment at a cost of \$73,563

4. Approving the award of a contract with Altrui Bros. Truck Sales Inc. for one (1) Refuse Truck Chassis and Equipment at a cost of \$73,563

5. Approving the award of a contract with Beam Truck & Body, Inc. for one (1) 30 Cubic Yard Refuse Body at a cost of \$77,782

Chuck Smith of DPW explained that the purchase of this truck has been split into three sections, because of the way it was voted on at the FTM. The three different components make up one complete truck. It will be purchased with capital improvement funds that have not been utilized yet.

Motion made by Vice-President McGee seconded by Councilman Mattson to approve resolutions 3, 4, and 5. All voted Aye.

6. Requesting the Rhode Island General Assembly to approve School Capital Bond Referendums

Manager Hoover advised that Council previously approved this bond referendum for \$8,550,000 for the school department a month ago, but when it was sent to our bond counsel, she wanted it split into five separate questions for the ballot. This is the same item, only split into five parts.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ryan Hall, 228 Camp Westwood Road, appeared before the Town Council to advise that he is going to resurrect the Memorial Day Parade in Coventry. His grandfather, Frank Rezendes, was instrumental in carrying out this event; however Mr. Rezendes passed away in November of 2011. Mr. Hall would like to carry on this tradition and is seeking assistance in the amount of \$1500 to pay for the police detail on the day of the parade. The parade will run from MacArthur Blvd. to the VFW on South Main Street, beginning at 10 a.m. on May 28.

Chief Volpe offered to waive the cost of police car rentals for the parade, but is not able to do anything about the cost of the police detail.

Manager Hoover suggested that this matter be discussed at the next agenda meeting. The Town Council is supportive and Councilman Mattson has ideas to offer for fundraising.

Charles Vacca, 124 Fairway Drive, President of the PV Preservation and Historical Society of RI announced that on April 14 and 15, from 8 am – 2 pm they will hold a clean-up of the Pine Grove and Manchester Cemeteries across from Knotty Oak Church. Mr. Vacca invited the public to help or just stop by.

Ron Gizzarelli, 50 Harrington Road, has concerns with regard to the governor's legislative package and thinks things can be resolved in another manner. He also would like the Council to look into the pension formula.

Motion made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Vice-President McGee to adjourn meeting. All voted aye.

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Town Clerk