

Town Council Meeting
September 23, 2013

EXECUTIVE SESSION – 6:00 PM

For the purpose of discussing matters of potential litigation per RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2)

WORK SESSION - 7:00 PM

Presentation and discussion on Automated Refuse and Recycling Collection

Manager Hoover gave presentation on an automated one man refuse collection and recycling program. It is an efficient operation, using an automatic arm attached to the vehicle which loads a container into the compactor. Several towns in Rhode Island have an automated collection program; some are performed in-house while some are performed by contract. RI Resource Recovery Corp, the corporation that runs the Johnston landfill, is currently promoting cities and towns in RI to consider adoption of an automated collection program. This type of operation lends itself to an increased amount of recycling, more driver safety and customer satisfaction.

Because Coventry is among a number of communities in RI that receives a recycling profit sharing check from Resource Recovery every year, the town currently has \$145,986, which can only be used for advancing recycling. There is another profit sharing check expected on September 30th and I recommend that Coventry utilize the fund to provide a six month pilot program in order to determine whether the Town should proceed in implementing a town wide automated collection system.

For the pilot program we propose to rent two trucks and 3,000 wheeled containers, a mixture of 48 gallon and 96 gallon, for six months. We propose to run two refuse routes, one would consist of curbed streets and the other uncurbed streets, in order to determine the effectiveness on both types of streets. The plan is to do the Harris area and North Wood Estates.

If the program tonight is favorably received by the Town Council, I would recommend that a resolution approving the pilot program is placed on the next council agenda. The program would run from January 1, 2014 through June 30, 2014. If favorably received by citizens on the pilot routes, it is recommended that a bond referendum be placed on the November 2014 ballot to approve funding for the town-wide program. (See full presentation in council folder).

Such automation would reduce tipping fees at the landfill, boost recycling and recycling profit sharing, and increase transfer station revenue by processing our own metal products. Reduced costs would include reduced manpower, reduced potential work related injuries, increased collection efficiency. The total cost for the pilot program is \$146,500.

Trucks would dump directly at RI Resource recovery, saving \$225,000 a year, the cost of that contractual service. All in all, we could save about \$ 7.7 million over a 20 year period. However, there is the other side of the equation, which is the cost, and the plan would be to ask to voters to approve this via a bond referendum.

Councilman Jendzejec asked about overages for tonnage. Manager Hoover responded

that we currently experience a municipal rate at the landfill, as compared to commercial private haulers, of \$32.00 per ton with about an 11,000 cubic yard cap. Because of the amount we collect, we capped out in May, so for about 1.5 months we lose our rate of \$32.00/ton and have to go to the commercial rate of \$54.00/ton.

Councilwoman Carlson thinks the program is a good idea and asked if it would be run in-house or through an outside contractor. Manager Hoover recommended our own in-house staff. She also asked about the longevity of the trucks. Mr. Jody Tomasso of DPW has worked very hard for the last year and a half gathering information on this program and replied that trucks last 10-12 years; Manager Hoover added that our mechanics would need training to work on them.

President Cote advised that Resource Recovery feels that we should experience at least a 30% increase in our profit sharing and decrease our tipping fees also by a big number. We would save in other areas such as workmens compensation claims.

Vice-President McGee agrees the pilot program is a good idea, but does have some concerns about the driving time to and from the landfill along with the wear and tear on the vehicle, but a pilot program would iron these things out. He also would like a comparison between what it is costing us now compared to privatization.

Councilman Laboissonniere questioned how pilot routes were decided upon and Manager Hoover explained that he believes the Harris area is a good choice since the roads are a lot tighter maneuverability-wise and the streets are uncurbed. Wood Estates North would provide an area of curbs and sidewalks.

Councilman Laboissonniere asked why you would take out a 20 year bond for trucks that have a life of 10-12 years and thinks the town should have some type of plan for putting money aside rather than bonding. Further discussion took place pertaining to the container rentals, the number of them we would rent, etc.

The Council began the regular meeting at the conclusion of the work session.

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Present: President Cote, Vice-President McGee, Councilman Jendzejec, Councilwoman Carlson, Councilman Laboissonniere, Town Manager Thomas Hoover, Town Solicitor Frederick Tobin

A motion was made by Vice-President McGee seconded by Councilwoman Carlson to close executive session move on to the regular meeting. Individual voice vote, all voted Aye.

A motion was made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Councilman Laboissonniere to seal minutes of Executive Session. All voted Aye.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Town Sergeant
Invocation given by Vice-President McGee
Review of Emergency Evacuation Plan

President's Comments

President Cote announced that "Public Comment" was inadvertently omitted from tonight's council agenda. When we get to that portion of the meeting, the chair will accept a motion to add it to the agenda.

Approval of Town Council minutes September 9, 2013

A motion was made by Vice-President McGee seconded by Councilwoman Carlson to approve minutes. All voted aye.

Proclamation Recognizing The Greene Company for receiving The Rhody Project Award for restoration of their Cranberry Processing Barn

President Cote presented proclamation to Ralph Pratt, representative of the Greene Company.

SCHOOL DEPARTMENT REPORT

School Committee member Ann Dickson reported that the School Committee has approved a three year Strategic Plan for 2013-2016. In addition, she reported that the first day of school this year went very smoothly. Mr. Gene Dufault, Coventry High School Unified arts teacher, was recognized as Coventry High School Teacher of the Year. With regard to safety and security, the Schools are working in collaboration with Chief Volpe and the police department and have conducted active shooter training with all employees, lockdown drills at all the schools and are in the process of assessing our school safety and security procedures using the new RI Emergency Management Association School Safety Assessment.

Councilman Jendzejec asked whether the School Committee has looked into the Safe Routes to School Program; Ms. Dickson would inquire at the next School Committee meeting.

PRESENTATION

Human Services Director Pat Shurtleff presented the annual report on the Waterman/Fiske Assistance Program (See full report on file). She described the various ways assistance was given over the period of April 1, 2013 through September 1, 2013, totaling expenditures of \$66,294.38. Specific areas were broken down as follows: Rent/mortgage, \$8,215.12; Emergency Home Heating, \$36,156.49; Medication, \$1,813.39; Camperships for Coventry Parks and Recreation, \$20,800.00; Washington St., Building Renovation supplies, \$3,345.12; and Emergency septic pumping, \$455.00.

She advised that there has been an increase in the number of people who need assistance, due to reasons such as home heating oil costs going up, prices of daycare going up, more money spent on co-pays, etc.

Finance Director Ted Przybyla clarified that although Human Services has spent \$66,000 +, the Waterman Fiske fund has \$2.6 million in it. We give assistance using only the interest on the account. Ms. Shurtleff added that additionally, everyone is assessed before assistance is given.

CONSENT AGENDA

Discussion and resulting action on sewer tie-ins for Michael Perras, property located at 729 Washington Street; Taco Bell, located at 784 Tiogue Avenue; and Benny's, located at 495 Tiogue Avenue

A motion was made by Vice-President McGee seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to approve Consent Agenda. All voted Aye.

RESOLUTIONS

1. Discussion and resulting action on appointing William F. Marcotte to the Coventry Board of Canvassers

A motion was made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Vice-President McGee to approve appointment. All voted Aye. President Cote administered the oath of office to Mr. Marcotte.

2. Discussion and resulting action on the switching of Board positions between Carl Mattson, Historic District Commission Board Member, and Sandra Lukowicz, Alternate Historic District Commission Board Member

Member Carl Mattson requested that the Town Council allow him to switch positions with Sandy Lukowicz, who was recently appointed to the alternate position on the Historic District Commission. Mr. Mattson felt that because of her vast knowledge and the fact that she has worked diligently, she is more deserving of the full time position and he would be better off as the alternate.

A motion was made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Councilwoman Carlson to approve resolution. All voted Aye.

3. Discussion and resulting action on a new collective bargaining agreement between the Town of Coventry and AFSCME, Council 94, Local 3484 for the period of July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2016

Manager Hoover highlighted the changes that have been made to the contract. The main features of the proposed contract include: wage increases of 0% the first year of agreement; one percent the second year and two percent the third year. An increase of 1% in pension contributions over the next three years; new hires will be provided a defined contribution program in lieu of the current municipal pension; family sick days have been reduced from five days to three days per year and health insurance premiums will remain at 15%. The manager recommended that the Town Council approve the new contract, which will soon be before the membership of Council 94, Local 3484 for ratification.

A motion was made by Vice-President McGee seconded by Councilman Laboissonniere to approve resolution. All voted aye.

4. Discussion and resulting action authorizing the Town Manager to expend Rhode Island Clean Water Authority approved borrowings to complete the Flat River Road and Industrial Drive Sewer improvements.

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

5. Discussion and resulting action on the award of a contract to Fuss & O'Neill, Inc. of Providence, RI to provide due diligence examination at a cost of \$27,500 on the two private pump sewer systems which the Town of Coventry is interested in purchasing; the Woodland Manor Sewer System and the Reservoir Road Sewer System

Manager Hoover advised that the town is in a tentative agreement to purchase both sewer lines, but we have to do a due diligence investigation by a professional engineer. The purchase of this line will be a great advantage to the town. We have received three quotations from engineering firms, and believe that Fuss & O'Neill will do the best job in the least amount of time; they predict four weeks. The amount of \$27,500 will come out of the Clean Water Financing Fund.

A motion was made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Councilwoman Carlson to approve resolution. All voted Aye.

6. Discussion and resulting action on the award of a contract to Cintas Corporation of Pawtucket, RI for upgrades to the fire system at the Town of Coventry Town Hall and Library at a cost of \$20,413

Manager Hoover stated that there is \$25,000 in the capital improvement program for fire alarm upgrades. Cintas was the only bidder at \$20,413 and approval is recommended.

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

7. Discussion and resulting action on adjusting the Town Council meeting agenda to provide one October meeting on October 28, 2013, one November meeting on November 18, 2013 and one December meeting on December 9, 2013

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

A motion was made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Councilwoman Carlson to include Public Comment on tonight's agenda as it was omitted on the Secretary of State's website. All voted Aye. Solicitor Tobin added that the purpose of public comment is just to let the public comment to the Council. Discussion items should be placed on the regular agenda.

Michael Lupino, 383 Town Farm Road, an 8th grade student at Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School, told the council that a fellow student and good friend of his, Jake Aversa, recently passed away. He asked if the Council would consider a request to have a memorial in the name of "Jake Aversa", and suggested that maybe the town skate park be named after him. President Cote expressed his condolences and assured Mr. Lupino that he would work with Councilman Laboissonniere and Parks and Recreation Director Guy Lefebvre to do everything we can do to make that happen.

Ken Jackson, Harkney Hill Road, commented on being turned down on his offer to conduct a systems study for the town. He feels that things in town need to change and assured the council that if he were to conduct such a study, he would not go into any town records and would only interview about 20 people. Secondly, the town needs to work on a disaster plan.

Deborah Pagano, 27 Catalpa Way, referred to the recent Kent County Water Authority situation with contaminated water, asked the town to consider a reverse phone calling system so that residents can be informed immediately.

Tammy Duxbury, Orchid Trail, also referred to the Kent County Water situation and reminded the council how important it is to protect our water supply. If something were to happen to the aquifer at 75 Airport Road, we would be in the same predicament.

William Landry, Esq. with Blish and Cavanaugh, spoke pertaining to following up on a letter written to Council with regard to Colwell's Campground. The campground is a non-conforming use. It has a right to continue to the extent it was in existence when the law went into effect. Our position is that it is operating in a more expansive and more non-conforming way than it was. There are more than 106 sites there; the ordinance states that they need 25% of area for recreational use, but they can't conform because they are too small. They have taken what they had of a recreational area and added an additional 15 camping sites. There are well in excess of the allowed 106 campsites. Secondly, the campground has to have 25% of its area dedicated to recreational use. This campground can't conform to that, it is too small. But, what they have done is taken the non-conforming recreation area and used that for 15 new campsites, reducing the already non-conforming recreation area. Beyond that they are expanding to within 100 feet of property lines and streets with these 15 new proposed sites, and that is an expansion of a non-conforming use, making the use more non-conforming. Finally, there is supposed to be a 100 foot landscape buffer and they are expanding sites into that buffer area.

I asked the zoning officer in May to respond to a formal complaint on behalf of my client and I received an e-mail from Solicitor Tobin. At this point the zoning officer has not responded to the complaint and the situation has become worse than it was in May. This is a situation where we have to ask the town to enforce its own ordinances.

Raymond Budziak, 429 Fairview Avenue, asked if Wood Estates will hook into the sewer line being purchased. Manager Hoover will speak to Mr. Budziak after the meeting.

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

Town Clerk