

AGENDA
COVENTRY TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING
March 27, 2017
7:00 PM
Town Hall Annex

1. Call To Order, Roll Call
2. Unfinished Business:
 - 2.A. 16/17-41: FY 2017-2018 Budget
 1. Human Services (7 PM)

[MANAGER'S PROPOSED BUDGET - HUMAN SERVICES](#)

2. Parks & Recreation (7:30 PM)

[MANAGER'S PROPOSED BUDGET - PARKS & RECREATION](#)

Documents:

[HSO TRANSMITTAL LETTER.PDF](#)
[TRANSMITTAL LETTER 17-18.PDF](#)
[PERFORMANCE MEASURES.PDF](#)

3. Adjournment

(E) Denotes Enclosure

<p>Open Participation in Public Meetings: The Town of Coventry will provide reasonable accommodations to assist those with special needs to attend & participate in public meetings. Contact the Town Manager's Office at 742-6324 or e-mail Lstone@Coventryct.org at least 48 hours in advance to discuss special needs.</p>

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

HUMAN SERVICES

The Human Services Department is a multi-generational service agency. The goal of our department is to allow Coventry residents to achieve and maintain personal and social well-being. The Human Services Department provides an extensive range of services such as advocacy, crisis intervention and help with basic needs such as food bank, energy assistance programs, advocacy, information and referrals to other state and local agencies. This office relies on donations from programs such as The Clergy Fuel Fund, The Salvation Army, Holiday Committee and our Special Needs Fund. Without these donations, these funds would not be able to help Coventry resident's obtain assistance for food, heat, and electricity.

This office acts as a liaison between local agencies such as Eversource, United Services, Department of Social Services, Operation Fuel, Access Action Agency, The Salvation Army, Connecticut Legal Services, Police Department, public schools, local churches, and other counseling and action agencies. For the last five years, the office has served as a Field Placement Location for the Eastern Connecticut State University's BSW program. This is a very successful program and the intern has become an asset to our office. Interns help in a variety of capacities, including outreach, client intake, data processing, holiday programming, Youth Services group work and programming, as well as helping out with day-to-day office tasks.

In 2014, the office expanded the Food Bank at the Patriot Parks Community Center and is partnering with Coventry High School's Community Based Program in which Coventry High School students volunteer to help organize, stock, and facilitate the distribution of food on set food bank hours. This has been a very successful partnership.

The Human Services Office, Youth Services and the Senior Center work together to provide wrap-around services for all residents of Coventry.

YOUTH SERVICES

In line with the mandated C.G.S. Section 10-19m, Coventry Youth Services provides direct delivery of prevention, intervention services (i.e. campership, financial assistance programs/scholarships; Youth & Family Counseling; Back to School Programs; Juvenile Review Board/Diversion; Mentoring programs; Youth Job Bank; Prom Dress Program; Lending Library; Community Events; Parent Education programs; At-risk Boys and Girls programs; Community Service Projects) along with support services (outreach; referrals to services, programs and resources; communication to families, schools, businesses, and state organizations regarding programs, services, resources, updates, trends, and issues; youth and family advocacy (state and local levels); grant writing/fund development;

data collection and analysis; collaborate with community, state, regional youth serving agencies; capacity building, training for school staff, youth serving professionals; education & awareness; member of State and local boards; advocate and leverage resources; assessment, research, development of programs, services; website/social media) for Coventry children, youth and their families.

The Youth Services Coordinator, which is funded in part by the State Department of Education (SDE), is the Municipal Agent for Youth and staffs the Coventry Youth Service Bureau. Programs, services, supplies and contractual staff are funded through an additional grant from the State Department of Education, along with a grant from Northeast Communities Against Substance Abuse (NECASA), fundraising and donations.

SENIOR CENTER

The Coventry Senior Center offers comprehensive programming that encourages adults, age 60 and older, to participate in activities to pursue their interests in a supportive environment of their peers. The programs seek to address emotional, recreational, educational, nutritional, health and financial needs of seniors across a changing and growing demographic. Programs include: meals, fitness classes, crafts, games, health/wellness programs and discussion groups. Other professional services include massage, haircuts and foot care and collaboration with AARP to provide free tax preparation and driver safety courses.

The Coventry Senior Center provides professional in-house social services and benefit counseling. The Senior Center Coordinator holds a Masters in Social Work with a certificate in Social Work with Older Adults. The Coordinator is a CHOICES Certified Counselor, trained to offer unbiased information about Medicare plans and related benefits, such as the Medicare Savings Program, which offers significant fiscal savings to low-income residents. The Coordinator serves as Municipal Agent for the Elderly for any individual seeking information or referral to elderly services in the community. The Coordinator also assesses the need for intervention from Coventry Human Services, which may include protective services, energy assistance or food insufficiency concerns.

The Transportation Coordinator facilitates scheduling “free” transportation that primarily serves elderly persons and persons with disabilities where public transportation is not available. Through a network of volunteer drivers, individuals have access to health services, shopping, banking, post office, and the senior center which allows seniors to remain mobile; creates social independence; reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness and many other life prolonging benefits. The Senior Center’s goal is to provide place for enrichment and assistance of all seniors within in the Town of Coventry.



Budget Proposal

Fiscal Year 2017/18



***Submitted By:
Wendy L. Rubin, CPRP
Director of Parks and Recreation
Dec. 30, 2016***

A: LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL - FY 17/18 Budget

1. In support of the Town Council's goals related to economic development, fiscal responsibility, service to our seniors, providing and promoting safety, and the presentation of a realistic and affordable budget, the Coventry Parks & Recreation Commission submits this Budget Proposal for FY 2016-2017.

Goal 1: To address the needs of public safety.

Being a Lake Community, Coventry Parks & Recreation plays an essential role in providing safe waterfronts. Each year, about 4,000 people die from drowning in the United States. Approximately 50-75% of drownings occur in open water such as oceans, lakes, rivers, and ponds. Most drownings are preventable through a variety of strategies, one of which is to provide lifeguards in public areas where people are known to swim and to encourage people to swim in those protected areas. Some estimates indicate that the chance of drowning at a beach protected by lifeguards can be less than one in 18 million.

We teach about 400 children annually using the *American Red Cross* swim instruction program. According to the *American Academy of Pediatrics* (AAP), evidence shows that children ages 1-4 may be less likely to drown if they have had formal swimming instruction. Additional steps taken for safety include:

- Offering community & staff Red Cross & AHA CPR/AED & First Aid classes
- Requiring & conducting background checks on staff & volunteers that work with youth
- Staff Training provided on identifying Child Abuse & Mandated Reporter requirements
- Playscape safety audits and inspections are conducted regularly

Goal 2: To oversee the Town's investments by maintaining all Town equipment, buildings and infrastructure.

Risk reduction and minimizing our liability exposure is accomplished by maintaining our town's assets (facilities/ parks) at a proper operating level to meet the needs and demands of public use. Regular communication and coordination with DPW is required for on-going routine maintenance and special projects. The Department of Public Works had a Facilities Maintenance Division in prior years that supported our infrastructure with a more dedicated work force and operating budget than we have today. The shift away from DPW support has created a need to hire our own seasonal park maintainers.

In FY 2009/2010, in response to the economic downturn, the Department absorbed all operational costs, except for a Lifeguard payroll subsidy and the Director's salary by transferring the burden from the General Fund to the Special Revenue Fund totaling \$19,000. Due to inflation, increased use of facilities, and expanding programs, costs continue to rise. In FY 14/15, the operational costs have increased to approximately \$86,000 per year. When we made the shift, it was agreed upon that the issue would be revisited once the economy rebounded.

We have spent down our fund balance for major maintenance and repairs of our aging infrastructure. In order to remain competitive and attract renters, the facilities must be aesthetically pleasing and provide basic services needed to serve as a function hall.

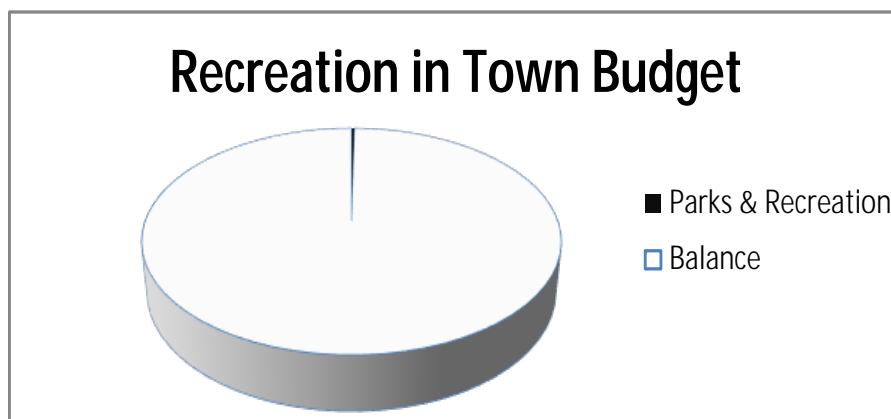
Operating costs associated with the town's parks and recreation facilities include:

- Dumpster & porta-a-john rentals
- Plumbing repair & winterizing services
- Water Testing & well/pump maintenance
- Alarm System
- Mud carpet service
- Cleaning of Grease traps and Ansell systems in kitchens
- Custodial Supplies/paper goods
- Seasonal Trash & Restroom cleaning
- HVAC Service
- Propane & Oil Heat at Patriots and Creaser
- Electricity at Patriots, Creaser, Miller Richardson, Laidlaw
- Septic Tank pumping
- Custodial costs for BOE Custodial services

Most of our needs for major facility maintenance and improvements are in our Capital Improvement Plan and our Capital Outlay requests, which historically are funded via LoCip grants or the Special Revenue Fund.

Goal 3: Fiscal responsibility and allow individuals to keep more of the money they earn. To seek sustainable solutions for lower taxes, present realistic and affordable budgets.

In a cost-recovery model, the Recreation dept. focuses on the costs to operate in comparison to the fees collected. The tax generated funds support the administrative salary & benefits of the Recreation Director and a subsidy to support the summer lifeguard operations at the town beaches. Since 1975, a self-supporting Special Recreation Revenue Fund recovers the direct and indirect program costs of the Department. We use a pricing strategy that allows us to provide a variety of levels of programming to meet the needs of our citizens and non-residents. We always try to offer programs and services at a reasonable rate and we try to avoid fee increases unless merited. We have consistently kept our share of the tax base low. In FY15/16, the Recreation division operated a \$422,524 budget while only utilizing \$100,419 in taxes to operate. The Return on Investment (ROI) is 320% or, in other words, for every dollar of taxpayer money the town receives back \$320 in services & programs. The Average Cost per Median Household is \$10.50



PricingStrategies

- 1 **Public Access:** Areas, facilities, and open space acquired by tax dollars resulting in a fiduciary responsibility on the part of government to afford taxpayers opportunity to use such investments. Examples include trails, parks, pavilions, and ballfields. This also includes special events such as the Tree Lighting, Ice Fishing Derby etc.
- 2 **Core Services:** Those activities, services, and/or programs that address issues of importance to the current and future viability and well-being of the community. Examples are: day camp, swim lessons, youth basketball and before & after school care.
- 3 **Quality of Life Services:** Activities, services, and programs that enhance the overall well-being and quality of life of the individuals involved in the specific activity. This may include yoga, tennis lessons, Zumba, etc.
- 4 **Highly Specialized/Individualized:** Activities, services, and programs that represent one-on-one or small group involvement in highly advanced or specialized nature of a recreation or leisure activity or the restricted use by a particular group of a public area or facility. This would include sports camps, bus trips, Road Races, etc.

Goal 4: Promote Economic Development

Most communities today recognize that high quality parks and recreation facilities and amenities are an important element of a resident's perception of their quality of life. Parks & Recreation is usually among the top three reasons people give for selecting places to live and work. Because of the value that parks and recreation contributes to the economic viability of the community, the expenditures on Parks & Recreation should be viewed as an investment rather than an expense. The following are some ways Parks & Recreation have helped promote economic development this past year:

- The Parks & Recreation Department serves as the facilitator for the *Coventry Arts Guild* as a direct result of the "**Arts Catalyze Placemaking Grant**". The Guild is thriving with a growing membership and visibility in the community through their programs such as the First Annual ARTS IN THE PARKS Festival in September, the youth art contest in December and many upcoming events being planned.
- **Community Garden @ Creaser Park:** The Garden saw much activity this past year, with strong leadership and support of a Master Gardener. The group is planning to use the old decking from the Lodge deck to install raised beds next year.
- In lieu of the Harvest Run, we are working with the state-wide Veterans group to offer a new Patriot Race, which was held on November 12th at Patriots Park. Over 400 runners and their friends and families converged at Patriots Park for a day of festivities.
- We were awarded **2016 Playful City USA** status making this our sixth year in a row!
- Recreation has had active participation in the **Eastern Highland Health District Plan4Health** initiative to develop a planning toolkit for local towns to make them healthier. A new program, Park Prescriptions, engages the medical community to promote local parks as a means to improve health.
- We employ over 60 local youth annually.

Goal 5: Seek opportunities to consolidate resources with the goal of improving efficiency and service to seniors.

- Recreation staff have **successfully partnered with various community groups** to offer many additional initiatives and events: We worked collaboratively with the **Coventry Lions Club** on the Christmas in the Village offerings (including the Polar Express event and assistance with marketing & facility use). Tree

Lighting activities were eliminated to better focus on Christmas in the village – too avoid redundancy & have only 1 Santa.

- The **Scouts** have been on hand helping with event set-up and refreshment sales at the Ice Fishing Derby, Patriot Run, Tree lighting and Polar Express.
- Internally, we collaborate regularly with other Town Departments including **Human Services, Public Works and Planning & Zoning** to better serve our community members. We continue to partner with Planning & Zoning with trail management & development; Human Services with the implementation of the Camp Scholarship Fund and other initiatives; and DPW on facility maintenance and special event assistance.
- The **“Lakes Region” Basketball League** consisting of Coventry, Ashford, Hebron, Bolton and Mansfield. shares gym facilities, scheduling software, and coaches training; thus allowing for consistency and sharing of resources. Working collaboratively with these other towns and sharing the expense of the software/trainings has afforded our program with many more opportunities for improvement, without incurring the full cost to us. This program was honored by the CRCOG for Inter-town Cooperation in 2016.
- Meeting with **Library & Human Services (Youth Services, Senior Center & Human Services)** staff to discuss collaborations and coordination, and aligning our initiatives with the Town Council’s goals. This past year we successfully introduced the “UP TO” Calendar for promoting a one stop location for all town activities. We are also installing a “Little Library” at Laidlaw Park and future plans for other parks.
- We have also been a constant facilitator & supporter of most civic organizations and non-profits, and have helped to provide a venue for **community service and volunteerism** that adds up to thousands of hours donated annually. We have benefited from the volunteers at STEPS, CECC, the Scouts, Coventry Lions Club, Youth Sports leagues, Coventry Schools, UConn Athletics, and ECSU just to name a few.

Goal 6: To protect the provision of essential services.

Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services

1. Economic Value

- Parks improve the local tax base and increase property values. It is proven that private property values increase the value of privately owned land the closer such land is to parks. T
- In a number of studies, quality parks and recreation are cited as one of the top three reasons business use in relocation decisions.
- Parks and recreation programs produce a significant portion of operating costs from revenue generated from fees and charges, but more importantly, provide significant indirect revenues to local and regional economies from sports tournaments and special events such as arts, music, and holiday festivals.

2. Safety, Health and Environmental Benefits

- Parks are the places people go to get healthy and stay fit. Parks and recreation programs and services contribute to the health of children, youth, adults, and seniors. Swim Lessons and the provision of Lifeguards at town beaches provide a safer environment with less risk exposure.
- Parks and protected public lands improve water quality, protect groundwater & flooding, improve the quality of the air we breathe, provide vegetative buffers to development, produce habitat for

wildlife, and provide a place for children and families to connect with nature and recreate outdoors together.

3. Social Importance

- Parks and recreation services are provide identity for citizens and are a major factor in the perception of quality of life and the livability in a given community.
- Parks provide gathering places for families and social groups, as well as for individuals of all ages and economic status, regardless of their ability to pay for access and are accessible by persons of all ages and abilities, especially to those with disabilities.
- An ongoing study by the Trust for Public Land shows that over the past decade, voter approval rates for bond measures to acquire parks and conserve open space exceeds 75%. The majority of the public view parks as an essential priority for government spending.
- Access to parks and recreation opportunities has been strongly linked to reductions in crime and to reduced juvenile delinquency. The average cost to incarcerate a juvenile in the State of CT for 1 year is over \$265,000. (\$726/day)
- Parks have a value to communities that transcend the amount of dollars invested or the revenues gained from fees. Parks provide a sense of public pride and cohesion to every community.
- The provision of core services i.e. Childcare in our before & after school program, summer day camps, and swim lessons improve quality of life for all residents.

Goal 7: To increase transparency in government

Through social media and email, we are able to efficiently supplement the traditional modes of communication without incurring additional expenditures. Cutting-edge ways we have accomplished this is through Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, Instagram, eblasts and mobile apps, including My Town Trails.

This past year we continue to grow, adding 120 new “likes” on Facebook, bringing our grand total to 1052 since joining the site in 2009. With Facebook, we are able to keep in touch with our customers through photo sharing, status updates, and event listings. Facebook has also become an easy way for folks to ask questions, offer feedback and refer us to their friends through post sharing and friend-referrals. It has also become a valuable tool in encouraging registration for those programs at risk of cancellation, due to low enrollment.

Eblasts are an efficient way of communicating with our customers; this past year, 479 new coventryrec.com accounts/members were created. We now have 4300 household accounts, made up of 7991 individual members (6249 town residents & 1742 non-residents). Coventry has approximately 8,900 households. This demonstrates the Parks & Recreation Department’s ability to directly reach and serve our citizenry, and this does not take into account casual, indirect users that hike trails, picnic at a park, attend special events such as concerts, etc.

2. Departmental activities of financial impact

- Parks & Recreation staff is constantly looking for new and different ways of engaging the public, thusly impacting our financial bottom line. A major area of financial impact that we have continued to bear over the last few years, and will continue to feel the effects of, is the **rising minimum wage**. In 2008 the minimum wage was \$7.65 per hour. As of January 1, 2017, minimum wage will rise again from 2016 by .50 to \$10.10. This will impact our Camp, After School, and Aquatics budgets, which typically pay out over 16,000 hours seasonally. As a result of our research, many fees were raised to accommodate the increase in payroll.

- Staff proposed a variety of options to restrict the hours that **Patriots Park** beach is open during the summer, from staying open only weekends and holidays, to a mix of limited hours during the weekdays as well. The intent was to save on lifeguard and park maintenance costs.
- Staff was able to set up a new process for registrations that passes the credit card fees on to the users directly, thereby saving approximately \$7,000 +.

As the Department continues to grow and offer more direct services to Coventry's residents, additional assistance in-office has been needed. Since FY 2009, revenues and expenses have doubled, demonstrating the growth the department has realized through its programs and services. Over the past few years, seasonal workers have been hired to assist Department staff with program registrations, facility reservations, phone inquiries, and in-person customer service during the busy summer months while Department staff are often pulled from the office and into the field, to oversee ongoing programs and staff. We have utilized student internships whenever possible, and had a very successful intern from SCSU this past year.

3. Systematic Review of Operations:

We conduct post-program evaluations, which are also available on-line. We also benchmark with other towns via CRPA list-serve survey tools on a regular basis. We have a *Survey Monkey* account and have been successful at reaching out to the public for their feedback. Examples include surveys regarding the arts, youth basketball, dog park interest, etc. The *National Recreation & Park Association* produces an annual "Community Standards Report" using a national database to allow us the opportunity to benchmark with communities of our size nationwide. Of note, the national average for Parks & Recreation's cost recovery rate is 47%. It is our goal to analyze this information to develop a more realistic rate of return. Please see Appendix A.

A salary study was conducted using 2015 figures shows that Coventry falls short of meeting the mean and median salary for the Recreation Director position in comparison to other CT communities with similar populations. The Average income for towns with populations of 10,000 to 19,999 was \$72,563. Annual increases in past few years have made progress towards reaching this goal but still are in deficit of the average, by approximately \$6,645.

4. Revenue Estimates (fees, grants, other sources):

In addition to user fees, Parks & Recreation is constantly looking for other sources of income to help subsidize our activities and initiatives. This past year, we were able to secure a \$4,000 Sponsorship from the United Bank Foundation for our Summer Concert Series. Federal, state & foundation grants are very limited and typically support low-income, urban settings.

5. Significant increases, decreases and changes in Budget from Past Years:

This past year we were able to implement some new strategies for cost-savings, such as changing out our Community Center lighting to energy efficient lights. We continue to consider increasing fees, reducing services, increased fundraising, sponsorships and grants, reducing overtime, whenever called for or appropriate.

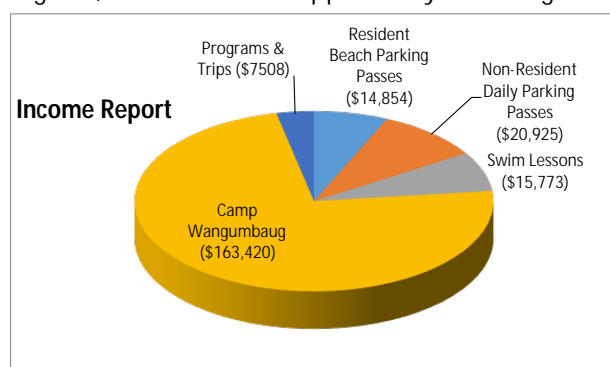
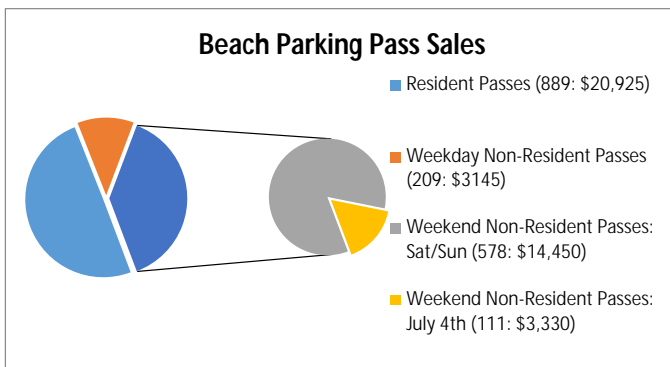
Resident sticker fees had not been increased since the inception of the program back in 2009. The Recreation Commission raised the fee for resident parking at Lisicke & Patriots to \$20 for the first car, and \$10 for each additional car. They also added a daily resident guest pass for \$5.00.

They also increased the daily parking fees at Patriots Park. Both moves resulted in significant gains in revenue, especially when coupled with a good weather summer overall.

6. Justify New or Expanded Programs:

When planning our annual array of recreational programs, special events, trips, and concerts, we operate 100% self-sustaining. As mentioned earlier, staff is continually focused more on improving existing programs, rather than introducing several new programs this year. By focusing on what we know works and what will be successful, rather than working on making those uncertain new programs work was a better use of time and funding this year.

Recreation Staff implemented the move from the Youth Building to the Community Center, allowing for the expansion of the **Recreation Daze, Before & After School Program**. We estimate that by expanding the program, we have the opportunity to bring in



approximately \$23,000 in additional revenue to the Rec. Daze program, versus losing approximately \$2,000 in private rental income.

B. BASIC PROGRAM INFORMATION

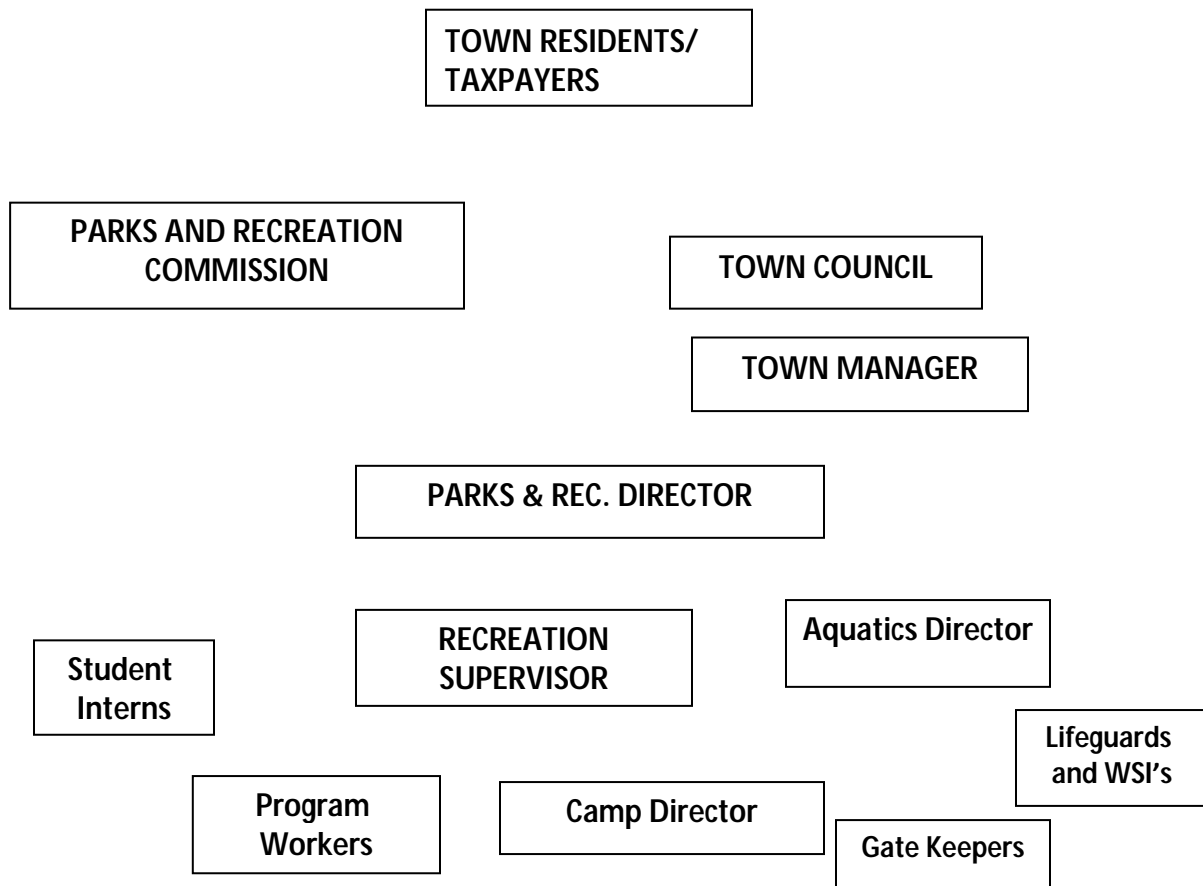
1. Purpose of the Organization: The mission of the Coventry Parks and Recreation Department is to foster active lifestyles, social well-being, and environmental stewardship.

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the administration of all town-sponsored recreation activities and facilities, including the management and planning for town parks and recreational facilities. Coventry’s park system includes 5 unique parks covering more than 170 acres of land and miles of hiking trails.

Parks and Recreation operates a range of facilities devoted to providing health, recreation, and education opportunities, including: community centers, arts venues, athletic facilities, beaches, basketball courts, and playgrounds. Recreational programming and special events offered within and outside of these facilities enrich the lives of all people.

2. Organization and Staffing Chart:

Fig. 6





3. **Non-Quantitative Workload Measures:**

Please refer to our annual report for a concise summary of the non-quantifiable workload measures.

Performance Measures	FY 2012 Actual	FY2013 Actual	FY2014 Actual	FY2015 Actual	FY2016 Actual	FY2017 YTD
224-5202 AQUATICS						
Beach Gate Receipts	\$29,625	\$27,311	\$23,755	\$21,516	\$39,994	\$24,765
Swim Lesson Registrations	360	344	427	337	412	203
Swim Lesson Revenues	\$17,257	\$15,576	\$16,530	\$16,764	\$15,781	\$7,983
Total Aquatics Revenue	\$46,882	\$42,887	\$40,285	\$38,280	\$55,775	\$32,748
207-5202 PATRIOTS PARK						
Patriots Park Lodge Rentals	130	108	187	153	114	72
Youth Building Rentals	22	6	0	0	0	10
Community Center Rentals	183	117	108	114	54	12
Pavilion/Band shell		16	18	16	14	1
Alcohol Permits Filed			16	22	22	3
224-5203 CAMP CREASER						
Creaser Park Building Rentals	18	5	5	1	1	0
Pavilion Rentals	4	2	1	3	4	5
224-5205 OTHER PARKS						
Market Barn Rentals		1	2	4	3	2
Total Facility Rental Revenue	\$27,916	\$27,831	\$29,860	\$29,497	\$38,956	\$15,142
224-7715/7716 PROGRAMS/CAMP						
Registrations processed	2605	2043	2395	2837	3151	1381
Programs Offered	77	64	69	61	57	41
Programs with enrollments	61 (79.25 %)	48 (76%)	55 (80%)	48 (79%)	49 (86%)	31 (76%)
Number of Program <i>Sessions</i> Offered (advanced levels, different time slots or ages)	298	261	263	270	285	168
Day Camp Enrollments	772	833	908	942	1181	996
Total Program Revenues	\$255,210	\$241,336	\$226,833	\$228,871	\$312,071	\$190,377