

**Minutes  
Town Council Meeting  
March 21, 2016  
Town Hall Annex**

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.  
Present: Julie Blanchard, Andy Brodersen, Richard Williams, Thomas Pope, Matthew O'Brien, Lisa Thomas, Hannah Pietrantonio  
Also present: John Elsesser, Town Manager; Beth Bauer, Finance Director; Mark Kiefer, Public Works Director; Mark Palmer, Police Chief

2. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. **Audience of Citizens:**

- 3A. **Citizen Comments:**

Leslie Schor, 47 High St, strongly supports the proposed school budget, in particular the Challenge and Enrichment program. She understands there are families in Coventry struggling financially but sometimes a modest investment can make a big difference down the line. Not supporting it can drive away the highest performing students in the district. When she moved here she was advised Coventry's schools were of poor quality but that has not been her experience. She has been very happy. She acknowledged the work of teacher Jeff Spivey with the future problem solving team. Her son was on the team and competed internationally. He is currently a 7th grader and is taking 9th grade algebra. Families have choices where they send their children to school. There is fierce competition for students. Student populations are declining, and also in Coventry but the rate has slowed here and it could be because the word is getting out. The school is doing a very good job with limiting their budget. The CEP program is a tiny portion of the budget but it reaches the top ten percent of students. She believes we should judge a school by their dedication to every student, not just the average student. She urged the Council to give the school budget their full support and advocate for its adoption.

Donald Swinton, 658 Broad Way, also wants to speak on behalf of the Challenge and Enrichment program at Coventry schools. Has a child who is benefitting. He knows the tremendous challenges put before Boards and Councils. He knows you have to be stewards of the budget and it is a tremendously divisive topic. You also have to be stewards of the children in your charge. Coventry is blessed by being neighbor to UConn and they are looking for a pipeline of talent, particularly in engineering, science and math courses. The town has a tremendous opportunity to attract those who have an interest in quality education. Towns without a quality school system will have people depart. The question is what does Coventry want to be. He is the director of development for the School of Engineering at UConn. All the departments are looking for pipelines of talent. They are offering scholarships and programs to entice students to study engineering, science and math. As CT tries to build a high tech base, having children to work in those industries is vital. A strong and empowered job force is important to future citizenry.

Evan Dailey, 355 Pucker St., is a 6th grader and part of the Challenge and Enrichment program. He is certain if he hadn't been a part of CEP he wouldn't have had opportunities to challenge himself and learn new things. CEP opened the door to 3D printing, opportunities for public speaking, and the ability to develop prosthetic hands. CEP has allowed him to take risks and think more seriously about his education in the future. He loves his time with Mr. Spivey and his classmates. Not only is Mr. Spivey funny, he makes him feel important. The CEP is the only part of the day where he is really challenged. It is expected that he puts in a lot of effort and always does his best work. It is the hardest part of his day and he always looks forward to it. All the members of CEP work hard, stay out of

trouble and make our teachers and families proud. Cutting CEP would be very upsetting and make school less fun. He hopes you will consider keeping CEP.

Celia Delvecchio, 60 Alice Drive, supports the Board of Education budget and the Challenge and Enrichment program. It's not fair that she spent her weekend writing something that might save her education. It's not fair that she has to be worried about something she takes so much pride in. It's not fair that she, at 11 years old, has to be fighting for her education. Her favorite class of the day is Challenge and Enrichment and the work they do for the Future Problem Solvers program. When she was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade her parents looked at enrolling her in a magnet school wondering if that would open up more challenges and opportunities for her, but she turned down the idea because she didn't want to lose Mr. Spivey or CEP. If the program was cut, she would have to look at leaving a little more seriously. If CEP is eliminated, would we lose Mr. Spivey? With his knowledge and experience, other school systems would jump on the chance of having him. And what will go with him? Some of things include the morning show, the Veterans' Day assembly, the prosthetic hands program, tech support for classrooms and FPS. Not only is Mr. Spivey a great asset to our school, but she speaks on behalf of all the CEP kids when she says we love him. She thinks of him as a Dad and could not imagine her school day without him.

Suzanne Pranger, 34 Farmstead Lane, is a sophomore now and has been in CEP since the 5th grade. She is still actively involved with the program and is currently helping coach the 7<sup>th</sup> grade teams. From this she has helped the community in more ways than one. She is an active EMT at the local firehouse and it is a huge part of her life. Without program she would be doing nothing more benefitting to the community. Involvement in the firehouse for her and other students was a direct effect of the CEP program. It doesn't just help one group of students such as the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students who pass that test. She knows because she didn't pass that test but she took initiative and wrote a letter and was accepted. Since then has been an active member and has been on an academic path thought she would never be able to be a part of. It has made her such a better student and developed her leadership skills. The challenge you get in the program has been amazing. It has changed who she is in terms of her motivation and dedication and she knows it is reflected in her test scores and her grades. Other students not accepted into the program can still be involved in small projects with Mr. Spivey like 3D printing or the CHS promotional video and they have all benefitted from the program. It has been an amazing experience and probably the most empowering thing she has done in her school career. She will never forget it.

Colleen Ackroyd, 64 Frederick Drive, is a sophomore at CHS and has been in CEP since 7th grade. It opened many doors that led to decisions she is still making today. She was able to meet with other students in her grade and throughout the school that she never would have talked to or associated with. From 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade she lived in Japan and when she came back, through the CEP program she was able to reach academic levels she had been used to and even better. The Future Problem Solvers program led her to seminars on topics she would never have thought about and has led to a love of engineering which is the path she wants to follow now. She is not sure she would have thought about that without the program. It opens doors to many kids who would not have had the opportunities at home. It is individualized to the child. There are so many different programs. We were able to achieve so much more than we thought we could. She has become so much more of a leader and a teammate. Cutting the budget for this amazing program would cause the loss of something of immense value.

Meghan Urbanski, 90 Snake Hill Road, is in 8th grade and has been in the Future Program Solvers program for several years. The Town of Coventry should ensure that the students receive a quality educational experience. Every student learns differently. When she was younger she often became bored in her classes because she already understood the subject being discussed. Being recommended

for CEP changed everything. It challenges students and allows them to go more in-depth on certain topics. It gives her something to look forward to. It stretches her thinking and she wouldn't be who she is today if she didn't participate in this program. No other class has made her put so much thought into every piece of work. Taking away funding for CEP will be a disadvantage for the Coventry school system. This program better prepares students for real life situations. It teaches them how to think, not what to think.

Shareen Hertel, 658 Broad Way, thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak and acknowledges challenge before them in governing us and stewarding our resources carefully. Every person who spoke today has shared their unique experience with the CEP program. She is a parent of a daughter who began with CEP earlier than most – in October of her kindergarten year she was already working with Mr. Spivey so she could transition to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. He then shadowed her progress so she could transition into the 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade program. She will be taking 9th grade classes in math next year. Each child has made incredible process from whatever their jumping off point is. The children not in CEP benefit from the leadership and peer mentorship of their friends who are bringing those skills back into the classroom. Hence, CEP not only meets the needs of the individual students, but branches out and helps the larger school community. It is an extraordinary way of keeping resources in Coventry, not only for the families who choose to stay, but children who build out from the program. Coventry is known throughout the country for its FPS progress over the past several years including the international competition in Iowa. She is a professor at UConn and has peers eagerly awaiting these students. The stewardship of these resources is quite remarkable for a 1.5 position. She acknowledges the budget challenges but hopes we can think creatively.

April Ackroyd, 64 Frederick Drive, thanked the Council for their decision making thus far. Her family is beneficiary of Coventry Public Schools including the CEP program and preschool. She doesn't know if you were part of the effort to get the preschool up so quickly, but if you were, thank you. She is grateful for all the students who were able to speak up for themselves this evening, but she also implores you to think of those who do not yet have a voice yet. Her youngest son who just turned 5 has autism and has enjoyed the benefits of a wonderful preschool program, including very high-quality educators. She implores you to keep them in place. You are probably already aware of the ratio that for every \$1 invested in pre-education yields \$7 later – when the numbers were actually run it was more like \$16. If you look at it as an investment that way, she hopes you will consider the youngest members of student population.

Anna DeCarlo, 322 Woodmont Drive, wanted to comment that one of the main reasons is in Coventry is because of the CEP program. Her husband works in New Haven and has a long commute and they were debating if they should move or not. When they look at other towns Coventry's dedication to CEP is a factor. Her daughter has been in the CEP program since third grade and it challenges her to go to the next level - she needs to be pushed a bit and programs like that are what do it for her. She is impressed with the teachers. The 3D printer is amazing - that they are able to make prosthetics for poorer countries – that alone is worth investing in. Please don't take away the CEP program. It makes Coventry stand out. If it weren't for this program we would be considering moving from Coventry. Her daughter has loved her teachers so far and has nothing negative to say. At first she didn't want to be in the CEP program but as she progressed she really wants to stay. She has seen the investment and is grateful we have programs like that in Coventry.

Kathleen Breitenwischer, 61 Barber Drive. She was here last Monday when the Board of Education presented their budget and was in complete shock within the first five minutes of questioning. Mr. Pope's line of questioning was more rhetorical than information seeking. Right off the bat she found his tone to be accusatory and the theme she walked away with was he seems to spend more time asking questions he already knows the answer to. She is not sure why – was it so he could have an "I

gotcha" moment? For instance, the high school solar panels – if you knew there was an issue with the billing and that the Town was addressing it, why did you ask Mr. Petrone how much savings he was getting from the high school? Tonight she would love to hear a positive comment about the education budget from each one of you. The Town Council's job is not to micro-manage the Board of Education. She understands that Special Education is very expensive and complicated. Let's all have some trust in our Superintendent and his staff that have received their degrees in education. Privacy needs to be respected. The Town Council's expertise is not in making sure that IEPs are appropriate. She was unable to attend the town-wide budget presentation a couple weeks ago, but she heard the overall tax increase, should the budget stay as is, and was shocked it would only be a \$13.49 increase for the average Coventry homeowner for the year. She hopes every single one of you is going to be considering the Board of Education's proposal with an open mind. Our kids have only one chance at an education and we need to ensure they are given the necessary tools to succeed. Political pettiness needs to be put aside for the sake of our children. Please do not cut this well-thought-out budget before residents have a chance to decide on the overall budget. Hear our voices. Keep in mind that cutting money out of the Board of Education budget will literally be nickel and diming us. As the overall town budget is presented it is only a 26 cent per week increase. That is worth every penny if it is going to ensure we are not going to take a step backwards in all that our schools have been able to accomplish in the past several years. Please remember that it takes a village to raise a child and approving this Board of Education budget is the Town Council's contribution to helping raise her children.

Jennifer Rodger, 745 Merrow Rd. Unit 111, is a mom to 2 young boys, ages 2 and 5. Her oldest son has been at CECC for the last two years and loves it. She looks forward to him entering kindergarten in the fall, and her other son will be starting at CECC the year after next. She is a school social worker in Putnam and drives 40 minutes to work because wants to stay in Coventry. She loves Coventry and wants her boys to have the best possible education. She hopes the Council will be in favor of the current education budget. She would be happy to pay 26 cents a week.

Grace Galey, 116 Sean Circle, is a sophomore at Coventry High School. When she found out funding for the CEP program might get cut, she discussed it with other students in her grade who have been in CEP for a long time and all of them felt it was a very important topic to them, and it took away a great deal of academic privilege they gained from the program, and we were able to talk about some of the life-long friends we have made. She entered the program in third grade. At the time her class work didn't challenge her enough. She was lucky enough to be surrounded by incredibly talented classmates and a really supportive teacher. Besides the obvious academic success and academic challenge the program provided, she learned how much hard work is valued. She got to learn to speak up for herself when faced with problems and put her success in her own hands. She learned to be a better leader and better teammate. Through the program she was exposed to so many values and traits that have shaped not only the person she is and the student she is, but the person she is becoming. To harm the further success of the program by cutting any type of funding would not only harm the academic success of current and future students recognized as gifted and talented, but would ultimately limit the success every student can strive for. She can confidently say that through Mrs. Kennedy's early work and Mr. Spivey's current in the Challenge and Enrichment program, that she and her classmates were provided with a platform to take our ambition for academic success and use it to the best of our abilities. We are the people we are today because of the CEP program. The kids who need CEP – the kids who clung to it are still some of the ones who are the most successful students now. They are the ones who are going to go on and do some of the most successful things. To out any funding from this program is saying in essence that excellence in education is not valued as highly as we had been brought up believing.

Joan Oros, 1169 Flanders Road, wants her remarks read into the record (see attached). She is not a

parent of a student here in town but she is a taxpayer. It is reasonable request to present the budget as is to the voters because the impact is not substantial. Just five months ago Republican Council members asked for our support and stated in their campaign flyer, "Our first priority in education is our students. Every child should have equal access to a quality experience. Our schools must be dedicated to developing abilities within a safe environment for both students and staff to ensure their success." Please honor your promises. Additionally, today's *Chronicle* gave threads to the budget for both the Town and the school and said they should be presented to the voters since it is so nominal.

Benjamin Urbanski, 90 Snake Hill Road, is a 10th grader at Coventry High School. As Francois Rabelais once said, "A child is not a vase to be filled but a fire to be lit." The Challenge and Enrichment program is what lit that fire in him. It has taught him not what to think but how to think. Since being part of this program he has had the opportunity to participate in FPS, which truly opened his mind and allowed him to interact and work with a variety of people from many different schools. The program has grown to the point where he and a fellow classmate have been able to continue to participate by serving as coaches to two 7th grade teams. Given the dramatic increase in participation in this program he believes it could use more funding, not less. The CEP program is an extremely worthwhile and important to Coventry schools.

Jillian Miner, 13 Hetzel Lane. As an individual who was born and raised in Coventry she made a conscious decision to purchase a home and raise her own children here. Over the past 10 years, she has been actively involved in the field of early childhood in Coventry, as a special education para-educator, as a preschool teacher, a parent chair of Coventry STEPS as a mother of two young boys. She has witnessed numerous changes and improvements in early education, perhaps most notably the creation of the Hale Early Childhood Center. She commended the Town Manager and Superintendent for their collaboration and forward thinking on this project, including the Smart Start grant. As a result of this grant, more Coventry families are able to access a high quality, NAYEC accredited program. This is important because research suggests expanding early learning provides benefits to society of roughly \$8.60 for every \$1 spent, half of which comes from increased earnings from children when they grow up. Increased access to high quality early education narrows the achievement gap, can lower involvement with the criminal justice system, and can reduce the need for remedial education. It is not just our youngest learners that need our support. It is our responsibility to offer an educational program that meets the needs of all of our students. The Superintendent and the Board of Education have worked diligently to put forward a budget that meets those needs in a fiscally responsible manner. Just as Coventry taxpayers voted in our Town Council, Coventry taxpayers voted in the current Board of Education, trusting them to determine the resources necessary to educate our students. She asks that the Town Council exhibit that same level of trust by maintaining the Board of Education budget as it was presented and allowing that budget to proceed to referendum.

Martha McKerley, 66 Springdale, was in the Audience of Citizens earlier this month and expressed her confidence in the school administrators, Mr. Petrone and the Board of Education, who put forth the education budget, and asked that the citizens be given opportunity to vote on that budget as it was presented. She is here tonight to communicate the value of the Challenge and Enrichment program. It is important to understand not only how vital the program is to our children, but also the district and our community as a whole. Both of her children are students in the CEP program, one at the middle school and one at GHR. You've heard from students, parents – and they'll tell you how important the program is to them. It offers opportunities that cannot be matched in regular classroom. Though Coventry has many talented classroom teachers, they are under tremendous pressure working with students with behavioral challenges and various disabilities that make it difficult for them to perform at grade level. They cannot effectively challenge students who seek work above grade level or who seek the opportunity for more creative challenges. They simply don't have the time or the resources.

Whether it's participating in the Future Problem Solver program, conducting independent projects or building or using 3D printers, the CEP program gives gifted and talented children an environment where they can pursue unique interests, where the bar is raised, where they receive constructive criticism that they need in order to grow as learners. It's this program that keeps these kids engaged in our schools. Though the impact on students is most important, it would be naive not to address the return on this program to the district and the community as a whole. The Challenge and Enrichment program engages students in high-profile initiatives that attract positive publicity and financial support that can build on the base already created by the Board of Education. Last year the parents of the middle school CEP students engaged in a month fundraising effort to help our kids get to Iowa with minimal expenses. People who had no connection to the Coventry School system were quickly impressed with the students' achievements, with Mr. Spivey and the program that Coventry had in place, so much that they invested their own time to helping us secure financial support. In a time when news stories are full of negatives people love to hear about good things that students are doing. We raised over \$6,000 in one month, a large chunk of that coming from a local foundation. When Coventry shows commitment to its children, others respond in kind. She is saddened she feels compelled to come here to express support for the Board of Education budget twice in one month. Here being here is a reflection of the deep concern her family has for their daughters' education. It seems it could take a significant downturn in very short order. Both her girls engage and language and music program with students from around the state. These children have engaged in orchestra experiences since they were in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Their middle school students carry tablets provided by their Board of Education for them. Coventry is not over spending on education. Does Coventry want to be known for saving money at the expense of students who contribute so much to their school community? Wouldn't we rather attract interest for our investment in our children? Until this month she has only attended one Town Council meeting in the 16 years she has lived in Coventry and that was last year, when the middle school Future Problem Solving students came here to receive a proclamation issued to them by the Town Council. Here we are less than a year later defending that very program that brought so much pride to our community. What a difference a year makes.

Darryl Rouillard, 75 Frederick Dr. Like many of the others, he supports education. He has two children one of them attending the elementary school. When he and his wife built their home less than 5 years ago they were told explicitly to stay out of Coventry. They looked more in depth to Coventry and were astonished at the great educational opportunities that existed in a small town in a close-knit community. We have not been disappointed. To be here tonight is disappointing. As an educator, having spent his entire career in education and currently as an administrator in a Hartford country school, your job is to support the school budget. Without supporting the education of all of our students - all of the students are extremely valuable. Taxes are something we all focus on. Taxes will go up if we continue to cut education. Historically they always do. The minute you start cutting extra-curricular activities – cutting funding you are going to start increasing the cost for your health needs, mental health needs. That has historically been a problem for communities that cut their education budgets. Also, regarding out of district students – there are a number of magnet schools throughout the region. Since 2009 Coventry has seen a steady decrease in the number of students attending magnet schools out of district. If we want to continue to maintain our own responsibility on the money we are spending, it seems silly we would allow students to have the opportunity to look at those magnet schools, where at the end of the year those magnet schools simply give the Board of Education here in town a cost and a bill for transportation and educational needs. Why wouldn't we want to keep those costs in Coventry is beyond me. Also, when he heard IEPs being mentioned he was staggered. Not only could you be sued, it is a certainty. To seek information regarding special education needs of any child would be likened to asking one of you for your medical paperwork, which none of us would freely give up. It is something you need to consider.

Julie Dutton, 11 Cindy Drive, has 3 children in the district. They decided years ago to stay. Her son is

a senior, her daughter is a freshman and she has a daughter in 5th grade. Every year is better than the year before and she is so proud we have chosen to raise our kids in Coventry. She hopes they feel the pride from the people in this room and the students who have come here. Don't do anything to take that away. Give us the chance to vote on the budget as proposed by the Board of Education. Otherwise she doesn't know what your job is. It has come so far. It would be such a crime to go backwards. This is progress. The things that are on the chopping block represent progress. Why you would for a second think of taking any of that away is beyond her, and it's not an educated thing to do. She urges you to put this budget forward the way it is, trust in the hard work and the dedication of everyone who has brought us where we are today, and why we're all here. Give us a chance to vote, please.

Mary Minor, 67 Old Tolland Turnpike, urges support of the Board of Education budget as proposed. The business of educating our children is the most important work we do as a community, that and providing a safe community to live in. She urges the Council to send this budget intact to the community and allow our voices to be heard at referendum. She recognizes their important role in this process, as stewards of our resources including our tax dollars, and she recognizes they have a difficult job and appreciates their volunteerism in being here. She understands the Council has raised a number of questions in their meeting with the Board of Education, including regarding the technology in our schools, that staffing ratios including para-educators, the CEP program and declining enrollments. She would first like to say about technology, she knows the question has been asked if kids need iPads, and what do they do with the iPads. The short answer to that is yes, the children need iPads. We are preparing children for jobs that don't even exist yet. That is important to remember. When you were children, the jobs of writing code didn't exist yet. Likewise there are jobs we can't even begin to think about, so we need to meet these children with the technology. For a community with a shocking lack of diversity, our only real diversity here is economic diversity. She would urge them to remember that for some children the only access they have to this technology is the access they are afforded in schools. The seemingly inconsistent thought that these children are born with iPads in their cribs – this technology exists for them at a very early age and we need to meet them where they are. So yes, technology is important in our schools. With regard to our staffing ratios and our para-educators, the budget includes 2 FTES for Special Ed paras. This is very important part of our budget. It allows us to educate those students right here in district. This is a win-win situation. To allow those children to have an appropriate education in our community and in their neighborhood is a win for a family, and it saves money for a district. Regarding declining enrollments – the decline in census is not realized in one grade level. It's recognized across grade levels, so you're not able to make a sweeping cut in response to it. You also have costs that don't decline just because your census declines. There are fixed costs that need to be met regardless of your population. The way to respond to declining enrollment is not with further cuts - you need to make your schools more attractive. You need to keep the children here. She is pleased to hear from so many who have spoken tonight that our rate of decline has dropped, because our schools are attractive - because families are electing to educate their children here. She urges the Council to support the Board of Education budget as it was proposed and allow community to vote on it at referendum.

Chrissy Stinson, 112 John Hand Drive, has lived here more than 25 years and is proud to call Coventry her hometown. She has three children who attend Coventry schools - a junior in high school, a freshman in high school and a 6th grader who is in the CEP program. She has a feeling by watching some of your faces feel you will say it is not our place to cut; we're just the Town Council. This is true, it is the Board of Education's decision what to cut, but it's very important that you put this budget forward for the parents to decide. Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Pope; people supported you along your education and look at what you've become today – you've become men who are trusted – the town has trusted you and voted you into this position. She implores you to carry that on and support our children and our future because that is what's really the most important thing here. If we can't

support our children, what future do we have? She implores you to put this forward and see what is in the best interest of our children.

Hearing no further requests to speak, Julie Blanchard closed the public comment portion of Audience of Citizens.

**3B. Resolution: John (Jack) O'Connell – Eagle Scout Award:** Julie Blanchard read a resolution recognizing Jack O'Connell for the completion of a foot bridge over the Willimantic River in North Coventry.

**7. Unfinished Business:**

**A. 15/16-69: FY 2016-2017 Budget:**

**1) Public Works:**

Mark Kiefer, Director of Public Works, was present to discuss the department's proposed budget. He indicated that a considerable amount of time was spent putting the budget together. He tried to tighten his belt to be as cost effective as we can. He will highlight areas of increases and would be happy to talk about any other areas of interest. Also he would like to talk about the capital budget and things we would like to replace.

- 3100 Roads and Drainage, page 6.2. Salaries for regular full time people. There is an increase of \$18,621 4.17% for additional personnel added in October. We are going through contract negotiations starting soon for the new union contract. John Elssesser noted that some newer employees are getting step increases - not all are at the top. We put in what we feel is a reasonable increase based on the market.
- No increase in overtime except snow.
- Temporary help: We have asked for an increase to double this. We had one temporary employee from April to Sept. We would like to increase by \$2800 in this account and also the facilities account to create an extra position. We would like to use them to do a lot of the lower-level labor such as string trimming around fences so we can use our higher skill set employees on more complex work. We are struggling to maintain maintenance on roadside mowing. Using this approach will allow us to put on additional crews for ballfield work or road construction prep.
- Longevity is contractual. Increase of 3.66%.
- Differential is an item we use when multiple crews are running. We might use a truck driver at that pay rate to add flexibility in staffing. It is a temporary upgrade when working at that classification.
- There are no increases in Other Professional. He removed the \$300 cost for the APWA membership. He can't get to meetings so there is no point in having a membership. It is not a lot of money but we are trying to tighten our belts. This is not to say that he knows everything and couldn't make connections there, but he is too busy with the road plan. Perhaps he will put it back in in future.
- 3101 PW Building 55050 sewer - Item 6.6 at the bottom of the page: WPCA has increased their rates so we have had to follow suit. John noted we were able to cut electric, sewer and fuel.
- Item 6.8 Snow removal: We are evaluating this and from conversations with John, have budgeted \$77,000 per year for overtime. That is for a relatively mild winter. A modest increase of \$5,000 will get us to an average winter where we work 150 hours of overtime. It varies we get weekend storms. Double time pay is required on Sundays and holidays in the current contract. We would like not to have to come to ask for additional funding unless it is an extreme winter.

- Sand and salt: \$175,000 was asked for. The Manager increased it. That material typically goes up. Typically we bid in July - last year we paid about \$73/ton and this year \$79. There have been additional mining costs for salt. We use Clear Lane – it has coloring so we can see how much we are putting down. It is much less corrosive than what the State uses.
- Item 6.10. Facilities 3103: Increases are directly related to the person we hired and also there are increases in hourly rates for personnel.
- Temporary is the other half of the person for summer help.
- Service contracts: The tree pesticide program has been reduced. Typically we don't use pesticides unless there is a serious problem.
- 6.11. Ground Supplies: a modest increase of \$750 for line painting and grass seed. Based on feedback from the athletic teams would like to give better support for field painting to paint more often. John noted this is not the line item for street line painting. When we re-do roads striping is done as part of the bonding. Last year we did some roads that were missed in the prior year because the contractor wouldn't show up. We are transitioning to epoxy paint which is more expensive but lasts longer. Mark said the goal would be to hit every road every 5 years. We might ask for an increase in funding next year. Hannah Pietrantonio said that more frequent field painting will certainly improve the appearance overall. Mark said every time you mow you have to re-stripe. John said we will also be trying to over-seed the fields more.
- 6.14. Public Works Administration: We've been so busy with projects and asked for additional funding of \$100 for advertising work we are doing under the road bond. Matthew O'Brien asked about the increase in the top line. John replied that the Administrative Secretary does a lot of COVRRRA work. She spends 30-40% of her time on this. Matthew asked why it was not there before. John replied we don't know, but have made a corrective action.
- 6.16 Fleet Maintenance: Increase for the same reason for mechanics. John one is at step and the other two are at max. There is also an increase for longevity.
- Decreases were made for gas and diesel. It was smart to lock in because prices at the pump are beginning to go up.
- 3107 Matching Funds: John said based on recent conversations he put \$5,000 in. It doesn't seem like a lot of money but we took over a lot of Association roads with the sewer project. There are not a lot of roads left. The budget used to be \$10,000 but it was reduced during several rounds of budget defeats a few years ago. Matthew said he would feel better if they had their plans and what they are trying to accomplish. Mark said we are meeting with neighborhood reps soon on Avery Shores and they will be at Steering. John said for the record they weren't asked to do a new A2 survey – they were asked to do an updated one. Mark said he thinks some of the difficulties have been with turnover of people. Once we have everything on the table he thinks everyone will understand. Progress has been made but there are some stumbling blocks with the A2 survey.
- 6.22 Streetlights: John reduced \$2,000 because of LED lights.
- Cemetery Commission. Beth is treasurer. Mark works with them too. Modest reduction.
- 6.26. Tree Warden: Mark is the tree warden. We have a lot of ash trees that will need to be addressed. We have included a minor increase for professional affiliation and some training for him and the deputy warden to remain certified. We did not ask for an increase for service contracts for removal of bad trees. We have been trimming trees for the road bond under road bond funding. This line item is what the public identifies as bad trees. He is in the process of putting an inventory together for ash trees to be proactive. We will include increases in the near future. John said it may warrant inclusion in the capital budget because it is that significant. Mark said we expect to lose 3000 trees due to

Emerald Ash Borer. Thomas Pope asked when you take a tree and replace it do you replace it with tree that won't grow into the power line? Mark replied we typically don't replace them because we don't have funds. John said the priority is removal. We do have a grant program for some areas – the trees that are being putting up are more specimen trees. Mark said we would eventually like to identify trees that can be moved away from the power lines. Thomas said it might be a benefit to Planning & Zoning if guidelines can be put together. He asked if we have seen other pests like pine wasps. Mark said no, primarily ash trees. There has been some damage due to road work over the years. Thomas asked how severe is the problem and whether we should start looking at increases going forward. Mark said yes. We need to start thinking about it. The tree inventory will be the next step. We will try to step it in. Part of it is liability and safety to the public. John noted that ash trees are good firewood. We can get certain net pricing if it is a good species, and combine work to get a good day rate. Mark said part of putting the tree inventory together will be a bid for tree service work. We can usually get \$1000/day and get 3-4 trees down where a homeowner would pay \$500-600 for one. Matthew asked if includes removal. Mark replied they typically cut all brush and chip and we take that. They leave the wood and it quickly disappears. People call all the time and ask where we are cutting wood.

- Engineering. John explained the \$5760 decrease and \$5760 increase. We transferred money out of consulting engineering to an intern and are switching it back.

#### **Capital Budget - Page 11.8:**

- The first thing is a large dump truck replacement. John noted it was scheduled for this year and we pushed it back. We haven't got this year's in yet; it will be here next week. The one that was supposed to be replaced two years ago had to have its transmission replaced so we felt we should get another year out of it.
- Summer Roads: \$5,000 increase. Mark said this is part of the road bond.
- We included some money for field irrigation: \$20,000. It is one of the things really needed on the field. There are several issues: over-play and the need for irrigation during dry spells. Once the turf gets stressed it takes a long time to recover. We will work with the tank we already have and work off the well. John noted when we did the sod at Miller Richardson we were surprised at the capacity of the well. Long term we have lots of irrigation initiatives. The contractor has donated the irrigation system for Laidlaw. Mark said we would bring one of the 3,000 gallon tanks from the transfer station. The well has high yield. We would put the tank in and pressurize the system. There is Locip funding for that project. Water Wizards is moving forward with the donated system. The field work is going very well. We are ready to screen loam. It is too wet right now. John said we just heard we need to evaluate environmental impacts in the muddy stream area.
- We are asking for \$77,000 for a small dump truck. This would be an F-350 with a sander and plow off the State bid to replace the 1995 International that he purchased when he last worked here. We definitely got our use out of that truck – we would move it to auction if the purchase is approved. We have several routes on the western border of South Street to Northfields and on in the northwest including Satari Drive, Twin Hills and Zeya - those routes are farthest out and are long routes. We would like to develop a smaller route for this truck to get to those roads in a quicker manner. We need to provider a higher level of service there. We have had complaints and this would fulfill that need. The additional person we hired would be put into that route.

- \$12,500 for a front line zero turn mower off the State bid. We have a mower that is from 2006 – there are a lot of hours on it and the deck is in bad shape. At 8-10 years the repair cycle increases. The motor is burning oil. We would move it to auction. We had good luck with the auction firm last year. We are putting the Vac-all we share with Mansfield into auction in April.
- High visibility sign replacement. This would allow us to proceed with the second or third phase, branching from main thoroughfares to secondary roads. John said we may go through and do stop signs town wide before street signs. They are fading and need to be replaced. Mark said we would buy engineering grade to increase longevity. Matthew O'Brien noted there are no funds in future years in that line item. John said there should be.
- Backhoe. Ours is a two-wheel drive machine and is not versatile. It can't be used for snow removal. It is a 2003. We would like to upgrade to 4-wheel drive model that has some lifting capacity. We need to be able to lift a catchbasin while on a drainage job. Also we would pre-stage it before a storm at Robertson School to start pushing the parking lots sooner. We would do Robertson, then the commuter parking lot, senior center, and town hall. We would use the other machine at the high school complex and meet there. The one we have now needs \$30,000 in hydraulic repairs and pin replacement. This one will be smaller and we will be able to trailer it. The other one is too big to do that and it takes a toll on roads. This price is from the State bid. It would be a Cat which is better machine than John Deere. They would give us \$18,000 in trade in for the old machine which we feel is substantial. The old machine does have some value in the overseas market.
- \$10,000 for guardrail off State bid. We have a lot of areas in town where this is needed. We upgrade in areas where we are working on the road but there are other areas that need standalone work. We are identifying those with higher priorities for public safety.
- Dump body replacement. We have two trucks in the fleet. This is the second one – the first one was replaced last year. These are lower-line bodies purchased at minimal cost. The trucks are in great shape. We would install a new body so the truck can be used and extend its life for at least 4 years. We asked for two last year and one didn't make it through the budget.

Matthew O'Brien asked about lake management. John replied on that page it shows \$61,900. The breakdown is further down in the detail capital section. The local fund share is \$15,740, Mansfield's share of Fanwort is \$7,400. We are looking for grant for \$39,300. There are three projects in that - one is Hydrilla. At this point the State is committed to doing something but we are not sure if they will do it the way we want. There are no funds for a further flyboard study at this point. We feel pretty good that we will be able to do the Fanwort and Hydrilla. Flyboard is uncertain. We are working on it. Dr. Kortmann's approach for Hydrilla is slightly different. We are waiting for some response from CT DEEP.

Thomas Pope asked about the calculation of 6 cents per mile for maintenance and how that measures up with industry standards. Mark replied it is a new item we put together. It is tough to get a handle on because it doesn't include depreciation. We can certainly do that and attempt to break it out. If you compare it to the outside commercial environment it is lower because we are not including depreciation. He thinks the best way would be to include depreciation over a 10 year period and include it in the metrics. We have some new software and will continue to try to update this to be as accurate as possible. It is a general number depending on what type of equipment is being used. A loader much more expensive to run

than a staff car. Richard asked if it can be done by hour. Mark said yes. Matthew said it would be a good tool to determine whether we ever want to contract out a piece of equipment. Mark said since has been director he has been working to determine what the most productive work is for our crew. We are not paving contractors - will we do it in a pinch yes but we can't compete with a paving contractor. However, it is very expensive to hire a contractor for cut and patch. We can do that type of project in-house and be competitive. We find our niche and contract other work out. John said that last year lot of the drainage work in the Village and other spots - we had a contractor come and do the actual drainage work and we supplied materials because we can get them cheaper. Then we work in conjunction with them - smaller firms might not have the hauling equipment so we can do that. We evaluate projects to determine where we can get the best value.

Hannah Pietrantonio noted the priority list, with field irrigation at a 4 – it sounds like it should really be higher. John replied that 3-4 years ago it might have been a 4 and we missed it. It has been pointed out to me. Matthew noted that some of the fire trucks are 4's too. John said we just didn't concentrate on that column. Mark said we are developing a program to aerate, over-seed and irrigate. Our fields were not all built as fields. There are soil issues, turf issues, and compaction issues. The big step is irrigation and to be able to take a field out of rotation for major work.

Hannah asked about facilities maintenance and how things are being done at the Human Services and Recreation buildings. She sees custodial items but knows that is just basic cleaning. What about painting and other renovations? Is that Public Works or Town budget? John replied it is under facility maintenance. Hannah said she doesn't see much there. Mark said there is an individual buildings budget for some areas and we support them. Hannah said the buildings need some cosmetic work. John said at some point they rise to become a Locip project like the deck at the senior center. We don't budget a lot for it because we don't have staff time. Mark said we do a lot in the winter. Hannah said she is thinking of Patriots Park Lodge in particular. It is rented and used a lot and the lack of maintenance shows. John said it is scheduled to be painted this year. Some of those items come out of Recreation funds because there are rentals. The community center needs a lot of work and we didn't have time because it was a busy winter last year. Winter has flown by this year too. We got a grant to convert lighting to LED. That building is in much worse shape than the lodge. Recreation also hires their janitor who is a handyperson to do some wall patching work. We don't have janitors - we contract but they don't touch maintenance. This year winter was mild so Public Works concentrated on field maintenance work. Lisa Thomas asked at what point we pass the point of no return with facilities. At some point putting it off becomes a far greater cost than keeping up with maintenance. Where is the balance? John replied there is no simple answer – we have to look at it on case-by-case basis. Hannah said she wishes there were more hours or another summer-help person. Mark said knows Wendy Rubin hires some maintenance help in the summer. John said that person cleans the bathrooms and does minor landscaping work.

The Council thanked Mark Kiefer for his presentation.

## 2) **Police Department - Mark Palmer:**

Police Chief Mark Palmer gave a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed budget for the Coventry Police Department. A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes. Highlights include:

- Capital improvement request: One unmarked vehicle for detective use. We requested \$27,000 and it was budgeted by the Town Manager at \$17,500. Several items were withdrawn at a total of \$73,500, including a marked patrol vehicle, replacement flooring, and roof heating cable. We had two winters with severe ice dams where we had water leakage.
- An outline of the current fleet was provided with vehicle age and mileage. We are keeping an older vehicle for private duty assignments during road construction to preserve our other vehicles. The staff car is used to travel to training, labs, etc. We would replace it with the 2010 vehicle and remove it from the fleet.
- Department goals and objectives and an organizational chart were shown. There have been some significant changes over the past several years. We added a 4th sergeant and did not go with Lieutenants. A list of sworn employees by year of service was provided - it does not include the chief. The average time with the agency is 12 years. Several employees are eligible to retire and one is planning to do so before the end of the calendar year – we will have challenges with staffing in years to come and will deal with it. One employee is in the academy but won't be eligible to start until September just as the other employee retires, so we will still be one person short when that person retires.
- A chart showing a comparison of the number of officers per 10,000 residents was displayed. Hiring the additional officer moved us up one spot on the graph. We are on the right path. We are doing well with the staff we have now.
- A comparison of FY 15/16 to 16/17 budgets was reviewed. The totals have an increase of \$77,199 including Police and Community Service. There is an increase in salaries based on the negotiated collective bargaining agreement, longevity and a full year's salary for the new officer at about \$64,000. There is a decrease in overtime in Administration. The Administrative Assistant used to be a Union position and changing it eliminated overtime. There is no increase in overtime or holiday pay. We think we can cover it with retirement savings. Tuition payments were decreased based on historical numbers for the last 5 years. A couple of officers who were attending classes have completed their degree requirements. Uniforms and other equipment were reduced. Collect fees were decreased - we understand the State will not be charging for it next year. Electricity decreased based on projected savings from solar and the electric bid rate. Heating fuel was decreased. We have an increase for lake patrol. The marine patrol officer came out on 3 holidays and we have to compensate for that.
- A chart of crime statistics was shown. We don't like to take a lot of credit but crime is down. We attribute some of this to increased visibility of officers which is a deterrent. Index crimes are down 38%. Property crimes decreased by 39%.
- Regarding the unmarked vehicle: The Town Manager found a grant for a hybrid vehicle. We were looking for a Ford Fusion. The detective carries a lot of equipment that is needed for crime scene processing, accident reconstruction, etc. He responds in all types of weather so we were looking for all-wheel drive. John had budgeted for a Ford Focus which is smaller and then we found the grant but it doesn't come with all-wheel drive. We are evaluating whether to go with a smaller car without AWD or used vehicle with AWD. John noted the issue is not resolved well. At some point we don't want to keep the old Crown Vic because repairs are expensive. Lisa asked why this was reduced from \$27,000. John replied he was trying to cut the budget while still giving them a staff car. Lisa said she is hearing the Focus doesn't meet the need for how vehicle would be

used. It is a concern. Mark said we generally equip the detective vehicles with a minimal amount of emergency lights and sirens in case he has to get to a scene quickly, plus a radio. This is several thousand dollars' worth of equipment. John said he is not in opposition if the Council feels more money needs to go back in. Thomas Pope asked if they still have the Humvee. Mark said yes – it is not included in the list. It is typically used in limited situations such as severe weather conditions where roads are impassable. A lot of times it is used to shuttle people into work when they can't get here. It doesn't have a radio so it is used for emergency transport.

- Matthew O'Brien asked if Mark thinks when the new officer becomes active and before the retirement if we will save some overtime. Mark replied it is only a couple months. The new officer gets a limited amount of vacation time and that overtime rate is cheaper so we will save some money. It may take six months to get a new staff member on board. John noted we will also have to pay severance, i.e., accumulated sick leave, when the long-term employee leaves. That either comes out of the police line item or Claims/Losses. Claims/Losses is detailed in the back of the budget - \$40,000 is budgeted to cover all types of losses including insurance, litigation, etc. This year we are already over-expended.
- Lisa Thomas asked about the floor problems. Mark said when we first got into the building the dispatch area was carpeted. Due to the amount of traffic it became threadbare and we put tile down. We used the building maintenance account. Every room we have with carpet is buckling – the product is not correct to be used over concrete slab. We have done some patching but it is continuing to have issues. We take a lot of pride in our building – it is 10 years old now. The carpet is a problem and will continue to be a problem until it can be replaced with the proper product. Lisa said she is concerned about safety. Hannah Pietrantonio asked if it is a trip hazard. Mark said yes. The people who work in the offices know where the buckled areas are. Thomas Pope asked if there is a humidity problem why they went with carpet vs. tile. Mark replied the acoustics are bad. If we took up all the carpet it would exacerbate that issue. We would like to maintain privacy for the interview rooms so voices don't carry.

The Council thanked Chief Palmer for his presentation.

**4. Acceptance of Minutes:**

**Motion # 15/16-322: Thomas Pope moved to accept the minutes of the Special Town Council meeting of February 29, 2016. The motion was seconded by Matthew O'Brien and carried on unanimous vote.**

**Motion # 15/16-323: Matthew O'Brien moved to accept the minutes of the Town Council Meeting of March 7, 2016. The motion was seconded by Andy Brodersen and carried with Thomas Pope abstaining and all other members in favor.**

**5. Consent Agenda:**

**Motion # 15/16-324: Richard Williams moved to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Matthew O'Brien and carried on unanimous vote.**

**6. Reports:**

**A. Council Chairwoman – Julie Blanchard:** Upcoming budget meetings: the next meeting is March 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7 PM in the Annex to finish discussing the Board of Education budget. We asked them for additional information. On March 28<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM in Annex we will meet with Human Services and

Recreation. Then I would like to schedule a budget deliberations meeting on Tuesday March 29<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM. We are getting down to the wire to make changes and prepare for Annual Town Meeting.

**B. Council members:**

Hannah Pietrantonio said there is a volunteer recruitment meeting for the Coventry Farmers Market at Hale Homestead on March 31<sup>st</sup> at 7 PM for those who want to be involved as a volunteer.

Lisa Thomas thanked Julie Blanchard for extending the Audience of Citizens tonight to accommodate the many people in the audience who wanted to speak. She has also received emails from about a dozen people who couldn't be here and wanted their messages read aloud. We will make them part of the record. Also one audience member noted that the Town Council doesn't have the authority to determine how the Board of Education spends its resources, but if the Board of Education budget is cut it creates a situation they don't want, such as cutting newer programs or those that aren't mandated. She heard the plea very clearly to take into consideration that the decisions we make can force the decisions the Board of Education has to make. Thomas Pope said to the best of his knowledge there has been no discussion of cuts to the Challenge and Enrichment program, altering it or reducing it. We don't have the authority to do that and he suggests the Chair forward that section of the minutes to the Board. They need the input because they are the ones with the authority. If there is talk of cuts, those have to come to the Board of Education. Lisa replied she thinks the concern came from questions that were asked by some of the Council members. Richard Williams said what he finds upsetting is that so many people came out who were part of the CEP program. Somebody funneled that to them and somehow that information was misrepresented. We have no control over it and it seems out of place that so many people from one group came as if they were told that was what would be cut. When had the budget hearing only 4 people came. Clearly this group was brought out to express their opinion. Matthew O'Brien said he didn't recall that there was any discussion of the CEP other than questions about technology. Hannah Pietrantonio said she thinks the general concern was that answers were known before questions were asked. She was a little embarrassed because it seemed like an inquisition. Matthew said he thinks we are finding out important and needed information and he doesn't think we have done anything untoward to the Board of Education.

**C. Finance Committee – Matthew O'Brien:**

The Finance Committee met on March 21<sup>st</sup>. We discussed property tax revenue, anticipated general fund revenues, and loss of anticipated revenues from the State. We are watching the State budget process/crisis very carefully in anticipation of additional loss of funds this year and impacts next year. If revenues continue on the same pace we will exceed projections by \$91,000. Several line items are over-expended. Beth Bauer will be looking at the budget for opportunities to do transfers in April. The tax sale date is set for May 17<sup>th</sup>. Moody's confirmed our bond rating and we sold \$3.4 million of bonds at a very favorable rate. The Board of Education management report predicts a surplus of \$266,591. Thomas Pope said it is important to note that the State reductions came after the Town Manager prepared his budget. Matthew said it is clear it will be very difficult for the State to do the things they have promised.

**D. COVRRRA – John Elsesser:**

No report.

**E. Town Manager – John Elsesser:**

1. Projects Update: A written memo is in the Council packet.

- We were planning to hold a Main Street construction project update meeting today with Coventry Village businesses – it was postponed due to inclement weather – the design engineers are coming from Boston. We did not have a good way to notify people of the cancellation. He met with some people who showed up and it has been rescheduled for

Monday the 28<sup>th</sup>. Notices will go out tomorrow. We got email addresses of the people who came today.

- We forwarded Dr. Kortmann's recommendation on Hydrilla treatment in Coventry Lake. We have drafted letter to send to neighbors along the shore with a copy of the report and an early heads-up about treatment. We identified a list of shoreline abutters who will be most impacted. We are sending the letter to the State for review.
- We have received early indication that we will receive the trails grant for the Decew property for \$50,000 to do park enhancements.
- Tree work at Miller Richardson and field work at Laidlaw is proceeding. We will beef up environmental controls at Laidlaw if needed.
- We are urging people to sign up for road alerts – there is no way will be able to do fast-breaking developments via press releases. Road alerts are a separate item to sign up for than the e-blast.
- We received notification that CT DEEP is making us redesign our outlet dam structure to allow eels to climb. They want to restore eel populations so they are requiring it for all dams. Thomas Pope asked if eels are there, and if there are none, if there is there a plan to put some there. John said it is his understanding that it is a small pipe with some texture so they can get traction.

**2. Investigation of Voting Policies and Practices Under ADA:** The Justice Dept. is conducting an investigation of the use of paper ballots vs. IVS machines, based on anonymous ADA complaints. Thomas Pope asked if the complaints are from Coventry. John replied not that we know of but they won't tell us. A statewide investigation is being done and we are following the advice of the Secretary of State and Attorney General's office. Once the Justice Dept. is involved punitive damages may come into play if they feel people with disabilities are being disenfranchised, and they will make us change our practices. It will be a challenge to program the machines. Thomas said it should be noted that although we have hooked up the equipment by State statute, no one has ever used it. John noted it requires special installation by the phone companies. It costs \$400 each time.

**3. Tax sale:** Details were mentioned in the Finance Committee report. If you want to see how people are paying it off you can go to [cttaxsales.com](http://cttaxsales.com). When the property disappears it means they have worked out at least a tentative agreement with the attorney handling the sale. It doesn't mean it won't come back on but as of today we are down to 11 properties. We hope that more are able to pay off.

**4. International Fire Chiefs Association Summit:** This is a two-day event for municipal and elected officials to learn more about recruitment and retention of volunteer fire fighters. It is funded by a SAFER grant. Thomas Pope asked if someone from town is going. John said yes. It is an important event. If a Council member could go on either day that would be great. Thomas will volunteer to attend on 4/1.

**5. EHHD Healthy Communities Toolkit:** This information was recently released. If the Council would like EHHD to attend a meeting in April to present the information, let him know. Thomas Pope said he watched their video and wondered how you get improved access to local businesses by barring drive-in windows at establishments. John said he didn't catch that but his assumption would be that at a drive-through you buy one item but if you go in you tend to shop. Thomas said he thinks Dunkin' Donuts would do more business with a drive-through than without.

7. **Unfinished Business:**

**B. 15/16-68: Consideration of CNG Proposal to Extend Natural Gas to Coventry:** John Elsesser said that late this afternoon got a sample agreement that CNG gave to the Town of East Hampton but we don't think it will be applicable to us, so we are still waiting for information. We have very rough information on the cost side of conversions but don't have the savings information so we don't have the whole picture. Matthew O'Brien said he would rather wait and get all the information. He did see that the energy committee for the Board of Education met and there are grants available. John said that was a very productive meeting - Beth Bauer staffs it. They just hired BL as their design firm. Matt Mullen was there and said that natural gas in some type of rooftop unit would allow air exchange. Part of the component for school buildings were unit ventilators and ours are not code compliant because of noise quality standards. It is not a good option right now so they are grandfathered in. Since they are not compliant there is an opportunity to ventilate through a natural gas system – and the State program may kick in. If all 9 boilers were replaced with gas modulating boilers there would be \$100,000 rebate we would not get if we stay with oil. It is complicated and there are a lot of elements but we will try to have all the information by the next meeting. The contract is important because it details what we agree to and how payments would be scheduled. We have some rough verbal estimates but want details in writing.

**C. 15/16-72: Adoption of Job Description for Construction Inspector:** Matthew O'Brien said this was discussed at Finance and we agreed the experience requirement should be bolstered to specify the candidate is to have a minimum of 5 years' experience. **Motion # 15/16-325: Matthew O'Brien moved to adopt the job description for Construction Inspector as modified. The motion was seconded by Andy Brodersen.** John Elsesser noted this position is funded by a grant for the Lake/Cross St. project. It is temporary and not a full time addition to the workforce. **The motion carried on unanimous vote.**

8. **New Business:**

**A. 15/16-77: Authorization of Town Manager to Execute: America the Beautiful grant:** John Elsesser said this is good news. We have a couple trees left from the fall planting that are going in next week and we are already eligible to get the next round. The will allow the same type of trees from town hall to the high school and trees at the other corner of Miller Richardson, as well as specimen shade trees at Laidlaw Park. **Motion # 15/16-326: Matthew O'Brien moved to authorize the Town Manager to execute the America the Beautiful grant. The motion was seconded by Richard Williams and carried on unanimous vote.**

**B. 15/16-78: Authorization of Town Manager to Execute: 2015 Farm Viability grant:** John Elsesser said this grant in the amount of \$34,605 will be to handle publicity and materials for the Coventry Farmers' Market at Hale Homestead. **Motion # 15/16-326: Matthew O'Brien moved to authorize the Town Manager to execute the 2015 Farm Viability grant. Andy Brodersen seconded the motion.** Richard Williams said it is great that we get these. How do we do it? John replied that some of our success is a result of long-standing relationships – we nervous about State cuts because those relationships may be lost. **The motion carried on unanimous vote.**

**C. 15/16-79: Consideration: Leasing Caretaker House to Commercial Enterprise per Recommendation of Recreation Commission:** John Elsesser said this property had been a rental – we decided we don't want to be a landlord. We discussed it with the Arts Guild but they decided it is not right for them and will use other venues for exhibits or performances instead. We were approached by a woman who runs the UConn crew team who has a holistic healing firm and thinks the location would be perfect. We told her we would have to go out to the local market but compatibility with park use is more important than income. Matthew O'Brien asked whether special permitting would be required by Planning and Zoning. John replied the property is in the Village

Gateway zone so any use would require a special permit. Matthew asked how lengthy the special permit process is. John replied probably six weeks because a legal ad is required. We tried to streamline the permit process over the years to be more business friendly. Hannah Pietrantonio said it is a nice house smack in middle of a park. She wishes it could be a town facility rather than a business. John noted it is not good to have any vacant buildings. We should either tear it down or move somebody in. There is a broader expense if we move somebody in. The Recreation Commission shares our concern. We don't want the wrong mix. Richard Williams said it does seem like a strange spot to have a commercial enterprise. John said if you think of something like a yoga studio that would be an enhancement. We are not in a huge rush if the Council wants to think about it. Thomas Pope said the sooner we take action the sooner we can cover costs. John said the first step would be to go out for proposals. Then we would screen them to see if anything is compatible. Once they go to the P&Z process costs are incurred. **Motion # 15/16-327: Matthew O'Brien moved to authorize the Town Manager to move forward with initiatives to lease the Caretaker House to a commercial enterprise. The motion was seconded by Richard Williams and carried on unanimous vote.**

**10. Executive Session:**

**Motion # 15/16-328: Matthew O'Brien moved that the Town Council enter into Executive Session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 1-200(6)(B)-discussion of strategy and negotiation with respect to pending claims and litigation to which the public agency or a member thereof, because of his conduct as a member of such agency is a party until such litigation claim has been finally adjudicated or otherwise settled with the following people in attendance: Town Council members, the Town Manager and Town Finance Director. The motion was seconded by Andy Brodersen and carried on unanimous vote.**

**Motion # 15/16-329: Matthew O'Brien moved that the Town Council enter into Executive Session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 1-200(6)(D)-discussion of the selection of a site or the lease, sale or purchase of real estate by a political subdivision of the state when publicity regarding such a site, lease, sale, purchase or construction would cause a likelihood of an increased price until such time as all of the property has been acquired or all proceedings or transactions concerning same have been terminated or abandoned with the following people in attendance: Town Council members, the Town Manager and Town Finance Director. The motion was seconded by Thomas Pope and carried on unanimous vote.**

**Executive Session commenced at 10:47 PM.**

**Motion # 15/16-330: Matthew O'Brien moved to leave Executive Session at 11:10 PM, seconded by Andy Brodersen and unanimously approved.**

**8. New Business:**

**Motion # 15/16-331: Matthew O'Brien moved to add an item to the agenda as 8D, 15/16-80: Consideration of an appropriation from the Town Council's 1.5% to fund a full and final settlement of a claim pursuant to C.G.S. 433C; Heart and Hypertension. The motion was seconded by Thomas Pope and carried on unanimous vote.**

**D. 15/16-80: Consideration of an appropriation from the Town Council's 1.5% to fund a full and final settlement of a claim pursuant to C.G.S. 433C; Heart and Hypertension: Motion # 15/16-332: Matthew O'Brien moved that the Town Council appropriate a sum of \$83,000 to fund a full and final settlement of a claim pursuant to C.G.S. 433C; Heart and Hypertension. The motion was seconded by Thomas Pope and carried on unanimous vote.**

- 11. Adjournment:**  
**Motion # 15/16-333: Matthew O'Brien moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:14 PM. The motion was seconded by Andy Brodersen and carried on unanimous vote.**

Respectfully submitted:

Laura Stone  
Town Council Clerk

*Note: These minutes are not official until acted on by the Town Council at its next regular meeting. Those meeting minutes will reflect approval or changes to these minutes.*

My name is Leslie Shor. My address is 47 High Street. Today I am speaking in strong support of the school board proposed budget, and in particular, for continuing support of the Challenge & Enrichment Program in the Coventry Schools.

I understand that there are families in Coventry who are struggling financially. You have to make tough choices. Sometimes a small investment can reap huge benefits down the line.

We've all seen in the news that recent state budget decisions may have contributed to corporations and wealthy individuals leaving the state. Likewise, not supporting CEP could drive away the highest-performing students from the district.

Let me briefly give you some background. My husband and I are UConn professors. We have 2 children in the Coventry Public schools. When we moved here in 2009, we were advised by UConn colleagues not to buy a house in Coventry because the schools were perceived to be of lower quality.

But that has not been our experience at all. I tell my colleagues that we have been extremely happy

with the educational opportunities our 2 children have received. In particular, I want to acknowledge the Challenge & Enrichment Program, Mr. Spivey, and the Future Problem Solvers along with the music program.

(1:40) My son Jacob has been in CEP since the third grade. He was on the FPS team that won the State Championship last spring and competed at Internationals in Iowa last June. My son is currently a 7<sup>th</sup> grader taking 9<sup>th</sup> grade Honors Algebra at CHS. While my son is the only student in his school doing so, I know from my UConn colleagues that there is an entire class of "double advanced" 7<sup>th</sup> graders in the Mansfield schools.

Families have choices in where they send their children to school. School quality is a major factor when people buy a home. There are also many magnet options as well. Such schools do offer special services, and some aggressively recruit top talent.

You may be well aware that the school-age population in Tolland County is declining in recent years. There is fierce competition for students. It is interesting to note that the Coventry

Public school population is also declining, but the rate of decline has slowed in recent years.<sup>1</sup> Is this because the word is getting out, more and more families know their children will be supported and successful in the Coventry schools? I think it may be.

(3:20) I think this school district has done an amazing job on a very careful budget. Superintendent Petrone and his staff have zealously sought grants and employed creative approaches to meet the needs of the students with a modest budget.

With just 1.5 FTE, CEP represents a tiny proportion of the nearly \$27.3M proposed budget. With that money, CEP meets the needs of the top 10% or so of high-ability students in each grade, and the technology related tasks of Mr. Spivey reach many many more. These students are engaged in their community, active in sports and music, and arts. They are leaders and sometimes even classroom support for their peers. Many are headed for great colleges and professional

careers. Many may choose to return to this wonderful community, and 20 years from now, perhaps one or two might sit where you are now.

I believe we should judge a school not by the achievement of the *average* student, but by its dedication to *every* student: those who need extra assistance to succeed, and those who need extra challenge to thrive.

Please don't send the message to the CEP families that the Coventry Public Schools can't continue to meet their needs. In the longer run, how would that affect our schools and our community? Please give this budget your full support, and advocate for its adoption among your constituents.

I am grateful for the efforts of many dedicated teachers and administrators and volunteer public servants like yourselves who work so hard to make and keep our schools and our community strong.

Thank you.

---

<sup>1</sup> The annual decline was >3% in 2010, 11, & 12, 2.5% in 2013 & 14 and 1% in 2015.

Letter to the Coventry Town Council Members

Let the Voters speak on the budget for 2016-2017.

It is a reasonable request to present these budgets "as is" since the budgets presented will not impact the current taxes in any substantial way.

Just five (5) months ago the Republican Council members asked for our support and votes stating: \*  
"Our first priority in education is our students. Every child should have equal access to a quality educational experience. Our Schools must be dedicated to developing abilities within a safe environment for both pupils and staff to ensure their success." Please honor your election promise!

\*Direct quote from Candidates for Town Council – Where They Stand on the Issues flier November 2015

Joan M. Oros

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joan M. Oros', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned to the right of the printed name and extends upwards and to the right.

1169 Flanders RD



ANDREW BRODERSEN    JULIE BLANCHARD    MATTHEW O'BRIEN    RICHARD WILLIAMS    THOMAS POPE

## **CANDIDATES FOR TOWN COUNCIL – WHERE THEY STAND ON THE ISSUES**

### **PUBLIC SAFETY**

Public safety is more than just having fire and police coverage it means supporting those organizations to provide the services taxpayers expect. Our police and fire are community organizations serving friends and neighbors in time of need. They are there for us and we need to be there for them.

### **PARKS & RECREATION**

Coventry taxpayers work hard for their money, when they have a little down time they deserve parks and recreation facilities that are not run down or overrun. It is time to address our needs, this is a quality of life issue for every family. We have parks, we need committed leaders.

### **SENIOR CITIZENS**

Our senior citizens of today were once the building blocks and foundation upon which our town has grown. They were committed to living in a classic small town with quality education, public safety and recreation. They did the work, we must work to ensure high taxes will not take away their dreams.

### **TAXES**

Make no mistake we all need to pay some taxes to provide government services, but we also must remember where that money comes from. Reaching into the pockets of our neighbors always takes away money from family life and our first priority should be to control spending.

### **EDUCATION**

Our first priority in education is our students. Every child should have equal access to a quality educational experience. Our Schools must be dedicated to developing abilities within a safe environment for both pupils and staff to ensure their success.

### **OPEN SPACE**

Our rural character and open space is a treasured natural resource that must be preserved and protected to assure future generations a quality of life that is consistent with our historic small town pastoral New England heritage.

# **VOTE FOR THE REPUBLICAN TEAM ON NOV. 3<sup>RD</sup>**

**For more information go to: [www.coventryrtc.com](http://www.coventryrtc.com)**



PROFESSIONAL POLICING  
COVENTRY  
CONNECTICUT  
POLICE  
COMMUNITY COMMITMENT



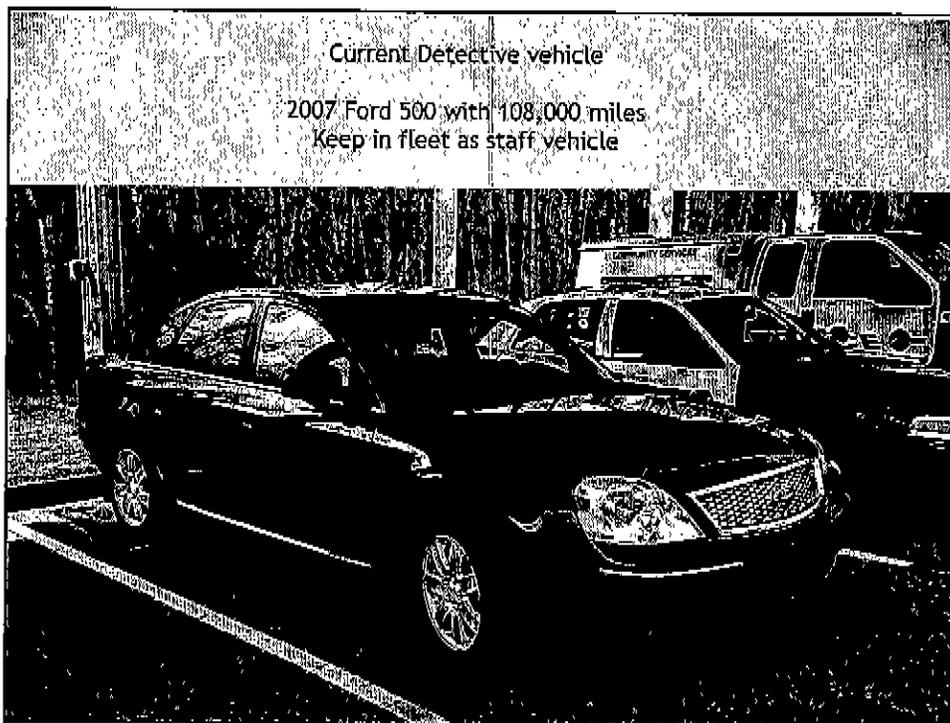
An internationally accredited  
law enforcement agency

Budget Presentation  
March 23, 2016  
Chief Mark Palmer

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN REQUEST**

One unmarked vehicle for use by Detective	Requested: \$27,000
	Budgeted: \$17,500
Withdrawn	
Marked patrol vehicle	\$40,000.00
Replacement flooring	\$16,500.00
Roof heating cable	\$17,000.00
Total	<u>\$73,500.00</u>

CURRENT VEHICLES		
1 CV	2011 Crown Victoria	91,200
2 CV	2013 Interceptor Sedan	78,040
3 CV	2014 Interceptor SUV	64,678
4 CV	2015 Interceptor SUV	34,125
5 CV	2013 Interceptor SUV	66,475
44 CV	2010 Crown Victoria	128,213 (private duty)
	Detective	108,000
Staff	2009 Crown Victoria	91,068

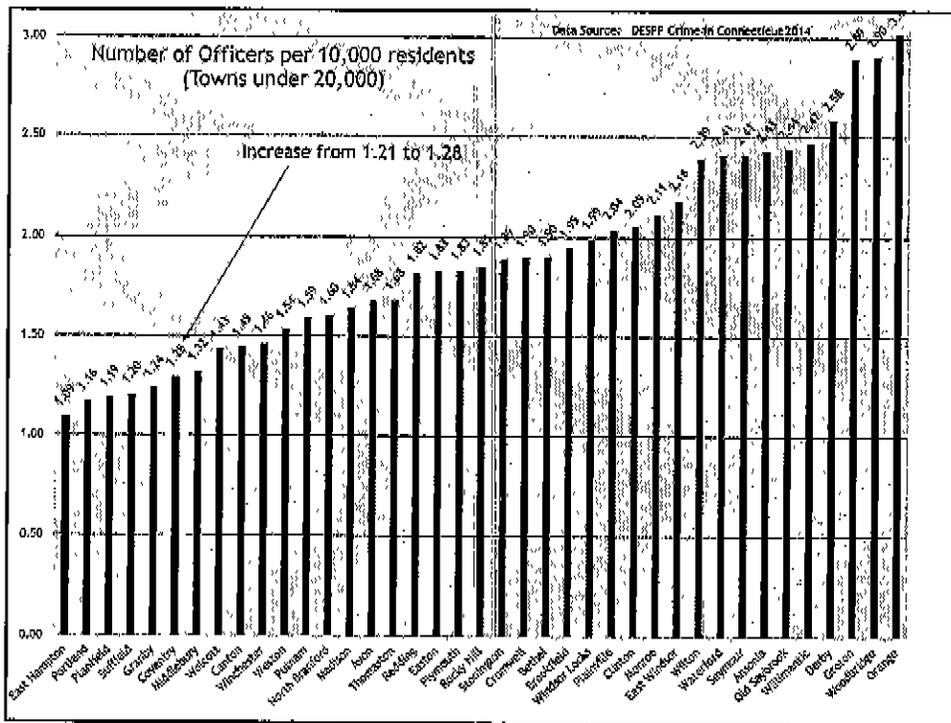




### Sworn Employees

Employee	Years	Employee	Years
Employee 1	26.6	Employee 9	9.9
Employee 2	21.4	Employee 10	8.9
Employee 3	19.5	Employee 11	3.3
Employee 4	18.9	Employee 12	3.0
Employee 5	17.8	Employee 13	2.0
Employee 6	17.0	Employee 14	1.0
Employee 7	15.2	Employee 15	0.2
Employee 8	11.7		

Average time with the agency = 11.75 years

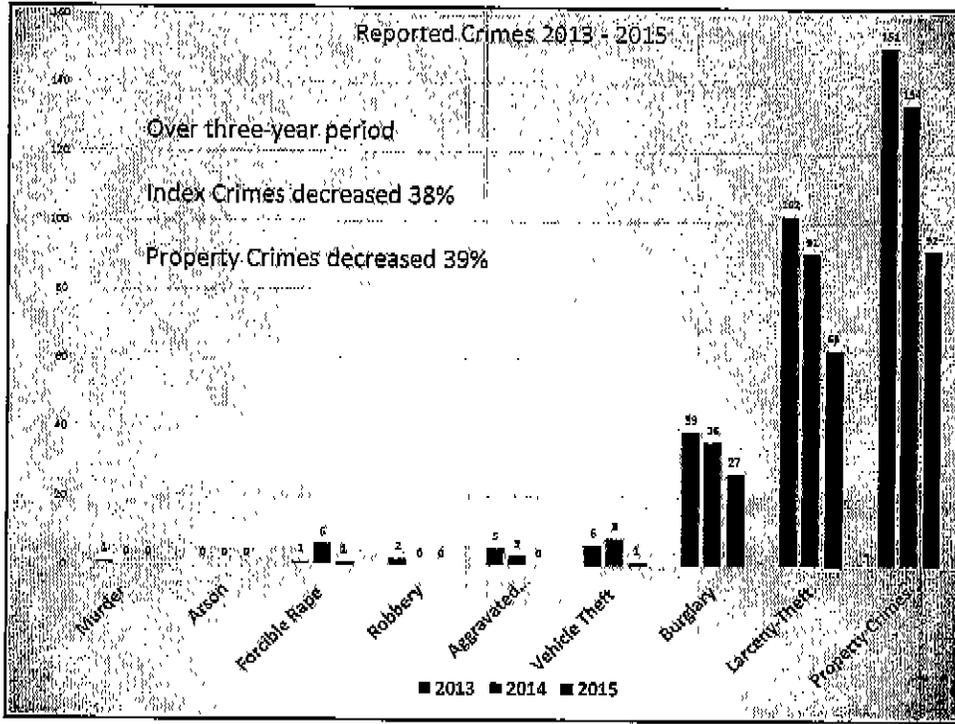


### OPERATING BUDGET FY 2015/2016 vs. 2016/2017

	2016	2017	Difference
Administration	185,551	184,651	-900
Operations	1,247,711	1,327,102	79,391
Support	319,630	320,658	1,028
Building	59,480	56,300	-3,180
Marine Patrol	7,850	8,400	550
Community Service	70,891	71,201	310
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,891,113</b>	<b>1,968,312</b>	<b>77,199</b>

### 2017 Operating Budget

Contractual Salary increases and longevity pay	88,570	
Overtime (Admin and CSO)	-2166	}
No increase in OT or holiday pay		
Tuition payments	-2000	}
Uniforms and equipment	-1500	
Other equipment	-1500	
COLLECT fees	-1400	
Electric	-2000	
Heating Fuel	-1225	}
Community Service costs	-175	
Increase for Lake Patrol	550	}
Sewer fees	45	
<b>Total</b>	<b>77,199</b>	



Thank you

Questions ?



RECEIVED

MAR 14 2016

TOWN OF COVENTRY  
PLANNING & ZONING

March 8, 2016

Eric M. Trott  
Director of Planning and Development  
Town of Coventry  
1712 Main Street  
Coventry, CT 06238

Dear Mr. Trott:

I am pleased to inform you that Town of Coventry's application for the America the Beautiful grant has been accepted\*. We are in the process of finalizing the paperwork, but I wanted to be sure to give you the good news.

The project title is "Main Street and Laidlaw Park Planting Plan". The amount of the grant is \$4,975.

At some point over the next few weeks, I will be sending to you a Personal Services Agreement (PSA). This PSA is the contract by which the grant is established. It needs approval from both parties - the Town and DEEP - to be complete and fully executed. That typically takes a few more weeks and may take us past Spring 2016 planting season.

Please do not begin work on the project until the PSA has been fully executed and you receive a copy of the PSA back with both signatures on it.

As a part of the finalization process, it will be necessary that whoever signs the PSA be authorized by a Resolution from the Town Council. Enclosed is a sample of such a Resolution. I mention this so as to help facilitate the process. The Resolution can be voted on before the Town receives the PSA. Doing so could help keep the process moving.

In the meantime, please feel free to call or write me if you have any questions or comments. I am very pleased that we will have the opportunity to work together as part of this worthwhile project.

The best of luck and, again, congratulations.

Chris Donnelly  
Urban Forestry Coordinator  
CT DEEP Forestry  
(860) 424-3178  
chris.donnelly@ct.gov

\*Eric - just a note. We cannot start this grant until we wrap up the previous one. Logistically, it would probably work out that way anyways.

The following is an example of an approved Certified Resolution:

CERTIFIED RESOLUTION

I, John Doe, Secretary of WXY Corporation, a Connecticut Corporation (the "Company"), do HEREBY certify that the following is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company held and convened on April 1, 2010, at which meeting a duly constituted quorum of the Board of Directors was present and acting throughout, and that this resolution is at present in full force and effect:

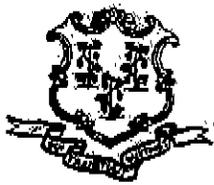
RESOLVED: That the President, Regina Rex, is empowered to execute and deliver in the name and on behalf of this Company a certain contract with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection of the State of Connecticut for the fulfillment of the America-the-Beautiful grant, and is authorized to affix the Corporate Seal.

In witness whereof, the undersigned has affixed his signature and the Corporate Seal of the Company this fifth day of May, 2010.

John Doe, Secretary

(Seal)

In lieu of a certified resolution, a certified copy of the applicable section of the corporate by-laws which authorizes execution of the contract by the signing person may be submitted, along with certification that the person signing the contract in fact holds the office in question. In lieu of a certified copy of the corporate resolution or by-laws, a certified copy of the corporate minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors may be submitted. These minutes must specifically authorize the signing person to execute the particular contract under review or the particular type of contract, of which the one under review is an example.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



March 9,  
~~January 27, 2016~~

Town of Coventry  
Eric Trott  
1712 Main Street  
Coventry, CT 06238

Dear Eric:

Congratulations on being awarded \$34,605 through the 2015 Farm Viability Grant! As a sub-grantee to the Department of Agriculture's award you are required to sign a contract with the State of Connecticut agreeing to complete the project submitted.

Please review the entire contract **carefully**. Each appendix highlights important information including your project commitment(s), reporting requirements, financial reporting requirements, payment schedule, among others.

Enclosed are two copies of the contract that must be signed before your project can begin. All locations needing a signature or seal have been highlighted with a flag. Please be sure to keep in mind the following information when signing:

1. Whoever signs the contract must sign their name the same way each time. For example: If you sign it Jaime L. Smith the first time do not sign it Jaime Smith the second time. It must always be Jaime L. Smith.
2. You must always use the same title. For example – if you're Executive Director the first time you cannot become President or 'ED' the second time. You must always be Executive Director.
3. Finally, all the dates signed on all the documents must be the same. It cannot be April 10, 2015 on one document and April 14, 2015 on another.
4. The person signing the contract cover page cannot also be the secretary/clerk signing the Certified Resolution or Incumbency Certificate.
5. If there are any handwritten changes (cross outs or corrections), they must be initialed and dated by the signor.

While it seems nit-picky, staying consistent will enable the Attorney General's office to sign the contracts sooner without additional revisions. Please sign **both** copies of the contract. Return it all in the enclosed envelope. An original signed contract will be returned to you for your records after all signatures are obtained.

Again, congratulations! We look forward to working with you. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me at 860-713-2559 or [jaime.smith@ct.gov](mailto:jaime.smith@ct.gov).

Sincerely,

  
Jaime L. Smith  
Marketing Rep and Farm Viability Grant Program Coordinator

165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106  
Phone: 860-713-2503 CTGrown.gov  
*An Equal Opportunity Employer*

**RESOLUTION**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that it is in the best interest of the Town of \_\_\_\_\_ to enter into contracts with the Connecticut Department of Agriculture.

**IN FUTUREANCE OF THIS RESOLUTION**, the Honorable \_\_\_\_\_, (name) \_\_\_\_\_ (Title) is duly authorized to enter into and sign said contracts dated \_\_\_\_\_ on behalf of the Town of \_\_\_\_\_. The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_, (name) \_\_\_\_\_ (Title) is further authorized to provide such additional information and execute such other documents as may be required by the State of Connecticut in connection with said contract and to execute any amendments, rescission, and revisions thereto.

**THE TOWN CLERK IS AUTHORIZED** to impress the seal of the Town of \_\_\_\_\_ on any such document, amendment, rescission or revision.

**ADOPTED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL, THIS** \_\_\_ **th DAY OF** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I, (Name), the Clerk of the Town of \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby certify this to be a true copy of the resolution duly adopted at the Town Council meeting on (Date) and that it has not been rescinded, amended or altered in any way, and that it remains in full force and effect.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**PUT TOWN SEAL HERE**