

Minutes
Coventry Town Council Meeting
April 4, 2016
Town Hall Annex

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.
Present: Julie Blanchard, Andy Brodersen, Lisa Thomas, Hannah Pietrantonio, Richard Williams, Matthew O'Brien, Thomas Pope
Also present: John Elsesser, Town Manager; Beth Bauer, Finance Director
2. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. **Audience of Citizens:**
Tammy Regan, Hemlock Point, grew up in Coventry and worked at Town Hall for 18 years. She has a daughter and is active in the Coventry school system, especially the PTO. If the weather had been better we would have had better attendance tonight. She is here to support the Board of Education budget and would like the Council to move up the budget deliberations item on the agenda to discuss it earlier in the meeting. A town's education system is the number one consideration when people with children choose a town to live in. Our schools are preparing Coventry students for the future and for jobs that don't even exist today. Many citizens have attended Council meetings to express their support as well as sending over 40 emails. The Council has the power to cut the budget before the townspeople can vote. Any cuts to the education budget will impact Coventry students. By making cuts you would be diminishing things the school has built over the years. She noted that when Matthew O'Brien served on the Board of Education, he voted in favor of budget increases in the amounts of 5.3 and 7%. The Board of Education has made great strides and is requesting a minimal increase. Republicans were elected in November for what they stood for in their campaign pledge: "We will listen. We will respond. We are committed to excellence for the future of Coventry." She asked if the Council has the integrity to follow through with their platform, or whether individual members are following their own agenda. She hopes they will make the right decision to move Coventry's children toward the future.

Michael Ader, 284 Carpenter Rd, expressed concerns about the proposed CNG pipeline. He has written to the Council and submitted editorials to local newspapers about his position. He shared some of his opinions regarding John Elsesser's document about the proposal, which was including with the Council meeting materials for tonight's meeting. He noted that a lot of savings we hope to see are based on natural gas maintaining the same price. It is the same price across 10 years of the projection, and we don't have that in writing. Studies show when the two pipelines are completed to export gas to Asia our costs are going to go up. He was also surprised to see a payback to CNG over 7 years. That means we don't have to have a referendum because the annual payment amounts would be under \$100,000. The original proposal was a 5-year payback, which would have been more than \$90,000. He doesn't like to think we are avoiding a public vote. Regarding the roads in the CNG proposal, it says they were going to dig the ditch, do temporary fill and do permanent resurfacing. When he read the proposal it said the Town would pave the roads. He doesn't know if CNG put that in as sweetener but it is an expense. Gas is not really the most cutting edge technology out there; it is a non-renewable fossil fuel. It is not solar or wind. The Town might want to explore a system similar to what Stafford is doing. They are combining various methods including solar and geothermal and will save \$4.2 million. If we hook up and down the line we don't want to do it anymore is there a penalty? He didn't see that in the contract. Everybody wants responsible government. We also want a transparent government. It is ironic that the Council had the sunshine proclamation and then is going to sweep through a 20-year plan that people aren't going to have a chance to talk about. Who is doing who a favor? Let's not rush this.

Kelly Sobol, 745 Merrow Rd, unit 107, is a 9-year Coventry resident and parent of two children in school. She is here to advocate for our children and their education. Many parents have attended meetings and written emails. Back in November, the majority of the members sitting on this Council ran on a Republican ticket that supported our children's education. She passed around a copy of the Republican campaign platform and read aloud a section that outlined their principles regarding education. (A copy of the document is attached to these minutes.) That is platform they were elected on, most likely by parents who sat in this room and sent emails. We have entrusted you with making decisions in the best interest of our children. Unfortunately what we have witnessed is not quite in line with what you said your priorities and intentions were. You have stated you want a zero increase in the Board of Education budget. How does that align with your campaign platform? The education of our children and their future is the lifeblood of our town and this country. Your unwillingness to do everything you can to support them and the needs of their educators only depletes the resources they have and stifles their ability to grow, learn and lead in the future. We are well aware you have been unwavering in your ability to be flexible and come to a compromise with the Board of Education and their budget. She implored them to consider a few things before making a final decision that will so negatively impact our children. She attended a reception at the middle school recently where Mr. Pope spoke about how important education is to a room full of students and educators from around the world. She said he was boastful and enthusiastic about the school system and their commitment to the education of our children. She asked if he would be willing to stand back up in front of those same students and explain to them why they no longer have the opportunity to continue their enrichment program because it's not in the budget. She also spoke to Mr. O'Brien about his previous support of Board of Education budgets at higher percentage increases and to Mrs. Blanchard, who has had children go through the school system and how she would have felt if the Town Council had made cuts while here children were in school that might have prevented her daughter from taking advanced language or sports programs. Ms. Sobol urged the Council to make wise, educated and responsible decisions when it comes time to make cuts to the budget, and to put our children first. (Ms. Sobol's full remarks are attached to these minutes.)

Thomas Pope responded to the last comment since he was personally called out. He said at no time in the Council's deliberations has anyone at this table talked about cutting the budget to zero. He doesn't know anybody at the table who has said we ought to cut anything in the Board of Education budget that would reduce a program. He doesn't know where this information is coming from but it is inaccurate and untruthful. Matthew O'Brien agreed with Mr. Pope, saying citizens can check the Council minutes. Nobody has said anything like this and it is totally untrue and ludicrous.

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

4. **Acceptance of Minutes:**

March 14, 2016: Motion # 15/16-336: Thomas Pope moved and Andy Brodersen seconded to accept the minutes of the Town Council Special Meeting of March 14, 2016. The following corrections were requested:

- Page 3, 5th paragraph, 1st line: Add the word "report" after racial profile.
- Page 4, 1st paragraph, 4th line: Change "were" to "where."
- Page 4, 3rd paragraph, 8th line: change "to project" to "to the projection."
- Page 8, 3rd paragraph, 2nd line: change "p.o.s" to "purchase orders."

The motion to accept the minutes as corrected carried on unanimous vote.

March 21, 2016: Motion #15/16-337: Andy Brodersen moved and Thomas Pope seconded to accept the minutes of the Town Council meeting of March 21, 2016. The following corrections were requested:

- Page 9, 6th bullet, 3rd line: Change “increase” to “decrease.”
- Page 11, last line: Add the word “is” after loader.
- Page 12, 1st line: Add the word “the” after by.
- Page 12, 3rd line: Add the word “he” after since.
- Page 17, Item C, 3rd line: Add the word “amount” after minimum. Remove the words “5 years.”

The motion to accept the minutes as corrected carried on unanimous vote.

March 23, 2016: Motion #15/16-338: Andy Brodersen moved to accept the minutes of the Town Council Special Meeting of March 23, 2016. The following corrections were requested:

- Page 3, 4th paragraph, last sentence: Revise the sentence to read, “Lisa noted page 9a shows prevalence and any time there is fewer than six for a specific disability they have suppressed those numbers.”
- Page 3, 5th paragraph, 1st line: Add the word “asked” after Richard.
- Page 4, 2nd paragraph, 3rd line: Add the words “of programs” after names.
- Page 5, 3rd paragraph, 2nd line: Add the words “in surplus” after \$99,000. Add the word “they” after why.

The motion to accept the minutes as corrected carried on unanimous vote.

March 28, 2016: Motion #15/16-339: Lisa Thomas moved to continue acceptance of the minutes from the March 28, 2016 meeting to the next Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Matthew O’Brien and carried on unanimous vote.

5. Consent Agenda:

Motion #15/16-340: Hannah Pietrantonio moved to accept the Consent Agenda, seconded by Richard Williams. Matthew O’Brien requested to remove item 9A. Thomas Pope requested to remove item 6F7. The motion to accept the Consent Agenda with the removal of the requested items carried on unanimous vote.

1. Unfinished Business:

Motion #15/16-341: Lisa Thomas made a motion to move item 7B up on the agenda to follow item 5 in order to enable the audience to have information before it gets very late. The motion was seconded by Hannah Pietrantonio and carried on unanimous vote.

7B. 15/16-69 FY 2016/17 budget deliberation and possible action:

Thomas Pope said since November this Council has faced a series of unusual challenges in our mission to craft a responsible balanced budget for our community. We were told that two fire trucks had to be removed from service and must be replaced. We were informed that the invasive weed Hydrilla had been discovered in Coventry Lake, a weed that if left un-treated would be so prolific in growth that irrefutable and irreparable harm would come to Coventry Lake.

The aging Town Hall heating system, which had been pushed to the end of a useful life, failed and we faced a flood and freezing temperatures that required immediate action. Our public safety and first responders came forth with needs that could not be ignored. Paramount among those needs was the immediate requirement for ambulance drivers due to a lack of available volunteers to answer the calls for assistance within our community. We also looked at the requirements for an emergency mini-grid to strengthen our local government and first responder abilities to operate during times of crisis. We

looked at cost savings and efficiencies.

We not only had to consider our community needs but we had to consider the potential local impact from our State Capitol as our State budget failures continue to expose a growing deficit that will have to be addressed. There are massive state layoffs and potential financial cuts coming that will impact our citizens and our community. There is little doubt that the hole of debt dug in our State budget will need to be filled and some of the requirements to fill the hole are likely to be passed down to our Town, adding burdens and stress to our future budgets.

In crafting our budget proposal we had to consider local families that are feeling the burdens of ever increasing taxes, a lingering slow economy and those that will soon be faced with a layoff notice from what they thought was a secure State job. We received input from citizens with a wide diversion of opinions on the proposed budget. We heard strong support for the educational needs of our community. We thank those that participated in the budget process, your counsel was considered and your input is an important part of the process.

Under those circumstances and economic environment we have faced the challenges and I offer the following budget motion to be considered by this Council:

Motion #15/16-342: Thomas Pope moved that the Town Council recommend to the Annual Town Meeting the following appropriations for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017:

General Government	\$ 9,680,544
Board of Education	\$ 27,141,365
Capital Expenditures	\$ 968,787
Debt Service	<u>\$ 2,760,106</u>
For a Total of	\$40,550,802

Matthew O'Brien seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Thomas Pope said this motion addresses the many needs and challenges we as a Council faced during the developing phase of the budget process. We have the opportunity under this proposal to provide funds and a plan of action for the needs of our fire and police departments. We will provide for the required replacement needs of fire equipment and the use of paid staff for ambulance coverage to augment the efforts of our volunteers.

We can take important and necessary immediate action to protect the beauty and recreational use of Coventry Lake by supporting this budget. We can provide funds for improved quality of life issues such as improvements to athletic fields and open space, by supporting this budget.

We can provide for the use of funds to improve the efficiency of our utilities and to explore the strengthening of government and first responders in the face of emergencies. We were able to identify efficiencies and savings that permit the transfer of funding within the LOCIP funding to move \$15,000 from our fencing project and \$1,500 for guardrails to provide \$10,000 funding for much needed renovations to the Community Center in Patriots Park and allocate \$6,500 to immediately eliminate a safety hazard associated with the carpeting in the Police Station.

We are increasing by \$150,000 funding within our Capital Non-Recurring Expenditure Fund to protect programs and to provide flexible options going forward. This will also reduce the potential for the need to reduce our fund balance and weaken our financial position.

During public comment sessions we were sometimes criticized for asking questions and we were urged to shepherd along the Board of Education budget without change. We chose to accept and honor our responsibility under the Town Charter to review the Board of Education proposed budget. During the review process, which was not easy, we were able to identify undisclosed information, line item savings, and unexpended funds. We also identified surplus money that will allow the Board of Education to fully fund their budget through a combination of funds found within this proposed new budget and the application of existing surplus funds. This proposed budget, while reducing the Board's original request by \$200,000, will provide the Board of Education with the opportunity to fully fund all the requirements found within their proposed budget without the need to alter any programs. The Board of Education currently has a projected surplus, new line item savings in the electrical utilities projection and projected new additional income from the recycling of iPads. With this proposal the Board has the opportunity to augment the new budget with the current projected surplus to reach all of their spending goals. I would urge all to support this budget proposal.

This proposal has been constructed with a heart of compassion for those living on a fixed income, and for those families struggling in tough economic times. We listened to the voice of our citizens and the concerns of our community for the need to control government spending. I think it is safe to say this proposal addresses those desires, serves our community well and provides for a better future for us all. This proposed budget will maintain the current mil rate and not increase taxes.

We have before us a budget that allows us to live within our means and will satisfy our needs while maintaining the current mil rate of 31.20. When asked to express and condense my thoughts on this budget I would paraphrase Winston Churchill, by saying, "Never has so much been done with so little, for so many."

I would urge all of my colleagues at this table and the community at large to join me in supporting this proposed budget, to best serve the needs of our entire community for today and the future.

Matthew O'Brien said he supports the budget motion and urges members of the Town Council to support it as well. He commended John Elsesser, Beth Bauer and Town department heads for their hard work. He believes we have an excellent budget on the Town side that will meet our needs and move the Town forward as Tom said in his comments.

He does support the appropriation for the Board of Education included in this motion. The level of funding we are providing in conjunction with surplus funds that have become available in this year's Board of Education budget will enable the Board to completely fund all of the initiatives and programs that they have put forth in their budget request.

We have heard from many Coventry citizens, taxpayers and students alike, during our budget discussions, that they would like us to forward the Board of Education's requested budget to referendum without scrutinizing it or determining whether the Board's plan is supported, well thought out and represents the best use of taxpayer dollars. Obviously, we chose instead to carry out our responsibilities under the Coventry Town Charter.

Before anyone attacks the budget that we are presenting here tonight because the requested appropriation for the Board of Education has been reduced by \$200,000 and will have negative impacts on the Board's plans and programs, let me put your minds at ease. In the past three years the Board of Education has made end of the year purchases totaling over \$586,000 from the Apple Education Store using surplus funds. And this only includes purchases made from the Apple Store.

The Board of Education has all the money that it will need to fund everything in their budget request and more when they simply continue to do this year what they have been doing for the past three years and probably for many years before that – use their current year surplus, which as of right now is projected to be over \$266,000, to purchase technology and other items which they deem important to their plans.

This process has been a struggle and a disappointment on the part of the Town Council. We have tried for many weeks and some months to request information about the Board's past spending, proposed budget, and actual use of surplus funds. The Board has yet to provide answers to many of our very specific questions and has provided us with inaccurate information, incomplete information or completely refused to provide some requested information at all. We had to ask ourselves why that would be and continued to ask for more complete information. We have now found some of those answers.

Even though the Board of Education's four-year technology plan which was begun in 2013-2014 called for the Board to purchase iPads for one class of children in the high school each year for four years, which is just short of 500 iPads in total, we learned that the Board in fact has purchased almost 1300 iPads in the past four years. The Board told us during deliberations that each iPad costs the District about \$650. If accurate, that would mean they have spent \$845,000 on iPads in the past four years. Money for that level of purchasing cannot be found in the budget proposals that the Board presented to the Town or the Town Council in those years.

Each year the Board presented the fiscal impact of the program to the Town in its budget presentations as being money for a Technology Specialist and about \$20-\$30,000 for iPads in the first two years of the program and no money for additional iPads in the third year at all. In fact the Board's original budget proposal in February 2015 (for this year's budget) contained no money to purchase the iPads required by the third year of their four-year plan. That could only be because the Board, as early as February of 2015 determined that they had more than enough surplus funds available in last year's budget to purchase the iPads needed in the third year of the plan and in fact were also able to purchase the iPads for the fourth year of the initiative – all with surplus funds – which the Board refused to identify for us. We were told during our March 14th budget meeting with the Board that the Board spent over \$131,000 of surplus funds to purchase about 240 iPads at the end of last year. In fact we now know that the Board purchased at least 321 iPads during the 2014-2015 year.

Piecing together all of the information that we can find and that the Board has presented we now know that the Board had a surplus of at least \$289,000 last year (2014-2015). From their monthly management reports and the invoices we have been given we calculate that in 2013-2014 the Board had a surplus of at least \$400,000 and likely more and that they made end of the year purchases from the Apple Education Store of at least \$260,000. The Board purchased a total of 465 iPads in the 2013-2014 school year. This came as a major surprise to members of the Town Council.

As he said earlier, the Board has a projected surplus of over \$266,000 in this year's budget. The Council's motion reduced the Board of Education's request by \$200,000. \$11,000 or more of that \$200,000 is being removed from their budget because the Town finalized our negotiation to set electrical rates for the coming year for the Town and Schools and the rate came in at an 8% savings. This was finalized after this budget was completed and this reduction will have no impact on the Board's programs.

In addition, the Board reported that they will receive about \$21,000 in reimbursement for the three-year-old iPads that the current seniors have been using when they sell them back to Apple. So our

proposal would require the Board to choose to purchase \$169,000 of technology and/or other items that are included in this budget proposal from this year's surplus funds.

It is likely that the Board will have additional surplus funds available at the end of this year beyond the \$169,000 we discussed and we would recommend that they put any additional available funds into their non-lapsing account that can be used for repairs and capital projects in next year's budget. That would be the responsible thing to do.

Again, this proposal provides the Board with 100% funding for everything in their proposed budget but asks them to use this year's surplus funds as they have been doing for many years. Going forward, the Town Council will continue to ask questions and demand answers from the Board and we hope and expect that they will be much more cooperative and transparent going forward. I will be providing additional information about the Board of Education when we discuss item 9A later tonight. I urge the members of the Town Council to support this motion.

Andy Brodersen said he is pleased that in good conscience he can vote in favor of this budget motion. He fully believes that the monies provided will meet the requested financial needs of our town and our schools for this coming year. Additionally – being able to hold the mil rate firm and not increase taxes helps protect Coventry's citizens. As times are difficult for the State of Connecticut, which has spent well beyond its means, Coventry can be proud to say that we have not followed suit. We must continue to spend wisely and budget appropriately so that Coventry can continue to be the great town that it is. As is stated in the National FFA creed, this budget makes a promise of better days through better ways even as the better things we now enjoy have come to us from the struggles of former years.

Richard Williams said he feels the other Council members have pretty much said it all. This is a responsible budget – we put a lot of thought into it as a group in how it was formed and crafted. In no way have we not given the Board of Education the ability to fund their programs. Looking back at past spending patterns it is obvious there has been plenty of funds available to fund their initiatives and fund the technology, and plenty of money for education. This is a well thought-out proposal.

Lisa Thomas said she is uncomfortable with the proposed budget for two reasons. She would like to speak to the many parents who have contacted the Council by email and stopped her when she has been out at events – including the Future Problem Solving competition this past weekend – congratulations to them for continuing to bring us honor. Many expressed their sense of feeling belittled by comments made by members of this Council that they must have been goaded into speaking on behalf of their children, as if these parents would not have been capable of taking their own initiative to advocate for the most precious things in their lives. She has stood in those same shoes and it is a horrible feeling. Both as a teacher and as a parent she has repeatedly noted over the years that there is no better advocate for a child than their own parents. If you as a parent aren't going to do it, nobody is going to do it. It is our moral responsibility to do everything in our power for our children. She knows parents who have spoken during Audience of Citizens or who have contacted the Council have been closely watching our meetings and have heard the many comments from Council members who are expressing distrust towards our school administration and Board of Education. Such comments have occurred not only in direct statements of the Council at the table but also in disrespectful side conversations taking place during Council meetings. She thinks such behavior is good cause for concern amongst parents and even grandparents who have spoken before us, and she thanks each and every one of those citizens for having the courage to speak up on behalf of their kids. Rather than considering them lemmings being led to a cliff, we should applaud their civic engagement in our process. As far as surplus goes, surplus ain't surplus until all the bills are paid. Parents didn't ask for a lack of scrutiny of this budget, as a matter of fact many have stated that they

looked at it very carefully, so to make over a \$200,000 cut before it has gone to referendum even once seems untenable. Her other concern with this budget is that it doesn't restore the line items for open space under General Administration in the Capital Improvement Plan to what was approved in prior budgets over several years under both Democratic-led and Republican-led Councils in order to support our Plan of Conservation and Development which should show \$50,000 in the next fiscal year and \$75,000 for each of the following five years. There are important economic benefits to acquiring and maintaining Town open space, including increased property values and reduced liabilities to the Town for infrastructure maintenance. Certainly we and future generations deserve to enjoy Coventry's landscapes, farms and forests for this small investment of capital funds. We have received communication from citizens in support of this issue as well as from our Planning and Zoning Commission. She shared a portion of a letter we received from Robert Proctor, a member of our Conservation Commission: "When priorities are set for capital improvement spending, I expect to see our citizens' wishes better reflected than with cuts in planned allotments. What are those wishes and priorities? In the run up to the current Plan of Conservation and Development, you will recall the Town conducted a comprehensive citizen survey. Goals and priorities were charted for how the Town should grow in coming decades. It was found that second only to a strong desire for public safety, preserving the town's rural character was the priority most favored by respondents. Besides being a key instrument in Town planning and development, protected natural land, open space, is the most refined expression of rural character under our control. The survey largely affirmed what we already knew of ourselves, but it helped inform deliberations that led the Plan of Conservation and Development to give this charge: "Utilize the open space plan to guide town land acquisition strategies and acquire more open space and coordinate the plan with recreational needs as expressed in the Parks and Recreation section. Guiding our Town's growth in accordance with these priorities takes keen leadership and yes, it takes some capital. I'm asking the Council to provide both of these constituents for a clear reflection of Coventry's values. Fund meaningfully for open space." To maintain that commitment for open space is simply putting in a commitment in the capital improvement plan. Anything beyond this year won't affect the mil rate. For these two reasons does not feel she can support this budget.

Hannah Pietrantonio said she also can't support the budget as it is presented. She feels it should go to the public at the Town Meeting and referendum as is. Anything over a \$100,000 reduction to the Board is not necessary. It is already a minute increase. There are infrastructure needs and projects and things in this Town that our schools are maintaining. Our children are flourishing and anything above \$100,00 in cuts she can't support.

Matthew O'Brien asked Lisa and Hannah why they supported a \$100,000 cut to the Board of Education budget last year. Lisa replied it was a negotiated conversation. No such conversations have taken place this year. Hannah stated there is no "we" in this conversation – it has not involved me. She asked that we be changed to "I." Lisa said she doesn't know if the numbers Matt cited are correct. She has nothing on a piece of paper. She feels the whole process has been disrespectful, not only of the Board of Education, but of her and Hannah. When we've been trying to speak there have been side conversations going on. She might not have been able to support any budget given the climate.

Thomas Pope said he is surprised that Hannah said none of her input was taken, mentioning funds for the Community Center refurbishment and carpeting at the Police Department. Hannah said that is not what she said. She is taking issue with "we." Lisa said she thinks there are a lot of good things in the budget but not enough to support it. The demeanor at the Council table is reason enough. Some funds were moved around to get projects done but the atmosphere is divisive. Thomas said last year only \$25,000 was put in for open space. Lisa replied that was negotiated with the Republican majority who wanted to cut it to zero. Thomas said we are doing other things like addressing Hydrilla and fields. There is more to open space funding than just putting money into a pot. We have some very specific

needs right now, including fencing, irrigation, the flyboard study, fanwort and we still put in \$25,000. He thinks we have addressed open space very fairly. Lisa respectfully disagreed, saying the budget line item addresses a different priority. Last year's decision was a compromise with the Republican majority but was not intended to be long term. Thomas said when you look back and talk about the history of fund, it would not be there without Mr. Williams. Lisa said she does not agree. Matthew asked if we had \$5,000 more in open space whether Lisa could support the budget. Lisa replied no -- she is talking more than numbers. Matthew noted she had the opportunity to request this when discussed we capital. Lisa replied she did bring it up.

Julie Blanchard said she supports the budget on table. Matthew O'Brien outlined changes in the capital budget, including a \$5,000 increase for the Police admin vehicle, increasing CNREF from \$50,000 to \$200,000, removing \$10,000 from the dump body replacement and transferring it to Misc. Highway funds. Fire SCBA was reduced by \$20,000 to \$65,000 based on a bid. Lake Management includes full funding for both the flyboard and fanwort studies. Under General Government we decreased advertising by \$200 and increased the Council Clerk by \$200. We reduced the Laidlaw fence line item, leaving money for installation. Guard rail was decreased. We added police carpet for \$6500 and Patriots Park Community Center at \$10,000. John Elsesser noted there were three changes in debt service that were distributed - the Road bond, Pucker Street Bridge and lease purchase from a better bid than expected for a total reduction of \$44,461.

Motion #15/16-342 carried with Julie Blanchard, Matthew O'Brien, Thomas Pope, Andy Brodersen and Richard Williams in favor; and Lisa Thomas and Hannah Pietrantonio opposed.

Motion #15/16-343: Matthew O'Brien moved that the Town Council recommend to the Annual Town Meeting that the Town Manager be authorized to enter into agreement with the Commissioner of Transportation for Town Aid Funds available to the Town of Coventry under Chapter 240 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The motion was seconded by Thomas Pope and carried on unanimous vote.

Motion #15/16-344: Matthew O'Brien moved that the Town Council recommend to the Annual Town Meeting, pursuant to Title 7, Chapter 116b of the Connecticut General Statutes, the FY 16/17 Capital Improvement Plan, as amended by the Council, be adopted and, further, that the Town Manager be authorized to make application for funding for eligible projects under the Local Capital Improvement Program (LOCIP). The motion was seconded by Thomas Pope and carried with Julie Blanchard, Matthew O'Brien, Thomas Pope, Andy Brodersen and Richard Williams in favor; and Lisa Thomas and Hannah Pietrantonio opposed.

Motion #15/16-345: Matthew O'Brien moved that the Town Council recommend to the Annual Town Meeting to authorize the Town Manager and the Town Treasurer to borrow money from time to time in anticipation of tax collections as needed to meet current expenses. The motion was seconded by Thomas Pope and carried with Hannah Pietrantonio abstaining and Julie Blanchard, Matthew O'Brien, Thomas Pope, Andy Brodersen, Richard Williams and Lisa Thomas in favor.

Motion #15/16-346: Matthew O'Brien moved that the Town Manager and the Town Clerk be authorized to warn the Annual Town Meeting for Saturday, April 23, 2016 at 10:00 AM in the Veterans Auditorium of the Coventry High School/Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School. The motion was seconded by Thomas Pope and carried on unanimous vote.

Motion #15/16-347: Matthew O'Brien moved that the Town Manager and the Town Clerk be authorized to warn the Adjourned Town Meeting for Tuesday, May 3, 2016 and that the hours

for voting be set for 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM and that the method of voting be by paper ballot. The motion was seconded by Thomas Pope and carried on unanimous vote.

Motion #15/16-348: Matthew O'Brien moved that the Town Council authorize the Town Manager to make any adjustments needed to correct any mathematical errors in the budget. The motion was seconded by Thomas Pope and carried on unanimous vote.

6. **Reports:**

A. Council Chairwoman – Julie Blanchard: No report.

B. Council Members:

Richard Williams said he went to the Library on Friday night. He was amazed at how many young kids were there. But what surprised him was what they were doing. The whole teen center is computers and all the kids were playing video games that he wouldn't let his kid play. He doesn't know if that is the right use for those computers - to play games where they were shooting up stuff. No one knows him, and as he was standing there, a fellow who was working there was talking to one of the teens and said, "This loads slow. Pretty soon we are going to have new computers." He found it odd that that's what was being done at the Library. He didn't notice anyone reading a book or doing anything constructive other than social. They were having a good time and were supervised but it doesn't seem appropriate. He knows these games are popular but the kids aren't learning. Thomas Pope noted that the role of libraries these days is to entertain.

C. Steering Committee – Thomas Pope:

We had an abbreviated meeting to accommodate a special Council budget meeting. We do have several appointments to recommend.

Motion #15/16-349: Thomas Pope moved to appoint Sam Norman to the Inland Wetlands Agency, term to expire 9-15/2018. The motion was seconded by Lisa Thomas and carried on unanimous vote. Lisa noted that Sam is a new volunteer and thanked him for stepping up.

Motion #15/16-350: Thomas Pope moved to appoint Harvey Barrette to the Inland Wetlands Agency, term to expire 9-15-2016. The motion was seconded by Richard Williams and carried on unanimous vote.

Motion #15/16-351: Thomas Pope moved to appoint Nathan Carter to the CHS Walls Code Compliance Committee for an indefinite term. The motion was seconded by Richard Williams and carried on unanimous vote.

Motion #15/16-352: Thomas Pope moved to appoint Scott Gallo to the Ad-hoc Lake Advisory & Monitoring Committee, term to expire 5-7-2018. The motion was seconded by Lisa Thomas and carried on unanimous vote.

D. COVRRRA – John Elsesser: The deadline is coming up to switch your tipper barrel size at the subsidized price. Information will be in the spring newsletter.

Thomas Pope said we had a very good record of compliance with our trash and recycling. Currently we have a situation in state government where they are overspending our money and possible costs will be passed down to the Town. We have an opportunity to do a little extra for our citizens and reduce the COVRRRA fee a bit.

Motion #15/16-353: Thomas Pope moved to recommend a \$5 per household reduction in

tipper barrel fees for FY 2016/2017. The motion was seconded by Matthew O'Brien. Lisa Thomas asked if we know what the cost of this change would be to us in billing and administration. John Elsesser replied the rates are plugged into the bill so the cost of billing shouldn't change. Lisa said she is wondering if there is a fiscal impact to the Town. Thomas Pope said COVRRRA is outside the budget. Beth Bauer said we should be ok – we just have to change the rate in the program. Lisa asked how about projecting out in the fund – it is a small amount going back to people but how does it affect the fund going forward? John replied this would be about a \$23,000 reduction in fund balance. The fund should be able to absorb it. We have been subsidizing the fund for the past several years. Lisa said she had heard John say we might not continue to see the recycling funds come back to us. John said we are starting to see a decline in fund balance. We have negotiated fees for several years. There is always some uncertainty but it is a proposal he feels comfortable with. Thomas said this is an annual program so we can review it every year. Lisa said she would hate to see it go up and down. John said there are projects we need to do but there are funds available for that. **Motion #15/16-353 carried on unanimous vote.**

E. Town Manager – John Elsesser:

1. Projects update:

- A regional meeting on crumbling concrete foundations will be held on 5/11/16 at 6:30 PM in the E.O. Smith Auditorium. The Lt. Governor will be here as well as representatives from Consumer Protection. We received another call today and Joe Callahan did an inspection – there is definitely another affected home in our town. We will be sending a letter to homeowners whose homes were constructed during that period. There is a brochure from the State telling people where to start.
- The Police accreditation hearing is tomorrow at 5 PM. The public is invited to share comments or concerns.
- We opened bids for phase two of the Village drainage project. There were nine bidders. The winning bid was from Koss and was \$42,894, which was about 10% less than estimated. They will start on 4/16. We hope the Tracy Shoddy Mill project will also restart this week.

2. Hydrilla notification letter: We decided it was important to notify people in the cove area near the island about pending treatment for Hydrilla this summer. We sent out a letter with a copy of the management report and have gotten three phone calls so far. We are advocating a less impactful, potentially more effective treatment approach. We are waiting for the State's response regarding treatment methods, but as expected people are concerned regarding swimming and the use of their boats. We let them know we will try to work with them as much as possible but we must address this issue ASAP.

3. Crumbling concrete foundations: Rep. Ackert also put out information on this issue. Matthew O'Brien noted that Rep. Ackert mentions a stipulation about 2000 formal complaints are needed to be considered for assistance. John replied there is no guarantee but if there is a large pool there might be concerns about class actions lawsuits. It is scary for the people who have it and they are not necessarily coming forward. Thomas Pope said reporting it to the State is for their own benefit. John said there is great fear and it is understandable when looking at your largest investment.

5. Trails Grant: We were very successful in getting a grant for the Decew property – this will be the end point of the Millbrook Greenway project and connect the dam to the Willimantic River. We received \$57,560 to start doing modest landscaping, signage and photos of the old mill site. We envision a picnic area, fishing and kayak launch spot. It is exciting use of the land we

acquired - we torn down the house there that had septic issue. Richard Williams asked if the property is open space. John said yes. Richard said he is glad we are addressing some of the open space issues in town.

7. WPCA agreement: Removed from the Consent Agenda by Thomas Pope, who said a month or two ago when the WPCA was talking about writing this very letter, he had asked when they wrote it that he wanted to see a map of the plan. He didn't receive it and wants to make sure it goes out. Hannah asked if there will be any discussion with Planning and Zoning about what this extension will impact. John said it is governed by WPCA - they are just starting dialogue but that is a good point. It might have to have public hearing. Hannah asked what benefit this will provide to Coventry. John said right now the plan is to get sewers into Coventry because we have failing systems at the plaza and 7-11. The plan for phase 1 is just on rt. 44. As they go forward there would be all sorts of public hearings in terms of assessments. It is not being done in the typical sewer way. If someone needs it, they would do a developer agreement – and extend at their cost. It may be cheaper than a septic repair. It is not done as a Town project. This is first step and CT DEEP has authorized it under those terms. It is consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development.

7. Unfinished Business:

7A. 15/16-68: Consideration and Possible Action: CNG proposal to extend natural gas to Coventry: Andy Brodersen asked if there is any new information regarding this proposal. John Elsesser replied nothing besides what the Council received on Friday. Matthew O'Brien asked if we have we sought input from the Board of Education. John replied we have had discussions with Board staff - they are interested in having further discussions. They have invited us to attend their special meeting on April 7th and discuss it with them. We have this month to do it – it is important to have dialogue with the Board and the Council has a building committee with an engineer on staff. They are excited about having options to handle items that would require repairs to get the school facilities more compliant for noise. The whole system has to be designed and they have a staff person who can do that. Matthew asked if we can we get input from them. John said we think we can - if not maybe CNG will be willing to wait. The building committee has a meeting coming up. Matthew said the schools are a big part of this so their input is crucial. Andy asked when CNG can get back to us with a proposed contract. John replied it is in the package with handwriting from him on things he would like to be modified. We want a few points of clarification on things that were mentioned in Audience of Citizens. It was a 7-year deal because they were willing to do it interest free and that was the break-even point. It was not an attempt to avoid a referendum. The projections are based on the current price of natural gas. It can be bid out just like electricity. The gas company is just a transmission company. When people say there is no competition that is not true. He showed a map outlining towns with natural gas available in the state. Another issue is it is not an irrevocable contract - we have to make payments but we can choose to stop at any point. The practical reality is once you buy equipment you don't want to change but we could change back to oil or to something that is not developed yet. The combination of fuel cells and geothermal that was suggested earlier is typically tied into natural gas to generate power. Regarding the roads, if you look at the presentation roads were always our responsibility. We can ask them to do them but the cost would go up - we can do it more economically. A lot of the work is off-road. There is no denying there will be some expense but at least two of the roads were already in our summer roads program. There is still more work to do on cost avoidances – such as fuel tanks that need to be replaced - if we don't do the project we will have to put funds toward those items. The committee can look at burner replacement vs. full boiler replacement. The committee can also look at savings from increased efficiency. Thomas Pope asked if we increase efficiency whether funding is available. John indicated rebates available and details are outlined in the document that was provided. Matthew said to please remind the building committee of the time constraints. John said we can get a packet of information to them this week.

Hannah Pietrantonio asked if there is any room for public hearings on this. The timetable is incredibly fast. Will people living in the service area be able to ask questions? She is also curious about Rt. 31 - can it be tied in to extend gas any further downtown? When we did Rt. 31 there was a public hearing because it was a big project. This is a big project too. This timing is really ram-rodging it. John replied it can be done - there is no requirement. Hannah noted that making the micro-grid for emergency purposes is an important feature. Matthew said he doesn't think we have enough information to sit with the public yet. John said there is a construction impact to the neighborhoods. We don't know if they have other concerns we can address, but they don't have to tie in. Matthew asked if there is any way to send out an informational letter to them that it is being considered - we know what houses are being affected. John said yes. Julie Blanchard asked if John will attend the April 20th building committee meeting. Julie is prepared to meet with the Board of Education afterwards. John said he would be interested to hear the Board's perspective. Their facility management person has strong opinions about the benefits of reduced maintenance. He will try to get their input at their next meeting - the issue is on their agenda. Andy said he would like to see that \$629,000 is a firm price regardless of problems they might run into. Richard said when looked at pricing of natural gas over a period of time, it fluctuates just like oil. When you put it out for bid is it done yearly? How do you realize the real cost savings? Oil can spike at any time depending on what happens. He assumes natural gas also has volatility. John said typically we can take the standard offer and only bid if there is an opportunity to get it for less, like the long-term energy purchase agreement we have for electricity. We are locked in for electricity for 4 years. Historically natural gas has been lower than oil but there is no magic fuel. Richard asked if it is clearly more efficient. John said it is cleaner and can run higher uses - you loss less up the chimney. But when look at oil it has higher capacity so you make it up in adjustment factors. Other long term issues - we have frozen sections of the building when automatic delivery doesn't show up. We don't have to fill a generator to run it. It's just there vs. having to have a contractor come and deliver it. Richard said if we have so many towns that have natural gas, and so many people using it, why are people complaining about it so much? John said he thinks they have shared some of that. There are some concerns about how it is obtained. That is not an issue for Connecticut directly but there are some concerns about geographic areas being victimized. People talked about fracking processes where chemicals are used to break open veins. There are concerns that those things can pollute groundwater in those regions. There are cases where it appears that has happened - and others where it has not. Richard said all energy sources probably have some problems. John noted how many wars have we fought over oil - and the problems created by fuel oil spills. There is no great energy source right now. In terms of solar, we have done a lot. There is not much more we can do without cutting down some trees.

Andy said once we change over to gas we lose the ability to negotiate price - we are being told what to pay. Can we negotiate a stable price for the next 5 years? John said we can ask but they are a regulated public utility governed by PURA. Rates are published - there are different rates for higher volume users, so the school would get better rate than the police station. Andy said even though it is one company? John said yes. The high school pays a different rate for electricity than the town hall. Andy said it seems the risk is on us - not on them. John replied they share risk in that their model shows they are assuming that a certain percentage of homeowners will choose to tie in. Matthew said and we have no responsibility if they don't so the risk is on them. John said this is an attempt to get Connecticut like the rest of New England - to reduce our dependency on oil. Andy asked if there is another development nearby decides they want natural gas, are they responsible for negotiating on their own? John said depends - if they are a big user, CNG will extend. Every project has a different financial model. Andy said if we decide it is a good idea but decide we want to go to the town garage and the next fire house would we have to pay? John yes because we don't have the users in that direction. We had discussions over the years and he asked for several models - one coming over Rt. 275 to the Village, but they didn't have the users going that way. The high school is a big energy user. The cost to come in down the hill and go up to the school was longer. We looked at a shorter run

coming up Brigham Road but there were only a few homes and a lot of ledge. That year they offered \$300,000 - this year it is \$1.2 million. Short of having another big user we don't think we will get to the 50% threshold. We can bid it out but they are still the transmission line. They don't make the gas - they just get it to us. Matthew asked if we already have gas in town. John said yes - there are very large transmission lines in the south end of Town that have been here since the 1950s. Matthew said he was wondering about the safety aspect. John said there were some issues in California with metal pipes. Now they tend to use plastic to avoid maintenance. Lisa Thomas asked where the \$90,000 would be coming from for this year - it is not in the budget. How would it be dealt with? There is a \$500,000 water tower in the budget that might not be built. John replied that the first payment would not be due this fiscal year. It would be one year after the date of installation. It would be paid for potentially through the capital budget or out of savings in fuel costs through the operating budget. CNG would be paying taxes so there would be revenue coming in. Oil prices are predicted to go up so there is projected savings there. There is savings in maintenance because we don't have to clean burners. The \$90,000 could become an operational savings. Based on the numbers we have today there is about an \$18,000 deficit but if oil comes up two cents there is additional savings. There are lots of companies in the power business we could work with that would come in and do all the repairs. Lisa said she is not personally in favor of putting in it capital because if the budget doesn't pass we have a \$90,000 commitment you can't touch. Regarding the potential savings, some of which might be a concrete reliable number - do we set funds aside? We have to guarantee funding for multiple years. Thomas Pope said that is like any bill we have in our budget. Lisa replied this is a little different. John said we spend more than that on oil now. Thomas said it is like a fire truck purchased on a lease. There is no one way to do this. Some discussion is needed with the Board of Education. We may want to look at a power purchase agreement. There is some concern about being locked in to proprietary equipment. Those are valid questions that have to be addressed. In the contract if you don't pay they come after you. The alternative is to pay all at once but we are not being charged interest so he is not inclined to take that approach. Matthew said those are all questions we would have to resolve if we decide to do it.

8. **New Business:**

§A. 15/16-91: Authorization to execute waiver of compensation with CT DOT for various Main Street takings: John said this is a series of little sliver takings he had authorized with the right-of-way people at CT DOT. They went further up the chain of command and wanted to know if it was authorized. We need a Council resolution. **Motion #15/16-354: Thomas Pope moved a resolution authorizing the Town Manager, John A. Elsesser to grant a right of entry, waiver of compensation and appraisal for two parcels of land located at 1195 Main Street, containing 77 sq. ft. more or less, along with easements and rights, on the remainder of its property, to the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation for the Reconstruction of Route 31, State Project No. 032-130, Serial No. 012, details for which are attached to these minutes. Richard Williams seconded the motion.** Hannah Pietrantonio asked what property this is. John replied we own the land beside Meet Me on Main. This extends the width a little. It also covers a sliver in front of the Visitors Center. **Motion #15/16-354 carried on unanimous vote.**

9. **Miscellaneous/Correspondence:**

A. Board of Education: 3/10/16 Minutes, 3/31/16 Agenda and Responses to Budget Questions:

Matthew O'Brien distributed documents that outline his attempts to track Board of Education requested and adopted budgets from 2013-2016 and surplus generated. It is a compilation of information that comes from the Board of Education monthly management reports. He has the reports if anyone has a question. He doesn't know about FY 14/15 - The Board's answer to our question of whether there was more surplus was, "We don't recall." The next document tracks surplus projections and unexpended funds by month. The last page shows purchases at the Apple Education store at the end of each year. He doesn't know about any other purchases made. The numbers provided for the

number of iPads purchased doesn't match up with the budgets at the cost cited per iPad. We were told the cost for each iPad is \$650. (A copy of these documents is attached to the minutes.)

Richard Williams said he spoke with Mr. Petrone a couple weeks ago about technology in the schools – he was going to take a tour but that has been delayed to May. He will send the information if other Council members want to attend. Matthew said the Board did respond to some of the questions we asked since the last meeting. They did not answer questions about staff – they refuse to give that information to us. He is not sure why. Thomas Pope asked if acceptance of vacancies is in their minutes. Matthew replied yes there are some. He has one other item to share, which is an Autism support memo that was provided in the first packet of information from the Board on 1/20/16 in response to Council questions. They provided it in response to Question #14. It details a new program created for Autism students and outlines the number of students at the schools and the impact on budget. Also this information was provided by Mr. Petrone during his budget hearing presentation. He presumes they are well aware of privacy laws and they have not violated any of those laws. During the budget process we requested information that the Board of Education refused to provide citing privacy laws. The information he requested is far less detailed than what the Board provided. He would like the Council Chair to ask the Board if providing the information contained in these documents violated any privacy laws. If not, he assumes they had the information we requested but were not willing to provide it.

10. Executive Session:

Motion #15/16-355: Thomas Pope 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 the Finance Director. The motion was seconded by Matthew O'Brien and carried on unanimous vote.

Motion #15/16-356: Thomas Pope 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 the Finance Director. The motion was seconded by Matthew O'Brien and carried on unanimous vote.

Executive Session commenced at 10:02 PM.

Motion #15/16-357: Richard Williams moved to leave Executive Session at 10:32 PM. The motion was seconded by Andy Brodersen and carried on unanimous vote.

11. Adjournment:

Motion #15/16-358: Thomas Pope moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:33 PM. The motion was seconded by Matthew O'Brien 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.

Good evening council members, Mr. Elsesser, and fellow concerned parents.

My name is Kelly Sobol, and I am a 9 year Coventry resident and a parent of two children, both currently enrolled in the Coventry Public School System. Aliza is 5, and is in Kindergarten at CGS, and Zoey is 3 and in the full day Smart Start Program at The Hale Early Education Center.

Tonight I am here to be the voice and an advocate for my children and their education. I stand corrected, I am here to be the voice for OUR children, and THEIR education. There are MANY concerned parents both here tonight and who have written numerous emails to you, and we stand together.

Back in November, the majority of you sitting on this council, ran on the Republican ticket and on a platform that supported our children's education. In front of you, is a copy of your Republican Campaign platform, and I thought I would offer a refresher of what that entailed in the event that you had forgotten.

Our Belief:

" The Coventry Republican Party and candidates for election believe in a bright future for Coventry, they believe in the wisdom of the people, and their commitment to family life..."

Our Principles:

We Believe every student has the right to a quality education.

We Believe it is our responsibility as citizens to contribute our talents to enrich our community and deliver a brighter future for the next generation.

We will listen – We will respond.

We will accomplish.

We are committed to excellence to you for the future of Coventry.

This is the platform that you ran on, and that you were elected based on... most likely by a lot of the parents who stand in front of you this evening. We have entrusted you with making decisions in the best interest of our children and our families, the FUTURE of Coventry. Unfortunately, what we have witnessed since your election into your current positions on this council, and since the budget season has begun is not quite in line with what you had said were your priorities and intentions.

You have stated that you want a 0% increase in the BOE budget. What that says to me is that you are willing to INVEST 0% in the education, the support and the future of OUR children. How does that align with your campaign platform?

The education of our children and their future is the life blood of our town and this country. Your unwillingness to do everything you can to support them and the needs of their educators and administration only depletes the resources they have and stifles their ability to grow, learn and lead this town and this country in the future.

We are well aware that you have been very unwavering in your ability to be flexible and come to a compromise with our BOE and their budget. You have said 0% and that is that. But I am here tonight to implore you to consider a few things before making a final decision that will so negatively impact our children.

Councilman Pope, and Councilman O'Brien... I recently had the pleasure of attending a reception at Captain Nathan Hale Middle School where you were also in attendance. Mr. Pope, you spoke very animatedly about how important education is to a room full of students, and educators from around the world who have sacrificed so much because they believe in the support and growth of our children and their education. You were boastful and enthusiastic about the school system and their commitment to the education of our children, as well as the children that we were hosting from China. So let me ask you this, will you be willing to stand back up in front of those same students and explain to them why they no longer have the opportunity to continue that enrichment program and partnership with that same school in China, because it's just not in the budget?

Mr. O'Brien, you have previously sat on the BOE. In 1998, the budget that you put up to the town was a 5.3% increase, in 1999, it was a 7%. That is a far cry from the 0% you are demanding from our current BOE. I would be interested to how you can possibly think that your ask of this board is realistic or remotely feasible?

Councilwoman Blanchard, you have also previously sat on the BOE in this town, and had children who have gone through our school system. I would like you to reflect on how you would feel if the Town Council had made the demand you currently are on the BOE when your children were in school. Would Anne have been able to participate in such a great cheerleading program, or what impact would those kind of cuts have had on Steven and his football team? And Emily had the opportunity to take an ECE French class while at Coventry High School. Your daughter Emily, made this testimonial on the schools website about that specific French 5

offering. " However, taking a language through high school has helped me to better understand some of my classes, such as English Dictation and Choir." Though it did not transfer as credits to college for me, the high school experience was invaluable." What if Emily was never able to take that ECE French class because a 0% BOE budget increase had forced it to be eliminated? How would that make you feel as her mother?

I am strongly encouraging you as a council to make WISE, EDUCATED, and RESPONSIBLE decisions tonight when it comes time to make cuts to the budget. We are begging you to put OUR children first. THEY are the future of this town. Not us and our agendas. They do not deserve to have their school budget cut. We as a town elected the members of this town that sit on the BOE and trust them and their decisions and recommendations for our children's education and we ask that tonight , regardless of how you may feel personally that you do the same. I can assure you that if this was up for a vote, the people of this town would vote that the BOE budget remain in tact. And based on the showing of parents tonight and the amount of emails that you have received that you also know that to be true. The people of this town, the parents of this town elected you to carry out our wishes. Please remember that tonight as you move forward with your cuts.

Thank you.

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2015 Republican Campaign Platform

2015 Coventry Republican Campaign Platform

Our Belief

The Coventry Republican Party and candidates for election believe in a bright future for Coventry, they believe in the wisdom of the people, and their commitment to family life in a rural environment. Our candidates believe through the generosity of the human spirit, in sharing their experience and talents for the good of our community, so that we all may share in a brighter future.

Our Principles

- **We believe** less taxation is better for families.
- **We believe** a smaller government is a more efficient government;
- **We believe** government has responsibility to protect our natural resources and our citizens;
- **We believe** in the accountability of our public schools to ensure that public funds are spent wisely;
- **We believe** every student has a right to a quality education;
- **We believe** in equality and the protection of our constitutionally recognized rights;
- **We believe** in the private property rights of all individuals and respect for the rule of law;
- **We believe the economic strength of Coventry is enhanced when we support local business and expand local economic opportunities;**
- **We believe the strength in our community is found in our families, in our diversity, in our rich cultural history, and in our national heritage. We believe it is our responsibility as citizens to contribute our talents to enrich our community and deliver a brighter future for the next generation.**

We Will Listen - We Will Respond

We Will Accomplish

We Are Committed To Excellence

to You For The Future OF Coventry

1 Summer Road Program (partial-see also Town Aid)	
2 School Computers	
3 Town Hall Computer Upgrades	
4 Classroom furniture	
5 Police admin. vehicle	
6 SCBA fire paks\hose	
7 Fire gear	
8 Open Space Fund	
9 Pat. Park: Lodge furnace replacement	
10 CNREF	
11 Town Voip hardware	
12 Small senior van replacement: grant match	
13 Zero radius mower-small	
14 1 dump body replacement	
15 CHS Hurlock gym floor refinishing	
16 Fire scha air tank compressor CVFA	
17 Lake management; Fanwort & Flyboard study	
TOTAL	

	270,000	
	150,000	
	36,700	
	30,000	
	22,500	5000 increase
	15,000	
	20,000	
	25,000	
	17,000	
	200,000	150000 increase
	30,000	substitution
	10,000	
	12,500	
	0	-10000 transfer to Misc highway
	27,500	
	65,000	-20000 decrease
	<u>37,587</u>	<u>22587</u> increase
	968,787	147,587

LOCIIP

1 Tracy shoddy mill
2 Miller richardson improvements
3 field irrigation
4 laidlaw soccer fence
5 guardrail
6 police carpeting
7 Patriots park community center
Total

	original	revised
	35000	35000
	11000	11000
	20000	20000
	24000	9000 -15000
	10000	8500 -1500
		6500 new
		10000 new
	<u>100000</u>	<u>100000</u>

RESOLVED

The Town Council of the Town of Coventry, hereby authorizes the Town Manager, John A. Elsesser, on its behalf, to grant a right of entry, waiver of compensation & appraisal, and execute a Quit-Claim Deed, conveying a certain parcel of land, containing 77 sq. ft., more or less, along with easements and rights, on the remainder of its property, which is located at 1195 Main Street, Coventry, CT, to the State of Connecticut-Department of Transportation, for the Reconstruction of Route 31, State Project No. 032-130, Serial No. 012.

Return to:
State of Connecticut
Department of Transportation
Division of Rights of Way- Unit 0403
P.O. Box 317546
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, Connecticut 06131-7546

QUIT-CLAIM DEED

STATUTORY FORM

KNOW YE THAT, Town of Coventry (Grantor), a municipal corporation, having its territorial limits in the County of Tolland and State of Connecticut, acting herein by _____, hereunto duly authorized, for Good and Valuable consideration, Grants to the State of Connecticut (Grantee), with QUIT-CLAIM COVENANTS,

That certain parcel of land situated in the Town of Coventry, County of Tolland and State of Connecticut, located on the southerly side of Present Main Street, CT Route 31, containing 43 square feet, more or less, as shown on Sheet 1 of a map set, to be filed in the Coventry Town Clerk's Office, entitled: "TOWN OF COVENTRY MAP SHOWING LAND ACQUIRED FROM THE TOWN OF COVENTRY BY THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION RECONSTRUCTION OF ROUTE 31 SCALE 1"=40' MAY 2015 THOMAS A. HARLEY, P.E. CHIEF ENGINEER - BUREAU OF ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION", Town No. 32, Project No. 32-130, Serial No. 12, Sheets 1 and 2 of 2, Last Revised 01/11/16, and bounded and described as follows:

NORTHERLY- by Present Main Street, (CT Route 31), a distance of 12.10 feet;

EASTERLY - by land now or formerly of Four T Realty, LLC, 4 feet, more or less;

SOUTHERLY - by remaining land of the Town of Coventry, 12 feet, more or less, by a line designated "TAKING LINE", as shown on Sheet 1 of said map set;

WESTERLY - by land now or formerly of TELEFLEX CT-Devices Incorporated, 3 feet, more or less.

Together with the following full and perpetual easements under, over and across portions of remaining land of the Town of Coventry, and further described as follows:

1. A drainage right-of-way easement, within an area of 77 square feet, more or less, as shown on Sheet 1 of said map set. And the Grantor further grants unto the said State of Connecticut, its successors and assigns forever, a full and perpetual right, privilege and easement to enter upon the said premises by its officers, employees, servants and agents, for the purpose of constructing, building, maintaining, cleaning, repairing, reconstructing and inspecting, at all times, the facilities contained within said drainage right-of-way, with appurtenances thereto, upon, over, under and across said easement areas, together with the further right to flow water through said facilities, as shown on said map.
2. An easement to slope for the support of the highway, within an area of 35 square feet, more or less, as shown on Sheet 1 of said map set.
3. A construction easement for the purpose of constructing box culverts, wingwalls and splash pad during reconstruction of Route 31, within an area of 2,200 square feet, more or less, designated Easement Area No. 1, as shown on Sheet 1 of said map set.

Reductions to the Superintendent's Budget Proposals each School Year and Surpluses generated from the Approved Budgets

(Sources of Information: Superintendent's Proposed Budget Presentations; Board of Education monthly
Management Reports; Board of Education Minutes)

2015-2016 School Year

Superintendent requested 1.97%	\$27,041,795
Town adopted 1.1% increase	\$26,811,045
Reduction	(\$230,750)
Surplus projected as of 2-29-16	\$266,591.40

(History of Budget Appropriation): March reduction of \$150,000 to 1.43% increase by Town Council to \$26,897,045. Budget defeated at Referendum and Town Council reduced education budget by \$86,000 more to 1.10 total increase to \$26,811,045)

2014-2015 School Year

Superintendent requested 2.97% increase	\$26,822,732
Town adopted 1.8% increase	\$26,518,064
Reduction	(\$304,671)
Surplus generated	\$289,000

2013-2014

Superintendent requested 4.33%	\$26,045,917
Town adopted 4.34%	\$26,049,425
Increase	\$3,508
Surplus generated	\$599,000 (estimated)

- As of 2-28-14 the Board projected their surplus to be \$417,742.53
- **On 4-30-14 the Board identified and transferred surpluses of \$175k in Tuition, \$80k from a vacancy, and \$75k from health insurance**
- **As of 5-31-14 the Board still had a projected additional surplus of \$269,371.66**

The total would be \$330k plus the additional surplus of \$269k as of 5-31-14

Tracking the Special Education Tuition/Excess Cost Surplus projections and the Total Forecasted General Fund Unexpended Funds by Month

(Source of the information: Monthly Board of Education Management Reports)

2015 – 2016 School Year

	Special Education Tuition/Excess Cost	Total Forecasted General Fund Unexpended Funds
2/29/16	\$79,654.95	\$266,591.40
1/31/16	\$94,199.04	\$245,474.82
12/31/15	\$77,619.04	\$131,637.50
11/30/15	\$43,423.45	\$155,985.04
10/31/15	\$62,134.41	\$150,900.08
9/30/15	\$235,786.41	\$202,929.99

2015 – 2016 Reported Transfers (information from Board of Education minutes)

11/13/15 112 Salaries \$13,195 **Transferred to** 430 Contracted Services \$13,195

2014 – 2015 School Year

6/30/15	\$269,858.88 (430 Contracted Services -\$256,350.99 for Bldg Repairs and Snow Removal) (111 Certified Salaries \$213,508.02 Vacancy Savings)	\$95,334.87
5/31/15	\$234,549.14	\$142,560.40
4/30/15	\$235,399.08	\$165,328.91
3/31/15	\$171,116.44	\$247,297.78
2/28/15	\$189,471.72	\$269,380.72
1/31/15	\$163,469.28	\$284,100.91
12/31/14	\$174,870.53	\$286,965.82
11/30/14	\$0	\$197,228.92

10/31/14	\$0	\$226,067.99
9/30/14	\$0	\$17,775.67

2014 – 2015 Reported Transfers (Information from Board of Education minutes)

7-7-15	Tuition \$99,000 Transferred to 600 Supplies \$36,000, 700 Equipment \$63,000
6/3/15	200 Employee Benefits \$30,000 Transferred to 600 Supplies \$30,000
5/8/15	100 Salaries \$85,000, 200 Employee Benefits \$50,000 Transferred to 600 Supplies \$134,900, 800 Other \$100

2013 – 2014 School Year

6/30/14	\$24,382.35	\$23,836.69
5/31/14	\$52,491.62	\$269,371.66
4/30/14	\$97,136.15 (Tuition: Transfer \$175k; Add'l \$76k Surplus) (111 Lib/Media Vacancy Transfer \$80k) (120 Cert Temp Salaries – Potential for Surplus) (210 Health Insurance – Transfer \$75k) (332 Pupil Services – Potential for Surplus)	\$194,378.27
3/31/14	\$195,383.53	\$323,855.29
2/28/14	\$220,473.78	\$417,742.53
1/31/14	\$342,526.02	\$396,881.31
12/31/13	\$265,978.89	\$321,034.02
11/30/13	\$209,080.70	\$249,986.38
10/31/13	\$209,182.07	\$248,334.74
9/30/13	\$253,705.66	\$246,742.37

2013 – 2014 Reported Transfers (information from Board of Education minutes)

5/23/14	200 Employee Benefits \$50,000 and 560 Tuition \$50,000 Transferred to 430 Contracted Services \$52,500, 600 Supplies \$2,500, 700 Equipment \$45,000
4/23/14	100 Salaries \$80,000 and 200 Employee Benefits \$75,000 Transferred to 600 Supplies \$70,000 and 700 Equipment \$85,000

Purchases at the Apple Education Store at the end of each year

2014 – 2015 school year

purchase at end of the school year 2015

Over \$133,000

2013 – 2014 school year

purchases at the end of the school year 2014

over \$260,000

2012 -2013 school year

purchases at the end of the school year 2013

\$189,113.97

iPads purchase in the past 5 years (reported by the Board) and the source of the funds used

School year	General Fund	Grants
2015-2016	30	
2014-2015	321	
2013-2014	465	
2012-2013	217	160
2011-2012	4	

The Town Council asked the Board how many of the iPads purchased from the General Fund were included in that year's final appropriated budget (after approval at referendum) and how many were purchased with surplus funds.

The Board of Education has repeatedly refused to provide us with that information.

This document was provided to us in our Council packet and was part of the response from William Oros, Chairman of the Board of Education to Julie Blanchard, Town Council Chairman to the Town Council's Request for Budgetary Information dated January 20, 2016.

It was provided in response to question #14 asking for: "Details of any proposed new programs/projects that will impact the 2016-2017 budget."

You will note that this request was for budgetary information only related to new programs and did not mention special education at all.

I am certain that all of the members of the Town Council and the Board have seen these documents and they have been available on the Town's website to any interested parties since they were received.

As you can see they are titled Budget Request Form – New Item/Program.

It was created by the Administrator of Pupil and Staff Support Services, Ms. Christine Murphy on 11-20-15 as part of budget discussions.

The first document names the Proposed Program as "Autism Support."

Christine provided the following information under Rationale/Justification:

"To increase the number of FTE paraprofessional at Coventry Grammar School from 5 to 7. Currently there are 7 students enrolled in the ABA program at CGS that will remain in the school next year, and 5 students enrolled at the ABA program at the preschool that will be transitioning to the grammar school during the 16-17 school year. It is anticipated that a number of these preschool students will require 1:1 support in order to engage in their learning and remain in a least restrictive environment setting. In order to support all the student involved in the ABA program for the 2016-17 school year, It will be necessary to increase paraprofessional support.

Supporting Quantitative and Qualitative Data;

Current number of four year old preschool students transitioning to CGS – 5
Current number of students enrolled in the autism program at CGS – 7
Anticipated referrals from Birth to Three program to the CEIS program.

Proposed/Approximate Financial Impact:
\$35,000 (2 FTE) .."

I listened to the recording of the Superintendent of Schools, David Petrone, at the Town Manager's Budget Hearing of March 10, 2016 which is available on the Town's website and Mr. Petrone provided the same information to the public. You can see it if you watch at the 46 minute 30 second mark of the recording.

This information provides specific information about the number of students (5), their particular special needs (autism support – ABA program), their current grade and age (pre K) in the district and their location next year (CGS). It provides details of the resources being added (2 paraprofessionals) within the budget to provide them with the services that will be needed by these students.

The second document references these same students and details the need for an additional CGS ABA Special Education Teacher to meet their needs as well.

I presume that the Superintendent, the chairman and members of the Board of Education and Ms. Murphy are well aware of the "Privacy Laws" that are in place to protect our students interests and I assume that they have not violated those laws.

During our budget deliberations I requested budgetary information that could be used to quantify and justify the proposed special education expenditures in the budget – providing a copy of the Strategic School Profile that the State produced and published up until the 2012 school year as an example of the type of information I was seeking. The Board refused to provide me with the information I requested citing privacy laws.

The information I requested was for total number of the students, the special needs they were being treated for and the grade or school where they are currently and would be in next year's school budget. That information is far less detailed than the information that the Board and Superintendent have provided at hearings and in these documents.

Remember the Board provided this information as their way of answering the Town Council's question about what new programs the Board is putting in place that would affect the budget.

It is obvious that the Board recognized the budgetary value of this type of information and considered it appropriate or else why did they provide it to the Town Council?

Madam chair I would ask that you ask the Board:

Did providing the information that is contained in these now public documents violate any privacy laws?

If, as we assume, it did not, then it is clear that the Board had the information we requested available and that they were willing to give it out when it suited them but were not willing to provide the information we requested to help justify their budget request.



Coventry Public Schools
Coventry, Connecticut

Budget Request Form – New Item/Program

Department: Pupil and Staff Support Services

Date: 11/20/2015

Administrator: Christine Murphy

Proposed Program: Autism Support

Rationale / Justification:

To increase the number of FTE paraprofessional at Coventry Grammar school from 5 to 7. Currently there are 7 students enrolled in the ABA program at CGS that will remain in the school next year, and 5 students enrolled at the ABA program at the preschool that will be transitioning to the grammar school during the 16-17 school year. It is anticipated that a number of these preschool students will require 1:1 support in order to engage in their learning and remain in a least restrictive environment setting. In order to support all the student involved in the ABA program for the 2016-17 school year, it will be necessary to increase paraprofessional support.

Supporting Quantitative and Qualitative Data:

Current number of four year old preschool students transitioning to CGS - 5
Current number of students enrolled in the autism program at CGS - 7
Anticipated referrals from Birth to Three program to the CEIS program.

Proposed/Approximate Financial Impact:

\$35,000 (2 FTE)

Other Impacts:

Superintendent's Office Use Only

Superintendent's Proposed Budget Figure:

Other Adjustments



Coventry Public Schools
Coventry, Connecticut

Budget Request Form - New Item/Program

Department: Pupil & Staff Support Services

Date: 12/14/15

Administrator: Christine Murphy

Proposed Program: 1.0 CGS ABA Special Education Teacher

Rationale / Justification:

Increase in number of ABA students in the ABA program at CGS

Supporting Quantitative and Qualitative Data:

2015-2016 - current number of ABA students = 7

2016-2017 - projected number of ABA students = 12

Proposed/Approximate Financial Impact:

\$50,000

Other Impacts:

Superintendent's Office Use Only

Superintendent's Proposed Budget Figure:

Other Adjustments