

**MINUTES  
COVENTRY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2016  
TOWN HALL ANNEX**

**1. Call to Order, Roll Call**

The November 7, 2016 Meeting of the Town Council was called to order by Council Chairperson Julie Blanchard at 7:30 p.m.

Members Present: Julie Blanchard, Richard Williams, Thomas Pope, Hannah Pietrantonio, Lisa Thomas, Andy Brodersen, Matthew O'Brien

Also Present: John A. Elsesser, Town Manager

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Recited by Members and the audience.

**3. Audience of Citizens**

Christine Pattee, 98 Brookline Road – spoke for the thirty-four senior citizens that signed a petition requesting that the Town Council approve an increase in funding for the Senior Center. They are requesting that the Senior Center Coordinator be elevated to Senior Center Director with a corresponding increase in pay, funds for soundproofing the hall where meetings are held, for new chairs, and for increase funding for additional van transport services. There are now two-thousand riders per year, which is an increase from four hundred per year. An increase in taxes to pay for these requested items would be fractions of cents as the Human Services budget is three percent of the Town budget with the Senior Center's budget being one-third of the Human Services total budget. The petitioners would also like to

Peter Depaola, 82 Wall Street – provided an update on the Connecticut Day Race at Patriot's Park. There are two hundred runners registered representing fifty-five towns and three states. They have received confirmation that the Lt. Governor will be visiting during the event. The race is scheduled to being at 10:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 12, 2016. Depaola expressed thanks to the Town Manager's office and the Recreation Department for their assistance in organizing the event.

**4. Acceptance of Minutes**

**Motion** - Broderson moved to accept the Minutes of the October 17, 2016 meeting; seconded by Williams. All Members voted in favor of the motion.

**5. Consent Agenda**

All items listed with an asterisk (\*) will be acted on by one motion. There will be no separate discussion on these items unless a Council member so requests in which case, the item will be removed from the consent agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda.

**Motion** – Williams moved to accept the Consent Agenda; seconded by Broderson. Pietrantonio requested the removal of 6.F.8; Pope requested the removal of 6.F.9. All Members voted in favor of accepting the Consent Agenda with the requested items removed.

## **6. Reports:**

### **6.A Council Chairwoman: Julie Blanchard**

#### **6.B. Council Members:**

O'Brien attended the Veteran's Day Ceremony. The Senior Center provided refreshments. Mr. Elsesser did a wonderful job and Tim Ackert was the main speaker.

Broderson read a report that he wrote regarding the Senior Center concerns.

Thomas provided a reminder of the polling venues for presidential elections. Those are Coventry Grammar School and G.H. Robertson School, not the fire stations. Thomas then read a memo regarding her resignation from the Council effective November 3, 2016.

Pope referenced a Standard's and Poor study regarding the outlook of ratings for municipalities if forward looking policies are not in place due to state budget deficient and resulting cuts in municipal aid. While there have been job gains these have lower paying jobs, under \$50,000, and growth prospects for the state are .8% that is well below the national average of 2.4%. Connecticut has one of the largest tax burdens with 40% going to property taxes.

Pope had the opportunity to attend the Sinatra program that was hosted at the library. Four people attended the program.

### **6C. Steering Committee: Thomas Pope**

Pope reported that the Committee met on October, 24, 2016. A number of corrections were made to reports. Reappointments to various commission were discussed. Avery Shores being considered to be taken over as a town road has been tabled as the Association did not respond to inquiries from the Committee. This Committee is suggesting action on the Tax Abatement program for Seniors. A policy is recommended for Interfund allocations.

#### **6.C.1.a Cemetery Commission: Pagliuco**

**Motion** – Pope moved to accept Pagliuco as a Cemetery Commission member; seconded by O'Brien. All Members voted in favor.

#### **6.C.1.b. WPCA: Jamaitus**

**Motion** – Pope moved to accept Jamaitus as a WPCA member; seconded by O'Brien. All Members voted in favor.

### **6.C.2 \* Minutes October 24, 2016**

**6.D \* Finance Committee: Matthew O'Brien**

**6.E \* COVRRRA: John A. Elsesser:**

**6.F Town Manager: John A. Elsesser**

**6.F.1 Projects Update**

The Main Street project has biweekly meetings each Wednesday. The upper milling work on Main Street has been completed. The culvert expected by Halloween has not yet been delivered. In the meantime, another contractor will begin the milling on the lower section of the road. Elsesser reported that Main Street will be very difficult to traverse in the coming week.

Lake Gate project progress has been very slow, which is very concerning. The contractor has sub-contracting some work to a local firm in hopes this will speed up progress. The project is of a 150-day duration with three weeks having passed. While concrete can be poured into December, the project work has to be at the point for that to occur. It is hoped that the concrete will be poured in December so the Lake level can be risen in the spring.

Williams asked about the progress of the tennis courts project at the high school. Mr. Elsesser reported that this project is stuck at 95% of the design completed due to staffing limitation and workload priorities. Once the project design is completed, it will be put out to bid. In the meantime, the high school tennis team cannot host matches.

There was money left on the table for the Cross Street project so the Town has gone back to ask to extend the work area. With the extra \$500,000 almost all of Cross Street will be completed.

The paperwork for the sidewalks project along Main Street and the Pucker Street project has not yet been completed.

**6.F.2 Update: Senior Center Coordinator Hire**

Emma King is Hannah Pietrantonio's daughter. Emma has a Master's degree in Social Work; she was the top candidate. Elsesser is convinced the seniors will love her. There is a paid part-time person filling in the afternoon at the Center. Lee Vida has tendered her resignation in running the van program effective December 31, 2016. This position will be filled and is funded by a grant program.

**6.F.3 Booth & Dimock Library: Request for Council Funding for Unanticipated Internet Expenses**

A report was provided by Beth Bauer regarding this item. The chart included in the memo shows how and where costs were budgeted.

Elsesser reported there is no contractual relationship between the Board of Education and Library.

Pope and O'Brien would like to know the details of the contract between Charter and the Board of Education. O'Brien opined that the Board of Education should have come back to the Council for funding rather than scare the library with no receiving internet services. Staff indicated that he will have to get a copy of that contract.

**Motion** – Thomas moved to appropriate the unbudgeted Library expenditure of \$4,680 for Charter and CEN Costs; seconded by Pietrantonio.

**Motion** – O'Brien moved to table the motion by Thomas until more information is received from the Board of Education in regards to the signed contract with Charter; seconded by Williams. All Members voted in favor of this motion.

Thomas questioned why the money cannot be appropriated in order to support the library and if Members question Ms. Bauer in not doing her due diligence in preparing her memo. Pope indicated that he supports the library and what it provides for citizens, but he does not feel a bill should be paid without knowing what the responsibility is for. It has been difficult in the past to get information from the Board of Education and this item seems to follow suit. O'Brien would know what the payment obligation is. Blanchard added that the Council will do what is necessary to support the library and the Town's citizens.

#### **6.F.4 Crumbing Concrete Foundation: CRCOG Activities**

The workgroup has a good meeting last week. The framework has been created to turn this into a bill; a sponsor will be needed. There will be a pot of money that homeowners can tap into for up to 75% of the cost of replacing a foundation up to \$75,000. This is the procedure that is used in Quebec. These amounts were decided upon because it was felt the bill suggests 100% up to \$200,000 be available, the bill would be dead on arrival. There is no appetite to leave the insurance companies off the hook. The Hartford and Travelers are willing to put money into the pot with the understanding that future litigation is not possible. Federal sources other than FEMA will be researched for assistance. Banks will have a low interest loan pool and also contribute to a community reinvestment act fund. Block grant money may be possible to be used toward testing.

A study by UConn dated August 31, 2016 identified the mineral that is causing the problem. There is no indication of faulty workmanship. Since this is a chemical reaction, chemists may be able to slow or stop the reaction.

O'Brien feels that banks should be asked to contribute in additional ways than just the low interest loan pool.

Reporting on real estate transactions forms is being developed. CROG went out to bid for engineering firms that can be used for consumers to pick from this list and have testing site lined up.

Towns do building codes different ways. Tolland is going through the process to waive fees. There is a waiver for governmental issue in the ordinance. The Council would have to agree to this method. Tolland, Vernon, South Windsor, and Ellington have already waived fees. The Town of Tolland is amending their ordinance. Pope is much more comfortable with amending the ordinance like Tolland is doing rather than making it a governmental issue. The Council agreed to transfer this issue to Steering to discuss and report back.

There are 15-16 homeowners in Coventry that are seeking reductions in their assessments. Elsesser feels this number is quite a bit under where Coventry will be eventually. The Town of Vernon now has 140 houses seeking the reduction.

**6.F.5 CT Siting Council: Eversource Petition, 900 Transmission Line**

Mr. Elsesser reported that a meeting was held on October 27, 2016 regarding the petitions. A decision will be made by March 8, 2018.

**6.F.6 2017-18 Capital Improvement Program and Budget Calendar**

Elsesser indicated this is the first step in developing the capital budget and that the calendar list important target dates.

**6.F.7 \* Quarterly Report, July-September 2016**

**6.F.8 \* Human Services: 2016 Holiday Programs**

Pietrantonio noted there are several announcements about the Salvation Army holiday bell ringers and team challenges. The Holiday committee is appealing for family adoptions for the holidays. November 21, 2016 is the due date for Thanksgiving and Christmas adoption commitments.

**6.F.9 \* EHHD Regional Opioid Presentation**

Pope reported that there were three people from town at the Community work group. The town of Tolland is very much involved. Coventry is reported to have the largest number of admission for opioid treatment, which the people of Coventry should hear. He feels the town may be putting its head in the sand by not getting Coventry teens involved. Elsesser reported that opioids are generally a problem for people in the 30-50 years old range. Chief Palmer has reported that there are a lot of working heroin addicts that you would never guess was the case. This is the first step in the process, not the final product, and will involve long-term community involvement.

**7. Unfinished Business**

**8. New Business**

**8.A 16/17-18: Consideration/Possible Action: Amendment to Tax Abatement Ordinance To Allow Tax Credit Option and Possible Call to Public Hearing**

The Steering Committee is ready to bring this to the Council. Section 94-94 has a suggested language change in case the State drops the program. Pope reported

that the current program allows for a yearly \$1,000 tax abatement and includes a lien on the property. This amendment adds another option. That is for a yearly \$500 tax abatement with no lien added to the property. The income limits will be the same as the State uses. The citizen must have lived in Coventry for one year and be 65 years of age or older. The language must still be reviewed by the Town Attorney. He feels this needs to be approved by January 2017.

**Motion** – Pope moved to add this as a Public Hearing at the December 5, 2016 Council meeting; seconded by O’Brien. All Members voted in favor.

**8.B 16/17-19: Consideration/Possible Action: Policy Governing Authority to Make Inter-Fund Allocations**

Pope reported this is suggested to clarify the policy so in the future the option cannot be abused by a person making a fund to fund budget move to cover a budgetary problem. It is only a safeguard and not because of any wrongdoing.

**Motion** – Pope moved to accept this as a Town Council policy; seconded by Williams. All Members voted in favor.

**9. Miscellaneous/Correspondence:**

**9.A Pepin: Call for Advocacy to Federal Government For Assistance with Crumbling Concrete Foundations**

This is a letter from Willington citizens.

**9.B Magnano: Testimonial, Coventry Farmers’s Market**

**9.C \* Board Of Education:**

1. October 13, 2016 minutes
2. October 27, 2016 agenda
3. October 27, 2016 minutes

**10. Executive Session**

**1. Negotiations**

**Motion** – O’Brien moved that the Town Council enter into Executive Session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 1-200(6)(E)-discussion of any matter which would result in the disclosure of public records or the information therein contained described in sub-section (b) of Section 1-200 with the following people in attendance – all Council members, Mr. Elsesser, and Beth Bauer at 9:08 p.m.; seconded by Williams. All Members voted in favor.

**Motion** – Pope moved that the Town Council exit Executive Session at 9:32 p.m.; seconded by O’Brien. All Members voted in favor.

**11. Adjournment**

**Motion** – Pope moved for adjournment of the meeting; seconded by O’Brien. All Members voted in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne B. Filip

Yvonne B. Filip  
Acting Town Council Clerk

**PLEASE NOTE: These minutes are not official until approved by the Council at the next Council meeting. Please see the next Council meeting minutes for approval or changes to these minutes.**

## Laura Stone

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**From:** Lisa Thomas <lisadthomas.13@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 07, 2016 7:54 PM  
**To:** Laura Stone  
**Subject:** Fwd: resignation speech

For 11/7/16 minutes.

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Lisa Thomas** <lisadthomas.13@gmail.com>  
**Date:** Monday, November 7, 2016  
**Subject:** resignation speech  
**To:** Lisa Thomas <lisadthomas.13@gmail.com>

I have notified the Council Chairwoman that I am resigning from the Town Council, effective Nov. 30.

This was a very difficult decision to come to, one that I have considered numerous times since late last spring as family health issues began to escalate. But then summer came, life seemed a bit less intense and I thought perhaps I could keep everything on my very full plate after all. It turns out, I can't.

My days are too unpredictably filled with medical crises and needs. For a few months now, I have not been able to adequately do the work of representing my constituents and our town. My focus is fractured, by the time I sit down at night or on the weekend to work my way through meeting agendas and Town Council issues I am too exhausted to dig deep.

One night over 10 years ago, when my daughters were just 6 and 10, I shared with my husband that I was considering both running for elected office and leaving my teaching position of 20 years to accept a job in another school district. Despite the fact that I had just told him that I was planning to walk away from tenure and 20 years of job security and turn our family upside down through campaigning and - if I took office - plenty of being absent from home, Eric stood by me and has ever since then never wavered in his support of the thousands of volunteer hours this elected office consumes. Our daughters have done the same, always stepping up when needed and encouraging me to be a role model for other women to be in leadership positions. Without these three people, I could never have served so long and I give them my heartfelt thanks. My gratitude also goes to Dorothy Grady who has been my inspiration and many times the surrogate parent who took my kids to the dentist or picked them up from school or rushed nail polish to the beauty salon when I was at work and my daughter was in prom preparation crisis!

Serving our community has allowed me to know so many more people, to understand the roots of your families, and to be part of important growth over the years. I encourage all of you to

consider volunteering in some capacity in our town - there are so many opportunities from serving on a town board or commission to supporting a sports team or scouting group. There is a niche for everyone!

Thank you.