

**MINUTES**  
**Coventry Town Council Meeting**  
**March 6, 2023, 7:30 PM**  
**Town Hall Annex & Virtual**

**1.Call To Order, Roll Call:**

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Thomas at 7:30 PM.

Members Present:

Lisa Thomas-Chairperson  
Marty Milkovic-Vice-Chairperson  
Jonathan Hand-Secretary  
Matthew Kyer  
Robyn Gallagher  
John French  
Julie Blanchard (Remote)

Members Absent:

Also Present:

John Elsesser- Town Manager  
Amanda Backhaus-Finance Director (Remote)  
Bill Watkins (Director of Public Works)

**2.Pledge Of Allegiance:**

All members stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3.Audience Of Citizens:** (30 Minutes - 5 minutes per person.)

Elizabeth Bauch, 110 Seagrave Road- Explained she is a representative for Autism Speaks, and asked the Town Council to issue a proclamation, declaring April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, World Autism Awareness Day in Coventry. April 2<sup>nd</sup> is World Autism Awareness Day, as declared by the United Nations, and is recognized around the world as a day to raise awareness of autism spectrum disorder. Autism is a spectrum disorder that affects 1 in 44 children, and 1 in 45 adults, including many individuals here in Coventry. Roughly 2.3% of the entire world population are affected by this disorder. Autism is a neural developmental disorder that affects social skills, communication skills, sensory processing, and often includes repetitive behaviors. It affects people of all races, genders, ethnicities, and socio-economic backgrounds. World Autism Awareness Day is an important day around the world to help raise awareness for individuals on the Autism Spectrum and their families, support them in their daily challenges, and celebrate their success. I therefore ask the members of the Coventry Town Council to recognize this as an official day in the Town of Coventry. Help me to continue to raise awareness of autism and to support individuals on the spectrum (including my 10-year-old son, Joseph Bauch, 4<sup>th</sup> grader at G.H. Robertson School). I have provided a typed proclamation with the appropriate language, for your approval. All that is needed is a signature of the Chairperson, and an official proclamation in paper form. Joseph Bauch would like to accept the proclamation, when it is issued.

Ted Granby, 3650 Wrights Mill Road- Asked Town Council to create a contract agreement with John Elsesser, after he retires for consulting services and make recommendations for projects in the Town of Coventry, if he is willing to do so. Elsesser has been serving the town for 30+ years and has seen the town flourish with education projects, economic development, public safety, and is well aware of attaining grant money. There are concerns about being able to fill the position of Town Manager by July, and we would be losing a lot of knowledge and experience. If Elsesser is willing to negotiate this type of agreement, it would be beneficial to the town, as well as useful to several of the commissions to help the town move forward. As a resident of the Town of Coventry, the interest may be there for him to want to do this. Granby hopes the Town Council will work on this request.

#### **4.Acceptance Of Minutes:**

- **February 21, 2023**

**Motion:** I move to accept the minutes of the February 21, 2023, Town Council meeting.

By: Milkovic

Second: Kyer

Discussion/Changes:

- Pg. 4, under item 6.C., 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph, remove “a” before special education.
- Pg. 4, under item 6.C., 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph, change “budget went from good to them having a deficit in the span of one month” to “budget went from positive to a deficit in the span of one month.”
- Pg. 5, Under 6.F.2., in the parentheses, add “per capita allocation” after “the formula has Coventry at \$8”.
- Pg. 6, Under 8.A., under discussion, add “Gallagher said,” to the first paragraph to read “Gallagher said, at the finance meeting...”
- Pg. 7, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph under ‘Discussion’, change the 1<sup>st</sup> “construction” to “the ongoing project” to read “Gallagher indicated that these repairs are not related to the ongoing project”.
- Pg. 15, Under 8.K. discussion, add “and holding them” after “to spend money” to read “ ...a staff member cutting checks to spend money and holding them, rather than encumbering...”
- Pg. 9, under discussion, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, add “of” after “Thomas asked how much”
- Pg. 9, under discussion, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, add “\$” in front of “32,000”
- Pg. 12, 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet point, 4<sup>th</sup> line, change “uniformed” to “uniform”
- Pg. 6, Under 8.B. Under discussion, fix the paragraph indentation.
- Pg. 10, 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, after 1<sup>st</sup> RRFB add (rectangular rapid flashing beacons) to clarify the acronym.
- Pg. 12, under 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet, 5<sup>th</sup> line, change “done” to “included in the previously awarded grant”

Voting:

For: Thomas, Kyer, Gallagher, Blanchard, Milkovic, and Hand

Against: None

Abstain: French

- **February 23, 2023-Special Meeting**

**Motion:** I move to accept the minutes of the February 23, 2023, Special Town Council meeting.

By: Milkovic

Second: Hand

Discussion/Changes:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> line, change “Rand Frank Consulting LLC” to “Randi Frank Consulting, LLC”
- 4<sup>th</sup> line, add comma after “Frank”
- 2<sup>nd</sup> line, add comma after “Slavin”

Voting:

For: Thomas, Kyer, Gallagher, Blanchard, Milkovic, Hand, and French

Against: None

Abstain: None

**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:** I move to accept the Consent Agenda.

By: Hand

Second: Milkovic

Discussion: None

Voting:

For: Hand, Thomas, Kyer, Gallagher, Blanchard, Milkovic, and French

Against: None

Abstain: None

**6.Reports:**

6.A. Council Chairwoman: Lisa Thomas:

Thomas asked for motion to add an agenda item for World Autism Day proclamation discussion.

**Motion:** I move to add agenda item 8.C. 22/23-66: Consideration/Possible Action: Town of Coventry Proclaiming April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, World Autism Day in Coventry.

By: French

Second: Kyer

Voting:

For: Hand, Thomas, Kyer, Gallagher, Blanchard, Milkovic, and French

Against: None

Abstain: None

Councilwoman Thomas read the following report:

- I had the pleasure of walking our newest protected open space property, the South River Preserve on South River Rd. It is just down the road from Hickory Ridge Tree Farm if you are traveling from Rte. 31. I have seen many positive comments from the public who look forward to enjoying walking along the river, picnicking, and taking advantage of fishing there.
- I attended the February staff meeting to update staff on the Town Manager search, recognize that we all have a variety of feelings about the transition, and thank them for providing feedback to the search firm.
- We will hold another public forum regarding the Town Manager search. It will be a virtual forum on Zoom next week, March 15, at 7:00 p.m. Details for joining can be found on the town web site and on the town manager's Facebook page.
- Two of Coventry's childcare providers have called me to thank the Council for its support of their small businesses. You might remember that the Council adopted, on a 5-2 vote, property tax relief for childcare facilities in order to not only support local businesses but also to help address increasing demand for childcare as parents go back into the workforce post-COVID. The providers I spoke with talked about being able to use their property tax savings to add staff and further train current staff. I also received a phone call from another town asking what process we had gone through in order to provide this relief. I'm proud of Coventry for taking the lead in addressing a very serious problem in our state.
- Finally, the Town Manager's proposed budget is now available on the Town website. Tonight, we will meet with Public Works to hear the presentation of their budget requests. This Thursday night is the Public Budget Hearing at 7:00 p.m. in the high school lecture hall. It is an important opportunity for residents to ask questions and to share their priorities. Please join us! Next Monday, March 13, we will have a special meeting during which Human Services and the Board of Education will present their budgets. That meeting starts at 7:00 here in the Annex.
- As always, if you have questions or concerns, you can email Council members.

6.A.1. \* Testimony, Raised Senate Bill 1094; House Bill 6659:

Thomas noted quickly the attachments regarding this agenda item, and what they are and their purpose.

6.B. Council Members:

Gallagher reported that she was excited to participate in the Read Across America Program at the grammar school. She read the book with no pictures to a class of kindergarteners, and they were so happy they asked her to read more. She felt it was a great experience.

Milkovic reported he also attended Read Across America, and thought it was interesting that there was a book by Bob Marley that was based off the lyrics from one of his songs. One of the students recognized him from a photo in the book, he thought that was impressive. He also reiterated Thomas's comments from earlier about the zoom meeting for the Town Manager search on March 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. Milkovic noted he went to the 2 other in-person meetings with Thomas and the discussions were good. He wanted to make a point that this Zoom meeting is the last opportunity for people to give input.

6.C. \*Finance Committee: Robyn Gallagher, Chairperson:

6.C.1. \* Finance Committee Minutes: February 13, 2023

6.D. Steering Committee: Matthew Kyer, Chairperson:

Kyer reported that prior to the February 27, 2023, steering meeting, he and Councilwoman Thomas met with the new members of the Senior and Affordable Housing Alternative Study Committee to read them their charge. Also in attendance was John Elsesser, Eric Trott, and Manuel Navina.

During the Steering meeting, the committee members received an update from Lesley Munshower and Cat Merriam of the Parks & Rec Department, and Marie Gallo-Hall of the Parks & Rec Commission. Their presentation highlighted their strengths in a variety of programs, fiduciary responsibility, and focus on the community. They are experiencing challenges with staff recruitment and retention, lake closures, limited growth capacity, and deferred maintenance. Kyer noted we will hear more from Munshower when she comes before the Town Council with her budget presentation.

Kyer discussed that a conversation was initiated regarding upgrading job descriptions for town staff. Elsesser presented draft versions of several job descriptions and agreed to provide highlights of changes for the next meeting.

Steering accepted the resignation of Richard Conti from the Economic Development Commission and thanked him for his service to our community.

6.D.1. Reappointments:

6.D.1.a. Cemetery Commission: Arpin:

**Motion:** I move the Town Council reappoint Kevin Arpin to the Cemetery Commission for a new term to expire 10/17/25, as recommended by Steering.

By: Kyer

Second: French

Discussion: Milkovic questioned who is responsible for reaching out to people as they get close to the end of their terms. Elsesser informed they get letters from the Town Clerk's office.

Voting:

For: Hand, Thomas, Kyer, Gallagher, Blanchard, Milkovic, and French

Against: None

Abstain: None

6.D.1.b. Energy Conservation/Alternative Energy Committee: Reilly:

**Motion:** I move the Town Council reappoint Jennifer Reilly to the Energy Conservation/Alternative Energy Committee for a new term to expire 3/1/26, as recommended by Steering.

By: Kyer

Second: Hand

Discussion: Elsesser commented that she is a rock star, and everyone agreed.

Voting:

For: Hand, Thomas, Kyer, Gallagher, Blanchard, Milkovic, and French

Against: None

Abstain: None

6.D.1.c. Parks And Recreation Commission Alt: Pascarelli:

**Motion:** I move the Town Council reappoint Ashlee Pascarelli to the Parks And Recreation Commission as an alternate for a new term to expire 1/1/25, as recommended by Steering.

By: Kyer

Second: Hand

Discussion: None

Voting:

For: Hand, Thomas, Kyer, Gallagher, Blanchard, Milkovic, and French

Against: None

Abstain: None

6.D.2. Appointments:

6.D.2.a. Energy Conservation/Alternative Energy Committee: Castillo:

**Motion:** I move the Town Council appoint Julie Castillo to the Energy Conservation/Alternative Energy Committee for a term to expire 3/1/26, as recommended by Steering.

By: Kyer

Second: French

Discussion: Kyer thanked Castillo for stepping up and volunteering her extensive knowledge. Milkovic commented that she seems very qualified. Elsesser noted that she is very knowledgeable about the Eversource programs available to the Town and citizens.

Voting:

For: Hand, Thomas, Kyer, Gallagher, Blanchard, Milkovic, and French

Against: None

Abstain: None

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

6.F. Town Manager - John Elsesser:

6.F.1. Projects Update:

Elsesser highlighted the following items from his report:

- Both Senators and Representatives came out with new directive spending requests at the federal level. There is not a lot that applies to our town, but an EDI (Economic Development Initiative) was submitted last year by Elsesser, and this will be updated and resubmitted this year in attempts for additional funding. However, Elsesser does not think Coventry will be high on the priority list.
- There are BURNS grants, that help funding for police equipment. Elsesser will be talking with the police chief about this tomorrow. There are not a lot of police departments in Congressman Courtney's district, so we may be more competitive with this grant.
- Sen. Murphy's office is working on something for Emergency Operation Centers (EOC). Elsesser put in for one last year, and it is in the capital budget this year. The plan is to add a facility to the back of Town Hall for an EOC and Council Chamber. The Town Hall Annex serves as the EOC for representatives from the Fire Department, Public Works, Police, Eversource, and additional staff. The addition would allow storage at a downstairs level for emergency equipment like cots. Elsesser prepared one of these last year as well, which he can simply update.
- Eric Trott applied for a grant for Connecticut's Countryside, and we were awarded the grant. This will do a 4-Town reveal that will be on our webpages to get people attracted to this area. There are forms that need to be completed by a June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline.
- We had an update with CT Water and the Department of Public Health on our 2 water projects and received good news. CT Water did an evaluation that revealed that there are 5 houses that do not need to connect to the Main St water system in the area of Snake Hill Rd, and Nathan Hale Dr. There is enough water to serve those houses, which cuts a couple million dollars out of construction costs. The Department of Public Health also informed us they granted us the maximum percentage of grant funding of 25%. These projects continue to move forward, but there is still some cost analysis and engineering that needs to be done. There are proposals out to 4 firms, and we are still waiting to hear from them. However, costs went down, grant funding went up, so this is a simple project we can get done faster.

Thomas commented that she and Elsesser discussed hiring a project manager out of project funds that already exist and doing so as soon as possible now that the budget is put together. This way, the project manager will already be on board during the Town Manager transition.

## **7.Unfinished Business:**

### 7.A.21/22-18: Consideration/Possible Action: Assignment Of American Rescue Plan Funding:

Thomas suggested this be continued as there are no changes to report or discuss.

### 7.B. 22/23-61: Consideration/Possible Action: Authorization Of Use Of Capital Non-Recurring Expenditures Fund Per Board Of Education Request For Expenses Related To Necessary Emergency Equipment Repairs In Amount Not To Exceed \$43,207.13:

**Motion:** I move to authorize the use of Capital Non-Recurring Expenditures from the 2% Fund for the Board of Education's expenses related to necessary emergency equipment repairs, not to exceed \$43,207.13.

By: Gallagher

Second: Milkovic

Discussion: Thomas noted that this item was continued from the last Town Council meeting, as we wanted more specific details on how the money is being spent. Milkovic had concerns as the details that were provided were small. Hand asked that the amount be specified in the motion, and Backhaus clarified that these expenses have already been incurred.

Voting:

For: Hand, Thomas, Kyer, Gallagher, Blanchard, Milkovic, and French

Against: None

Abstain: None

## **8. New Business:**

8.A. 22/23-64: FY 2023/24 Budget-Public Works Budget, Bill Watkins (7:45 PM):

*(Copies of the DPW Budget Handouts can be found following the conclusion of the minutes)*

Watkins presented a prepared summary of the budget that highlights changes for this year. He reviewed the summary below:

### **[Public Works] Budget Summary FY 24**

#### **3100 Roads and Drainage**

- 51010 – Regular Payroll - \$30,000 decrease due to reclassification of staff to 3103
- 51030 - Overtime – Request \$21,500 increase in overtime. The requested increase would allow for DPW crews to provide additional work on road and drainage projects, culvert failures and repairs, ditching, sweeping, and provide emergency response after normal operating hours.
- 52070 – Other Professional Services – Town Manager proposed \$1,000 decrease and road bond can be used to fund this portion.
- 52100 - Training funds were moved to 3104-52100 to consolidate all training to one line item.
- 53090 – Clothing safety Equipment - \$500 increase for safety gear.
- 53160 – Cement Sand Salt Gravel - \$3,000 increase due to cost increase for bulk sand and gravel.
- 53200 – Traffic Control Signs - \$1,500 increase to replenish supply of safety cones, and for sign replacements.
- 54050 - Other Equipment - \$7,000 increase for the following; \$2,800 – Pump, \$2,270 – 2 battery powered chainsaws, \$1,200 – Battery powered cutoff saw, \$650 – 2 Spare batteries. Town Manager proposed using fy23 savings or misc. highway funds.

#### **3101 Public Buildings**

- 51043 – Cleaning and Maintenance – 30% of new custodian salary.
- 53070 – Custodial supplies – moved to 3103-53070 to consolidate all custodial supplies in one line item.
- 54050 – Other Equipment - \$1,000 for janitorial equipment, mop buckets, buffer, and other small equipment.
- 55030 – Heating Fuel – increase due to price increase.

#### **3102 Snow Removal**

- 53120 Equipment Parts – Town Manager proposed \$1,000 reduction.
- 53160 – Cement Sand Salt Gravel - \$16,660 increase due to salt price increasing to \$94.83 per ton.

Gallagher asked if there would be leftovers that we could use next year. Watkins clarified that at the end of every winter, they stock the shed for the following year, so the Winter starts full. He explained that DPW is still using last year's supply, and have 1000 tons on hand, with another 200 tons ordered today. Elsesser added that they have a certain amount that they have to buy, and with this last order, they have met their obligation. He also added that there are some funds leftover from this budget item in FY23 that can be used for some equipment purchases that were cut out of the budget. Elsesser discussed that salt prices are bid on annually by CRCOG.

The process of buying and stocking salt was discussed in greater detail to clarify how much we have on hand, how much we go through in a year, what we will need for next year/are obligated to purchase, and how much gets stored for the following year so that we start off with a full supply. It was also discussed that the vendor we have been using will no longer deliver out our way. The town was forced to switch vendors, which led to the cost increase for the next year. Elsesser and Watkins stressed the importance of having ample supply on hand and committing to a purchase. If the winter gets really bad, and we do not have enough salt, we won't be able to get more as there is a limited supply in the Eastern States. Watkins also noted that once the CRCOG bid comes out, we may be able to lower our number from 2000 to 1500.

- 53210 – Other Purchased - \$2,000 moved into this line from 54050 Other Equipment line. This is for the purchase of large and small plow blades.
- 54050 – Other Equipment – moved to 3102-53210

### **3103 Facility Maintenance**

- 51010 – Regular Payroll – Increase due to salaries being moved from 3100.
- 51030 – Overtime - The requested \$2,000 increase will allow for floor stripping and waxing to be done while the buildings are not occupied and will be used for additional field maintenance.
- 51040 – Temporary Seasonal Payroll – Town Manager proposed \$780 decrease.
- 52100 – Training - Training funds were moved to 3104-52100 to consolidate all training to one line item.
- 53070 – Custodial supplies – This line shows an increase due to all funds for custodial supplies being consolidated into one line. Also due to a new full time custodian position and updating custodial closets and supplies.
- 53090 – Clothing and Safety Equipment - \$400 increase to purchase safety gear for new employees.
- 53170 – Ground Supplies - \$6,000 Increase reflects a major increase in the cost of fertilizer and an increase in the number of fields requiring maintenance.
- 54050 – Other Equipment - \$1,500 request for a one time purchase of a carpet extractor to be used in town buildings.

### **3104 Public Works Administration**

- 51010 – Regular Payroll - \$6,200 increase for salary increases. Town Manager removed a requested salary adjustment for the DPW Superintendent.
- 52100 – Training - This line shows an increase due to all funds for Training being consolidated into one line.

- 53010 – Office Supplies - \$200 increase due to inflation.
- 53090 – Clothing Safety Equipment - \$1,000 increase to outfit new employees with safety gear.

### **3105 Fleet Maintenance**

- 51010 – Regular Payroll – Increase due to lead mechanic position being filled and a mechanic 2 position being filled.
- 51100 – Longevity - \$1,500 increase due to CBA. Mechanic 2
- 52100 – Training - Training funds were moved to 3104-52100 to consolidate all training to one line item.
- 52140 – Equipment Repairs - \$3,000 increase due to the cost of outside repairs increasing, and \$500 moved from 3105-52160.
- 52160 – Building Repairs - Funds moved into 3105-52140
- 53040 Gasoline and 53050 Diesel Fuel– Increase due to large price increase.
- 53070 – Custodial Supplies – Funds move to 3105-53210
- 53210 – Other Purchased - \$1,200 moved into this line from 3105-53070.
- 53220 – Subscriptions and Books - \$200 increase for annual updates on scan tool.
- 54050 – Other Equipment - \$2,500 request for a one time purchase of a small parts washer. Town Manager proposed using fy23 savings or misc. highway funds.

### **3109 Cemetery Commission**

- 51020 – Part Time Payroll - \$3,250 increase based on current fy23 budget.
- 51040 – Temporary Seasonal Payroll – Town Manager proposed decrease of \$840.
- 52130 – Service Contracts – Town Manager proposed \$1,000 decrease.
- 54050 – Other Equipment – Requested \$6,000 for a fine cut mower. Town Manager proposed using fy23 funds or the Cemetery fund.

### **3110 Tree Warden**

- 52100 - Training - Training funds were moved to 3104-52100 to consolidate all training to one line item.
- 52130 – Service Contracts -Requesting a \$30,000 increase for tree trimming and removals by contractors due to the large number of dead and declining trees.
- 52200 – Equipment Rental – Town Manager proposed \$2,500 reduction.

Watkins discussed that the town removed 300-400 trees last year. He added that our tree warden, Mark Owens, has a great relationship with Distinctive Tree Care, and Eversource. Eversource will be supplying \$20,000 to us for an upcoming tree project.

Elsesser gave his review and edits of what can/cannot be met on the budget as follows:

- It is unlikely we will be able to cover overtime costs. We are going to need to do the work that needs to be done during the workday.
- With upcoming road work, to be done with the road bond, there are some items in both the operating budget and the bond. We do not need to have these items listed twice and will pay for what we can with the road bond. Elsesser broke down a few items that were listed in the operating budget that can be removed, as the funds for the work/materials will come out of the road bond.

- Other equipment purchases are not guaranteed until we can confirm we have enough savings out of this year's budget.
- We had a good locked in price for heating fuel.
- Temporary help is needed for the summer. However, we will not hire help if it comes between that and laying off current staff. There will be some work the town will not have the capacity to do if we do not get more help, like raking the softball field, lining the soccer fields, etc. Historically, parents have helped us in the past with this.
- Electricity usage on the building behind the middle school was increased based on historic use. Increased usage means increased costs.
- Worked out something internally to try and go down to one plotter instead of the two we have. Both are obsolete, and we will need to get a new one. Hopefully we can do so with the road bond. For now, we will use the one in better shape.

Gallagher thanked Watkins and Elsesser for going into detail on this and explained that it looks like Public Works is asking for a 5.4% increase this year, which Backhaus confirmed (it's a 5.39% increase). Gallagher is impressed in today's world of price increases with inflation, and giving staff increased pay that is deserved, that the budget increase was kept at 5%. Gallagher asked if there were 3-line items that could be cut. Watkins informed will have to look though this in more detail before giving an answer. He will be submitting answers later. Milkovic was also impressed with this budget considering all public works does and finds it unfortunate we can't grant the increases that are needed and deserved. Watkins expressed that they have pride in what they do at DPW, and raising the level of how the town looks. The budget put forward reflects that. If cuts are made, there will be a service that won't be provided. Hand agreed with the purpose of Gallagher's question as the Town Council is going to have to make difficult decisions with the upcoming budget, and they would rather hear from those who know their departments best on what cuts could be tolerated, and those that would be actively bad for the town.

Watkins went over the public works capital improvements budget. The capital improvements for FY24 total \$1.69M. He summarized the requested improvements and their total costs by categories:

- Vehicle purchases-\$350,000: A request for the purchase of a large dump truck was submitted, for the amount of \$235,000. Watkins expressed concerns regarding the importance of getting this vehicle on order due to supply chain issues. It looks like it will be a year to 18-months to get this delivered. An F-350 pick-up truck was also requested for \$65,000, to replace DPW's existing F-350 from 2012.
- Construction equipment- \$180,000: This request is to fund an additional backhoe to add to the fleet. Moving forward, this would allow us to have 2 construction crews operating at the same time in 2 different locations or allow DPW to stage one piece of equipment at the yard and have one out a job site.
- Street Sweeper-\$245,000: Our current street sweeper is from 2008 and is starting to breakdown on a regular basis.
- Mowers and Field Maintenance Equip.- \$47,000: \$16,000 is requested for a fine cut mower, to replace a mower from 2013. \$50,000 is requested for a staff vehicle for Watkins to use. The vehicle he currently uses is a 2004 retired police car with over 160,000 miles on it. He would like to replace it with an all-electric vehicle.
- Ballfield renovations and irrigation-\$245,000: \$30,000 is requested to expand the irrigation at Laidlaw Park and Miller Richardson. At Laidlaw, only one soccer field is irrigated, and DPW would like to be able to have all playing fields irrigated. At Miller Richardson, only the infields have irrigation, and DPW would like to

add irrigation to all areas to keep this grass nice. \$20,000 was requested for a fertilizer spreader, which would be a ride on machine to allow DPW to speed up this operation. It would also have a 60-gallon tank to do spot applications as well. \$11,000 was requested for a scag blower, which would also be a ride on machine that can be used on all town owned properties for fall clean up, on the roads during construction, and following storms to remove debris.

- DPW Building Improvements- \$55,000-\$25,000 for a mezzanine wall to be added at the facility. This area is used for storage for things like filters and parts. In the warmer months when the doors are open, a lot of dirt and natural debris blow in and get on the filters, or in the parts. A wall would block this area off and protect these materials. \$20,000 is requested for a keyless entry system at the DPW garage, allowing keyless entry on 4 of their 8 exterior doors. This would also cover the costs of having the gates open automatically when the vehicles pull up. Currently we have garage door openers that constantly get lost or destroyed. There is also a request for \$10,000 for heat in the grounds building behind the high school. Equipment is stored there right now, but with heat added, this space would be able to be utilized as a workshop for carpentry projects and to do maintenance on field equipment.
- Urban Forestry-\$30,000: Funds are requested to replace the dead trees that have been removed.
- Trails and Open Space-\$20,000: \$10,000 is requested to continue maintenance on open trails and to remove trees in parks and open space.
- Infrastructure Projects (Summer Roads)-\$600,000 (\$300,000 from the Town & \$300,000 from the State): The list of roads to be done should be coming soon. DPW will be doing chip sealing, crack sealing, and some shimming of the roads.
- Large Drainage Projects-\$50,000
- Small Bridge and Culverts-\$20,000
- Guardrail Replacement-\$25,000: There are several locations in town where the guardrails have been hit over the years and never repaired. There are also some areas that will need guardrails added, as roadwork is being done there.
- Sidewalk Extension and Repairs-\$15,000: The funds requested in this category are more for repairs than extensions, as the existing sidewalk is aging. Every year we find more sections that have deteriorated and need maintenance.
- Town Parking Lot Repairs-\$10,000

The below capital improvement plan breaks down improvements over a 10-year span:

Public Works CIP 2023-2032												
	Priority	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	FY 32	FY 33	Ten Year Total
Summer Roads(includes Town Aid)	1	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 6,000,000
Large Classification Bridges												\$ -
Large Drainage Projects	2	\$ 50,000		\$ 50,000		\$ 50,000		\$ 50,000		\$ 50,000		\$ 250,000
Small Bridges & Culverts	2	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000		\$ 180,000
Guardrail Replacement	2	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000		\$ 25,000		\$ 25,000		\$ 25,000		\$ 25,000	\$ 150,000
Sidewalks Extension/repair	3	\$ 15,000				\$ 15,000				\$ 15,000		\$ 45,000
Town Parking Lots	4	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000						\$ 50,000
												\$ -
Tri Axle Dump Truck	3		\$ 250,000									\$ 250,000
Large Dump Trucks	1	\$ 235,000	\$ 239,700	\$ 244,494	\$ 249,384	\$ 254,372	\$ 259,459	\$ 264,648	\$ 269,941	\$ 275,340	\$ 280,847	\$ 2,292,338
Medium Dump Truck	2		\$ 160,000									\$ 160,000
Small Dump Trucks (lowboy 1 ton)	2			\$ 105,000				\$ 120,000				\$ 225,000
Mechanic Service Truck	2				\$ 80,000							\$ 80,000
Pickup Trucks	1	\$ 65,000		\$ 70,000				\$ 75,000				\$ 210,000
Backhoe	2	\$ 180,000										\$ 180,000
Elgin Sweeper	2	\$ 245,000										\$ 245,000
Utility Machine ( Toolcat )	2		\$ 95,000									\$ 95,000
Staff Cars	1	\$ 50,000										\$ 50,000
												\$ -
Fine Cut Small Area Mower	1	\$ 16,000		\$ 16,500								\$ 32,500
Fine Cut Large Area Mower	2		\$ 150,000									\$ 150,000
Field Irrigation	2	\$ 30,000	\$ 20,000									\$ 50,000
Ball Field Renovations	3	\$ 15,000		\$ 15,000			\$ 15,000			\$ 15,000		\$ 60,000
Turf Fertilizer Spreader	2	\$ 20,000										\$ 20,000
Scag Blower	1	\$ 11,000										\$ 11,000
Urban Forestry Stewardship	3	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 160,000
Open Space Stewardship	3	\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000		\$ 50,000
Hiking Trail Stewardship	4	\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000		\$ 50,000
Cemetery Wall Repair	2		\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000			\$ 40,000
Mechanic Shop Mezzanine Wall	3	\$ 25,000										\$ 25,000
DPW Keyless Entry	1	\$ 20,000										\$ 20,000
Grounds Bld Heat	1	\$ 10,000										\$ 10,000
												\$ -
Priority 1 Projects		\$ 1,007,000										
Priority 2 Projects		\$ 570,000										
Priority 3 Projects		\$ 95,000										
Priority 4 Projects		\$ 20,000										
Page Column Totals		\$ 1,692,000										

Kyer asked Watkins to elaborate on the priority column on the CIP spreadsheet. Watkins explained that this is a system scaled 1 to 4. Items marked with 1, are the highest priority. Kyer questioned why the dump truck would be a priority #1, when the 2008 street sweeper is a priority #2. Watkins reiterated that a new dump truck would replace one from 2012. He explained they like to keep these trucks under 10 years old as they are the front-line plow vehicles. He added that with these trucks, they do not rely on milage, but rather hours used. The old dump truck would be kept as a backup. It is also a priority as the lead times are getting increasingly longer, and it would be a year minimum before a new one came in. Backhaus commented that Elsesser did include the large dump truck in his requests for the budget, and they can compare his request with Watkins’s request. Watkins emphasized that his number 1 items for capital improvements are the large dump truck and sweeper. He also noted the backhoe was requested last year and he does not expect to get it this year, but would like it to remain on the radar. The fine cut mower is also up there in priority. Irrigation is important too as we have stepped up the level of fertilization that is done on these fields. It is important for kids to have a nice playing surface. If we do not have these fields irrigated, it leads to a variety of problems. One final thing that is important is having the keyless entry to the DPW facility. There was an instance where the doors were unlocked for an entire weekend, and a resident walked around the building with no one there. Backhaus commented that this keyless entry system would be compatible with the other systems we have in town. You would be able to have access to the town hall, senior center lodge, fire houses, and public works all with one “key”.

Gallagher questioned some differences between Elsesser’s budget, and items Watkins proposed. Elsesser had \$10,000 for cemetery expansion and improvements, while Watkins had cemetery repair slated for next year, and she was curious if the funds they were requesting is for the same thing. Elsesser confirmed that it is the same and will be for cemetery walls at Nathan Hale Cemetery as they are collapsing in the back. Backhaus commented that \$5,000 for these repairs could be coming from a grant that we will hear back on at the end of

the month. Elsesser added that the cemetery commission has a lot of plans, but right now he just wants to make sure that nothing gets worse. Gallagher also questioned the \$15,000 for the Avery Shores pump station. Elsesser informed that this is funded by the WPCA. She also wondered if the large dump truck that is needed could be leased. Elsesser informed that we are doing a lease to purchase, and reflected in the budget is the 1<sup>st</sup> year lease payment. He emphasized how critical the large dump and other snow plowing vehicles are, and we essentially have to buy one new vehicle a year.

Milkovic questioned what the impacts would be if the large dump truck we have breaks during the winter and can't be used. Watkins explained that routes would have to be consolidated, making the routes larger. This would cause it to take longer to get the roads clear and open. Additionally, you are putting extra wear and tear on the equipment. This would add hours to the clean-up time. Elsesser added clarification that the trucks don't always break because of age, but sometimes there are accidents that have the trucks out of commission for long periods of time.

French asked how many large dump trucks we have at this point, Watkins said we have 8. French asked that the one DPW is looking to replace is the oldest one? Watkins stated that the one they are looking to replace is from 2012. There is one truck that is a little bit older, but it is kept as an emergency backup. Elsesser commented that we have been lucky things have been mild, and we haven't had trucks go down in the past couple years, so we did not have to use the backup truck.

Thomas thanked Watkins for his time. Watkins expressed that if there are any other questions to reach out.

8.B. 22/23-65: Consideration/Possible Action: Acceptance Of Windy Hill Road:

**Motion:** I move to accept Windy Hill Road as a town road.

By: Milkovic

Second: Hand

Discussion: Milkovic asked if this is a developer's road. Elsesser confirmed and explained that it was new.

Voting:

For: Hand, Thomas, Kyer, Gallagher, Blanchard, Milkovic, and French

Against: None

Abstain: None

8.C. 22/23-66: Consideration/Possible Action: Town Council Proclaiming April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, World Autism Day in Coventry:

**Motion:** I move that the Town Council proclaim April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, World Autism Day and April 2023 as World Autism Month in the Town of Coventry.

By: Hand

Second: Kyer

Discussion: Thomas explained that she will be asking that Elsesser put this on to a formal proclamation from the Town Council, and will invite Elizabeth Bauch, and her son Josph to the Town Council meeting so the proclamation can be presented to them. Gallaher wanted to clarify that we are presenting

the proclamation to Elizabeth Bauch as an individual and Coventry resident, and not for the Autism Speaks organization, which she represents. Elssesser confirmed that Autism Speaks is not listed in the proclamation text.

Voting:

For: Hand, Thomas, Kyer, Gallagher, Blanchard, Milkovic, and French

Against: None

Abstain: None

## **9. Miscellaneous/Correspondence:**

9.A. \* Thank-You Note, Laurie Bradley:

9.B. \* Board Of Education: Agenda, 2/23/2023 Meeting:

9.C. \* Board Of Education: Approved School Calendar For The 2023-2024 School Year:

## **10. Executive Session:**

- Negotiations or other personnel matters

**Motion:** I move that the Town Council enter into Executive Session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 1-200(6)(A): discussion concerning the employment, appointment, performance, evaluation, health or dismissal of a public officer or employee with the following in attendance: Town Council Members (Matthew Kyer, Jon Hand, Robyn Gallagher, Lisa Thomas, Marty Milkovic, John French, and Julie Blanchard).

By: Hand

Second: French

The Council exited Executive session at 10:00 PM.

## **11. Adjournment:**

**Motion:** I move that the Council adjourn at 10:01 PM.

By: Milkovic

Second: Kyer

Respectfully Submitted,

**Nicole Archambault**

Nicole Archambault, Minutes 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.**

## **Budget Summary FY 24**

### **3100 Roads and Drainage**

- 51010 – Regular Payroll - \$30,000 decrease due to reclassification of staff to 3103
- 51030 - Overtime – Request \$21,500 increase in overtime. The requested increase would allow for DPW crews to provide additional work on road and drainage projects, culvert failures and repairs, ditching, sweeping, and provide emergency response after normal operating hours.

- 52070 – Other Professional Services – Town Manager proposed \$1,000 decrease and road bond can be used to fund this portion.
- 52100 - Training funds were moved to 3104-52100 to consolidate all training to one line item.
- 53090 – Clothing safety Equipment - \$500 increase for safety gear.
- 53160 – Cement Sand Salt Gravel - \$3,000 increase due to cost increase for bulk sand and gravel.
- 53200 – Traffic Control Signs - \$1,500 increase to replenish supply of safety cones, and for sign replacements.
- 54050 - Other Equipment - \$7,000 increase for the following; \$2,800 – Pump, \$2,270 – 2 battery powered chainsaws, \$1,200 – Battery powered cutoff saw, \$650 – 2 Spare batteries. Town Manager proposed using fy23 savings or misc. highway funds.

### **3101 Public Buildings**

- 51043 – Cleaning and Maintenance – 30% of new custodian salary.
- 53070 – Custodial supplies – moved to 3103-53070 to consolidate all custodial supplies in one line item.
- 54050 – Other Equipment - \$1,000 for janitorial equipment, mop buckets, buffer, and other small equipment.
- 55030 – Heating Fuel – increase due to price increase.

### **3102 Snow Removal**

- 53120 Equipment Parts – Town Manager proposed \$1,000 reduction.
- 53160 – Cement Sand Salt Gravel - \$16,660 increase due to salt price increasing to \$94.83 per ton.
- 53210 – Other Purchased - \$2,000 moved into this line from 54050 Other Equipment line. This is for the purchase of large and small plow blades.
- 54050 – Other Equipment – moved to 3102-53210

### **3103 Facility Maintenance**

- 51010 – Regular Payroll – Increase due to salaries being moved from 3100.
- 51030 – Overtime - The requested \$2,000 increase will allow for floor stripping and waxing to be done while the buildings are not occupied and will be used for additional field maintenance.
- 51040 – Temporary Seasonal Payroll – Town Manager proposed \$780 decrease.
- 52100 – Training - Training funds were moved to 3104-52100 to consolidate all training to one line item.
- 53070 – Custodial supplies – This line shows an increase due to all funds for custodial supplies being consolidated into one line. Also due to a new full time custodian position and updating custodial closets and supplies.
- 53090 – Clothing and Safety Equipment - \$400 increase to purchase safety gear for new employees.
- 53170 – Ground Supplies - \$6,000 Increase reflects a major increase in the cost of fertilizer and an increase in the number of fields requiring maintenance.
- 54050 – Other Equipment - \$1,500 request for a one time purchase of a carpet extractor to be used in town buildings.

### **3104 Public Works Administration**

- 51010 – Regular Payroll - \$6,200 increase for salary increases. Town Manager removed a requested salary adjustment for the DPW Superintendent.
- 52100 – Training - This line shows an increase due to all funds for Training being consolidated into one line.
- 53010 – Office Supplies - \$200 increase due to inflation.
- 53090 – Clothing Safety Equipment - \$1,000 increase to outfit new employees with safety gear.

### **3105 Fleet Maintenance**

- 51010 – Regular Payroll – Increase due to lead mechanic position being filled and a mechanic 2 position being filled.
- 51100 – Longevity - \$1,500 increase due to CBA. Mechanic 2
- 52100 – Training - Training funds were moved to 3104-52100 to consolidate all training to one line item.
- 52140 – Equipment Repairs - \$3,000 increase due to the cost of outside repairs increasing, and \$500 moved from 3105-52160.
- 52160 – Building Repairs - Funds moved into 3105-52140
- 53040 Gasoline and 53050 Diesel Fuel– Increase due to large price increase.
- 53070 – Custodial Supplies – Funds move to 3105-53210
- 53210 – Other Purchased - \$1,200 moved into this line from 3105-53070.
- 53220 – Subscriptions and Books - \$200 increase for annual updates on scan tool.
- 54050 – Other Equipment - \$2,500 request for a one time purchase of a small parts washer. Town Manager proposed using fy23 savings or misc. highway funds.

### **3109 Cemetery Commission**

- 51020 – Part Time Payroll - \$3,250 increase based on current fy23 budget.
- 51040 – Temporary Seasonal Payroll – Town Manager proposed decrease of \$840.
- 52130 – Service Contracts – Town Manager proposed \$1,000 decrease.
- 54050 – Other Equipment – Requested \$6,000 for a fine cut mower. Town Manager proposed using fy23 funds or the Cemetery fund.

### **3110 Tree Warden**

- 52100 - Training - Training funds were moved to 3104-52100 to consolidate all training to one line item.
- 52130 – Service Contracts -Requesting a \$30,000 increase for tree trimming and removals by contractors due to the large number of dead and declining trees.
- 52200 – Equipment Rental – Town Manager proposed \$2,500 reduction.

