

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
CORNWALL BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

Tuesday, Aug 18, 2020  
7:30 p.m. – Remotely via Zoom

PRESENT: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway; Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey; Selectman Priscilla Pavel; One Member of the Press; Two Members of the Public

First Selectman Gordon Ridgway called the meeting to order at 7:33 PM.

MINUTES: The minutes from the August 13, 2020 Special Meeting of the BOS were not considered because they had not been published by the time of this meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

COMMUNICATIONS: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway recognized the nice note from the “Art for Justice” group thanking the Town for its storm response to Isaias.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: First Selectman Ridgway moved to add two items to the agenda: 1) Planning and Zoning Vacancy; and 2) Allen Cemetery. The motion was seconded by Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey, and unanimously passed.

HIGHWAY PROJECTS: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway provided an update: Ford Hill Bridge repair is complete, and work on the Cogswell Rd Bridge over Mill Brook is next. Also, the work on Popple Swamp Rd at Nash Pond is also upcoming. The town crew worked extra hours to clear debris leftover from Tropical Storm Isaias.

TROPICAL STORM ISAIAS: First Selectman Ridgway noted that the expenses for extra hours related to debris removal was being tracked by Barbara Herbst, Cornwall Finance Director, in order to submit a request to FEMA for re-imbusement. Next, power is back on in Cornwall, but internet and phone are still down in some places. The Board also discussed the re-publishing of the Storm Preparedness insert in the Cornwall Chronicle as well as emergency communications. Also, The Board of Selectmen thanked the Cornwall Chronicle for publishing the updated Storm Preparedness insert.

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS UPDATE: First Selectmen Gordon Ridgway provided an update on Covid-19. He noted that there were some upticks in infection in CT, and reminded everyone to stay vigilant. Next First Selectman Ridgway noted that he has been in touch with Mary Kay Ravenola, the new CCS Principal, regarding re-opening of the school. Also, the Town Registrars and Town Clerk have written letters to the School requesting permission to conduct the November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 election at the school due to social distancing concerns at Town Hall.

FARNSWORTH PROPERTIES: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway stated that at the Special Meeting on August 13, 2020 the Board had voted unanimously to offer to sell the Firehouse lot in West Cornwall Village to the Farnsworths for \$500.00. The Farnsworths are in the process of completing their environmental study of the lot, and if they are interested, the proposed sale will go to a Town Vote for approval.

VOTING PROCESS UPDATE: First Selectmen Gordon Ridgway reported that he has contacted the Town’s attorney, regarding a town-wide voting process compliant with the State’s pandemic

regulations. The potential sale of the Firehouse Lot to the Farnsworths would require approval via town vote. Also, the West Cornwall Village Sewer / Septic would require a full referendum.

**WEST CORNWALL SEWER / SEPTIC:** First Selectman Gordon Ridgway noted that a recommendation from the Sewer / Septic committee is likely to be decided in 2020. Information will be provided to taxpayers and residents regarding the USDA Grant numbers and other facts about the proposed project. The decision will need to be decided by a town-wide referendum where all taxpayers are eligible to vote. First Selectman Ridgway also gave an update on the plan for a pizza place in West Cornwall Village.

**CCS REOPENING:** First Selectman Ridgway provided an update. CCS is Scheduled to reopen on Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Selectman Priscilla Pavel noted that the first day of school will be a short day, and she emphasized how impressed she is with the new CCS Principal, Mary Kay Ravenola.

**DONATED CURTIS HANSON AND NICK DEREVETSKY PAINTINGS:** First Selectman Ridgway opened and displayed two paintings by former Cornwall artists depicting scenes from the Town of Cornwall. The framed oil paintings were given to the Town by Diane Schrier, a former Cornwall Resident.

**ALLEN CEMETERY:** First Selectman Gordon Ridgway proposed taking action to provide some upkeep to the Allen Cemetery near Town Street South in West Cornwall. The cemetery is named after the Allen family, of which Ethan Allen (co-founder of Vermont) was a member. The Allen Cemetery has some of the first settlers of Cornwall buried there, and is an important part of Cornwall's history.

**PLANNING AND ZONING VACANCY:** The Board of Selectmen discussed the vacancy on the Cornwall Planning and Zoning Commission left by Ben Gray, who will be attending Law School in Vermont this Fall. First Selectman Ridgway stated that Phil West would be a good person to appoint. Phil West has been an active and longstanding participant of the P&Z Commission as an alternate.

**TAX REFUND REQUESTS:** The Board of Selectmen considered two requests for tax refunds for overpayment of real estate taxes: 1) \$104.38 and 2) \$63.00. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway moved to grant the two requests. Selectman Priscilla Pavel seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Leila Hawken of the Lakeville Journal asked the Board of Selectmen how to spell the last name of the person who donated the paintings. The correct spelling is "Schrier". Next, Richard Griggs of West Cornwall asked for an update on fiber optics coming to Cornwall. First Selectman Ridgway recalled a recent phone meeting with an Optimum government liaison who said Optimum is planning to bring fiber to Cornwall, but Covid19 has delayed that plan. Also, there has been some talk of a fiber hot spot being added to West Cornwall, but details are still being developed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Berry  
Administrative Assistant  
Town of Cornwall