

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

Tuesday, July 21, 2020
7:30 p.m. – Remotely via Zoom

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

First Selectman Gordon Ridgway called the meeting to order at 7:31 PM.

MINUTES: Selectman Priscilla Pavel moved to approve the minutes from the July 7, 2020 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway moved to add 3 items to the agenda: (1) Paul Prindle Contract Extension; (2) Taxpayer Refund; (3) Josh Tyson appointment to TAHD. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Selectman Priscilla Pavel announced that on Friday, July 24, the Cornwall Library will present a Zoom event with Cornwall EMS Lt. Elizabeth Ridgway, Emergency Management Director Diane Beebe, and First Selectman Gordon Ridgway at 5:00 PM titled “Reflections and Projections from the Coronavirus Frontline”. First Selectman Ridgway also commented regarding the Library’s zoom event.

COMMUNICATIONS: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway reported that construction to repave the North side of Cream Hill Rd would commence the first week of August. Also, rehabilitation of Ford Hill Rd Bridge is now under way, and Cogswell Rd Bridge will have a new guide rail installed in August.

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS UPDATE: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway provided an update and indicated Connecticut has had good news related to Covid19. Hospitalizations for Covid are down in Connecticut, and CT has one of the lowest positive Covid test rates of any State in the country. First Selectman Ridgway once again urged everyone to wear masks and wash hands as health experts project Covid will surge in the Fall. Next, The Board of Selectmen discussed the influx of visitors bringing litter to the River and Mohawk Pond. A volunteer picked up trash that filled seven garbage bags from the banks along River Road in West Cornwall. First Selectman Ridgway has contacted DEEP and requested that they monitor the littering problem. He also reported that the State has re-opened some of the inland beaches. There has been a push to re-open Kent Falls State Park which could alleviate some of the demand for recreation on the limited spaces along the River. Residents should call the State Police if they witness illegal behavior such as littering, and First Selectman Ridgway noted that it would be helpful if people document what they observe. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey advocated for the creation of signs encouraging people to responsibly recreate. The Board was in agreement regarding signs. Next, First Selectman Ridgway briefly discussed re-opening of the school and noted that The Board of Education has meeting Wednesday to discuss re-opening. Finally, the Cornwall Central Command continues to meet each week, and the Food Pantry delivery service continues to operate under the direction of Social Service Agent Heather Dinneen.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN GRANT PROGRAM: The Town of Cornwall was approved for a housing plan grant of \$10,100 from the CT State Department of Housing to explore a Town housing plan. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway discussed a Council of Small Towns meeting

which addressed the upcoming special session of the State Legislature. The special session will include a proposed rewrite of the State Housing and Zoning statutes.

NATURAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING: First Selectman Ridgway discussed the Town's Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning efforts which will examine risks and plans related to hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and other natural hazards. The NHCOG is coordinating the efforts which will help Cornwall renew its five-year hazard mitigation plan.

PAUL PRINDLE CONTRACT EXTENSION: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway discussed extending the Town's contract with Building Inspector Paul Prindle. Paul Prindle's work as Building Inspector results in fees collected. Under the existing contract the Town receives 10% of the fees and Paul receives 90%. The Board of Selectman discussed the high degree of satisfaction with Paul's work to date and First Selectman Ridgway moved to extend the contract with Paul Prindle for an additional year. Selectman Priscilla Pavel seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

TAX REFUNDS: The Board of Selectmen considered 3 requests for tax refunds. Two refund requests were due to car sales: one refund of \$37.16 and also \$39.45. The third refund request was for \$1,162.27 due to overpayment of real estate tax. First Selectman Ridgway moved to grant the three requests as recommended by Tax Collector Jean Bouteiller. Selectman Priscilla Pavel seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

JOSH TYSON APPOINTMENT TO TAHD: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway stated that Josh Tyson possesses the requisite knowledge to represent Cornwall at TAHD, and moved to appoint Josh Tyson as Cornwall's representative to the Torrington Area Health District. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway praised the successful operation of Hammond Beach during the Pandemic and thanked the Lifeguards and the people who were able to make that possible. First Selectman Ridgway credited Beach Director Marina Kotchoubey for engineering a system that has allowed the Town to provide beach access in the Covid Era. The Board of Selectmen also commented on the generosity of Roxanna Hammond who donated the land for the Hammond Beach some 30 years ago. Next, Leila Hawken of the Lakeville Journal asked for the amount of the Housing Planning Grant and how the grant would be used. First Selectman Ridgway answered that the grant is approximately \$10,000, and it pays for an investigation into what Cornwall could do to diversify its housing stock. Ruth Epstein of the Waterbury Republican inquired about the littering issues up at the boat launch by Mohawk Pond. First Selectman Ridgway noted that overuse problems are not unique to Mohawk Pond as crowds have also been littering at Great Falls. First Selectman Ridgway stated that he has been in contact with Kent First Selectwoman Jean Speck about re-opening Kent Falls State Park to provide a more structured recreation option with porta-potties and people to monitor what's going on. The littering problems on River Road in West Cornwall were also discussed. Finally, Paul Gottsegen asked if the Housing Planning Grant would look into aspects of development other than housing. First Selectman Ridgway stated that it was specific to housing.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Berry
Administrative Assistant
Town of Cornwall