

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

Tuesday, May 19, 2020

7:30 p.m. – Remotely via Zoom

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

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

MINUTES: Selectman Priscilla Pavel moved to approve the minutes from the May 5, 2020 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway moved to add the following item to the agenda: Bottle Drive for M.S. Selectman Priscilla Pavel moved to add discussion regarding what CCS is doing for the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduates this year. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded the additions, and the motions passed unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS: First Selectman Ridgway discussed the plans for a Memorial Day Video, and encouraged residents to visit the graves of Veterans in the local cemeteries.

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS UPDATE: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway presented an update on the Re-opening of businesses in Cornwall. Masks and Social Distancing are still required by Law and police are issuing citations for non-compliance. Also, gatherings of more than 5 are prohibited. First Selectman Ridgway noted that Connecticut and Cornwall continue to operate under a state of emergency, and Cornwall will continue to monitor the situation and work with the State.

HIGHWAY BIDS: (1) TRUCK, (2) PAVING: After a discussion with Cornwall Highway Foreman, Jim Vanicky, First Selectman Ridgway moved to authorize the Highway Department to request bids for a truck cabin and chassis. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed. Next, First Selectman Ridgway moved to accept a proposal from “Equipment Specialists” to outfit the truck with a body, hydraulics, and controls for approximately \$78,865.00. The motion was seconded by Selectman Priscilla Pavel and unanimously passed by the Board. Second, the Board of Selectmen discussed road paving in Cornwall. First Selectman Ridgway noted that paving will occur at the North End of Cream Hill Rd., parts of Town Street north of Yelping Hill Rd., and in West Cornwall near the train station. Also, the State will be paving Rt. 128 in September, 2020. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey and First Selectman Ridgway discussed the Town’s approach to road maintenance plans. Selectwoman Kotchoubey proposed compiling a road expenditure analysis.

MILL RATE: First Selectman Ridgway moved to sign “Rate Bill”, memorializing the Mill Rate of 16.7 mills on the dollar on the Grand List of October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed. On a side note: First Selectman Ridgway took a moment to graciously thank the Selectmen’s Administrative Clerk, Jonathan Berry.

**HOUSATONIC RR SPRAYING PROPOSAL:** The Board of Selectmen discussed Housatonic Rail Road's plan to spray herbicide on the vegetation surrounding the tracks that run through Cornwall commencing on May 18th. First Selectman Ridgway discussed a meeting that was held with State Representative Horn, and State Senator Minor regarding the Town's request for "No Spray Zones" in West Cornwall Village and Cornwall Bridge. The Rail Road will hold off on spraying until after evaluating the Town's request. The Rail Road has also been asked to remove dead trees killed by prior spraying events.

**APPOINTMENT, STACY DOLAN TO PARK & REC.:** First Selectman Gordon Ridgway moved to appoint Stacy Dolan to the Cornwall Park and Recreation Commission. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

**SUMMER RECREATION: TENNIS & BEACH:** First Selectman Ridgway discussed a webcall with the State Department of Health regarding State beaches. He noted that the State's inland beaches are remaining closed this season, but boating will still be available. The State shoreline beaches will be open, but social distancing will be enforced. First Selectman Ridgway stated that he would follow-up with the Torrington Area Health Department regarding re-opening guidance for municipal beaches. The Board discussed several concerns regarding opening the Town Beach in the midst of a pandemic. Beach Capacity, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as masks, social distancing, and sanitation are primary concerns. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey stated that there are no plans for a Town swim-team or swim program this summer. The Board expects to receive additional guidance from TAHD regarding municipal beaches soon. Next, the Board of Selectmen discussed Tennis. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway has spoken with TAHD, and TAHD stated that Tennis can happen so long as social distancing is observed. Notable Covid19 rules for Tennis include: doubles-matches where only family members are on the same team, and separate balls for each server so that players do not touch other players' balls. Jennifer Markow, Cornwall Park and Rec Director, is purchasing signs for town recreation fields and playgrounds stating requirements for use during the pandemic. Todd Piker stated that the Cream Hill Lake Association will observe the social distancing and other requirements, as well as require online sign-up for courts. First Selectman Ridgway re-iterated that the State continues to limit gatherings to 5 people or less.

**HOUSING PLAN:** The Board of Selectmen discussed the Town's housing plan, and noted a State program that the Northwest Hills Council of Governments is engaged in. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway stated that it was important to work on long term plans and options for the Town of Cornwall.

**INTERNET MEETING:** The Board of Selectmen discussed the May 18, 2020 Internet Meeting with NHCOG consultant Ben Paletsky. There are different proposals from different towns regarding expansion of internet and cellular connectivity, and the NHCOG is looking into what is the best model for the towns. Selectman Priscilla Pavel thanked Gary Steinkohl of the Cornwall Association and also thanked the group of 5 volunteers from Cornwall who will be working with the NHCOG and Board of Selectmen to explore options for communications connectivity in Cornwall.

**BOTTLE DRIVE FOR MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY:** The Board of Selectman discussed a request from Jennifer Kenniston-Larson for the Town to donate funds raised via redeemable aluminum cans at the Transfer Station to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. First Selectman Ridgway moved to donate \$500.00 from the Returnable Can Fund to the National Multiple Sclerosis Fund. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE GRADUATION: The Board of Selectmen discussed potential plans for CCS graduating 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Class in the midst of the pandemic. A drive through ceremony is planned for June 11, 2020 (rain date June 10, 2020). Annie Kosciusko stated that the class will receive monogrammed backpacks and “goody-bags”. Next, the traditional 8<sup>th</sup> Grade class trip has been canceled due to Covid19. Furthermore, Annie Kosciusko and the Board discussed the matter of the class trip activity fund, and how to disperse that fund to the students in lieu of a class trip. The fund amounts to about \$900 dollars per student. No actions were taken by the Board of Selectmen. On a side note, approximately \$1500 was donated to the Cornwall Food Fuel Fund from the CCS Walkathon.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Annie Kosciusko discussed pandemic guidance related to Summer operations of the Cream Hill Lake Association. Concerns regarding social distancing and safety were shared with the Board of Selectmen. At this time the grounds are open, but the Clubhouse is locked and shuttered to limit potential communication of the virus. Annie emphasized the difficulties that CHLA lifeguards are likely to face regarding enforcement of social distancing. First Selectman Ridgway noted that the Town was awaiting expected guidance from the Torrington Area Health Department regarding municipal beaches, and that capacity will need to be enforced to ensure social distancing. He concluded that the 5-person limit on gatherings will make recreation more difficult. Hammond Beach Director / Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey stated that she is ready to work with CHLA on plans for summer beach operations upon receipt of guidance from TAHD.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Berry  
Administrative Assistant  
Town of Cornwall