

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

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

7:30 p.m. – Remotely via Zoom

PRESENT: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway; Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey; Selectman Priscilla Pavel; Two Members of the Press; 5 Members of the Public

First Selectman Gordon Ridgway called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

MINUTES: Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey moved to approve the minutes from the April 21, 2020 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Selectman Priscilla Pavel seconded and the motion unanimously passed.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway moved to add the following item to the agenda: Housatonic Rail Road Spraying Proposal. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS: First Selectman Ridgway announced that the Covid19 Tax Deferment application form will be made available at www.cornwallct.org. Qualified applicants will have their local taxes deferred until October 1st, 2020.

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS UPDATE: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway presented an update on the Town's efforts to respond to the health threat of Covid-19. He expressed deep gratitude to a Cornwall family for using their 3D printer to manufacture face shields now being used by Cornwall EMS. First Selectman Ridgway also noted that Cornwall continues to operate under Town, State, and Federal Emergency Declarations, and people must wear face masks while out in public. He also thanked Emergency Management Director Diane Beebe for obtaining surgical masks from the State and distributing those to essential businesses located in Cornwall. Next, First Selectman Ridgway noted that Cornwall is expecting to receive guidance from Torrington Area Health (TAHD) regarding outdoor recreation guidelines. He also recommends looking into posting signs reminding people to wear masks and practice social distancing. First Selectman Ridgway also gave thanks to the Cornwall Covid19 Unified Command for all their efforts, thanks to Social Services Director Heather Dinneen and the CERT volunteers, and thanks to everyone in town who has made efforts to fight Covid19 - including people wearing masks and maintaining social distance. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey commented on adherence to social distancing and concurred that signs reminding people to wear masks and maintain social distance would be beneficial.

2020 / 2021 BUDGET ADOPTION: First Selectman Ridgway discussed the proposed 2020 / 2021 Budget. Of note, there will be no increase in local taxes under the proposed budget. Also, the Board of Education is expected to introduce additional savings soon. First Selectman Ridgway moved to approve the 2020/2021 Budget as it was presented at the Budget Hearing, and to present the Budget to the Board of Finance for their opportunity to vote on the budget pursuant to the Governor's executive order related to town budget approval process. Selectman Priscilla Pavel seconded the motion and noted the virtue of no increase to the mill rate. The motion unanimously passed.

MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVATIONS: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway provided an update on the plans for Cornwall's Memorial Day observations. The VFW is unable to participate in ceremonies this year due to the Covid19 Pandemic, however, veterans' graves will be decorated.

Also, the West Cornwall ceremony will not occur as normal this year, instead a video will be filmed and made available on online.

INTERNET EXPANSION MEETING: The Board of Selectmen discussed an upcoming stakeholders meeting regarding internet expansion. The Cornwall Association, Board of Selectmen, Cornwall Conservation Commission and the Economic Development Commission are working together with the NHCOG (Ben Paletsky of Morris) and NW ConneCT to support internet expansion in Cornwall. The meeting is scheduled for May 18, 2020 at 7:30 PM via Zoom. First Selectman Ridgway stated that Covid19 has stressed the need for connectivity.

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. The Board of Selectmen were united in their opposition to the use of herbicide chemicals in proximity to Cornwall residences. First Selectman Ridgway proposed sending a request that no spraying should occur in West Cornwall Village and Cornwall Bridge. Both Selectman Priscilla Pavel and Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey concurred. Selectwoman Kotchoubey further stated the request to reduce spraying should be as expansive as possible. Selectman Priscilla Pavel stated that the Rail Road shouldn't spray at all, and the Rail Road should remove the dead trees and plants that were killed by prior spraying events.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Leila Hawken of the Lakeville Journal asked if the May 18, 2020 Internet Connectivity Meeting would be held via Zoom? First Selectman Ridgway confirmed that it would be held remotely via Zoom. Kate Freygang of Cornwall asked the Board of Selectmen to check with Ben Paletsky regarding potential edits to the Cornwall internet connectivity survey.

The Board of Selectmen then reviewed items for Bill Payment.

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Berry
Administrative Assistant
Town of Cornwall