

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

Tuesday, November 17, 2020
7:30 p.m. – Remotely via Zoom

PRESENT: Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey; Selectman Priscilla Pavel; Seventeen Members of the Public; One Member of the Press

Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

MINUTES: Selectman Priscilla Pavel moved to approve the minutes from the November 3, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion passed with two votes in favor and none against.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Caroline Nastro commented on the Cornwall Internet Committee (CIC) and its request for funding. Next, Johan Winsser, of the Cornwall Internet Committee, requested an opportunity for the CIC to present its final proposal several months from now.

COMMUNICATIONS: None

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: Selectman Priscilla Pavel moved to add three items to the agenda: 1) Town Hall Players Virtual Event; 2) 2019-2020 Town Report; and 3) Annual Town Meeting. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion passed with two votes in favor and none against.

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS UPDATE: Cornwall Emergency Management Director Diane Beebe gave an update on the Coronavirus Pandemic. Connecticut's test positivity rate is 5.4%, and Covid-19 hospitalizations and deaths have been increasing. Locally, from March through September 2020 there were 7 cases in Cornwall. In the last 4 weeks Cornwall has added 6 new cases. EMD Beebe emphatically urged everyone in Cornwall to wear their facemasks and practice social distance. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey emphasized the need to be cautious going into the Holiday Season.

REQUEST FOR FUNDING – CORNWALL INTERNET COMMITTEE: Gary Steinkhol and Johann Winsser of the Cornwall Internet Committee requested \$1200 for publication of a survey to gauge internet needs in Cornwall. (\$500 for a Chronicle Insert and \$700 for mailing). Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey and Selectman Priscilla Pavel suggested they start with a Chronicle Insert and wait to see if an additional mailing is necessary. Selectwoman Kotchoubey asked the CIC to include a question about cellular service in the survey. Selectman Priscilla Pavel discussed her previous cellular assessments which showed 40% cellular service along the roadways in Cornwall. Selectman Pavel added that cellular service is one of the most important issues facing Cornwall. Selectwoman Kotchoubey also noted that if the CIC ends up accepting taxpayer funds, they should make their meetings open to the public. Gary Steinkhol and Johann Winsser stated that the CIC was prepared to post all their meeting minutes on www.cornwallct.org, and that the CIC now has an email address – cornwallinternetcommittee@gmail.com – to receive communications at any time. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey reminded the CIC that in addition to making their minutes available they would also need to make their meetings available to the public if they were to accept public funding. Anna Timmell of the CIC suggested withdrawing the request for funding. Selectman Pavel and Selectwoman Kotchoubey stated their support for the work of the Internet Committee and offered their thanks. Ultimately, Gary Steinkhol of the CIC stated it would be appropriate for the committee to speak internally in order to reconsider their funding request.

VACANCIES: This item was postponed until another BoS meeting.

ELECTION REVIEW: Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey reported that Cornwall had great voter turnout for the 2020 November election. She thanked the Registrars, Poll Workers, CCS, and Vera Dinneen – Cornwall Town Clerk. Selectman Priscilla Pavel was also very proud of Cornwall's voter turnout which was one of the highest for any town in the State, and thanked everyone involved.

BUSINESS ILLUMINATION: Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey announced that, in addition to West Cornwall businesses setting up lights this Holiday season, Cornwall Bridge businesses will also be participating.

TOWN HALL PLAYERS VIRTUAL TALENT SHOW: Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey announced that the Town Hall Players will be posting a video of performances online at www.cornwallct.org the day after Thanksgiving. The Town Hall Players Talent Show will also be collecting donations to benefit the Food & Fuel Fund.

2019 -2020 TOWN REPORT: Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey announced that the Town Report will be available on Thursday, November 19. It will be posted online at www.cornwallct.org and printed versions will be distributed for pick-up at the various Cornwall Post Offices.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING: Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey noted that due to the rise in Covid cases and because there is nothing pressing on the Town Meeting agenda the Board is going to consider canceling the meeting and reschedule in the future. Selectwoman Kotchoubey also said this would allow time to research remote meeting options that may be available. Furthermore, Selectwoman Kotchoubey assured that postponing the meeting would not hinder any Town business since the 5-year capital plan doesn't take effect until July of 2021. Selectman Priscilla Pavel agreed, and stated there was no immediate need for a Town Meeting. Selectman Pavel then moved to postpone the Town Meeting until late spring, with a date to be developed by March 2021. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded and the motion passed with two votes in favor and none against.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Journalist Leila Hawken asked if the Town was planning any gatherings such as caroling or a cocoa social to coincide with the lighting of West Cornwall and Cornwall Bridge? Selectwoman Kotchoubey answered that Cornwall is not having a tree lighting event. People can check-out the lights at their leisure while remaining socially distant for safety purposes, but no specific event that could create crowds. Anna Timmell gave her advice on which masks are most effective. Next, Joanne Wojtusiak noted her concern regarding the private nature of the Internet Committee meetings, and requested the meetings be open to the public. There were three additional comments regarding the Internet Committee.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: FIREHOUSE PROPERTY IN WEST CORNWALL: This agenda item was postponed.

Selectman Priscilla Pavel moved to adjourn. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion passed with two votes in favor and none against. The meeting adjourned at 8:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Berry
Administrative Assistant
Town of Cornwall