

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

Tuesday, September 1, 2020  
7:30 p.m. – Remotely via Zoom

PRESENT: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway; Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey; Selectman Priscilla Pavel; Two Members of the Press; 9 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 August 13, 2020 Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the August 18, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

COMMUNICATIONS: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway noted Social Service Agent Heather Dinneen's communication that over 100 people received food last week from the Food Pantry, and the Food Panty is currently low on items following tropical storm Isaias. Also, Popple Swamp Rd will be closed on September 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> near Nash Pond, while the road is being elevated and new pipe / fire hydrant are installed.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: First Selectman Ridgway moved to add the Allen Cemetery as an agenda item. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS UPDATE: First Selectmen Gordon Ridgway provided an update on Covid-19. A staff member at C.C.S. tested positive for Covid-19. That staff member will be in isolation until they are cleared as being recovered. Three other staff members who were exposed will be in quarantine for 14 days. Next, due to social distancing concerns at Town Hall, voting for the November Election will occur at C.C.S. this year, and the students will at home taking class remotely that day. First Selectman Ridgway also noted that the Cornwall multi-departmental Covid work group continues to meet once a week.

PLANNING & ZONING VACANCY: PHILL WEST APPOINTMENT: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway moved to appoint Phill West to the Cornwall Planning & Zoning Commission, until the next municipal election, to fill the vacancy created when Ben Gray Jr. left to attend Law School in Vermont. Phill west is the longest standing alternate on the P&Z. Selectman Priscilla Pavel seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

TOWN BUILDING RENOVATIONS: First Selectman Ridgway gave an update on the budgeted town building renovations, which include: removing the underground oil tank at the Town Offices and switching to an above ground propane tank; renovation of the Transfer Station building; and work on the Town Garage building.

HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway discussed a meeting to update the Cornwall Hazard Mitigation Plan with Emergency Management Director, Diane Beebe; NHCOC Regional Planner, Janell Mullen; and NHCOC consultant, Milone & MacBroom. First Selectman Ridgway also discussed a meeting with State officials regarding the failures of Eversource in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Isaias.

WEST CORNWALL WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway has been in touch with WMC Consulting Engineers who reported that the USDA is optimistic about having potential grant amounts available in October 2020. First Selectman Ridgway also noted that it may be possible, with remote information sessions, to conduct a Town Vote in November or December this year.

HIGHWAY PROJECT COGSWELL RD BRIDGE: The Board of Selectmen discussed the replacement of the deteriorating concrete parapets with a new metal beam-rail. Bridge Expert Roger Kane presented options for the rail ends: 1) Anchored End; 2) Buried End; and 3) Terminal End (recently used a terminal end on Lake Rd). Roger recommended the Terminal End. The Board then discussed the various options regarding the metal beam rail. The Board also discussed an estimate for replacement concrete parapets. Roger Kane reported that Harwinton Paving estimated that each parapet would cost approximately \$98,000.00. Roger noted that this bridge is 85 years old, and may need to be entirely replaced in the next 25 years. First Selectman Ridgway moved to use terminal ends and complete the contract, and in the future, continue to look at alternate options regarding the railing. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey emphasized using this opportunity to research alternative possibilities for future bridgework that takes into account aesthetics. Selectwoman Kotchoubey also noted the logic of the investment right now given the remaining life of the bridge, and seconded the motion. Selectman Priscilla Pavel, although sorry to see the less aesthetic beam rail, discussed the primary responsibility to keep Cornwall bridges safe, and stay within budget so as not to raise taxes. Selectman Priscilla Pavel stated, "Those two things I think are really important: safety and economy." The motion unanimously passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Ruth Epstein, of the Waterbury Republican, asked if C.C.S. Students would have Election Day off in November. First Selectman Ridgway stated that they would have class remotely over the internet that day. Leila Hawken, of the Lakeville Journal, asked what the total cost of the Bridge Repairs would be. Roger Kane stated that the Cogswell guiderails alone would cost \$14,475.00. The total work for the Cogswell Bridge and Ford Hill Bridge was approximately \$160,000.00. Tobie Cornejo asked questions regarding previous bridgework on bridges from the same era as the Cogswell Bridge. First Selectman Ridgway discussed other bridgework done in Cornwall. Tobie Cornejo asked questions about Town regulations related to construction. First Selectman Ridgway discussed the lengthy process involved in completing construction projects by the Town. Tobie Cornejo suggested funding future bridge projects with private donations for the remaining Cream Hill bridges with concrete parapets. First Selectman Ridgway stated that in the future private funding could be explored. James Fishman criticized the Board of Selectmen regarding the removal of the concrete parapets on Cogswell Bridge. Tobie Cornejo asked if there was a timeline to replace the entire bridge. Roger Kane answered that it could be 20 or 30 years before the bridge needs replacement. Tobie Cornejo asked if there was a way to accelerate the replacement of the Cogswell Bridge? First Selectman Ridgway answered that if someone wants to buy the town a new bridge, then that could be a possibility, but would need to get the approvals from Zoning and the Wetlands Commission. First Selectmen Ridgway then discussed the multi-department process involving the Board of Finance and Town vote that would be needed to bond-out a new bridge if the Town was providing all the funding. Tobie Cornejo asked if something had changed to precipitate the replacement of the parapets. First Selectmen Ridgway said nothing changed- the engineering report called for replacement of the deteriorating parapets, and the bond money was required to be spent before a certain deadline. Jim Fishman discussed his concerns regarding historic preservation. Anne Coffin commented on historical preservation in order to maintain sites of aesthetic and cultural significance.

ALLEN CEMETERY: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway discussed clearing the accessway and fixing the fence at the Allen Cemetery near Town Street South this fall. It's not a major undertaking, but it is a spot of historical significance, as Ethan and Ira Allen went on to co-found the State of Vermont.

Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey moved to adjourn. First Selectman Ridgway seconded, and the motion unanimously passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Berry  
Administrative Assistant  
Town of Cornwall