

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

Tuesday, September 15, 2020
7:30 p.m. – Remotely via Zoom

PRESENT: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway; Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey; Selectman Priscilla Pavel; One Member of the Press; 23 Members of the Public

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

MINUTES: Selectman Priscilla Pavel moved to approve the minutes from the September 1, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Caroline Nastro requested a hearing regarding an action by the internet expansion committee. First Selectman Ridgway stated the internet expansion committee is a private entity, so the Board of Selectmen does not have jurisdiction.

COMMUNICATIONS: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway warned of the high fire danger in the region due to the current drought, and noted that open burning cannot occur at this time. Next, First Selectman Ridgway informed that the State would commence re-surfacing Route 128 on Sept. 28, 2020. The State may also resurface some of Route 43 in the beginning of October. Popple Swamp Rd will be closed on September 28th and 29th while work is underway near Nash Pond to install a new culvert, new fire hydrant, and raise the road where a dip exists now.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: First Selectman Ridgway moved to add the PURA Declaratory Judgment, Budget Transfers, and Ford Hill Rd to the agenda. Selectman Priscilla Pavel seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

PURA DECLARATORY JUDGMENT: Numerous Connecticut towns have requested the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority issue a declaratory judgment against Eversource in order to swiftly rectify and improve the power company's emergency response procedures. First Selectman Ridgway noted that Cornwall is participating in the matter against Eversource.

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS UPDATE: First Selectmen Gordon Ridgway discussed the successful efforts to re-open the Cornwall Consolidated School. The school has 12 tents being utilized to provide an open-air learning environment for the students and staff. The First Selectman noted that the opening has gone well thanks to the Staff and Principal. Also, the November Election will be held at C.C.S. due to social distancing concerns during the pandemic. First Selectman Ridgway also reported that there has been another confirmed case of Covid-19 in Cornwall.

FIVE YEAR PLAN CAPITAL PLAN: First Selectman Ridgway discussed the process for approving the Five-Year Capital Plan which is voted on at the Annual Town Meeting. The Board of Selectmen is expecting to have budget suggestions from the Fire Department and Highway Department at the next BOS regular meeting.

OCTOBER TOWN MEETING: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway provided an update on holding the Annual Town Meeting during the Covid19 Pandemic. An inquiry has been submitted to the town attorney regarding whether or not a virtual town vote could be held. The Board discussed a tentative date of November 13, 2020 for a potential town meeting.

FARNSWORTH: The Board of Selectmen previously approved an offer to sell the Firehouse Lot in West Cornwall Village to the Farnsworths for \$500. The property is assessed at \$200. The Farnsworth's own the adjacent property where their bookstore is located. The decision to send this to a Town vote is on hold until the Farnsworths receive the results of their environmental investigation.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLANNING GRANT: First Selectman Ridgway announced that Cornwall was received approval for a \$10,100 grant from the State to fund efforts to update the town's affordable housing plan. The grant application was made possible with assistance from the Northwest Hills Council of Governments. The Cornwall Planning and Zoning Commission will be updating the plan.

TOWN BUILDING PROJECTS: The Board discussed bids from Jim Terrall Construction to repair several town buildings: 1) The Cornwall Bridge Firehouse - \$11,626 to replace all windows, pressure wash the roof, and replace rotten trim; 2) The Town office oil tank and furnace to be replaced by an underground propane tank and propane furnace as well as hook up the propane to the Town Hall generator for \$23,503; and 3) Replace the roof on the salt shed for \$18,630. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey noted that the bids appeared to be reasonable prices, but recommended that the Board publish a request for proposals for future projects. Selectman Priscilla Pavel moved to accept the bids and proceed with Jim Terrall Construction. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway seconded and the motion unanimously passed.

BUDGET TRANSFERS: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway moved to refund two taxpayers for overpayment of Motor Vehicle Tax: 1) \$58.48 and 2) \$107.05. Selectman Priscilla Pavel seconded and the motion unanimously passed.

COGSWELL ROAD BRIDGE AND FORD HILL ROAD BRIDGE: The Board of Selectman discussed the longstanding bridges restoration project on the 13 bridges that needed work. So far, nine bridges have been repaired or replaced and there is minor work left to do on four bridges – two on Popple Swamp Road, one on West Road, and one on Music Mountain Road. First Selectman Ridgway discussed the wide spectrum of comments received regarding the Cogswell Rd and Ford Hill Rd bridges, and noted that the Town is required to have guiderail systems in place. Additional discussion by the Board of Selectmen ensued regarding the two bridges. First Selectman Ridgway added that in the next ten years the town is likely to look into projects for the Rattlesnake Rd Culvert and the Town Street Culvert near the Scoville Farm just North of the C.H.L.A. Boat Club entrance.

PUBLIC COMMENT: The Board of Selectmen heard comments and suggestions from multiple residents of Cornwall regarding the Cogswell and Ford Hill Bridges. Richard Griggs of West Cornwall announced that videos of the Board of Selectmen meetings can be found at www.CornwallCT.org. Also, the Board heard public comment regarding the Affordable Housing Plan. First Selectman Ridgway informed that more information should be available in October and November of 2020 regarding the Affordable Housing Plan. Next, the board heard a comment regarding a CARES EDC Act grant to the Northwest Hills Council of Governments to fund connectivity efforts in the region, and a comment regarding the Firehouse Lot in West Cornwall Village. In response to the question regarding the Firehouse Lot, First Selectman Ridgway noted that after the BOS approves an offer to sell, the potential buyer must express interest in the offer, Planning and Zoning would need to approve, and ultimately a Town wide vote would need to be held on the proposed transaction.

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Berry
Administrative Assistant
Town of Cornwall