

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

Tuesday, March 16, 2021
7:30 p.m. – Remotely via Zoom

PRESENT: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway; Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey; Selectman Priscilla Pavel; One member of the press; Eight 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 March 2, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Selectman Priscilla Pavel seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Joanne Wojtusiak commented about the Northwest Hill Council of Governments.

COMMUNICATIONS: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway reported that CT DEEP was glad to hear that Cornwall had joined the Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Material Management. First Selectman Ridgway also reported on the Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority (MIRA), and noted that the cost of municipal solid waste is increasing due to the age of MIRA's incinerator. MIRA will be on future Board of Selectmen agendas.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway moved to add Zoom Meetings and Eversource Update to the agenda. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

ZOOM MEETINGS: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway discussed Town Zoom Meetings and noted they have become popular. First Selectman Ridgway emphasized that it can be difficult to run a meeting and handle Zoom duties at the same time. First Selectman Ridgway moved to compensate Selectmen's Office Administrative Assistant, Jonathan Berry, \$50.00 (per zoom meeting) to provide Zoom hosting services to Town meetings that are outside of Berry's normal Board of Selectmen Zoom duties. Selectman Priscilla Pavel seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

EVERSOURCE UPDATE: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway reported that with the help of Emergency Management Director Diane Beebe, Cornwall has updated emergency procedures in place with Eversource. This update includes a request from the Town to add Bonny Brook senior housing to the list of critical facilities in Cornwall.

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS UPDATE: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway provided an update on the Covid-19 Pandemic: The Covid19 virus is still with us, but we may be turning a corner. The vaccination rates are up in Connecticut, but the positive test rate has also recently been up. Also, there has also been improvement in the number of hospitalizations.

MEMORIAL DAY; BASEBALL; FEDERAL ASSISTANCE: The Town and School will receive approximately \$100,000 and \$20,000 respectively in Federal Assistance for Covid related expenses. The Board of Selectmen are working with Emergency Management Director Diane Beebe to plan Memorial Day observances. At this time, the plan is to have a limited Memorial Day event due to concerns regarding Covid19. Also, Cornwall Park and Rec. will be organizing Baseball this spring.

TOWN MEETING, APRIL 23RD: The Board of Selectmen discussed the planned April 23rd virtual Town Meeting which will cover: 1) Last Year's Annual Report, 2) Five-year Capital Plan, 3)

Proposed Sale of the West Cornwall Firehouse Lot, 4) Consolidating the Sydney Kaye Fund into the Town Endowment. In addition, there will be a hearing on the 2021 – 2022 Budget at the same Town Meeting.

WEST CORNWALL WASTEWATER SCHEDULE, ETC.: The Board of Selectmen discussed the continuing efforts to bring the West Cornwall Wastewater project to a voter referendum. The Board of Selectmen discussed an informational explanatory text which will be published prior to the town meetings ahead of the referendum vote. First Selectman Ridgway moved to send a draft of the explanatory text to Bond Counsel Joseph Fasi for review in order ensure it falls within State guidelines. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway moved to adopt the following schedule for the referendum vote process: 1) In-person / Virtual - Informational Town Meeting on June 11, 2021; 2) Town Meeting on July 10, 2021; and 3) Referendum Vote on July 24, 2021. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed. First Selectman Ridgway also discussed potential funding opportunities for the project.

APRIL ROAD WORK: The Board of Selectmen reviewed a proposal from Seymour Sealing for chip-seal road work on approximately eight miles of town roadway for approximately \$150,000. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway moved to accept the Seymour Sealing proposal. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

BUDGETS: The Board of Selectmen discussed the increase in the budget request from the Housatonic Valley Association. First Selectman Ridgway moved to increase the HVA proposed budget line from \$250 to \$1,250, and to decrease the Conservation Commission proposed budget request from \$3,560 to \$2,560. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed. Next, First Selectman Ridgway briefly discussed the Board of Education budget.

NORTHWEST COG MEETING REPORT: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway reported on a recent Northwest Hills Council of Governments Meeting. The following was covered at the COG meeting: 1) Mental Health update from Greenwoods Counseling director John Simoncelli; 2) State “Solar Marketplace Assistance Program” to assist towns with solar energy; and 3) Proposed State legislation regarding housing. First Selectman Ridgway also responded to the public comment from Joanne Wojtusiak regarding the NHCOCG.

TAX REFUND REQUEST: First Selectman Ridgway moved to approve two tax refund requests for over payment of real estate tax: 1) \$44.25 and 2) \$356.55. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Joanne Wojtusiak followed up on her previous comment regarding the NHCOCG, and discussed proposed State regulations regarding zoning. Caroline Nastro commented on the proposed draft update to the Cornwall “Home Business” zoning regulations, and advocated for increased specificity in the draft.

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Berry
Administrative Assistant
Town of Cornwall