

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

Tuesday, March 2, 2021
7:30 p.m. – Remotely via Zoom

PRESENT: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway; Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey; Selectman Priscilla Pavel; Bridge Expert Roger Kane; Two members of the press; 17 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 February 8, 2021 Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen and February 16, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

COMMUNICATIONS: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway discussed the muddy conditions on Flat Rocks Road, and he urged people to take other routes, if possible, while traveling.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway moved to add bridge work with Roger Kane to the agenda. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS UPDATE: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway provided an update on the Covid-19 Pandemic: Rates of infection in Connecticut are declining, however please continue to take precaution by wearing a mask and social distancing. First Selectman Ridgway then commended and thanked CERT Volunteers Ali Lesch and Stephana Bottom for their hard work at the Cornwall Food Pantry. First Selectman Ridgway then moved to send Ali Lesch and Stephana Bottom each a gift card for \$50.00. Selectman Priscilla Pavel seconded, and the motion unanimously passed. First Selectman Ridgway also thanked Camp Mohawk for providing Cornwall residents with hot showers this past summer during the Isaias power outage of 2020. Finally, Covid Vaccine appointments can now be made by Connecticut residents aged 55 and over.

INTERNET SURVEY: Cornwall Internet Committee Chair, Gary Steinkohl, announced that the results of the internet survey are now available at www.cornwallct.org and the Cornwall Community Network. Mr. Steinkohl thanked the Board of Selectmen and all 275 residents who responded to the survey. The next step is a March 29, 2021 Town Forum with the Conservation Commission, Cornwall Association, and the Economic Development Commission, to review the results of the survey and answer questions. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway and Gary Steinkohl also discussed cellular phone service in Cornwall.

BUDGET: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway discussed the proposed 2021-2022 Budget. There have been some additional increase requests since the last Board of Finance meeting. Also, the Board of Education plans to present its budget to the Board of Finance on Thursday, March 11, 2021.

BRIDGES WITH ROGER KANE: First Selectman Ridgway and Bridge Expert Roger Kane talked about bridge work to be done this Summer. First Selectman Ridgway mentioned two bridges on Popple Swamp Road, one on West Drive, and one on the North end of Town Street. The planned work does not involve any structural changes. Concrete work and coating the deck with a sealant would extend the life of the bridges. First Selectman Ridgway also talked about removing the top guide-rail on the Cogswell Road Bridge and replacing it with something more minimalist like the rail on the Smith Place bridge in West Cornwall Village.

APPOINTMENTS EDC: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway moved to appoint Jane Herold and Duncan Webb to the Economic Development Commission. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey seconded and the motion unanimously passed.

CORNWALL BRIDGE TRAFFIC PLAN: First Selectman Ridgway discussed the preliminary proposal for changes to the traffic pattern at the intersection of Route 4 and Route 7 in Cornwall Bridge. The Board agreed to schedule a Special BoS meeting on April 12, 2021 to focus on the Traffic Plan. First Selectman Ridgway also expressed thanks to Cornwall resident Rick Lynn of the COG, who is planning on retiring this year.

APRIL TOWN MEETING: First Selectman Ridgway discussed scheduling a Town Meeting on April 23, 2021 to address the proposed sale of the 1) Firehouse Lot in West Cornwall, 2) Town Report, 3) Five Year Plan, 4) the Sydney Kaye Fund, and 5) Budget hearing. Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey and First Selectman Gordon Ridgway discussed a virtual vs. an in-person meeting, and ultimately the Board agreed that a virtual meeting would allow more non-vaccinated voters to attend.

WEST CORNWALL WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway stated that a Town Meeting to vote on a funding referendum is likely to be scheduled for some time in July 2021. If the referendum date can be set at least 3 weeks ahead of time, then absentee ballots can also be made available. There will be informational Town Meetings leading up to the referendum vote. The referendum language and explanatory texts are currently being developed.

HOUSING FORUM – MAY?: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway discussed scheduling a Town Housing Forum for early May 2021. It will be an informational forum to provide residents with an update on work being done by the Cornwall Housing Plan Committee. First Selectman Ridgway briefly discussed the current housing situation.

HOUSATONIC RR Co. VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN 2021: The Board discussed receiving the 2021 Vegetation Management Plan from the Housatonic RR. First Selectman Ridgway noted that the priority is to have the RR Co. remove the dead trees near the tracks.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Michelle Shipp asked the Board to keep crosswalks in mind when considering plans for the Route 4 / Route 7 intersection in Cornwall Bridge. Next, Joanne Wojtusiak made 3 comments: 1) Asked for the Town Budget to be re-organized to have a separate section for non-profit organizational support. 2) Asked for clarity about how residents should volunteer to be on a committee. 3) Requested a release of the internet survey raw data. First Selectman Ridgway responded to the first two comments from Joanne, and Johan Winsser of the Cornwall Internet Committee followed up on Joanne's 3rd question. Next, Hector Prud'homme asked 1) that the April 12, 2021 Cornwall Bridge Traffic Plan meeting be widely publicized in the Cornwall Chronicle and online, and 2) that exhibits to be shown at the Traffic Plan Forum be published in advance of the forum. Finally, Caroline Nastro commented on State bill HB6442 regarding internet providers, and a State public hearing regarding the internet on March 9, 2021. Caroline Nastro also talked about the recent meeting of the Litchfield County Cable TV Advisory Board with representatives from Optimum.

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Berry
Administrative Assistant
Town of Cornwall