

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

Tuesday, February 1, 2022  
7:30 p.m. – Via Zoom

PRESENT: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway; Selectman Priscilla Pavel; Selectwoman Janet Carlson; one member of the press; six 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 January 18, 2022 Regular Meeting and January 24, 2022 Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Selectwoman Janet Carlson seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

COMMUNICATIONS: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway reported that a winter storm is forecast for this weekend, and noted that residents can call Town Hall if they want to be added to an Emergency Call list. Someone from the town will call residents on the list to check on them when a major weather event occurs.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: First Selectman Ridgway moved to add WMC Engineers USDA Grant Application and Mobile Healthcare in Cornwall to the agenda. Selectman Priscilla Pavel seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS UPDATE: First Selectman Ridgway noted the Covid Positivity Rate in Connecticut is down from approximately 20% to 7%. However, Covid is still popping up in Cornwall. First Selectman Ridgway has set up an email account – [Cornwalltestquestions@gmail.com](mailto:Cornwalltestquestions@gmail.com) for residents to send inquiries regarding covid test kits supplied by the State.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN GOALS UPDATE: The Board of Selectmen discussed the following items related to the board's goals: (1) Forming a housing committee and appointing a housing advocate; (2) Sharon Hospital's filing to amend their 'certificate of need' required for the planned closure of maternity services; (3) Using ARPA funds to support Greenwood Counseling services; (4) the Cornwall Food Pantry; (5) Efforts by Selectwoman Janet Carlson to bring a Mobile Healthcare Van, vaccine clinics, and covid testing to Cornwall. The Board also discussed (6) the West Cornwall Waste Water plan. First, the Town is still waiting to hear whether or not Federal Community Project funding will be granted for the Waste Water Project. In the mean-time, WMC Engineers can re-apply on Cornwall's behalf to the USDA for additional / alternate funding. WMC Engineers has agreed to work on an hourly basis, not to exceed \$5,000, to re-apply to the USDA. First Selectman Ridgway Moved to authorize WMC to proceed with re-application to the USDA for funding, working on an hourly basis not to exceed \$5,000. Selectwoman Janet Carlson seconded, and the motion unanimously passed. The Board also discussed (7) the Transfer Station; (8) Optimum Fiber installation; (9) ARPA Funds; (10) the 2020 POCD Update; and (11) the Economic Development Committee's efforts to attract new residents and businesses.

APPOINTMENTS: First Selectman Ridgway moved to appoint Nancy Berry to fill a vacancy on the Conservation Commission that expires in 2023. Selectwoman Janet Carlson seconded, and the motion unanimously passed. Next, First Selectman Ridgway moved to appoint Michelle Shipp to fill Christine Gray's alternate position on Planning and Zoning expiring in 2023. (Christine Gray was elected as a regular member of P&Z in November 2021, leaving an alternate vacancy.)

Selectman Priscilla Pavel seconded, and the motion unanimously passed. Next, First Selectman Ridgway moved to appoint Richard Bramley to fill Roger Kane's vacancy on the Board of Assessment Appeals expiring in 2023. Selectwoman Janet Carlson seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

ZOOM, TOWN COMMISSION VIDEOS, YOUTUBE, ECT.: First Selectman Gordon Ridgway discussed a recent conversation with CT State FOI Public Education Officer, Tom Hennick, regarding compliance with videos of town meetings held via Zoom. There is legislation effective until April 2022 which requires towns to post videos of meetings on the agency's website for 45 days. First Selectman Ridgway noted that the Cornwall website is not run by the Town, but by a group of volunteers, so there may not be an official requirement for town agencies without a website to record and post zoom meetings. Also, there is no State requirement for a town to have its own website. First Selectman Ridgway thanked Richard Griggs for his volunteer work to record town committee meetings, and also thanked Rocco Botto for his volunteer work on [www.cornwallct.org](http://www.cornwallct.org). The Board and Rocco Botto also discussed a possible index and archive format for the minutes, agendas and videos on the website. Richard Griggs stated that he plans to continue making videos of public town meetings and community events.

BUDGET 2022/2023: The Board discussed the 2022/2023 proposed budget. There are proposed increases for health insurance, municipal solid waste, and the Fire Department - totaling a 4.6% increase that will be mostly offset by a reduction in debt servicing and capital expenditures. Selectman Priscilla Pavel moved to send the Board's draft budget to the Board of Finance ahead of the BoF regular meeting on February 17, 2022.

WMC ENGINEERS USDA GRANT APPLICATION: (Discussed during the Board of Selectmen Goals Update, supra)

MOBILE HEALTHCARE IN CORNWALL: (Discussed during the Board of Selectmen Goals Update, supra)

TAX REFUND RECCOMENDATION: Gordon Ridgway moved to grant the tax refund as recommended by Cornwall Tax Collector Jean Bouteiller for \$803.78 due to a duplicate payment of real estate tax. First Selectman Ridgway thanked Tax Collector Jean Bouteiller.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Bill Berry applauded further utilization of a separate, non-governmental entity to record and post videos of public town meetings, and urged that the videos be made available for several years rather than the minimum 45-day requirement. Leila Hawken of the Lakeville Journal asked when the Board of Finance meeting to consider the proposed 2022/2023 Budget is scheduled. First Selectman Ridgway and Selectwoman Carlson responded, saying the next Board of Finance meeting is scheduled for February 17, 2022 @ 7:00 PM. Leila Hawken also asked about the increase in the town budget draft of 4.6%. First Selectman Ridgway answered that the increase would be offset by a reduction in debt servicing and capital projects. Selectwoman Carlson asked First Selectman Ridgway to add an item to the next Board of Selectman Meeting Agenda: 'Presentation by Community Health CEO'.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Berry  
Administrative Assistant  
Town of Cornwall