

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

Tuesday, February 15, 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 February 1, 2022 Regular of the Board of Selectmen. Selectwoman Janet Carlson seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

COMMUNICATIONS: First Selectman Ridgway announced that dirt roads in Cornwall are currently restricted to local traffic due to muddy conditions associated with the winter thaw.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: Selectwoman Janet Carlson moved to add the communication from Jocelyn Ayer regarding the community engagement mini-grant program from Litchfield County Center for Housing Opportunity (LC-CHO) First Selectman Ridgway noted that this could already be covered under “Housing Plan Follow Up”.

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS UPDATE: First Selectman Ridgway reported that new covid cases and hospitalizations have decreased, but there are still some cases in town. Vaccinations are still available locally.

PRIMARY CARE IN CORNWALL: The Board of Selectmen and Joanne Boduas, CEO of Community Health and Wellness located in Torrington and Winstead, discussed the possibility of sending their mobile primary care unit to Cornwall on a regular basis beginning later this year. The mobile care unit (B.E.T.T.Y. – Brining Exceptional Treatment to You) currently visits the Town of Sharon a few days a week.

MIRA CONTRACT: First Selectman Ridgway reported on the scheduled June 2022 closing of the MIRA garbage incinerator in Hartford. Cornwall has until the end of March 2022 to sign a new contract with MIRA to provide garbage disposal services by trucking waste out of state. First Selectman Ridgway stated the contract will be voted on at the regular Board of Selectmen meeting scheduled for March 1, 2022. The Board and Transfer Station Manager Ted Larson discussed recycling, as well as potential composting options. Ted Larson reported that current costs for taking material to a compost facility would be approximately \$600 dollars more per ton than Cornwall’s current tipping fees. First Selectman Ridgway also noted that State Representative Maria Horn has been in discussion with other State legislators investigating possible in-State solutions to the planned MIRA incinerator closure.

BUDGET 22/23 HEARING – FEB. 17, 2022: The Board of Selectmen will present their FY 2022/2023 Budget to the Board of Finance during the BoF Regular meeting scheduled February 17, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

HOUSING PLAN FOLLOW UP: First Selectman Ridgway discussed the Housing Plan and some steps to implement the plan including setting up a Housing Study Group, Cornwall Housing Commission, and a Community Housing Trust. The Housing Study Group would make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen regarding formation of a Housing Commission and Housing Trust. Next, The Board discussed applying for the community engagement mini-grant program from Litchfield County Center for Housing Opportunity (LC-CHO). The grant is for \$5,000, and would go towards a Cornwall Housing Study Group. First Selectman Ridgway noted that a Housing Study Group could use the grant funds to aid investigation into creating a Community Housing Trust and setting up a micro loan program. The Board also discussed the need for additional housing options in Cornwall. Selectwoman Janet Carlson moved to authorize First Selectman Ridgway to apply for the mini-grant program from LC-CHO. Selectman Priscilla Pavel seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

HOUSATONIC RR VEGETATION MANAGEMENT 2022: The Board discussed the Housatonic Rail Road Vegetation Management Plan for 2022, which was received by letter earlier this month. The rail road is planning to begin spraying herbicide along the rail road tracks in March. First Selectman Ridgway discussed writing to the rail road's herbicide contractor and the State DOT to request "no spray zones" in Cornwall Bridge and in West Cornwall village. Also, First Selectman Ridgway discussed renewing the request for the rail road to take down the dead trees along the tracks. The Board also discussed writing letters to the head of CT DOT and DEEP.

2/10/2022 NHCOG MEETING REVIEW: First Selectman Ridgway reported that the NHCOG discussed the June 2022 closure of the MIRA municipal waste incinerator in Hartford. Also, at the NHCOG meeting: the head of CT Office of Policy and Management and a representative from the CT DOT discussed upcoming federal infrastructure funds that could soon be available for bridges and culverts.

APPOINTMENTS: First Selectman Ridgway moved to appoint Barbara Wolkowitz to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Selectman Priscilla Pavel seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

TAX REFUND RECCOMENDATION: Gordon Ridgway moved to grant the tax refund as recommended by Cornwall Tax Collector Jean Bouteiller for \$4,465.58 due to a duplicate payment of real estate tax. Selectman Priscilla Pavel seconded, and the motion unanimously passed. First Selectman Ridgway thanked Tax Collector Jean Bouteiller.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Anna Timell asked what herbicide would be sprayed along the rail road tracks for vegetation management purposes? First Selectman Ridgway said he didn't have that information on hand, but would inquire and respond later. Leila Hawken of the Lakeville Journal asked for the name of the housing group providing the mini grant opportunity. First Selectman Ridgway stated that mini grant would come from the Litchfield County Center for Housing Opportunity.

The meeting adjourned at 8:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Berry
Administrative Assistant
Town of Cornwall