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1 **STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE
PLANTATIONS**

2

3 **PROCEEDINGS AT COVENTRY FIRE DISTRICT**

4

5 **IN RE: SPECIAL MEETING**

6

7 **DATE: OCTOBER 12, 2004**

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

8 **PLACE: COVENTRY MIDDLE SCHOOL
 COVENTRY, RI**

9

10

CONRAD BURNS MODERATOR

11

JOHN GOLOMB DISTRICT CLERK

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STANLEY MRUK FIRE CHIEF

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1 **(MEETING COMMENCED AT 7:31 P.M.)**

2 **MODERATOR BURNS: Ladies and gentlemen,**

3 **please be seated. I would like to have everyone in**

4 **the room except the police officers seated, please.**

5 **Ladies and gentlemen, taxpayers and nontaxpayers of**

6 **the Coventry Fire District, I would like to welcome**

7 **you here to this special meeting. I'm going to call**

8 **the meeting to order to the Pledge of Allegiance and a**

9 **moment of silence and have the reading of the call of**

10 **the meeting in that order, all right. I ask you to**

11 **please stand and pledge allegiance to the flag of the**

12 **United States of America.**

13 **(Pledge recited, moment of silence**

14 **observed)**

15 **AUDIENCE MEMBER: Moderator, point of**

16 **order.**

17 **MODERATOR BURNS: I haven't called the**

18 **meeting yet. I call the clerk of the district for the**

19 **call of the meeting.**

20 **AUDIENCE MEMBER: Excuse me, please make**

21 **an announcement as to where all the emergency exits**

22 **are, please.**

23 **MODERATOR BURNS: I will. Emergency**

24 **exits exist to this side of the stairwell next to this**

1 officer here, two ramps over there, and one ramp off
2 the stage over here, there are double doors here on
3 the stage. You have to come up the stairs and go to
4 the door. Any questions as to where the exit ramps
5 are? (No response) I'm going to ask you to remain
6 seated at all times during the meeting so we can keep
7 the aisleways clear. Mr. Clerk, call the meeting.

8 CLERK GOLOMB: Good evening, ladies and
9 gentlemen. Notice of Coventry Fire District, in
10 accordance with a petition duly signed by the

11 **necessary number of taxable inhabitants in the**

12 **district and in conformance with the charter of the**

13 **district, a special meeting will be held on Tuesday,**

14 **October 12, 2004, at seven p.m., Coventry Middle**

15 **School auditorium for the purposes as follows: Now,**

16 **we have here eleven resolutions, we have four bylaw**

17 **changes, which will be read upon the presentation by**

18 **the moderator or others, so I'll just say that there**

19 **are eleven resolutions and four bylaw changes, to save**

20 **time, because I think it's going to be a little**

21 **lengthy. Only the taxable inhabitants will be allowed**

22 **to participate in the meeting. We have posted this**

23 **notice in the appropriate places. Thank you.**

5

1 posted this with the Secretary of State in accordance
2 with the new state law?

3 CLERK: Yes. There is a new state law
4 that came into effect first of July that all meetings
5 must be posted with the Secretary of State and we have
6 done that. Thank you.

7 MODERATOR BURNS: Can you attest to the
8 fact that they've been properly posted.

9 CLERK: I attest to that. I have the
10 attestation with me.

11 **MODERATOR BURNS: That being done I**
12 **declare the meeting open. Sir, if you want to speak,**
13 **come down to the stage to the microphone, and I'm**
14 **going to have to read the first rule of order so**
15 **everybody understands. In order to speak you must**
16 **come down to the microphone, give your name and**
17 **address the first time in such a way as the**
18 **transcriptionist can hear you, all right, and then**
19 **when you come down subsequently you only have to give**
20 **your name. Go ahead.**

21 **MR. CALCI: Keith Calci, C-A-L-C-I,**
22 **Washington Street. I object that the videographer and**
23 **stenographer who have been engaged by the petitioners**

24 are not being allowed into the meeting, and I appeal

6

1 the decision of the Chair to exclude the videographer
2 and stenographer.

3 MODERATOR BURNS: Right now you're out of
4 order. When I read the rules of order which are
5 required by state law that I read the rules, you can
6 then object and raise that question and vote on it.
7 Okay?

8 MR. CALCI: Okay.

9 MR. KIANELLI: Point of order.

10 **MODERATOR BURNS: Sir, come to the**
11 **podium.**

12 **MR. KIANELLI: Paul Kianelli (phonetic),**
13 **4 Jasmine Court, Coventry. I request that the**
14 **moderator step down as disqualified based on the**
15 **following points: The moderator is not lawfully voted**
16 **in here inasmuch as the moderator is not an inhabitant**
17 **of the fire district; the moderator has not been**
18 **lawfully elected; the moderator is in conflict of**
19 **interest inasmuch as he also serves as auditor of the**
20 **fire district; the moderator has breached his duty of**
21 **impartiality by meeting with legal counsel for the**
22 **district administration to plot a campaign to defeat**

23 the resolutions lawfully before this assembly. Can I
24 have your answer, Mr. Moderator?

7

1 MODERATOR BURNS: I'm going to object to
2 your point of record. I am lawfully registered with
3 the board of canvassers in Coventry, in the Coventry
4 Fire District, I have proof of that if you want to see
5 it. I'm a taxable inhabitant of the district.

6 MR. KIANELLI: I disagree, but you're
7 refusing to step down?

8 MODERATOR BURNS: Yes, I am. Ladies and
9 gentlemen, rules of order for this meeting: Only

10 taxable inhabitants of the fire district are allowed
11 to participate in the meeting; you must be seated in
12 the voting area of the room; all individuals attending
13 the meeting who are not taxable inhabitants are here
14 to observe and must refrain from any form of
15 participation in the meeting, including any shouting,
16 clapping, cheering or other distraction or
17 intimidation of the participants of the meetings; all
18 nonparticipants must remain in the area assigned to
19 them for nontaxable inhabitants; a copy of the minutes
20 will be produced by the stenographer, we have an
21 official stenographer tonight, and will become a
22 record of the meeting and as such will be available on

23 the open records statute as well as the web page of
24 the Secretary of State; all taxable inhabitants

8

1 seeking to be heard will seek recognition of the
2 Chair, come to the front of the room, step up to the
3 mic. The first time you come to speak please give
4 your name and address in a loud and clear manner for
5 the stenographer to record, any subsequent trip to the
6 mic please give your name. Each participant will be
7 given the opportunity to speak on each issue. In
8 order to avoid repetition, please try not to repeat

9 **what has been said. Inasmuch as we have a lengthy**
10 **agenda it is requested that your comments be directed**
11 **to the crux of the matter; I'm going to ask that all**
12 **cell phones be turned off as they're a distraction;**
13 **and the final rule of order is that no recording**
14 **devices will be allowed in the meeting as they may be**
15 **viewed as intimidation to voters. Are the rules of**
16 **the chair understood? There being no objection to**
17 **that, we'll proceed to the --**

18 **MR. CALCI: Point of order.**

19 **MODERATOR BURNS: Okay, Mr. Calci.**

20 **MR. CALCI: Keith Calci. I again,**

21 **Mr. Moderator, would object that the videographer and**

22 stenographer who have been engaged by the petitioners
23 are not being allowed into this meeting. I appeal the
24 decision of the chair to exclude the videographer and

9

1 the petitioner's stenographer.

2 MODERATOR BURNS: As I explained the
3 rules, the videoing of voters in the process of voting
4 is an intimidation and that's why I put the rule in
5 place. I have the right to make the rule. You have
6 the right to overturn the rule. In order to overturn
7 the rule you have to make a motion to overturn the
8 rule, you have to have a second and vote on it and it

9 is subject to debate. Do you wish to make that
10 motion?

11 MR. CALCI: I do wish to make the motion.

12 MODERATOR BURNS: We have a motion on the
13 floor to overturn my ruling that no video equipment be
14 allowed in the room. Do we have a second? We have a
15 second. Come up to the microphone.

16 MS. MATTHEWS: Shirley Matthews, 566
17 Knotty Oak Road. I second Mr. Calci's motion to have
18 video equipment allowed in the room and taping.

19 MODERATOR BURNS: Thank you. Any
20 discussion on the motion? There being none, I sense
21 you are ready to vote. Those in favor of allowing the

22 room to be videotaped will signify by saying aye.

23 (VOICE VOTE)

24 MODERATOR BURNS: All opposed signify by

10

1 nay.

2 (VOICE VOTE)

3 MODERATOR BURNS: I know it wasn't going

4 to be an easy night. All in favor of videotaping

5 please raise your hand and keep it high.

6 (COUNT TAKEN)

7 MODERATOR BURNS: I count 70 for the

8 affirmative. Those opposed raise your hands.

9 (COUNT TAKEN)

10 MODERATOR BURNS: I count 65 in the
11 negative, the motion carries.

12 MR. CALCI: Thank you, Mr. Moderator.

13 MODERATOR BURNS: I would like at this
14 time to introduce the chief of the district, Chief
15 Stanley J. Mruk for a short reading.

16 CHIEF MRUK: Good evening, ladies and
17 gentlemen, my fellow taxpayers. I have been a chief
18 in the Coventry Fire District for about 50 years.
19 That's a long time. We have battled brush fires,
20 structural fires, snow, rain, wind, heat and cold to

21 provide the service and protection that you deserve.

22 We have washed cars to pay for apparatus and

23 equipment. I have persuaded industry to aid us in the

24 purchase of any equipment, specialized equipment to

11

1 accomplish our goal of good service to you, our

2 taxpayers. I have twisted politicians' arms and legs

3 to bring about a centralized fire alarm. Yet whenever

4 we ask our fire district to dig deeper for equipment

5 and manpower, you have always said yes. Tonight, it

6 is my solemn responsibility to ask you to say no to

7 the questions being brought before you.

8 **For the past several years we have been under**
9 **attack by a group committed to destroying the district**
10 **for their own reasons. We have been threatened,**
11 **heaped with every imaginable inspection from state and**
12 **federal agencies because we believe in management's**
13 **right to run the district, not the will of the union**
14 **and its friends. These actions have cost us money**
15 **that would have been better spent in services to you.**

16 **AUDIENCE MEMBER: Excuse me. Can we give**
17 **the videographer time to set up his equipment?**

18 **MODERATOR BURNS: You interrupted the**
19 **chief.**

20 **CHIEF MRUK: This group has destroyed our**

21 volunteer fire fighting staff by threats and innuendo.

22 They promised that if we agreed to a union contract

23 they would get the volunteers back. They did not

24 bring back one volunteer, and now seek to ban

12

1 volunteers from serving on the department.

2 They say if I quit these things would stop, but

3 they have never kept their word about anything.

4 Tonight they have the audacity to ask you to pay for

5 their illegal acts, as ruled by the courts, and I ask

6 you now to say no.

7 I am old and I would like to retire, but the
8 actions of the second deputy and this group have
9 caused me to stay on and fight for the taxpayer and
10 the district. You can't fight fires and service
11 people by walking away, and I intend to leave my job
12 as soon as it can be placed in good hands for the best
13 interest of the taxpayers and the district. Thank
14 you.

15 MODERATOR BURNS: Thank you, Chief. In a
16 special meeting the only thing we're allowed to
17 discuss and vote on is those items that were called
18 for in the call of the meeting. I'm going to read
19 each one of those resolutions. At the end of a

20 resolution I'm going to ask for a motion to consider
21 the question and a second. That will put the motion
22 on the floor and we can discuss it. For your
23 information, I have printed enough paper ballots for
24 each one of these questions that you can ballot by

13

1 paper or you can ballot by voice vote or ballot by
2 hand. It's not easy to do a voice vote. It's not
3 easy to do hands, but we can do it. I do have
4 separate slips for each one of you for each one of the
5 motions so when we come to vote on the first one,
6 we'll pick a method of voting and go from there.

7 **The first resolution, resolved, that the**
8 **treasurer surrender forthwith any and all checkbooks,**
9 **drafts, notes, invoices, receipts, bills, related**
10 **correspondence, and any and all documents relating to**
11 **the administration of the Coventry Fire District.**

12 **You hear the resolution, the Chair calls for a**
13 **motion to consider the resolution. Mr. Calci, to the**
14 **front of the room, please.**

15 **MR. CALCI: Keith Calci. I would like to**
16 **make a motion, I would like to make the motion to**
17 **accept that resolution.**

18 **MODERATOR BURNS: A motion to consider**
19 **the issue. Is there a second?**

20 **MR. BRICKER: Fred Bricker (phonetic), 89**

21 **Read Avenue. I would like to second the motion.**

22 **MODERATOR BURNS: Thank you. We have a**

23 **motion duly made and seconded on the floor to consider**

24 **the resolution. Discussion on the resolution. Anyone**

14

1 **wishing to speak for the resolution? Are you speaking**

2 **for the resolution?**

3 **MS. KOWAL: I have a question about the**

4 **resolution?**

5 **MODERATOR BURNS: Go ahead.**

6 MS. KOWAL: My name is Diane Kowal, I
7 live at 95 East Shore Drive in Coventry and I don't
8 know who we're voting to surrender the records to. It
9 doesn't say, it says that the treasurer surrender
10 forthwith, but it never says who they're going to be
11 surrendered to.

12 MODERATOR BURNS: I think later when the
13 resolution's passed you find that means surrendering
14 to an auditor. The resolution doesn't say. She would
15 surrender her records to the chief's office in the
16 station. Those records now exist in her home, she
17 works out of her home. So the motion is made to get
18 the records into the station.

19 MS. KOWAL: Thank you.

20 MODERATOR BURNS: Does that answer your

21 question?

22 MS. KOWAL: Yes.

23 MODERATOR BURNS: Anyone who wishes to

24 speak against the motion?

15

1 CHIEF MRUK: Chief Stanley Mruk, 34

2 Blackrock Road, Coventry, Rhode Island. Passing this

3 resolution would give someone a blank check to rifle

4 through all of the district's financial information

5 back to the beginning of the district. This

6 resolution doesn't tell us who that someone will be,
7 it doesn't tell us how long the records will be gone,
8 or where they are going. It doesn't tell us what all
9 of this information will be used for. And there's one
10 other critical piece of information that is missing,
11 how much will this review cost?

12 Without knowing who will be looking through these
13 records, how long it will take and what that person
14 charges, we can't even guess at the cost. We have
15 already asked the auditor general to come in and do a
16 complete review of our books. He has advised us that
17 he's unable to do so in the immediate future due to
18 his work load, but has offered guidance in the

19 **securing of qualified auditors and a selection**

20 **process.**

21 **MODERATOR BURNS: Thank you, Chief.**

22 **Anyone who wants to speak for the motion? (No**

23 **response) Anyone who wants to speak against the**

24 **motion? There being no motion to speak, the gentleman**

16

1 **can be seated. There is no further discussion on the**

2 **motion, the Chair senses you're ready to vote.**

3 **I can't have the treasurer act as a tallier for**

4 **this one. If Ms. Murphy, you would have Ms. LaRue**

5 **come in and sit down here. Mr. Clerk, I'm going to**
6 **ask you to act as a tallier on this one and I'm going**
7 **to ask for a show of hands, I'll tell you when.**

8 **Ms. Murphy, you can have a seat here. I can't ask you**
9 **to count the votes on your job. Ms. LaRue and**

10 **Mr. Golomb will count, Ms. LaRue, you will count the**
11 **center section. It will be a show of hands.**

12 **Mr. Golomb will count the far section over there.**

13 **All in favor of passage of the resolution will**
14 **signify by raising your arm.**

15 **(COUNT TAKEN)**

16 **MODERATOR BURNS: Do you have a number?**

17 **CLERK GOLOMB: 25 here, 2 here.**

18 MS. LaRUE: 41.

19 MODERATOR BURNS: Those opposed to the
20 resolution will signify by raising their arm.

21 (COUNT TAKEN)

22 MODERATOR BURNS: The motion fails to
23 pass by a vote of 140 to 68. I'll now read the second
24 resolution.

17

1 Second resolution, resolved that any and all
2 official records and/or documents belonging to the
3 Coventry Fire District be surrendered forthwith by any
4 person maintaining such records and/or documents,

5 including any elected or appointed official to the
6 Coventry Fire District, to the Board of Engineers.

7 The Chair will ask for a motion to entertain this
8 motion. Anyone wishing to move this motion?

9 MR. McALLISTER: Joseph McAllister,
10 98 Bates Avenue. I will make a motion that we
11 consider the Question Number 2.

12 MODERATOR BURNS: Motion duly made to
13 consider the question, is there a second?

14 MS. CALCI: Karen Calci, 789 Washington
15 Street. I second the motion.

16 MODERATOR BURNS: We have a motion
17 duly made and seconded to consider the resolution I

18 just read. Does anyone wish to speak before the
19 resolution? Ma'am?

20 MS. KOWAL: Diane Kowal, 95 East Shore

21 Drive, I again have a question. I do not know who the

22 Board of Engineers are. Who makes up this board, what

23 are their positions?

24 MODERATOR BURNS: Okay. The Board of

18

1 Engineers is the governing board of the fire

2 department, made up of the chief, the first assistant

3 chief and the second assistant chief.

4 **MS. KOWAL:** So, in terms of education,
5 **none of them are actually engineers?**

6 **MODERATOR BURNS:** Engineer is a term used
7 **for a position.**

8 **MS. KOWAL:** Thank you.

9 **MODERATOR BURNS:** Anyone wishing to speak
10 **against the motion? Chief?**

11 **CHIEF MRUK:** Stanley Mruk. This
12 **resolution is even worse than the first one. This**
13 **gives someone complete and total access to every piece**
14 **of paper that the district has. We don't know who**
15 **will have access to this information or what it will**
16 **be used for. We certainly don't know how much**

17 gathering and reviewing this information will cost.

18 They did this already a few months ago and we couldn't

19 operate the district. They took all our records and

20 wouldn't let us do our jobs. The court said it was

21 illegal.

22 MODERATOR BURNS: Thank you, Chief.

23 Anyone wishing to speak for the motion? Gentleman on

24 the right-hand side please come down.

19

1 MR. WARREN: Robert Warren, 5 Bates

2 Avenue. I'm the second deputy chief that the chief

3 referred to, okay. I think we need to explain

4 something about these resolutions before we go any
5 further so we all understand where we are and where
6 we're going with these. These resolutions were passed
7 at another meeting and where these checkbooks are
8 going and where these documents are going, they're
9 going to an examiner, okay, and an attorney that was
10 requested by taxpayers of this district. They're not
11 going out in the wind, they're not going to someone to
12 write a blank check. We need to understand, this was
13 requested by a group of taxpayers to get this job done
14 and completed. As I have sat with the chief numerous
15 times about this, hoping to clear this up and to
16 answer any questions and not to misinform you people.

17 We're not hiding anything, nor do I think the chief is
18 hiding anything. What I think we need to do is
19 understand is a group of you people, not everyone here
20 now, but a group of you people have asked for this
21 examination and that's why we hired an examiner to do
22 this. It's not an audit, it's not just about money
23 and it's not a union issue. It's about safety, it's
24 about what the taxpayers requested. So hopefully we

20

1 can get this done and move on to the next topic. Any
2 questions that I can answer for you people?

3 **MODERATOR BURNS:** Sorry, sir, excuse me,
4 through the Chair if you have a question. Do you wish
5 to speak to the deputy through the chair? Ask me your
6 question.

7 **MR. GINAITT:** My name is Ted Ginaitt
8 (phonetic), 657 Washington Street. I wanted to know
9 why it was a select group of taxpayers, why wasn't it
10 all the taxpayers?

11 **MR. WARREN:** Okay, it wasn't a select
12 few, it was a meeting of some taxpayers that came to
13 the fire station, the meeting was posted properly,
14 maybe it was twenty, maybe it was ten, I don't
15 remember the exact number. It wasn't that it was

16 hidden or it wasn't that it wasn't posted improperly.

17 There was X amount of people that read it and came to

18 the meeting. It wasn't just a select few.

19 MODERATOR BURNS: Anyone who wishes to

20 speak against the motion. Against the motion?

21 MR. CODY: Gary Cody, 29 Bateen Street,

22 Coventry. I'm assuming that there is more people here

23 tonight than there were at the meeting you're

24 referring to, so if this motion is going to pass or

21

1 not pass, it should be done here tonight when a

2 majority of the taxpayers in this district are

3 attending this meeting, not ten or twenty or whatever
4 the number was. We should have a say-so in what
5 happens in our fire district. Nobody is saying Chief
6 Mruk is perfect but for 50 years he's given us good
7 service. I don't think our business should be taken
8 outside our fire district to anybody else.

9 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Mr. Moderator, I would
10 like to stop the clapping, you said no clapping at the
11 beginning.

12 MODERATOR BURNS: I said no clapping by
13 the nonparticipants.

14 AUDIENCE MEMBER: You said no clapping.

15 MODERATOR BURNS: No clapping by the

16 nonparticipants. These taxpayers can clap all they
17 want. They can clap to the moon and back.

18 MR. CODY: I'm not going to stand here
19 tonight and tell you that I think everything is
20 perfect with our fire district. I think there are
21 changes that need to be made but I think they can be
22 done within our district, that our records, that our
23 records do not have to be sent to outside people to be
24 gone over and perused at their disposal and at our

22

1 cost. If we have a problem in our fire district,

2 let's keep it where it is, in our fire district and as
3 taxpayers if we stick together I think we can solve
4 our problems. Thank you.

5 MODERATOR BURNS: Anyone wishing to speak
6 for the motion?

7 MR. KIANELLI: Paul Kianelli. I'm glad
8 to actually see this many people turn out. We had a
9 number of meetings for the last three years and we
10 only had a small group of people that actually showed
11 up. I'm glad you have an interest, however if you had
12 been looking for all this information for three years
13 like we have, you would realize that the chief has not
14 given us access to any of these records. That's why

15 there has been so many court filings against him and
16 still we don't have the documents that we requested.
17 If there is nothing to hide, I don't know why as
18 taxpayers we can't see these records. I've met the
19 chief on a number of times and I've never been able to
20 get any records out of him that I requested. I just
21 don't understand that as a taxpayer. I think I should
22 deserve more. If we're worrying about wasting money,
23 I don't know why we paid Kinder's firm here almost
24 \$45,000 to prepare for this meeting.

23

1 **MODERATOR BURNS:** Please speak to the

2 issue. So the issue here is this resolution.

3 MR. KIANELLI: If you understand how a

4 fire district is run, it's run by the three board

5 members of the engineers. The chief and two other

6 gentlemen who are frontline officers with the

7 department. These other two ranking officers in this

8 department feel that at this time the chief cannot

9 perform his job to protect the community and they have

10 decided, the two of them, to go against the chief and

11 they outvoted him.

12 MODERATOR BURNS: Speak to the

13 resolution. The resolution is turning over the

14 records of the fire district.

15 **MR. KIANELLI: I thought I was. This**

16 **lady here also had a question.**

17 **MODERATOR BURNS: She had a question, who**

18 **was the Board of Engineers. Please address the issue.**

19 **MR. KIANELLI: Well, like I said before,**

20 **if there is nothing to be hidden, I don't know why the**

21 **taxpayers can't see the records. And if anybody had**

22 **gone to these previous meetings, you would have**

23 **realized we've got competent people that these two**

24 **gentlemen hired officially at another meeting to go**

1 over these records so there would be no discrepancies,
2 there would be no issues, and if they find nothing,
3 I'll be the first to go away. But you know what, as a
4 taxpayer, if I can't find out or get answers where my
5 taxes are going, and that my family is safe in this
6 district, then I want to ask some questions and I
7 expect answers, and for the last three years I haven't
8 been able to get answers from Chief Mruk and I don't
9 feel my family is safe in this district as of right
10 now.

11 MODERATOR BURNS: The Chair is going to
12 recognize Chief Mruk. Ladies and gentlemen, I'm going
13 to ask you to do me a favor. It's warm, this is going

14 to be a long night, if the booing doesn't happen we're
15 better people for it. Thank you. Chief Mruk, please.

16 CHIEF MRUK: Mr. Kianelli came and I
17 offered him records, 15 cents a page, that's the open
18 records law in the state. I couldn't give it to him
19 for nothing. He came back, gave me a big order,
20 whatever it was, first hour is free. I'm very
21 familiar with the open records law, because I learned,
22 because we violated it and then we had to comply with
23 the law. And I've always complied with the law.
24 Another taxpayer came in, and we complied with the

1 law. And the records of what they paid are in the
2 treasurer's office and they're there, and we've
3 complied with every question they had, believe me.

4 But this man and in regards to this resolution always
5 had a question and I've always served him well, and
6 the meeting they're talking about was the meeting that
7 the judge ruled illegal and I wasn't there at that
8 meeting. There was a secret meeting done. That is
9 the truth.

10 MODERATOR BURNS: Anyone who wants to
11 speak for the motion?

12 MR. CALCI: Keith Calci. The secret
13 meeting Chief Mruk referred to wasn't secret, it was

14 properly posted in the fire station. He wasn't
15 present because he chose not to be there. He didn't
16 call the meeting, that's what the judge ruled, that he
17 has to call the meeting.

18 That's pretty sad because there are two other
19 chiefs on this district that want to run the district
20 properly, want some accountability and want some say
21 in how the district business is done, but the chief
22 won't allow it. He will allow just himself to do
23 that. All we're looking for is some checks and
24 balances to find out where our money is going.

1 **The auditor, who I disagree with, he is not a**
2 **certified CPA, he's audited our books for how many**
3 **years. We don't know they're accurate records.**
4 **That's all we're looking for, is that it's accurate**
5 **records, make sure everything is right in line where**
6 **it belongs, and the other changes are so it's equal**
7 **government. That's all it is. It's not about going**
8 **after the chief or anybody. It's getting the other**
9 **chiefs to have an equal say on the board. Any other**
10 **board in any fire district at any fire department in**
11 **any town works that way. It's an equal say, it's not**
12 **a dictatorship such as it is here.**

13 **MODERATOR BURNS: Anybody that wants to**
14 **speak against the motion?**

15 **MR. TERRACIANO: My name is Dominick**

16 **Terraciano, I live at 5 Bowl View Avenue, Coventry.**

17 **Getting back to the basics of this Resolution**

18 **Number 2, I think we're getting away from it with all**

19 **this political rambling here. It comes down to the**

20 **fact of turning over records to whomever for whatever**

21 **purpose, quote/unquote, to make sure everything is**

22 **kosher. The records are there, the records are**

23 **available.**

24 **The records were asked for by, as was previously**

1 mentioned, certain taxpayers, individuals whom are not
2 here tonight. Well, the rest of the taxpayers are
3 here tonight and if the ones who originally called for
4 these records at some previous meeting are not
5 available, then I don't see why we should have to turn
6 over our district's paperwork to a foreign entity for
7 any purpose. Let us decide it here whether it should
8 be turned over or not. If the people can't be here to
9 speak up for it, like the previous gentleman that was
10 here says we shouldn't turn things over, and things
11 are going well, that's fine. Regardless, those who
12 requested it, stand forward. Those who are against

13 it, make yourself known. Thank you.

14 MODERATOR BURNS: Thank you, sir. Anyone

15 else who wants to speak against the motion? Or for

16 the motion? Please come forward.

17 MS. CHAMPAGNE: Gayle Champagne, 2 Old

18 Hill Road, Coventry. Everyone keeps saying that we're

19 surrendering these records to some mythical person,

20 but within the resolution it says we're surrounding

21 them to the Board of Engineers. So, we're actually

22 giving the records to Chief Mruk and Mr. Warren and

23 the other first chief by the resolution; am I not

24 correct?

1 **MODERATOR BURNS:** That's what the
2 resolution calls for.

3 **MS. CHAMPAGNE:** So it's not to some
4 outside person, it's to the Board of Engineers?

5 **MODERATOR BURNS:** That is the resolution,
6 you're correct. Anyone else who wishes to be heard or
7 not for the resolution? There being none, I sense
8 you're ready to vote. I'm going to ask Ms. Murphy and
9 Ms. LaRue to act as counters. Ms. Murphy, you will
10 count this side, Ms. LaRue, you have the center aisle
11 again. All in favor of the passage of this resolution

12 will signify by raising your arm to tally it.

13 (COUNT TAKEN)

14 MODERATOR BURNS: All those opposed to
15 the resolution will raise your arm.

16 (COUNT TAKEN)

17 MODERATOR BURNS: You can lower your
18 hands now. The motion fails, 63 to 131, 131 in the
19 negative. Third resolution.

20 MR. GORRIE: Point of order,

21 Mr. Moderator? William Gorrie (phonetic), 43 Red Oak
22 Drive, Coventry. I would like to make it clear what
23 just happened in this room.

24 MODERATOR BURNS: You're rising to a

1 point of order, address the Chair.

2 MR. GORRIE: If you would like to speak

3 for me, Mr. Burns, what am I about to say?

4 MODERATOR BURNS: Do you have a point of

5 order?

6 MR. GORRIE: Thank you. Please explain

7 to the voters present that they have just voted down

8 the two deputy chiefs sharing information with the

9 chief in the department.

10 MODERATOR BURNS: I'll make that

11 assumption.

12 **MR. GORRIE: Is that not the gist of what**
13 **we just voted on?**

14 **MODERATOR BURNS: No.**

15 **MR. GORRIE: The motion that we just**
16 **voted on, sir, was that the records do not have to be**
17 **shared with the two chief operating officers that this**
18 **man runs the department with. I just want it made as**
19 **a matter of record, ladies and gentlemen, that that is**
20 **what you voted on.**

21 **MODERATOR BURNS: Excuse me. Please be**
22 **seated. Please be nice. Be seated, sir. Be seated.**
23 **Sir, be seated.**

24 **MR. GORRIE: Officer, I tell you what, I**

1 just made a statement, a point of order at a public
2 meeting and I was told to sit down by another member
3 of the audience. Now I know that what I said might
4 not be popular, but as a taxpayer in this town I have
5 a right to say it.

6 MODERATOR BURNS: Mr. Ginaitt, you're out
7 of order. Sir, I apologize for someone speaking out
8 of order. You rose to a point of order, you made no
9 point of order, you made an announcement. The two
10 resolutions that we just had said that we didn't turn

11 the records over, it doesn't bar anybody from the
12 records. The records are open.

13 Resolution Number 3, resolved that there shall be
14 conducted a compliance examination of the
15 administration, operation and management of the
16 Coventry Fire District by the Board of Engineers to
17 effectuate its obligations pursuant to Chapter 806,
18 Section 4 as amended, and Article 3, Section 2 of the
19 District Bylaws. The purpose of such compliance
20 examination shall be determined if the Coventry Fire
21 District is presently or in the past in compliance
22 with applicable statutes, ordinances, rules and
23 regulations and best practices. It is the further

24 objective of this examination to make recommendations

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1 for administrative, systemic and structural changes to
2 the practices and procedures of the Coventry Fire
3 District to ensure efficient and effective compliance
4 with applicable statutes, ordinances, rules,
5 regulations and best practices.

6 I would hope I don't have to read that one again.

7 The Chair will entertain a motion to consider the
8 question. Being no one to make a motion to consider
9 the question, the motion fails.

10 MR. KIANELLO: I had my hand up. Walt

11 Kianello (phonetic), I make a motion to consider the
12 question.

13 MODERATOR BURNS: Motion made to consider
14 the question. Is there a second?

15 MR. WARREN: Robert Warren, 5 Bates
16 Avenue. I'll second that motion.

17 MODERATOR BURNS: We have a motion made
18 and seconded to duly consider Resolution Number 3.
19 Anybody who wishes to speak for the resolution? Ma'am
20 you wish to speak for the resolution?

21 MS. KOWAL: Diane Kowal. My question is
22 to have this motion clarified, I don't understand what
23 you're asking. What it's asking us to do.

1 motion, and I'll leave Mr. Warren to correct me if I'm
2 wrong, it authorizes the conduction of a compliance
3 examination. That's to go over all the rules,
4 records, procedures in the fire department in the fire
5 district to see if it's living up to its obligations
6 under the law, to see if it's in compliance with the
7 statutes of the law, to see if it lives up to all
8 rules and regulations, and then to make
9 recommendations for administrative system changes and

10 structural changes to practices. Does that make it
11 clear? It's not a fiscal audit.

12 MS. KOWAL: Who is going to do this
13 examination? Who is the examination by?

14 MODERATOR BURNS: This resolution doesn't
15 address that, one of the later resolutions does.

16 MS. KOWAL: It says management of the
17 Coventry District by the Board of Engineers. Is the
18 Board of Engineers going to be auditing themselves?

19 MODERATOR BURNS: It would sound that
20 way, but the further resolutions tell you who they
21 want to do the audit. The governing board of the
22 district, people that run the district in your absence

23 is the chief of the department with his two
24 assistants. So they conduct all administrative

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1 affairs of the district. So if there is going to be
2 an audit, they would hire whoever they have to to set
3 standards for that hiring and that's what you're going
4 to be asked to do later.

5 MS. KOWAL: I'm not educated in legal
6 language, but I am a teacher in the Town of Coventry,
7 and Resolution Number 2, the grammar on that was
8 confusing, and the way I read it was that the
9 governing board for that was the Board of Engineers.

10 **MODERATOR BURNS: It is.**

11 **MS. KOWAL: It was kind of talked around**

12 **that, no, it might not be, it must be someone else**

13 **mentioned further. Now in Number 3 it says operation**

14 **and management of the Coventry District by the Board**

15 **of Engineers, but you're saying it's not the Board of**

16 **Engineers?**

17 **MODERATOR BURNS: The Board of Engineers**

18 **operates.**

19 **MS. KOWAL: Your English language is**

20 **telling me one thing.**

21 **MODERATOR BURNS: I didn't write the**

22 **resolution, ma'am. Anyone wishing to speak against**

23 the motion?

24 CHIEF MRUK: This is an open-ended

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1 investigation for someone to come in and tell you how

2 to run your fire district. Until the union started

3 trying to get rid of me no one ever suggested that we

4 needed outsiders to come in and tell us how to run

5 things. For 40 years I served this district and

6 protected you and we did it within a reasonable

7 budget. Then the union comes along and we get

8 lawsuits, investigations and calls for a compliance

9 audit. We know where this is coming from and we know
10 what it will say. The union desperately wants me to
11 go and Warren and Hartman just gave them millions of
12 dollars of your money that I refused to give them.
13 Now Warren and Hartman want to conduct this
14 examination. How fair do you think it will be? That
15 is just the union's way of trying to get your money
16 and Warren and Hartman went along with it. There is
17 no need for this type of examination, and you can bet
18 your last dollar that if I had agreed to give the
19 union the millions of dollars they wanted we wouldn't
20 be here. This doesn't mean to say things about who
21 will perform the audit, last time they tried it they

22 brought in two lawyers --

23 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Excuse me, what does

24 this have to do with the point of the resolution?

35

1 MODERATOR BURNS: Do not interrupt the

2 speaker. You raise for a point the order if you wish.

3 You're out of order.

4 CHIEF MRUK: This doesn't mean to say a

5 thing about who will perform the audit. Last time

6 they tried it they brought in two lawyers who didn't

7 know anything about how to fight fires or run a fire

8 district and they created chaos.

9 **AUDIENCE MEMBER: Point of order,**

10 **Mr. Moderator.**

11 **MODERATOR BURNS: Come down. Chief, step**
12 **away from the podium. It has to be a point of order.**

13 **MR. McALLISTER: Joseph McAllister. I**

14 **would like to know, you stopped gentlemen previously**

15 **from saying other topics other than this particular**

16 **amendment or whatever, Number 3, why are you not**

17 **stopping him? What he is saying about the union has**

18 **nothing to do with whether or not the district is**

19 **being run properly.**

20 **MODERATOR BURNS: He's trying to explain**

21 **why he thinks --**

22 **MR. McALLISTER:** He can explain so he can
23 use that in his explanations, but nobody else can
24 bring anything else into it; correct?

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1 **MODERATOR BURNS:** I take it that he's
2 trying to explain, because I would have called him out
3 of order.

4 **MR. McALLISTER:** Thank you, you make no
5 sense.

6 **MODERATOR BURNS:** Chief, before you
7 start, the chief was trying to explain why the call

8 for a performance audit. That's all. Chief, please
9 go on.

10 CHIEF MRUK: This has created chaos.
11 Where is their report? How much are they going to
12 charge? I wouldn't vote for this without knowing
13 that.

14 MODERATOR BURNS: Thank you. Anyone who
15 wants to speak for the motion?

16 MR. WARREN: I think we need to clear up
17 one thing right now. If I awarded a contract for
18 millions of dollars to the union, I wouldn't be able
19 to stand up here and face you people. I did not award
20 a contract to the union for millions of dollars.

21 Where Chief Mruk came up with their figure, I don't
22 know and I'm not questioning his ability in math
23 because mine is terrible. But what I'm questioning
24 is, where the did the millions of dollars come from?

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1 We have a budget to run that fire district of 1.3
2 million. And I applaud Chief Mruk for this, every
3 year he brings this budget to the taxpayers and he's
4 never in the red. I applaud him, but obviously I need
5 a lesson in fiscal management because 1.3 million
6 means 1 million, and he said I gave the union millions
7 of dollars. I would like if he would please explain

8 that to me.

9 MODERATOR BURNS: Deputy Warren, the

10 question is whether or not we have a conformance

11 audit. Someone who wishes to be heard for the motion?

12 MS. KOWAL: Diane Kowal. As it is

13 probably obvious, this is my first fire district

14 meeting and I don't know a lot about the history of

15 the fire department in terms of whether or not there

16 has ever been an external audit done, but I do know a

17 lot about this world and I know that businesses,

18 schools, everyone else, yes, they all do internal

19 audits, but external audits are also a very important

20 part of any business. Coventry Fire District is a

21 **business, as anything else, and I fully support, at**
22 **least on an occasional basis, an external audit being**
23 **performed.**

24 **MODERATOR BURNS: Thank you. Anyone**

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1 **else?**

2 **MR. KIANELLO: Walt Kianello. My point**
3 **is that until taxpayers got involved in the last three**
4 **years with the running of the fire department and**
5 **questioning the way certain things were done, you**
6 **people didn't even have mutual aid and it's only after**

7 the taxpayers really pressed the issue along with
8 other fire districts that the chief gave in.

9 MODERATOR BURNS: Address the resolution.

10 MR. KIANELLO: It is on the performance
11 audit, because that's how your fire department has
12 been run by Chief Mruk. He wouldn't even give you
13 mutual aid, so therefore we should be reviewing the
14 way the current practices are done to make sure we're
15 current with NFPA rules and regs as they are in every
16 other fire department across this nation. Why should
17 we be different and settle for less? My family is too
18 important for that. And I won't settle for the way
19 things have been done for the last 50 years.

20 **Sometimes change is good.**

21 **MODERATOR BURNS: Thank you. Someone to**

22 **speak for the motion? Please give your name and**

23 **address.**

24 **MR. YALELY: Walter Yalely, 6 Eisenhower**

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1 **Street. I have a question. This audit, is it going**

2 **to have an effect on the safety of the firefighters**

3 **and the equipment that they're going to have?**

4 **MODERATOR BURNS: I believe the audit**

5 **that they're proposing to conduct would cover any**

6 **basis, any item in the fire district, from its**

7 administration, its management, its finances, its
8 salary, its everything. It's a performance or
9 compliance audit to see if we comply with all
10 regulations and then come back and make
11 recommendations. The audit could do almost anything.

12 MR. YALELY: It could make the difference
13 on the safety of the guys and all the equipment they
14 have as to whether they need to be upgraded?

15 MODERATOR BURNS: It could. Anyone else
16 wishing to be heard? Seeing none, I sense you're
17 ready to vote. I'll ask the same two talliers to
18 perform the same job, Ms. Murphy, Ms. LaRue. I'll ask
19 the taxpayers to do the same job. Ms. Murphy, you'll

20 count the same section, Ms. LaRue, you'll count the
21 same section. All those in favor of the motion will
22 signify by raising your arm.

23 (COUNT TAKEN)

24 MODERATOR BURNS: You can lower your

40

1 hands. Those opposed to the motion, please raise your
2 arms.

3 (COUNT TAKEN)

4 MODERATOR BURNS: You can lower your arms
5 now. Motion fails, 86 to the affirmative, 114 to the

6 negative.

7 Fourth resolution, resolved, that the Board of

8 Engineers shall obtain and hire for a reasonable fee

9 legal counsel and any other professional assistance

10 necessary to perform such compliance examination and

11 advise the Board of Engineers during the conduct of

12 any such examination. Is there a motion to consider

13 the question?

14 MR. PROFFITT: Point of order. I'm

15 George Proffitt, I reside at 6 Sandlewood Court in

16 Coventry. Reviewing the call for this meeting, it

17 would appear to me that any of the following

18 resolutions would be moot inasmuch as none of the

19 materials in the last resolution will be passed and
20 why would we be hiring people if they don't have
21 anything to examine? And I can't, I can't understand,
22 and I think the point would be that all the rest of
23 them, only because of the defeat of that particular
24 resolution, makes the remainder of the resolutions

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1 moot. Therefore I would like to make a motion that we
2 dismiss any and all of the following resolutions as
3 having no value to this meeting. Thank you.

4 MODERATOR BURNS: You have a resolution
5 on the floor to dismiss. Technically the previous

6 motion was neither moved nor seconded. So

7 Mr. Proffitt's resolution is a motion, I'm going to

8 move in order if it has a second.

9 MR. ASHWOOD: Bill Ashwood, 973 Knotty

10 Oak Road. I second the motion.

11 MODERATOR BURNS: We have a motion made

12 and seconded to dismiss all the remaining resolutions.

13 Mr. Proffitt, your term was resolutions; correct?

14 MR. PROFFITT: Yes.

15 MODERATOR BURNS: Any discussion on the

16 motion? Come to the podium.

17 MR. CAUTNAUGH: Earnest Cautnaugh

18 (phonetic), 8 Sandy Lane, Coventry. I just have a

19 question. Mr. Proffitt, I assume is talking about
20 numbers 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11?

21 MODERATOR BURNS: Only the resolutions.

22 MR. CAUTNAUGH: The next part is
23 something different, right?

24 MODERATOR BURNS: Yes. If you notice,

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1 ladies and gentlemen, the question, Mr. Proffitt on

2 his motion to resolutions, you have 11 resolutions.

3 You rejected three, his motion is to dismiss the other

4 eight, and we still have to vote on the bylaws, but

5 that is a smaller issue. Anyone to speak against the
6 motion?

7 MR. McALLISTER: Joseph McAllister.

8 Looking at these resolutions, and having a sane head
9 for what my taxes are going to go to, or even having
10 any understanding of law and a little thing called
11 prior knowledge, if it was brought to the district or
12 the taxpayers to conduct an audit or to conduct a
13 survey of how the fire department runs their
14 day-to-day operations and their business, and it seems
15 like the meeting seems to be 130 to 70, or 118 to 80,
16 something, so it seems pretty even. But I'll tell you
17 what is going to happen. When we leave here tonight

18 and these resolutions are defeated, and something
19 happens within the district, whether it be at my
20 house, your house, or anybody else's house and it's
21 looked into, obviously by a lawsuit, one of the things
22 that they're going to do is look at the standards and
23 the practices and how the district conducts its
24 business. What is going to happen is these, the

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1 minutes of this meeting is in record, they're going to
2 look at that and say, you had an opportunity,
3 therefore you had prior knowledge, that equals
4 liability. I don't know how anybody in their right

5 mind would want to subject their tax dollar to that.

6 Now, earlier it was discussed that the previous

7 meeting that was posted legally had certain taxpayers

8 in it. I guess tonight's defeat of these resolutions

9 would be by 130 or so certain taxpayers. Thank you.

10 MODERATOR BURNS: Anyone else who wishes

11 to speak on the motion? There being none, I call the

12 same talliers, I sense you're ready to vote. Now,

13 understand, if you were voting no on all the other

14 resolutions, this is a motion to defeat the other

15 resolutions, the other 11. If you want it to pass you

16 would now have to vote in the affirmative. If you

17 want this motion to go away, and to consider the other

18 questions, you have to vote no. So if you want this
19 resolution to pass and dismiss the other motions you
20 have to vote in the affirmative. It's a little
21 different than the vote we've been doing. All those
22 who wish to dismiss the rest of the motions signify by
23 raising your arm.

24 (COUNT TAKEN)

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1 MODERATOR BURNS: Those in favor of
2 opposing this motion, wishing to address the questions
3 will signify by raising your arm.

4 (COUNT TAKEN)

5 MODERATOR BURNS: Motion passes, 124 to

6 37. Resolutions 4 through 11 are null and void for

7 this meeting. You have in the call of this meeting

8 two changes to the bylaws. There is actually four

9 changes, one takes power from the Board of Engineers

10 and deletes -- the board will be empowered to approve

11 all bills, and the other one says all bills have to be

12 contracted, that have been contracted be approved by a

13 majority of the board.

14 The Chair is going to read both resolutions so we

15 know what we're doing. Resolved, the following

16 provision of Article 3, Section 3, shall be deleted,

17 **"The chief engineer shall be empowered to approve all**
18 **bills that have been contracted." It will be changed**
19 **to read in Article 3, Section 2, "All bills that have**
20 **been contracted shall be approved by the majority of**
21 **the Board of Engineers." The change is to move the**
22 **power from the chief engineer to the Board of**
23 **Engineers and move it from one section to another.**
24 **All those in favor -- first I need a resolution on the**

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1 **floor. I'll ask for someone to move to consider the**
2 **question.**

3 **MR. YALELY: Wall Yalely. I move the**

4 question.

5 MODERATOR BURNS: Moving to consider the
6 question. Is there a second?

7 MR. CODY: Gary Cody. I second that.

8 MODERATOR BURNS: Okay. Ladies and
9 gentlemen, discussion on these two motions. One to
10 leave the power of the chief engineer due to changes
11 with the power of the Board of Engineers. Anyone in
12 favor of the first resolution can come up and speak
13 now.

14 MR. CALCI: Keith Calci. I support this
15 resolution in that at least the way it reads that all
16 bills shall be approved by the majority of the Board

17 of Engineers will give us some kind of accountability
18 that at least two out of the three board members can
19 approve the bills and some of the spending somewhere.
20 As of right now it's just one. So I do think that
21 it's a great idea that we have some kind of
22 accountability. So I just support it.

23 MODERATOR BURNS: Thank you. Anyone who
24 wants to speak for the resolution, to leave the power

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1 of the chief engineer. There being none, I sense
2 you're ready to vote. Chief, do you want to speak?

3 CHIEF MRUK: I certainly do.

4 MODERATOR BURNS: Go ahead.

5 CHIEF MRUK: This is an amendment to the
6 bylaws. The last time we had an amendment to the
7 bylaws the district appointed a bylaw committee. The
8 bylaw committee was 13 taxpayers that met several
9 times, many times, and adopted the bylaws and that's
10 the way they got it going. That's the procedure we've
11 had and we've been successful with the bylaws. Now
12 they're picking out two of these because the point is
13 that the two deputies have a commitment to pay for the
14 fiasco that they had back in June 23, which was
15 illegal. And if they get the authority, there are two

16 board members that okayed this, I didn't. Now if you
17 give them the amendment to this bylaw thing, you've
18 stripped me of signing the bill and paying it. They
19 all see the bill, they showed you a lawyer's bill, I
20 didn't prohibit that. They got it somewhere, maybe
21 they got it at the station, whatever they did, it
22 costs money to hire a lawyer. You're not going to get
23 them, and to protect the district you have to hire
24 lawyers and a lot of time you have to do things on

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1 your own.

2 Now my first assistant is not here tonight. My

3 second assistant is part of whatever you want to call
4 it.

5 I'm against this change of bylaws. I would
6 rather go at a district meeting, we want to add more
7 to the Board of Engineers. We have three people, we
8 want to add more members so we can have more people
9 voting. So I urge that you don't vote for this
10 change. Either one, this one or the next one. Let
11 the board, let the planning and advisory board and
12 district officers come up with a committee to study
13 the bylaws and come in at the annual meeting, which is
14 only eight weeks away, in December, that's the annual
15 meeting, bring in a new set of bylaws and that is what

16 you want to do. If you want to move it then, fine,
17 but you're going to have five people voting, not three
18 and not two that are committed. I move that you deny
19 amending the bylaws here tonight. Let's wait for the
20 committee to do it. Thank you.

21 **MODERATOR BURNS:** Thank you, Chief.

22 **MR. WARREN:** Robert Warren. I don't
23 understand something that was just said and I'm kind
24 of a little shocked about it actually. As a member of

1 the Board of Engineers -- and to let you know, your

2 first assistant is here.

3 CHIEF MRUK: I haven't seen him.

4 MR. WARREN: I understand that, sir. We

5 run the fire department under Chief Mruk's direction.

6 He is the fire chief, Joseph Hartman is the first, I'm

7 the second. Why can't we all sit down and look at the

8 bills and approve the bills? It's that simple. Have

9 one man approve the bills, as it's been for many

10 years, or have three men look at the bills and present

11 them to you and say they're approved or not approved.

12 Otherwise what we're saying is that three of us sit

13 down, whether the chief myself or whoever, and we

14 approve the bills. It's more than one set of eyes,

15 it's more than one person to say that we spent too
16 much on gasoline or too much on equipment. I just
17 think we need to look at that whole picture a little
18 more. Thank you, Mr. Moderator.

19 MODERATOR BURNS: Any other discussion on
20 the motion? If not, I sense you're ready to vote.

21 MR. CALCI: May I speak again?

22 MODERATOR BURNS: Yes, sir.

23 MR. CALCI: Keith Calci. One quick note,
24 as the chief just said at the end of his statement, we

1 would like to have five instead of three. Well,

2 Chief, why not have three now, it's better than one.

3 It gives us some accountability. It's pretty sad that

4 as we've been handed these legal documents that we

5 spend 30 or 40,000 in legal expenses at the request of

6 one man and at the power of one man. You stood up

7 here and said you have discussions and show your other

8 two deputies, that's not what they tell us. That's

9 not what they tell the rest of the taxpayers. You do

10 all this yourself. So, therefore there needs to be

11 some accountability. You standing up here saying,

12 wait until the annual meeting, wait until this, it's

13 continually what you do. You put the taxpayers off,

14 you tell them, let's wait and do it this way. That's

15 how you've continued to have your one-man show. Well,
16 I think we need to put some kind of end to that, and
17 at least as the deputy said, have some accountability
18 and maybe three people look at the bills and say, it's
19 a good idea that we spend our tax dollars on that, not
20 just one.

21 MODERATOR BURNS: Thank you. Anyone else
22 wishing to speak on the motion? There being none, I
23 sense you're ready to vote. You have the option here
24 of changing or not changing the bylaw. So what I'm

1 going to do is ask you to vote to change the bylaw or
2 not to change the bylaw.

3 All those in favor of changing the bylaw
4 regarding the approval of bills by the Board of
5 Engineers or the chief engineer will raise their hand.
6 If you want to make the change, raise your hand.

7 (COUNT TAKEN)

8 MODERATOR BURNS: All those not in favor
9 of changing the bylaws, raise your hand.

10 (COUNT TAKEN)

11 MODERATOR BURNS: The motion fails by a
12 vote of 69 to 100. It would have taken a two-thirds
13 majority to change the bylaws. We have one more piece

14 of business and I ask that you stay for it. That is
15 the other set of bylaws involved here. These
16 resolutions also change the powers and direction of
17 the Board of Engineers.

18 One, resolved, the following provision of Article
19 3, Section 2 be deleted. "The Board of Engineers will
20 hold a regular meeting or other special meeting at the
21 call of the chief engineer." The change would be in
22 the same article, the same section, to change that to
23 read, "The Board of Engineers may hold regular and
24 special meetings at the call of any member of the

1 **Board of Engineers." Rather than the chief engineer**
2 **having to call meetings, any board member can call a**
3 **meeting. The Chair will entertain a motion to**
4 **consider the question.**

5 **MR. CALCI: Keith Calci. Keep your**
6 **comments to yourself in the front row. I move to**
7 **approve that motion.**

8 **MS. CALCI: Karen Calci. I move to**
9 **second the motion.**

10 **MODERATOR BURNS: Thank you.**

11 **Mr. Ginaitt, one more word and you leave. Do not**
12 **speak to them.**

13 **MR. GINAITT: I asked a question.**

14 **MODERATOR BURNS:** You ask me the
15 **questions. Thank you. Motion has been duly made and**
16 **seconded to consider this bylaw change. Is there**
17 **anyone who wants to speak for the motion? Gentlemen,**
18 **please be quiet.**

19 **MR. CALCI:** I believe you already warned
20 **them, the next time you're throwing them out.**

21 **I would like to support this as accountability,**
22 **again. We're allowing the other two chiefs to have**
23 **some say in the district. It's all a matter of**
24 **getting them allowed to conduct business in the**

1 district. If the chief becomes incapacitated for any
2 reason or there is any other business that needs to be
3 conducted and they need to get a meeting going. If we
4 don't pass this resolution, there is no way they can
5 do that and the business of our district stops,
6 essentially, because we can't have the chief engineer
7 call the meeting. I would like to support the motion.

8 MODERATOR BURNS: Mr. Calci, for your
9 information, the bylaws do provide that if the chief
10 is unable, the first deputy steps up in his spot and
11 assumes his duties and responsibilities.

12 MR. CALCI: It doesn't state what unable

13 might be.

14 MODERATOR BURNS: He becomes the chief
15 engineer temporarily if the chief is unavailable.

16 MR. CALCI: The other two deputy chiefs,
17 if they have business to conduct and the chief refuses
18 to hold the meeting, such as he currently does all the
19 time, that they would be allowed to actually have a
20 meeting and still conduct business of the district, to
21 buy fire equipment, anything like that that they might
22 consider a safety hazard and a reason to call a
23 meeting and the chief doesn't want to, they'll have
24 the power to call the meeting.

1 **MODERATOR BURNS:** You are correct, sir.

2 **Anyone who wants to speak for the motion?**

3 **MR. FANTOLI:** Jeff Fantoli, 8 Amhurst

4 **Avenue, F-A-N-T-O-L-I. Is the public allowed to**

5 **attend Board of Engineer meetings?**

6 **MODERATOR BURNS:** Yes, sir, it is. It is

7 **considered an open meeting under the open meeting law,**

8 **you are allowed to attend.**

9 **MR. FANTOLI:** The reason I ask that is

10 **because I'm a new resident to Coventry and --**

11 **MODERATOR BURNS:** Welcome.

12 **MR. FANTOLI:** I wish I could say the

13 same. I'm kind of concerned at this point for our
14 possible safety with this much controversy just with a
15 fire department. I can't imagine what else goes on
16 here. What I was saying was I was a little
17 discouraged that there is so much controversy involved
18 with just the fire department and how the rest of the
19 town may work. It seems to me like this is like a
20 personality conflict and it's obviously not good.
21 Being a union firefighter myself I've never
22 experienced anything like this. It usually works
23 pretty well. I feel like my family is at risk with
24 this much controversy, how can anybody work

1 effectively, the chief as well as the men? I just
2 think something is being compromised and I'm a little
3 concerned. So my question was, if I could attend the
4 meetings I would like to do that.

5 MODERATOR BURNS: You can and I wish you
6 would. The gentleman in the corner.

7 MR. GELLO: My name is Richard Gello
8 (phonetic), my neighbor's house caught on fire
9 probably two years, three years ago, I don't know the
10 exact date. They come to my house, I called 911 for
11 them, Chief Mruk, the fire department, the police was

12 there within six minutes. They were there before I
13 got my pants and shirt on. They put the fire out, the
14 house was saved, and Dennis, right there, my neighbor,
15 is now living in the house.

16 **MODERATOR BURNS:** Anybody else who wishes
17 to be heard on the resolution?

18 **MR. McALLISTER:** Joseph McAllister. I'm
19 pretty certain I know how the vote is going to go.
20 It's going to go about 100 for it, judging how this
21 has thinned out, 30 or 40 against it. If you look at
22 how everything is shaping here and how all of the
23 votes have gone tonight, it gives the power to one
24 man. It actually says to do away with the type of

1 government that we have in America, which is checks
2 and balances. You people have voted against and
3 deleted actually some checks and balances for this
4 particular fire district. I don't understand it. I
5 know I'm not going to move any of you and change your
6 vote because you're here for a particular purpose. I
7 just want to be heard on it, that's all. In this
8 country we have an executive government, we have
9 legislative, we have judicial; but in this fire
10 district, we have one man, Chief Mruk. That's all.

11 MODERATOR BURNS: Thank you, sir.

12 **CHIEF MRUK: You know, I always thought**
13 **we had one chief in the fire department, it appears**
14 **that some people think we have two or three. We have**
15 **assistant chiefs. We have two, we have three, I**
16 **proposed in December that we have five, so we have,**
17 **instead of two people controlling the chief, we have**
18 **all of them, and that's a fair way of doing it.**

19 **This is a bylaw change. I don't want to read**
20 **this chapter because it's critical of my deputies and**
21 **some of them I got the highest respect for.**

22 **Mr. Warren has been with me ten months. Mr. Hartman**
23 **has been with me almost 20 years. And I know he is a**
24 **busy man, he doesn't make the meetings, but he comes**

1 to calls when they're serious. And he can have any
2 position he wants, he can vote anywhere he wants.

3 Mr. Warren came from another fire district and I
4 understand he's still a deputy chief in Washington
5 under Chief Hoxsie. He hasn't resigned. He came in
6 and there is a question of his eligibility of being a
7 deputy because he never had the 40 signatures to
8 nominate him.

9 But I accepted him because he's a good
10 firefighter and I accepted a lot of volunteers and I

11 stand on my record, ladies and gentlemen, and believe
12 me, as soon as I get a chance and find the right guy,
13 I will be gone. I'm 77 years old and I'm an old man
14 and I am doing a young man's job. It's about time, so
15 this is the year. Thank you, very much.

16 MODERATOR BURNS: Thank you, Chief.

17 Anyone else wishing to be heard?

18 MR. WARREN: Robert Warren. Okay. Let's

19 clarify it and get it over with. I'm not the deputy

20 chief in Washington any longer. I did serve under

21 Brian Hoxsie as his deputy. Presently, unless

22 otherwise changed, Chief, I'm your second assistant.

23 I have been doing the job since last October when I

24 was put in temporarily due to Deputy Chief Mruk Jr.

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1 retiring. At this point, and here are the people that
2 have the deciding votes, which I thank you all for
3 attending tonight, if you don't want me as your
4 deputy, now is the time to say it. It's that easy.

5 MODERATOR BURNS: Any further discussion
6 on the motion?

7 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I move the question.

8 MODERATOR BURNS: The question has been
9 moved. All those in favor of this change to the
10 bylaws you'll raise your hands. You will raise your

11 hands. If you don't want the bylaws to change at this
12 point, you will vote no by raising your hand at the
13 appropriate time. If you want the bylaws to change,
14 that the chief calls the board meetings, all right,
15 please raise your hands, now.

16 AUDIENCE MEMBER: That's not right.

17 MODERATOR BURNS: Is there an
18 understanding? If you want the bylaws to change raise
19 your hand.

20 (COUNT TAKEN)

21 MODERATOR BURNS: If you want the bylaws
22 to stay the way they are, raise your hand.

23 (COUNT TAKEN)

1 Ms. LaRue, I'm going to relieve you of the obligation.

2 The motion fails. You can put your arms down. You

3 have to carry a two-thirds majority and it's plain it

4 is not.

5 Ladies and gentlemen, this being a special

6 meeting we have no other business to conduct at this

7 point. I want to thank all of you for coming. You've

8 demonstrated a democracy and citizenry that this town

9 still cares about. Keep it up, don't let go. Freedom

10 has a price tag and we don't want to have to pay it.

11 This meeting is adjourned.

12 CHIEF MRUK: Thank you ladies and

13 gentlemen for coming and having the confidence in me,

14 and the willingness to vote.

15 (MEETING CLOSED AT 9:10 P.M.)

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CERTIFICATE

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4 **I, MELANIE M. CHACE, RPR, Notary Public, do hereby**

5 **certify that the foregoing is a true, accurate, and**

6 **complete transcript of my notes taken at the**

7 **above-entitled proceeding.**

8

9

10 **IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereunto set my hand this**

11 **25th day of October, 2004.**

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14

15 **MELANIE M. CHACE, RPR, NOTARY PUBLIC**
 MY COMMISSION EXPIRES 04/07/07

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IN RE: COVENTRY FIRE DISTRICT, 10/12/04

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