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

2

3                    **PROCEEDINGS AT COVENTRY FIRE DISTRICT**

4                    **ANTHONY FIRE DEPARTMENT**

5

6                    **IN RE: ANNUAL MEETING**

7

8                    **DATE: December 11, 2007**

**TIME: 7:00 P.M.**

9                    **PLACE: Club Jogues**

**184 Boston Street**

10                    **Coventry, RI**

11

**BEFORE:**

12

**CONRAD BURNS, Moderator**

**13**

**14 PRESENT :**

**GARY COTE, Chairman**

**15 ED WEBSTER, Board member**

**DOMENIC TERRACCIANO, Board member**

**16 PATRICIA LEFEBVRE, Board member**

**SHIRLEY MATTHEWS, Board member**

**17 ROBERT WARREN, Fire Chief**

**JOHN GOLOMB, District Clerk**

**18 HOPE T. MURPHY, Treasurer**

**JOANNE LEROUX, District Secretary**

**19**

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1 (MEETING COMMENCED AT 7:01 p.m.)

2 MODERATOR BURNS: I would ask that if  
3 you're a registered voter, to sit on this side, and the  
4 nonregistered voters to sit on that side. First order  
5 of business will be to call everyone to stand, repeat  
6 the "Pledge of Allegiance," to be led by our director  
7 of the board, Gary Cote.

8 (Pledge Recited)

9 MODERATOR BURNS: The rules for the  
10 evening's meeting are, only registered voters of the

**11 Town of Coventry or also inhabitants of the district**  
**12 will be allowed to vote and participate in the meeting,**  
**13 and they must be seated in the voting area. Any**  
**14 individuals attending the meeting who are not eligible**  
**15 to vote are to observe, are here to observe and must**  
**16 refrain from any form of participation in the meeting,**  
**17 including any shouting, clapping, cheering or other**  
**18 distraction or intimidation of the participants of the**  
**19 meeting. All nonparticipants must remain in the area**  
**20 designated as a nonvoting area.**

**21 No recording devices will be allowed in**  
**22 the meeting, as they may be viewed as an intimidation**  
**23 to the voters.**

**24 A copy of the minutes will be introduced**

**25 by the stenographer and will become a record of the**

**3**

**1 meeting, and as such are available under the law, the**

**2 open records statutes, as well as on the web page of**

**3 the Secretary of State of Rhode Island.**

**4 All taxable inhabitants wishing to be**

**5 heard -- I should say, not taxable inhabitants, all**

**6 qualified voters wishing to be heard will seek the**

**7 recognition of the chair and will come to the front of**

**8 the room and use the microphone at the podium. The**

**9 first time you come to this microphone you will state**

10            your name and your address. Any subsequent times  
that

11            you come to the podium you just have to state your

12            name. Each participant will be given the opportunity

13            to speak on every issue. In order to avoid repetition,

14            please do not repeat the same thing that has been said

15            before, and inasmuch as we have the agenda we request

16            that your comments be addressed only to the matter in

17            question.

18                        With that done, I will call on the clerk

19            to ascertain that the meeting has been properly

20            advertised. Mr. Golomb?

21                        CLERK GOLOMB: As the rules were

22 explained, my name is John Golomb, I am the district  
23 clerk. The legal notice, as you all have a copy of, I  
24 won't have to read it, but it is all listed here and it  
25 has been posted, as you can see at the bottom of the

4

1 list here, in the Coventry town hall, the Anthony fire  
2 station, Western Hardware, Carr's paint store, Bob's  
3 barber shop and Aquidneck greenhouse flower shop. We  
4 posted that. Also, it was listed in the Pawtuxet  
5 Valley Times as per the bylaws stated and we have a  
6 copy of that, it is the same as this here.

7 So, it was well advertised and we're glad

8 to see that we have fairly good attendance. That is  
9 all I have to report.

10 MODERATOR BURNS: Next order of business,  
11 the chair will recognize the chairman of the board of  
12 directors for purposes of a motion to seat the legal  
13 counsel at the head table.

14 CHAIRMAN COTE: Gary Cote. I would like  
15 to make a motion that as legal counsel for the  
16 district, Arthur Capaldi and Christopher Pachino be  
17 allowed to take the chairs that were provided for them  
18 at the head table with the rest of the board of  
19 directors.

20 MR. WEBSTER: Second.

21                   **MODERATOR BURNS:** Motion is duly made, and  
22                   seconded by Ed Webster. You've heard the motion  
before  
23                   you, any discussion? There being none, those in favor,  
24                   signify by saying aye. Opposed? Ayes have it, motion  
25                   carries. Mr. Capaldi and your assistant, would you

5

1                   please take your seats at the head table.

2                   The next order on the agenda is the

3                   reading and the approval of the minutes of the last

4                   annual meeting and the special meetings. Mr. Cote?

5                   **CHAIRMAN COTE:** I would like to make a

6 motion that we waive the reading of those minutes from  
7 the two previous meetings.

8 MS. MATTHEWS: Second. Shirley Matthews,  
9 566 Knotty Oak Road.

10 MODERATOR BURNS: We have a motion to  
11 waive the reading of the minutes. John, if you would  
12 hold up the minutes so they can see them.

13 CLERK GOLOMB: These minutes are quite  
14 lengthy. This is for the annual meeting last year;  
15 this is for the adjourned meeting last year, January;  
16 and this is for the special meeting we had last July.  
17 So, if you want me to read all of these, you'll be here  
18 until midnight. These are available for anyone to read

19 at any time at the fire station, and also available  
20 here tonight if you want to read any part of it. So  
21 we're not hiding anything, if anyone is interested,  
22 here they are, fully explained, as the people that took  
23 the record, they were very, very accurate. Thank you.

24 MODERATOR BURNS: Any discussion? There  
25 being none, I sense you're ready to vote. Those in

6

1 favor of dispensing of reading of the minutes, signify  
2 by saying aye. The ayes carry, the motion carries.

3 The next order is old business. Report of

4 the finance department?

5 MS. LEROUX: Joanne Leroux, report of the

6 finance department. Coventry fire district, tax

7 finance division, report as of November 30, 2007. 2007

8 taxes collected, 1,521,585.67. Back taxes collected,

9 115,702.34. Interest on back taxes, \$29,246.20. Total

10 taxes and interest collected, 1,666,534.21. Interest

11 on invested taxes as of 11/30/2007, \$499.10. Balance

12 on hand, November 30, 2006, \$57,292.85. Total receipts

13 and interest, \$1,724,326.16. Transferred to the

14 treasurer, 1,675,500. Balance on hand, November 30,

15 2007, \$48,626.16. Coventry Credit Union balance,

16 November 30, 2007, 48,826.16. The report on the back

17 taxes. Uncollected taxes, 2007, 263,978.47.  
18 Uncollected taxes all prior years, 77,670.86. Total  
19 uncollected, 341,649.33. Respectfully submitted,  
20 Joanne Leroux, tax finance division.

21 MODERATOR BURNS: You've heard the reading  
22 of the report of the finance division. The chair will  
23 entertain a motion to approve the report. Joseph  
24 Hartman, 107 Columbia, makes the motion. Second?

25 MR. GORMAN: David Gorman, 24 Hornbeam

7

1 Road, second, with discussion.

2 MODERATOR BURNS: We have a motion made

3 and seconded. Discussion of the finance department?

4 MR. GORMAN: I notice the back taxes of

5 343,000, you said?

6 MS. LEROUX: 341.

7 MR. GORMAN: I don't know if you have the

8 answer, what are we doing to collect on that?

9 MS. LEROUX: As of January 1st we are

10 sending 99 percent of that up to the lawyers to be

11 collected, and then we're starting tax sale

12 proceedings.

13 MR. GORMAN: Why are we so far behind? Is

14 that all one year?

15 MS. LEROUX: 263 is this year, and the

16 majority of that is fourth quarter. And the 77,000  
17 goes from 2006 back to 1990. And our lawyer does have  
18 that, already.

19 MR. GORMAN: They're working on that?

20 MS. LEROUX: Yes, sir. You will be seeing  
21 it.

22 MODERATOR BURNS: Any other questions?

23 Any other discussion? There being none, I sense you're  
24 ready to vote. Those in favor of accepting the report  
25 will signify by saying aye. Opposed, nay. The ayes

1 have it, motion carries.

2 Next item of business will be the

3 treasurer's report. Mrs. Murphy?

4 MS. MURPHY: Hope Murphy, 83 Shelter

5 Avenue, Coventry. Coventry fire district treasurer's

6 report, fiscal year ending November 30, 2007. Balance

7 on hand as of 12/1/2006, 68,831.30. Receipts: Tax

8 division, 1,675,500; Blue Cross reimbursement,

9 3,228.18; insurance reimbursement, 10,657.94; special

10 detail, 2,001; State of Rhode Island education, 432.68;

11 Osage Industries, repair reimbursement, 231.36; US

12 crude oil overcharge, 63; fire reports and public

13 records 50.80; sale of equipment, alarm boxes, 1,275;

14 smoke and planning inspections, 11,925; building rent,  
15 1,100; rescue recovery billings, 186,414.48; interest  
16 from rescue recovery billings, 7.30; defibrillator  
17 donations, 2,250; defibrillator interest, 3.13. Total  
18 receipts, 1,895,139.87. Tax anticipation note payable,  
19 Centreville, 150,000. Total monies available,  
20 2,045,139.87. Long-term note, the new rescue, \$66,000.

21 District expenses: Payroll, 1,018,906.86;  
22 professional services, 40,147.77; support services,  
23 15,243.31; Social Security and Medicare, 14,461.45;  
24 fire alarm wire removal, 780; heating fuel, 14,694.14;  
25 station repairs, 2,981.12; station supplies, 6,791.29;

1 fire protection expense, 292.50; vehicle repairs,  
2 17,395.58; vehicle supplies, 5,940.22; vehicle fuel,  
3 11,305.82; hydrant rental, 105,227.92; streetlight  
4 rental, 105,036.17; station utilities, 13,683.70;  
5 insurance, 97,492.01; Blue Cross/Delta Dental,  
6 222,366.76; medical expenses, 1,606; training and  
7 education expense, 432.68; uniforms and clothing,  
8 9165.84; employee reimbursement, nonmedical, \$44;  
9 postage and supplies, 22,606.72; rescue recovery  
10 billing expense, 23,592.84; interest, TA note 4,035.61;  
11 interest, notes payable, 960.19; special resolution  
12 turn-out gear 3,354; special resolution new equipment,

13        **5,517.70; pension employee benefit, 95,698.10;**  
14        **severance for former chief, 36,000; total district**  
15        **expenses, 1,895,760.30. TA note payment, 150,000.**  
16        **Rescue loan payment, 19,000. Total expenditures,**  
17        **2,064,760.30.**

18                **Balance, checking account, 20,273.31;**  
19        **rescue recovery fund, 26,684.43, and the defibrillator**  
20        **donations, 2,253.13, for a total balance of all funds**  
21        **on hand as of 11/30/2007, 49,210.87.**

22                **MODERATOR BURNS: You've heard the reading**  
23        **of the treasurer's report. The chair will entertain a**  
24        **motion to accept as read.**

25                **CHAIRMAN COTE: Motion to accept.**

1           **MODERATOR BURNS: Second?**

2           **MR. TERRACCIANO: Second.**

3           **MODERATOR BURNS: We have a motion made**  
4           **and seconded for the acceptance of the treasurer's**  
5           **report. Discussion?**

6           **MR. COTNOIR: Ernest Cotnoir, 8 Cindy**  
7           **Lane, Coventry. I don't know where she is getting her**  
8           **figures, but I tried to follow on this page and some of**  
9           **the figures she's reading don't jive with what I see**  
10          **here. I don't know where she is getting her numbers**

11 from, or why they're different than what I have here.

12 MODERATOR BURNS: Are you looking at

13 budgeted or actual?

14 MR. COTNOIR: Actual, I think.

15 MS. MURPHY: There are some that are

16 lumped together here, that are separated here.

17 MR. COTNOIR: If I remember right, station

18 utilities, I have 13,683, I don't believe that is what

19 you read.

20 CHAIRMAN COTE: 13,683.70.

21 MR. COTNOIR: She went so fast, I couldn't

22 really follow, because some things that are not listed

23 here, she is reading. We've been through this year

24 after year, we get a one-page budget when we walk in  
25 the door. What is your bottom line for the total

11

1 budget?

2 MS. MURPHY: Total expenses, and then  
3 there are the monies available and there is the  
4 balance. That is not on this. This is a proposed  
5 budget, this is a completed budget.

6 MR. COTNOIR: Isn't this the actual budget  
7 here?

8 MS. MURPHY: Yes, but as I said, some of  
9 these figures are bunched into one on here. That is

10 the way the report is.

11 MODERATOR BURNS: Mr. Cotnoir, you also  
12 understand her report starts with beginning cash, works  
13 through her monies that come in, not all of which is  
14 income, not all of which is budgeted, like tax  
15 anticipation notes, and her expenses are expenses plus  
16 whatever she pays on retiring debt. So it does change  
17 the numbers. It may be a little confusing to you. The  
18 actual expenses should follow the budget, and I think  
19 that the board this year will work towards making those  
20 numbers come together, so what is on her report and  
21 what we budget come to be the same.

22 Any other discussion? There being none,

23 those in favor, signify by saying aye. Opposed, nay.

24 Motion carries.

25 We will now call on Hope Murphy to read

12

1 the auditor's report.

2 MS. MURPHY: From James N. Nadeau and

3 Company, to the Board of Directors, Anthony Station.

4 We have reviewed the accompanying statement of  
assets,

5 liabilities and fund balance, cash basis, of the

6 Coventry Fire District, Anthony Station, as

7 November 30, 2007, and the related statement of

**8 revenues, expenditures and changes in the fund balance,  
9 cash basis, budget and actual, for the fiscal year  
10 ended in accordance with statements on standards for  
11 accounting and review services issued by the American  
12 Institute of Certified Public Accountants. All  
13 information included in these financial statements is  
14 the representation of the management of the Coventry  
15 Fire District, Anthony Station.**

**16 A review consists principally of inquiries  
17 of fire department personnel, and analytical procedures  
18 apply to financial data. It is substantially less in  
19 scope than an examination in accordance with generally  
20 accepted auditing standards, the objective of which is**

**21 an expression of an opinion regarding the financial**  
**22 statements taken as a whole. Accordingly, we do not**  
**23 express such an opinion.**

**24 Based on our review, with the exception of**  
**25 the matters described in the following paragraphs, we**

**13**

**1 are not aware of any material modifications that should**  
**2 be made to the accompanying financial statements in**  
**3 order for them to be in conformity with the cash basis**  
**4 of accounting. Management has not capitalized fixed**  
**5 assets, and accordingly has not reported depreciation**

**6 expenses on those assets. Accounting principles**

**7 generally accepted in the US of America require the**

**8 capital assets be capitalized and depreciated, which**

**9 would increase the assets, fund balances and expenses**

**10 of the governmental activities. The amount by which**

**11 this departure would affect the assets, fund balances**

**12 and expenses of the governmental activities is not**

**13 reasonably determinable. The Coventry Fire District,**

**14 Anthony Station has not implemented the financial**

**15 reporting requirements of Governmental Accounting**

**16 Standards Board -- GASB -- Statement Number 34, basic**

**17 financial statements and management discussions and**

**18 analysis for state and local governments. Accordingly**

19 the Coventry Fire District, Anthony Station has not  
20 presented governmentwide financial statements.

21 In addition, the Coventry Fire District,  
22 Anthony Station, has not presented the management  
23 discussion and analysis information that the

24 Governmental Accounting Standards Board has  
determined

25 is required to supplement the basic financial

14

1 statements.

2 Lastly, the fire district utilizes the

3 cash basis of accounting. GASB 34 requires the

4 modified accrual basis of accounting to be utilized by  
5 all governmental funds. Management has elected to omit  
6 substantially all of the disclosures required by  
7 generally accepted accounting principles. If the  
8 omitted disclosures were included in the financial  
9 statements, they might influence the user's conclusions  
10 about the fire district's financial position and  
11 results of operations.

12 Accordingly, these financial statements  
13 are not designed for those who are not informed about  
14 such matters. Our review was made for the purpose of  
15 expressing limited assurance that there are no material  
16 modifications that should be made to the financial

17 statements in order for them to be in conformity with  
18 the cash basis of accounting. The information in the  
19 accompanying schedules is presented only for  
20 supplementary analysis and purposes. Such  
information  
21 has been subject to the inquiry and analytical  
22 procedures applied in the review of the basic financial  
23 statements. This information is presented on a cash  
24 basis of accounting and we are not aware of any  
25 material modifications that should be made thereto.

2                   **MODERATOR BURNS:** You've heard the reading  
3                   of the auditor's report, for purposes of discussion, I  
4                   will ask for a motion to accept as read.

5                   **CHAIRMAN COTE:** Motion to accept as read.

6                   **MODERATOR BURNS:** Mr. Cote makes a motion,  
7                   Mr. Gorman second, for discussion. We have discussion  
8                   on the report.

9                   **MR. GORMAN:** I couldn't help but sit back  
10                  and listen and it sounded verbatim of the same report  
11                  we had a year ago. Same thing, telling us that the  
12                  district does not follow basic accounting procedures.  
13                  I don't know if anybody else read into that, but, I  
14                  read it last year and I reread it again this year. It

15 is telling us they recommended this last year, the same  
16 changes. Obviously, we haven't implemented them. My  
17 question to the board is, why haven't we implemented  
18 them? Or maybe, Hope, as the accountant. We paid the  
19 money for the audit, why do we not follow the  
20 recommendations?

21 MS. MURPHY: The auditor said we can  
22 continue with the cash basis, we don't need to go on an  
23 accrual. It is not accepted as far as governmental is  
24 concerned, but what we are doing is accepted.

25 MR. GORMAN: Again, this year he states

1 the same as last year, we failed to submit records that  
2 could influence his decision one way or the other.

3 Part of the order would be to give these records out so  
4 he can do an audit?

5 MS. MURPHY: That would be the assets and  
6 the depreciation, and we don't do that. We never have.  
7 If they want to start doing it, it will be a much  
8 lengthier process, and what he is doing is, it is not  
9 like what you expected, as a forensic audit.

10 MR. GORMAN: I understand that. I'm  
11 trying to figure out, every year -- either that or we  
12 may as well stop paying for the same information we get  
13 every year. Then we should stop paying for the audit.

**14 MODERATOR BURNS: Mr. Gorman, you're**

**15 absolutely right, the district should be reporting its**

**16 assets, they report its cash, but they don't report the**

**17 equipment and buildings. They don't take depreciation,**

**18 and depreciation is an expense. It was one of the**

**19 objectives this year to implement that, but we didn't**

**20 get around to it with the other things going on. It**

**21 should be done, the board of directors is going to have**

**22 to take a look at it and come up with an inventory of**

**23 the whole station. It is going to be going back to**

**24 records that are pretty old, and that is the problem.**

**25 We don't know what the station cost us. We do know the**

1 two additions, but that is about it. It should be  
2 done.

3 Any other discussion on the motion? There  
4 being none, those in favor will signify by saying aye.  
5 Opposed, nay. The ayes have it, the motion carries.

6 The next order of business will be the  
7 report of the board of directors.

8 CHAIRMAN COTE: My name is Gary Cote, I am  
9 the chairperson of the board of directors. At this  
10 time I would like to introduce the other members of the  
11 board. When I call your name, would you please stand

12 and be recognized. Edward Webster, he's the co-chair.  
13 Domenic Terracciano. Patricia LeFebvre. Shirley  
14 Matthews. These are the people that we elected last  
15 year, and surprisingly they're still here.

16 This past year was one of the great  
17 challenges for the fire district and for the board of  
18 directors. Being the first board of directors to have  
19 the responsibility of the operation of the fire  
20 district, we did not have any instruction manual on how  
21 to do it. We had to learn on the job.

22 The first matter we had to address was the  
23 hiring of an attorney to address the many, many legal  
24 issues we were facing. I contacted Judge Arthur

**1 and present municipal court judge. After Judge Capaldi  
2 met with the board, and after reviewing his experience  
3 in municipal law and labor law, the board hired him.**

**4 These are the challenges faced and the results of our  
5 efforts:**

**6 Number one, was a review of Chief Mruk's  
7 retirement package. We reviewed the retirement package  
8 of Chief Mruk, which was in a written contract within  
9 the district and signed by acting Chief Warren. After  
10 review and advice of our attorney we were able to**

11 change the health insurance benefits to former  
12 Chief Mruk to save the district \$3,155.04.

13 Number two was the union contract dispute.

14 We were facing ten grievances, one of which involved  
15 the original contract with the union seeking lifetime  
16 family Blue Cross after retirement. We went to an  
17 arbitration over that issue, we were able to resolve  
18 all the grievances and the arbitration matter by  
19 negotiations. The result, this resulted in a new  
20 contract with a savings to the district of \$2.5  
21 million.

22 Number three, eviction of tenants. The  
23 district rented out the property that we owned next

24 door. Our tenants, one was 15 months behind, the other  
25 was five months behind on the rent. We evicted the

19

1 tenants and I had to appear in court as district  
2 representative.

3 Number four, we addressed the issue of  
4 hazardous materials stored on district property. The  
5 district leases a building on Mapledale Avenue, it is  
6 used for storage of materials we thought could be  
7 hazardous. The board advised DEM and state fire  
8 marshals of the situation. The board members, in

in

9 addition to other time spent at meetings, donated many  
10 hours filling nine Dumpsters with trash. We were able  
11 to recycle 12 bottles of nitrate oxide and other  
12 chemicals through Cranston Welding Supply and  
13 Rhode Island Resource Recovery. Director Mathews is  
14 contact with the Federal Government who gave the  
15 district some surplus materials now considered  
16 hazardous. We're in the process of trying to get the  
17 federal government to take responsibility back for the  
18 hazardous chemicals that we received as surplus over  
19 the years. Shirley Matthews and her husband Bill  
20 worked tirelessly cleaning out that building. If you  
21 could have seen the inside of the building at

22       **Mapledale, you would have thought the landfill was**  
23       **using it as the Coventry dump. The Town of Coventry**  
24       **donated the Dumpsters, Shirley and her husband, pretty**  
25       **much by themselves, with the assistance of some other**

**20**

1       **board members, cleaned that entire building out on**  
2       **their own time with their own sweat and hands, and I**  
3       **don't think it would have gotten done without them. I**  
4       **wanted you people to know about what they did on their**  
5       **own.**

6               **Number five was charter and bylaws review.**

7       **Our attorneys advised us that the charter wasn't**  
8       **properly amended in 2005, and some of the bylaws were**  
9       **in direct conflict with the charter. The director took**  
10       **immediate action to correct these conflicts. The board**  
11       **re-established a citizens advisory board and used them**  
12       **as a charter and bylaws review board.**

13               **Number six was the call of a special**  
14       **meeting. In order to approve the renegotiated union**  
15       **contract a special meeting was called. The contract**  
16       **was approved along with the establishment of a citizens**  
17       **advisory board to consider charter and bylaw reviews.**

18       **At the meeting a citizens chief selection committee was**  
19       **also created and approved. Over the objections of our**

20 attorney, the district voted to pay for the legal fees  
21 of Deputy Chiefs Hartman and Warren.

22 Number seven, lawsuit by Warren and

23 Hartman. Deputy Chiefs Warren and Hartman were sued  
by

24 Quinn & Quinn, attorneys, for legal fees exceeding

25 \$80,000 for a lockout of Chief Mruk and a forensic

21

1 audit. Deputy Chiefs Warren and Hartman, through

2 advice of their counsel, sued the fire district, which

3 was answered by our attorneys. It is an ongoing case,

4 that case is not closed.

5                   **Number eight, merger discussions. A**  
6           **merger discussion committee was established, and there**  
7           **are ongoing discussions concerning this issue. The**  
8           **first meeting on that has been held with Chief Seltzer**  
9           **and his team at the fire station, and it is my**  
10          **understanding that another meeting is scheduled for**  
11          **January 7th, to continue those discussions about the**  
12          **merger and the feasibility of that.**

13                   **Number nine, the district was assessed by**  
14          **the Town of Coventry for sewer installation on its**  
15          **various properties. The board was successful in having**  
16          **those assessments terminated at no cost to the**  
17          **district. The assessment was to the tune of about**

18       **\$34,000.**

19               **Tax collection. Through the efforts of**  
20       **our tax collector, Jean Lukowicz, the board of**  
21       **directors approved, along with a tax collection**  
22       **program, and we have collected \$21,683.60. Our lawyer**  
23       **has scheduled a tax sale for March, at which time to**  
24       **collect the balance due from delinquent taxpayers.**

25               **Mr. Gorman, that is kind of what I was**

22

1       **going to say when you had a question about that, and I**  
2       **knew I was going to address it in my report. I chose**  
3       **to wait until now. If that helps you any more than the**

4 answer you were given then, I hope it does.

5 At this point, I would like to tell the

6 people that we're going to present a budget to you

7 tonight that is going to call for no increase on the

8 residential side at all. It is going to stay the same

9 as it was last year. And we would have been unable to

10 accomplish that had it not been for our unionized

11 employees, and I want everybody to know that. For a

12 long time it was thought amongst the general population

13 in this district and in the Town of Coventry that the

14 union in our department was the trouble, and I have to

15 tell you, if it wasn't for concessions that they made

16 to the board of directors, we would not be able to

17 present the budget to you tonight that we're going to

18 present, and I want to give credit where credit is due.

19 This board has worked very, very hard to establish a

20 good working relationship with our unionized  
employees,

21 and I think on a lot of the issues we have done that.

22 Do we still have some work to do in that area?

23 Absolutely. But because our union employees took the

24 taxpayers of our district into account, they took into

25 account the fact that your taxes went up 35 percent

23

1 last year, they took into account that you were given a

2 revaluation by the Town of Coventry this year and  
3 everyone's values went up. On top of that, the town  
4 issued another 5 percent increase on property taxes in  
5 the town. Because of all these factors, the union took  
6 it upon themselves to make concessions that they  
7 absolutely didn't have to make, but we are all working  
8 together to try to make things better for the taxpayers  
9 in the Anthony Fire District and still provide you with  
10 the level of service that you deserve, that you expect,  
11 and that you absolutely pay for. Let there be no doubt  
12 about that, the level of service you receive, you  
13 absolutely pay for. But I think you get a very, very  
14 good level of service. I think our guys as a whole are

15 very professional. I think they conduct themselves in  
16 a professional manner, I think they represent your tax  
17 dollars very well when they're out in public.

18 With that, I will close. The board of  
19 directors has spent many hours trying to represent you  
20 in the most effective way. We hope that we have  
21 demonstrated to you our desire to have the most  
22 efficient and effective fire district in the Town of  
23 Coventry. It was a pleasure being of service to the  
24 taxpayers of the fire district. Thank you.

25 MODERATOR BURNS: You've heard a reading

1 of the report of the board of directors. I'll

2 entertain a motion to accept as read. Mr. Gorman makes

3 a motion. Mr. Hartman makes a second. Any  
discussion?

4 Questions? There being none, those in favor signify by

5 saying aye. Opposed, nay. The ayes have it, the

6 motion carries.

7 Chief of the department for the chief's

8 report.

9 CHIEF WARREN: Robert Warren, 144 Black

10 Rock Road. The Coventry Fire District has yet proven

11 again that even in the toughest times they work to

12 provide you, the taxpayer, with the most professional

**13 fire fighting team yet ever assembled.**

**14 The men of the Coventry Fire District have**

**15 honor and pride which they take to provide the care of**

**16 the person that calls for a rescue. They also have the**

**17 courage to enter a building that has hidden danger that**

**18 awaits them. They don't think of themselves or the**

**19 families that await them at the end of their shift,**

**20 they just do that job.**

**21 The following is a few of the duties that**

**22 they provide for you:**

**23 The fire marshal's office. The fire**

**24 marshal has been very busy this past year. Smoke**

**25 detector inspections, 99; business inspections, 29;**

1 rough inspections, 26; new home inspections, 13; plan  
2 review for fire alarm systems, 17; plan review for  
3 additions to homes, 11.

4 Also just keeping up on the changing fire  
5 codes is definitely a full-time task in itself.

6 Emergency response: Rescue calls, there  
7 was 1,383; 1,006 of those were in-district, 377 of them  
8 were outside of the district. Fire calls was 402; 274  
9 were within the district, 128 were outside of the  
10 district.

**11                                    The men and women of the Coventry Fire**

**12            District wish to thank the taxpayers for allowing them**  
**13            to provide you the most professional care that responds**  
**14            to your needs. The personnel to respond to your homes**  
**15            in your time of need are the people that are your**  
**16            neighbors, friends and relatives.**

**17                                    At this time I would like to thank them**  
**18            for risking their lives at the drop of a dime without**  
**19            having a second thought.**

**20                                    At this time I would like to thank**  
**21            Mr. Cote and the board of directors, and, you, the**  
**22            taxpayers of the Coventry Fire District for the**  
**23            opportunity of being your acting fire chief. It has**

**24**        **been my honor and pleasure to serve with the best**  
**25**        **firefighters the Coventry District has ever had.**

**26**

**1**                **Sincerely, Chief Robert Warren.**

**2**                **MODERATOR BURNS: You've heard the reading**  
**3**        **of the chief's report. A motion by Mr. Hartman to**  
**4**        **accept. Mr. Gorman, second. Any discussion? There**  
**5**        **being none, those in favor will signify by saying aye.**  
**6**        **Opposed, nay. The motion carries.**

**7**                **Next order of business will be under new**  
**8**        **business. Any old business to come before the body?**  
**9**        **There being none, we'll move to new business. The**

10 first item will be the reading of the resolutions for  
11 the operation of the fire department. It is a fairly  
12 lengthy series of motions here, some of them we pass  
13 every year. They don't identify any money, they just  
14 identify powers and authorities that are resolved to be  
15 taken in the next year. It has been our past practice  
16 to pass these motions as a lump as long as no one  
17 objects to it. I'll read those motions that are  
18 normally passed every year, we'll pass those, and read  
19 the other motions individually and vote on them  
20 separately.

21 Resolved, that the board of directors be  
22 and is hereby directed and empowered to install

**23 additional hydrants when and where needed; resolved,**  
**24 that the chief of the department be and is hereby**  
**25 directed and empowered to remove the fire alarm system**

**27**

**1 and have radio alarm boxes installed where required,**  
**2 and new street lights where required; resolved, that**  
**3 the board of directors be and is hereby directed and**  
**4 empowered to renew insurance on firefighters and renew**  
**5 liability and other insurances that may become due.**

**6 Also, continue paying into the Rhode Island State**  
**7 Retirement System for all employees that are presently**

**8 enrolled; resolved, that the board of directors be and**

**9 is hereby directed and empowered to hire sums of money**

**10 as may be needed to meet the needs of the district, and**

**11 to renew the outstanding notes when due, that such**

**12 notes shall be signed by the treasurer and the chairman**

**13 of the board of directors; resolved, that the board of**

**14 directors be and is hereby authorized to continue**

**15 purchasing smoke detector alarms as needed for 2008 to**

**16 be given to the elderly taxpayers who are qualified for**

**17 the tax freeze; resolved, that the board of directors**

**18 is hereby directed and empowered to continue**

**19 implementing a direct billing to insurance carriers for**

**20 health plan companies for rescue services rendered by**

**21 the fire department rescue squads, with the stipulation**  
**22 that the taxpayers will not be obligated to pay any**  
**23 amount for this service and that the fire department**  
**24 accept the payment of insurance carriers or health**  
**25 plans that the company may allocate for such services**

**28**

**1 rendered. All funds generated from this direct billing**  
**2 shall be deposited as the special rescue recovery fund**  
**3 to be used in the operation of the district budget;**  
**4 resolved, that the board of directors is hereby**  
**5 directed and empowered to sell the property at 563**  
**6 Washington Street which was purchased in 1995.**

7                   **Those are the resolutions that we've**  
8                   **repeated in the past. The chair will call for a motion**  
9                   **to pass those resolutions as a group, unless someone**  
10                  **has an objection. Chief Hartman, you make the motion.**  
11                  **Second? Mr. Gorman, thank you. Motion seconded by**  
12                  **Mr. Gorman. Any discussion on any of these motions?**  
13                  **There being none, those in favor of the passage of**  
14                  **these motions will signify by saying aye. Opposed,**  
15                  **nay. Motion carries.**

16                  **Let me go back and pick a couple that I**  
17                  **skipped. Resolved, that the board of directors is**  
18                  **hereby directed and empowered to spend a sum not**  
19                  **exceeding \$13,000 for the replacement of and new**

20 equipment, supplies and other expenses, such as  
vehicle

21 supplies, station supplies, and Items 9 and 12 of the  
22 budget.

23 The chair will entertain a motion for

24 passage of the resolution. Mr. Hartman. Mr. Parra.

25 That would be Ben Parra, 7 Walnut Hill Road. Any

29

1 discussion on the motion? There being none, those in  
2 favor will signify by saying aye. Opposed, nay. The  
3 ayes have it, motion carries.

4 Resolved, that the tax director be and is

5 hereby directed to freeze the tax amount levied on real  
6 estate to any person or persons currently receiving the  
7 1981 exemption, or who shall qualify for the freeze in  
8 2008. The freeze shall be granted to any inhabitant,  
9 to persons, husband and wife, widow or widower, 65 or  
10 over, living in retirement on a fixed income of \$17,500  
11 or less. Any person that is not granted the freeze may  
12 appeal the tax collector's decision on this matter to  
13 the board of directors in writing.

14 The chair will entertain a motion for  
15 passage of the tax freeze. Mr. Parra.

16 CHAIRMAN COTE: Second.

17 MODERATOR BURNS: Any discussion on the

18 motion? There being none, those in favor, signify by  
19 saying aye. Opposed, nay. The motion carries.

20 I think, Mr. Cote, if you pick up from  
21 there, I'll let you take the motions from there.

22 CHAIRMAN COTE: Resolved, that the board  
23 of directors be and is hereby directed and empowered to  
24 spend a sum not exceeding \$10,000 to continue to meet  
25 the NFPA 1500 requirements in 2008, i.e., turn-out

30

1 gear, line item 26. Can I have a motion to accept?

2 MODERATOR BURNS: Chair will entertain a

3 motion to accept. Mr. Gorman in the back. And, Mr.  
4 Hartman. Any discussion on the motion? There being  
5 none, those in favor, signify by saying aye. Opposed,  
6 nay. The ayes have it, the motion carries.

7 **CHAIRMAN COTE:** Resolved, that the board  
8 of directors is hereby authorized and empowered to  
9 present the charter amendments as presented and voted  
10 upon at this meeting to the Rhode Island General  
11 Assembly in order to amend the charter of the Coventry  
12 Fire District, and that said amendment shall be  
13 attached to and become part of the minutes of the  
14 meeting.

15 **MODERATOR BURNS:** Do I have a motion to

16 accept this resolution. Mr. Hartman. Mr. Webster.

17 You want to explain what you're asking for?

18 CHAIRMAN COTE: At the special meeting in

19 July, we voted to make amendments and updates to the

20 charter to bring the charter and the bylaws in

21 conformity with each other, because right now they are

22 in conflict, the two documents. That was approved at

23 the July meeting. The charter review board has gone

24 over that and come up with some changes that

25 Attorney Capaldi and his team will present to the

1 legislature on our behalf, and before those changes are

2 presented to the legislature at July's meeting we said  
3 we would come back and ask for approval from the  
4 taxpayers before we presented those changes to the  
5 legislature. That is what that is all about, and those  
6 changes were included in the package that you received  
7 when you came in the door.

8 MODERATOR BURNS: Anyone who does not  
have  
9 the package when you came in the door that showed  
what  
10 the charter changes were? We have a motion duly made  
11 and seconded. Chair is opening the floor for  
12 discussion.

13 MR. GORMAN: Quick question. It doesn't

14 show the changes, it shows how the charter is going to  
15 be rewritten. We have to extract for ourselves what  
16 the changes are, is that correct? That is how it is

17 presented. I expected something would have been  
struck

18 through and highlighted what changes, so we know what  
19 we're voting on.

20 CHAIRMAN COTE: Those are the sections  
21 that are going to be changed. This is what they'll  
22 read when the changes are made.

23 MR. GORMAN: This is the only thing that  
24 is affecting the charter?

25 CHAIRMAN COTE: Correct.

1                   **MR. GORMAN:** This is not the new charter  
2                   in its entirety, these are the changes to be added and  
3                   deleted?

4                   **CHAIRMAN COTE:** Correct.

5                   **MODERATOR BURNS:** Does that answer satisfy  
6                   you?

7                   **MR. GORMAN:** The answer to the question  
8                   does.

9                   **MODERATOR BURNS:** It would be hard to  
10                  present the whole charter in one piece tonight, it is  
11                  108 articles. Any other discussion? They're asking

12 for authorization to bring that charter to the  
13 legislature. Conceivably, the legislature could accept  
14 it the way it is, could change it, send it back to us,  
15 do what they want, it is state law. Any discussion?

16 No other discussion. I sense you're ready to vote.

17 Those in favor, signify by saying aye. Opposed, nay.

18 The ayes have it, the motion carries.

19 CHAIRMAN COTE: Resolved, that the bylaws  
20 of the Coventry Fire District are hereby amended to  
21 read as those presented by the board of directors which  
22 shall be attached to and become part of the minutes of  
23 this meeting. Again, those changes to the bylaws were  
24 presented to you as part of the package when you came

25 in.

33

1                   **MODERATOR BURNS:** Let's get a motion to  
2                   approve the resolution. Mr. Webster. Ms. Murphy  
3                   seconded. We have a motion made and seconded to  
4                   approve the resolution to change the bylaws. You want  
5                   to speak on that?

6                   **CHAIRMAN COTE:** I will try to answer any  
7                   questions, if anybody has them. What we're trying to  
8                   do is, as I said on the previous resolution, we're  
9                   trying to bring the charter and bylaws in line with

10 each other and do away with the conflicts that appear  
11 to be in the two documents as we speak. I don't have  
12 in front of me a list of changes that will be made to  
13 the bylaws, but I'm sure somebody does, and I'm looking  
14 down to the end of the table.

15 MR. CAPALDI: Arthur Capaldi, 1035 Main  
16 Street. Chris worked on the bylaws, I would like him  
17 to explain some of the changes. When we first got  
18 involved with the fire district, one of the first  
19 things we had to do was understand fully your charter,  
20 and then we looked at your bylaws, and then we looked  
21 at minutes, all the minutes of various fire district  
22 meetings since 2004, maybe 2003. And your bylaws and

**23 your charter were not in conformity, which made your**  
**24 bylaws illegal. So what we're doing here is to, number**  
**25 one, make sure that your charter reads to sufficiently**

**34**

**1 allow you to have the bylaws that you've always wanted.**  
**2 Anybody can challenge your bylaws and your actions if**  
**3 the bylaws are not in conformity with the charter. In**  
**4 doing that, we had to both change the charter and the**  
**5 bylaws. I'll have Chris, who worked on the bylaws,**  
**6 come up and answer any of your questions, or give you a**  
**7 brief overview of the changes in the bylaws. Is that**  
**8 what the body would like?**

9                   **MODERATOR BURNS: Would you do an**  
10                   **overview?**

11                   **MR. PACHINO: Christopher Pachino, 1035**  
12                   **Main Street. To give a basic overview on what the**  
13                   **charter and bylaws changes were without going word for**  
14                   **word through the various documents, there were several**  
15                   **key areas where there were conflicts between the**  
16                   **charter and bylaws. Basically, under the law if there**  
17                   **was a conflict between the two, the charter prevails.**  
18                   **There were several areas that the district has been**  
19                   **following the bylaws, and while they followed the**  
20                   **bylaws they were conflicting with the charter and**  
21                   **therefore could be susceptible to legal challenge.**

22 That had been going on for a number of years, and after

23 looking through the various documents on other  
24 matters,

24 we determined there were several areas that had to be

25 looked at, and that is when we discussed with the

35

1 citizens advisory board and sat down with them about

2 the various conflicts and what had to be resolved.

3 There were several key issues. The first

4 was the election and term of the chief of the fire

5 district. The charter stated that the chief is elected

6 and that he shall hold office during good behavior and

7 could only be removed for cause by a majority of the  
8 vote of taxpayers. However, the bylaws said that the  
9 chief was actually appointed. So that was one area  
10 that needed to be addressed. That got resolved in  
11 favor, under these amendments, in favor of how the  
12 bylaws are worded, that the chief is actually going to  
13 be appointed by the board of directors and shall serve  
14 at the pleasure of the board of directors.

15 The next issue was similar to the chief,  
16 dealt with the election of the moderator, treasurer and  
17 tax collector positions. Those, under the charter as  
18 well, were elected positions under the charter, they  
19 were elected; under the bylaws, they were appointed.

**20** Those got amended so that those three positions are  
**now**

**21** going to be appointed by the board of directors.

**22** The next area where there was a conflict

**23** was the number of signatures that were required to call

**24** a special meeting of the district. Under the charter

**25** only 12 signatures were required to call a special

**36**

**1** meeting of the fire district, while under the bylaws,

**2** there was 80 required. That got resolved in favor,

**3** following the bylaws, of 80 signatures, and that is how

**4** the charter was amended.

5                   **The next issue was the establishment of**  
6                   **the board of directors. Briefly, the board of**  
7                   **directors, previously the board of engineers, had been**  
8                   **a governing body. That got resolved in favor of**  
9                   **establishing a board of directors, as the taxpayers had**  
10                  **voted upon at previous meetings.**

11                  **Finally, one of the main issues was the**  
12                  **definition of who may vote at these meetings. There**  
13                  **was actually a Constitutional issue posed. Basically,**  
14                  **the charter had limited the vote to only taxable**  
15                  **inhabitants who were qualified to vote in town affairs,**  
16                  **meaning people who owned property. However, the**  
17                  **Rhode Island Supreme Court back in 1981 said that is**

18       unconstitutional, by limiting the vote to taxable  
19       inhabitants, is unconstitutional. The court had  
20       reasoned that renters have the same interest in fire  
21       protection and that they also indirectly pay taxes by  
22       paying their landlords. So, therefore, we struck the  
23       word taxable out of inhabitants to make it so that  
24       inhabitants of the district who are qualified to vote  
25       in town affairs may vote, meaning renters.

37

1               Those are the basic changes that were  
2       made, without going word for word. If there were

3 further questions we could go through what particular  
4 areas were changed, but that would likely be very  
5 time-consuming.

6 MODERATOR BURNS: Anyone have any  
7 questions?

8 MR. PARRA: I have a question. I'm not  
9 sure whether it is in the bylaws or in the charter, but  
10 there was a section that said to be an elected official  
11 in this district you had to be a taxable inhabitant; is  
12 that still there?

13 MR. PACHINO: To be an elected official  
14 you had to be an inhabitant who was qualified to vote.

15 MR. PARRA: They have to live in the

**16 district to be an elected officer?**

**17 MR. PACHINO: That's correct.**

**18 MR. PARRA: How about the chief?**

**19 MR. PACHINO: The chief right now is**

**20 appointed by the board of directors, so the chief does**

**21 not fall under that criteria. The board of directors**

**22 has to be inhabitants, but the chief, however, that**

**23 will follow the criteria set by the chief selection**

**24 committee, and now it is simply under the bylaws, the**

**25 chief is going to be appointed by the board of**

**38**

**1 directors. So right now, there is not a requirement**

2           that the chief has to be an inhabitant.

3                       MR. PARRA: That is one of the items  
4           getting changed?

5                       MR. PACHINO: It is.

6                       MR. PARRA: I didn't see it listed here.

7                       MODERATOR BURNS: Thank you. Any other  
8           questions, discussion? This is the resolution to  
9           change the bylaws. For the purpose of making sure  
10          there is no legal question involved, I'm going to ask  
11          that the resolution be subject to a two-thirds majority  
12          vote. I'll call for a show of hands, and if that will  
13          do it, fine. If not, we'll have to do a ballot.

14                      All those in favor of the passage of this

15 resolution will signify by raising your right hand.

16 Those opposed by raising your right hand. The chair is

17 going to rule it was unanimous. Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN COTE: Resolved, that the

19 salaries of the district officers' firefighters and

20 volunteers be as follows:

21 Salaries, expenses and stipends. Clerk of

22 the district, yearly, \$100; moderator of the district,

23 yearly, \$250; tax assessors, yearly, \$100; tax division

24 clerk, monthly, \$200; fire alarm technician, \$20 per

25 hour; fire alarm helper, \$12 per hour; Class A

1 firefighters, volunteer, \$12 per call, EMT; rescue and  
2 fire calls, assistant chiefs, \$14 per call; rescue and  
3 fire calls, two assistant chiefs, \$250 per month.

4 MODERATOR BURNS: You've heard the  
5 resolution for the passage --

6 CHAIRMAN COTE: I'm sorry. I have to look  
7 further down the page.

8 The following personnel shall receive a  
9 salary adjustment to be computed into their present  
10 salaries which are listed below:

11 Treasurer of district, pension agent, \$415  
12 a week; district secretary, 792.78 per week; tax

13 collector, 633.70 per week; chief of department, \$1,200  
14 per week. All salary adjustments subject to the rules  
15 and regulations of the board of directors. The end.

16 MODERATOR BURNS: You've heard the  
17 resolution setting the pay scales for the upcoming  
18 year. The chair will entertain a motion for passage.

19 MS. MATTHEWS: Motion.

20 MODERATOR BURNS: Chief Warren, second.  
21 You've heard the motions duly made and seconded. Any  
22 discussion? Mr. Cotnoir?

23 MR. COTNOIR: Is the chief's salary not  
24 being paid now, or is it going to the acting chief?

25 CHAIRMAN COTE: The chief's salary in

1 whole is not being paid now. The acting chief is being  
2 paid a small portion of that, as the acting chief.

3 MODERATOR BURNS: The provision in the  
4 structure is so if they hire a full-time chief, they  
5 have enough money to hire one.

6 CHAIRMAN COTE: This was money for the  
7 chief that was budgeted and approved by the taxpayers  
8 at last year's annual meeting, it was also budgeted and  
9 approved by the taxpayers at the special meeting. So,  
10 and it is proposed for the upcoming year in this  
11 budget.

12                   **MODERATOR BURNS:** Any other questions? If  
13 not, I sense you're ready to vote. Those in favor will  
14 signify by saying aye. Opposed, nay. The ayes have  
15 it, the motion passes. Continue.

16                   **CHAIRMAN COTE:** Resolved, the firefighters  
17 shall receive a 4 percent salary adjustment on July 1,  
18 2008, per the union contract. Captains, weekly,  
19 976.79; lieutenants, weekly, 990.45, firefighters  
20 first --

21                   **MODERATOR BURNS:** Check the lieutenants'  
22 number.

23                   **MR. WEBSTER:** That is biweekly, I believe.

24                   **CHAIRMAN COTE:** Captain, 990.45, weekly;

25        **lieutenants, 976.79, weekly; firefighters first,**

41

1        **902.65; firefighters second, 890.25, weekly;**

2        **firefighters third, 836.31, weekly; EMT-C cardiac**

3        **techs, \$40 per week.**

4                    **MODERATOR BURNS: You've heard the**

5        **resolution for the passage of the payroll, pay scales**

6        **for the employees of the department per the union**

7        **contract. Motion by Mr. Hartman. Second by Mr. Cote.**

8        **Discussion? There being none, I sense you're ready to**

9        **vote. Those in favor, signify by saying aye. Opposed,**

10        **ay. The ayes have it, the motion carries.**

11                    **CHAIRMAN COTE: Resolved, that the**

12        **Coventry Fire District require that all new plats that**

13        **are being developed within the Coventry Fire District**

14        **boundaries require underground utilities, five homes or**

15        **more. The chief shall require the developer or owner**

16        **of said plat or subdivision install at their expense**

17        **wireless radio fire alarm boxes. The fire chief shall**

18        **designate location, manufactured type and acceptance**

19        **after installations for the fire district.**

20                    **MODERATOR BURNS: You've heard the reading**

21        **of the motion. Motion by Mr. Hartman. Seconded by**

22        **Mr. Cote. Any discussion? There being none, those in**

23 favor, signify by saying aye. Opposed, nay. The ayes  
24 have it, the motion carries.

25 CHAIRMAN COTE: Resolved, that the board

42

1 of directors be hereby authorized and empowered to  
2 sell, transfer or exchange surplus or unnecessary  
3 equipment or buildings: Morton building and Mapledale  
4 School.

5 MODERATOR BURNS: You heard the reading of  
6 the motion. What is the pleasure? Mr. Cote, motion to  
7 pass. Motion seconded by Mr. Warren. Any discussion?

8 MR. GORMAN: Quick question. The building

9 next door, that is not listed on there, the building  
10 next to the station?

11 CHAIRMAN COTE: No, that was a separate  
12 resolution that already went through. The apartment  
13 house?

14 MR. GORMAN: Yes.

15 CHAIRMAN COTE: That resolution has been  
16 voted on, that was a separate resolution from this one.

17 MR. GORMAN: That was in this, earlier  
18 tonight?

19 CHAIRMAN COTE: Yes.

20 MR. PARRA: Mapledale School, what did you  
21 say about Mapledale School?

22                   **CHAIRMAN COTE:** What we would like to do  
23                   is eventually turn it back over to the Town of  
24                   Coventry, who owns it.

25                   **MR. PARRA:** It sounded like you wanted to

43

1                   sell it, but we don't own it.

2                   **MR. BUDZIAC:** Are you going to get rid of  
3                   the Morton building?

4                   **CHAIRMAN COTE:** That is one of the options  
5                   to raise revenue that the board of directors has  
6                   discussed. It is a mobile building. We went back

7 through the records and found what we had purchased it  
8 for, and if we need to raise more revenue without going  
9 up on the taxes, I would rather sell the Morton  
10 building, as we really don't use it for storage  
11 anymore. 90 percent, 95 percent of what we need to  
12 store is now stored inside the fire station. It is  
13 really just an empty building sitting there taking up  
14 space on the property that we could use for parking or  
15 anything else.

16 MR. BUDZIAC: How about the wing on the  
17 side of the station there, where you have a boat stored  
18 and all that, maybe you could rent that out for  
19 revenue?

20                   **CHAIRMAN COTE: No, I don't think that**  
21           **will be necessary. But this board has looked at a lot**  
22           **of different ways to generate revenue without coming**  
23           **back to the residential tax base in the Anthony Fire**  
24           **District. This is just one of the many things that**  
25           **were discussed, but this is a pretty prevalent item in**

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1           **the district. So we thought that we would probably be**  
2           **better served by bringing it to the taxpayers for their**  
3           **approval, and not acting on it on our own accord.**

4                   **MR. BUDZIAC: Those wash bays that you**  
5           **have, you could rent those out?**

6                   **CHAIRMAN COTE:** If I thought they would  
7                   generate some money, I might try that. I don't think  
8                   it will generate enough money.

9                   **MR. BUDZIAC:** Somebody else would probably  
10                  use those for garages.

11                  **MS. MATTHEWS:** It is an insurance issue.  
12                  You can't do that.

13                  **CHAIRMAN COTE:** I know of what Mr. Budziac  
14                  speaks, we've addressed the issue before.

15                  **MR. BUDZIAC:** We're still using them for  
16                  wash bays. We could rent them as garages.

17                  **CHAIRMAN COTE:** What Mr. Budziac speaks of  
18                  is that if there are lax times at the fire department

19 and all of their other duties have been performed to  
20 the satisfaction of the chief, on occasion the chief  
21 will allow one of the men to bring his vehicle inside  
22 of one of our bays that have drains in the floor and  
23 wash his vehicle. And that is what Mr. Budziac makes  
24 light to. That is what he's trying to bring to  
25 everyone's -- he's not making light of it, he is trying

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1 to bring it to light so everyone knows that our  
2 employees are washing cars at the fire station.

3 MR. BUDZIAC: At the taxpayers' expense,

4       you forget.

5                   **CHAIRMAN COTE:** At the taxpayers' expense.

6                   **MR. BUDZIAC:** And are we responsible if  
7       they get hurt in that garage washing their vehicle on  
8       their time?

9                   **CHAIRMAN COTE:** Mr. Budziac, I will tell  
10       you this, that we are responsible for them no matter  
11       where they are. If they are on duty, we are  
12       responsible for them. No matter where they are, if  
13       they are on duty, we are responsible for them.  
14       Absolutely.

15                   **MR. BUDZIAC:** On duty washing their  
16       vehicle. That is not their job.

17 **MR. GORMAN: The Hillbrand Street**

18 **property, where do we stand with that? I didn't know**

19 **if you wanted to add this to your list.**

20 **CHAIRMAN COTE: I would.**

21 **MR. GORMAN: I'll amend it. I make a**

22 **motion that we amend to add the Hillbrand property to**

23 **that list to that resolution.**

24 **CHAIRMAN COTE: Second.**

25 **MODERATOR BURNS: Motion made and**  
**seconded**

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1 **to add the Hillbrand property off of Hillbrand Street**

2                    and Black Rock Road. Any discussion on the  
amendment?

3            There being no discussion on the amendment, those in  
4            favor of only the amendment will signify by saying aye.  
5            Opposed, nay. The amendment passes.

6                    We're now on the main motion as amended.

7            Is there any discussion? There being none, I sense  
8            you're ready to vote. Those in favor, signify by  
9            saying aye. Opposed, nay. The motion carries.

10                   CHAIRMAN COTE: Resolved, that the board  
11            of directors be hereby authorized and empowered to hire  
12            on retainer legal representation for the Coventry Fire  
13            District for the sum of \$20,000.

14                   MODERATOR BURNS: Motion to hire?

15 **MR. WEBSTER: Motion.**

16 **MS. MATTHEWS: Second.**

17 **CHAIRMAN COTE: For discussion, any**

18 **questions?**

19 **MR. GORMAN: I looked, on the proposed**

20 **budget you have \$40,000 budgeted for legal expenses.**

21 **Also going back to my memory, which doesn't always**

22 **serve me correctly, but, motion and resolution for past**

23 **numerous years to hold the budget, the legal line to**

24 **\$5,000 each year. What is the need for \$20,000 this**

25 **year? Are you anticipating to use \$20,000? And why**

1 are we budgeted for 40,000?

2 CHAIRMAN COTE: I can explain that.

3 \$20,000 is for a contract that was negotiated, myself

4 and Arthur Capaldi's office, and I have a list here of

5 what that will cover for \$20,000. Just for the record,

6 Mr. Gorman, last year we budgeted 40. We didn't budget

7 five, we budgeted \$40,000 last year. A lot of that

8 money was used up this year, we faced a lot of legal

9 challenges, as you know. And because we didn't have an

10 attorney on retainer, we paid for all work by the hour.

11 To have an attorney on retainer, it covers

12 numerous, numerous items that we will no longer be

13 charged by the hour for. Basically, the only thing it  
14 doesn't cover is contract negotiations. Effectively,  
15 we are cutting the legal budget that was provided to  
16 the board of directors last year in half. \$40,000 last  
17 year, we're asking for \$20,000 this year for the  
18 attorney for the district. The reason the other  
19 \$20,000 was left in there is because at the special  
20 meeting in July the taxpayers chose to pay legal  
21 representation for the two deputy chiefs in the suit  
22 with Quinn & Quinn, and being as that is an open-ended  
23 case that has yet to be resolved, that we have been  
24 named as a third-party defendant in, so we have to  
25 defend ourselves against that case, also.

1                   **We left the other \$20,000 in there for**  
2                   **legal defense that is outside the scope of what the**  
3                   **board of directors has taken on responsibility for.**  
4                   **The taxpayers took on the responsibility for the legal**  
5                   **fees of the two deputy chiefs, not the board of**  
6                   **directors. So we left the other \$20,000 in there**  
7                   **because we have to pay their legal defense fund, and**  
8                   **nobody knows at this point how much that is going to**  
9                   **be, where it is going to go, how much it is going to**  
10                  **cost, how many man-hours are going to be. If we don't**  
11                  **enter into this contract with Arthur Capaldi's office,**

12 any work he does for the district in representing us  
13 against that case, which we are legal defendants in,  
14 third-party, we will pay for by the hour. If we have  
15 them on retainer, he is available to us, he is  
16 available at all our meetings.

17 This contract, if you would like to look  
18 at it, you can, that is why I brought a copy. I didn't  
19 have them printed up and added to the package because  
I  
20 didn't think everybody would want to see them, but I  
21 will show it to anybody who wants to see it. Every  
22 other fire district that I contacted, and I did my  
23 research and my homework, they keep attorneys on

**24       retainer. Some of them don't pay as much as \$20,000.**

**25       Some of them pay more than \$20,000 to keep an attorney**

**49**

**1       on retainer. We're looking at the past record of this**

**2       district, and this department, and the amount of work,**

**3       legal work that was put into this year, and I don't**

**4       think that is an unrealistic figure for the upcoming**

**5       year. Once the two deputy chiefs have resolved their**

**6       case and we are no longer involved in it, I'm hoping**

**7       that we don't need any of that additional \$20,000. But**

**8       in case we do, we have to have it. We have to pay that**

**9       bill, we're responsible for it. It was done through a**

10 resolution of the taxpayers. Rather than get caught  
11 with our pants down, or get caught short, we opted to  
12 budget the same monies for the upcoming year as was  
13 granted to us by the taxpayers for the last year.

14 MS. MURPHY: Are we no longer in that suit  
15 because we offered to pay their legal expenses?

16 CHAIRMAN COTE: No, we are still in that  
17 suit.

18 MS. MURPHY: We're paying their expenses  
19 to sue us?

20 CHAIRMAN COTE: Yeah.

21 MS. MURPHY: What kind of morons approved  
22 that?

**23 MS. MATTHEWS: The taxpayers.**

**24 MODERATOR BURNS: Let's not use derogatory**

**25 remarks. The taxpayers voted on that at the last**

**50**

**1 meeting.**

**2 CHAIRMAN COTE: It was explained before**

**3 the vote was taken, and that was the taxpayers' will,**

**4 and I'll go along with the taxpayers' will. I have no**

**5 problem with carrying out the will of the taxpayers.**

**6 We did, as you know, Mr. Gorman, cut the legal fees**

**7 from the past years, more than in half.**

8                   **MR. GORMAN:** I guess my question would be,  
9                   the \$20,000 that you have on retainer that is going to  
10                  cover the defense of the Hartman/Warren case, that is  
11                  contractual?

12                  **MR. CAPALDI:** Why don't I address this  
13                  issue? I've represented the Coventry Housing Authority  
14                  for over 30 years, I'm on retainer to them for \$10,000  
15                  a year. I represent the Coventry Housing Associates,  
16                  which is a nonprofit corporation that builds and  
17                  developments low and moderate housing, I get \$10,000 a  
18                  year. Those boards require my presence, I do some  
19                  eviction work for them, but most of it is legal  
20                  research and advice under the Federal Laws, because

21 covers housing authorities. Most of my work is really  
22 research and advice, very seldom do I go to court for  
23 those boards, and I get \$10,000 a year for that work.

24 Not to mention that I've been practicing  
25 law for 30 years in this town.

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1 Your legal problems, when I came into the  
2 district many months ago, were enormous. I was just  
3 absolutely shocked at what I saw and what I had to go  
4 through in reviewing other lawyers' work for this  
5 department. I was astounded at what you people have

6        paid and the results you got for it. Not criticizing  
7        any lawyers, but I know how I operate. \$20,000 is  
8        probably higher than what I would normally charge a  
9        fire district for a retainer for what we do, but we  
10       haven't finished with all of the issues that we had  
11       started when we first were hired. The \$20,000 is going  
12       to certainly cover district court work, it will cover  
13       all meetings and advice. Daily, anyone on the board  
14       can call us. All of your board meetings we will be  
15       going to, grievances, we will handle one-issue  
16       grievances. We will handle union discussions during  
17       the year. We will not go to Superior Court for that  
18       amount of money. That has to be billed separately. I

19 get \$250 an hour. My young associate, I was very proud  
20 of how he addressed you people tonight, he gets \$150 an  
21 hour based on the hourly rates that we charge. Being a  
22 lawyer for any client, it is a work in progress. We  
23 will try to make sure that we're asking for a retainer  
24 that is going to pay us sufficiently, not an hour rate,  
25 in the work we did for this district and the things

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1 that we had.

2 Do you know how many contracts you have  
3 with the union that were floating around in this  
4 district? You had five contracts, that I had to figure

5 out which one was the legal one. This is the kind of  
6 things that went on with your district.

7 I would say that the \$20,000 will have to  
8 be reviewed depending on the amount of work that is  
9 going to be generated.

10 I'm afraid of the fire district, however,  
11 I think since I've been involved with you I feel good  
12 about the fact that I think we got things running,  
13 hopefully through our legal efforts to have a  
14 smooth-running operation for the Coventry Fire  
15 District. A smooth-running municipal operation. And  
16 it took several months, a lot of litigation, a lot of  
17 problems solved to get to the point we're at tonight.

18                   **The \$20,000, is that going to be**  
19                   **sufficient to cover Superior Court? No, I can't do it**  
20                   **for that. So to answer your question, yeah, you'll be**  
21                   **paying two lawyers, however, I advised against that.**  
22                   **The taxpayers saw fit to approve what they did. And I**  
23                   **certainly feel bad for Mr. Hartman and for Chief**  
24                   **Warren. I think these are great guys and I certainly**  
25                   **don't believe that those lawyers are going to prevail.**

**53**

1                   **But, in the meantime, you have to be defended. I have**  
2                   **never been in a situation where my client's paying both**

3 the defense and the plaintiff, but that is what we're  
4 faced with.

5 To answer your question, if I remember,  
6 sir, no, it does not cover Superior Court work, it will  
7 not cover negotiations. It will cover almost  
8 everything else. It should keep your legal fees much  
9 less than what you were paying in the past.

10 CHAIRMAN COTE: The board is asking for  
11 this, and, like I said, if we weren't trying to pay two  
12 sets of lawyers, because the original budget that we  
13 did and came up with only budgeted \$20,000 for legal.  
14 But then, one of the other board members brought to my  
15 attention that we still have to pay the legal defense

16 fund for the two assistant chiefs. So we chose to  
17 leave it at the \$40,000. Because we could have  
18 successfully cut the legal budget in half from last  
19 year to this year. Possibly. Or came real close. But  
20 because we have two sets of lawyers we have to pay,  
21 we're asking taxpayers.

22 MR. CAPALDI: Mr. Cote, I just had a quick  
23 conference with my young associate. We will not charge  
24 extra for any representation. I really can't see you  
25 people paying both plaintiff and defendants' lawyers.

1 It is just unheard of. We will not charge you for

2 that.

3 MR. WEBSTER: Thank you, Arthur.

4 MODERATOR BURNS: Any other questions,  
5 discussion?

6 MR. MATOLLA: Ed Matolla. We are a  
7 defendant in that lawsuit, we're being sued directly by  
8 the chiefs, or a defendant of the lawyers that are  
9 suing the chiefs?

10 MR. CAPALDI: We are the defendant of the  
11 lawyers who are suing the chiefs, but we are actually a  
12 defendant of the chiefs. They brought us into the  
13 case. The case does not have a relationship between us  
14 and the lawyers, because that case -- you have a case

15 pending in Superior Court that was brought two years  
16 ago by the lawyers against the fire district. Your  
17 attorneys in that matter, and there is another bill  
18 coming up, I don't know what it is, you had an attorney  
19 by the name of Melody Alger, who was representing the  
20 fire district in the action of Quinn & Quinn against a  
21 direct action against the fire district. That case is  
22 pending, it has been heard and they're waiting for a  
23 decision from the judge. What Quinn & Quinn did was,  
24 they said, let's go after these poor guys. Their  
25 lawyer properly -- and I think when either Mr. Hartman

1 called me when he was first sued, it was you, Chief  
2 Hartman -- I said I can't represent you on behalf of  
3 the fire district, because you're going to turn around  
4 and sue us, which eventually they had to do. It wasn't  
5 them bringing suit, their lawyer recommended it, which  
6 is the proper legal thing to do.

7 MR. MATOLLA: It was my understanding that  
8 the chiefs had said they were going to talk to their  
9 lawyers.

10 MR. CAPALDI: A problem arose with that,  
11 and I didn't know this. I called their lawyer and I  
12 said, are you going to dismiss the case against us?

13 Your clients represented at the meeting that they would  
14 dismiss the case against us. He says, I can't. I  
15 said, why not? Because they were defaulted. They  
16 didn't answer the case in sufficient time. I think  
17 they tried to get insurance to cover them, it didn't  
18 cover them. So they were defaulted. When they filed a  
19 motion, their lawyer, Hartman's and Warren's lawyer,  
20 filed a motion to vacate the judgment. The judge said,  
21 I'll vacate it, but I want you to bring in the fire  
22 district. And that is what they did. So it was kind  
23 of like an order from the judge to bring in the fire  
24 district.

25 CHAIRMAN COTE: They couldn't abandon it.

1                   **MR. CAPALDI:** We're stuck with being in  
2                   the case. I hope that answers it.

3                   **MODERATOR BURNS:** Any further discussion?

4                   **MR. HARTMAN:** I would like to say one  
5                   thing on that. If anybody thinks that we want to sue  
6                   the fire district, they're wrong.

7                   **CHAIRMAN COTE:** Nobody thinks that.

8                   **MR. HARTMAN:** I've been on this fire  
9                   department for over 40 years. It is a sad state of  
10                  affairs that we had to get involved with that.

11                  **MR. CAPALDI:** Your lawyer explained that

12 fully, again, I explained to the people here that your  
13 lawyer, that is a legal requirement. If he didn't do  
14 it, he could be sued for malpractice. He did the right  
15 thing.

16 MODERATOR BURNS: Any further discussion?

17 MR. GORMAN: Back to my original question,  
18 I thank Mr. Capaldi for dropping his rate or whatever  
19 he did, my question was, the \$20,000 retainer, was it  
20 going to cover that? Originally it was no. My  
21 question was, my statement was going to be next, what  
22 did it cover? You went over it. You said it is not  
23 covering contract negotiations?

24 CHAIRMAN COTE: Correct.

25

**MR. GORMAN: Do you foresee any contract**

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1 **negotiations?**

2 **CHAIRMAN COTE: Absolutely not.**

3 **MR. GORMAN: For how long? It seems to me**

4 **we went through the bylaws and charter, we've done so**

5 **much.**

6 **CHAIRMAN COTE: 2011.**

7 **MR. GORMAN: I can't foresee a \$20,000**

8 **expense, aside from defending the district to defend**

9 **district employees. I was trying to figure out what we**

10 were going to spend the money on for the 20 grand this  
11 year.

12 CHAIRMAN COTE: I think it was covered.

13 MR. GORMAN: Why do we need a \$20,000  
14 retainer to represent us? They reviewed the charter, I  
15 know this year was a lot of money, charter review,  
16 bylaw review.

17 MR. CAPALDI: I still have to get to the  
18 General Assembly, someone has to do that. There is  
19 still a lot of legal work left over from last year.  
20 I'll be glad to go back to an hourly charge. A  
21 retainer always saves money.

22 CHAIRMAN COTE: It was not a number pulled

23 from the air.

24 **MODERATOR BURNS: Any further discussion?**

25 There being none, I sense you're ready to vote. Those

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1 in favor, signify by saying aye. Opposed, nay. The

2 ayes have it. The motion carries.

3 **CHAIRMAN COTE: One more thing, through**

4 the negotiation of that, because of the way our money

5 comes in, he'll take monthly payments, we don't have to

6 give it all to them up front. I should have mentioned

7 that. In this district, that goes a long way.

8 **Resolved, that the board of directors be**

9 and is hereby directed and empowered to adopt a budget  
10 for the operation of the fire district for the ensuing  
11 2008 fiscal year in the amount of \$2,086,380. A  
12 tentative tax rate of 21 cents on each \$100 of the  
13 ratable property of the Coventry Fire District be  
14 levied and assessed on the inhabitants thereof and  
15 others owning property therein. A special tax on  
16 industrial and other commercial properties shall be  
17 levied at a rate not to exceed 43 cents on each \$100 of  
18 rateable property as determined by the tax assessors,  
19 for the purpose of lighting the streets, hydrant  
20 rentals, fire department and incidental expenses of the  
21 district for the ensuing year; that said taxes be

22        **assessed in the fire station at Anthony, Rhode Island,**  
23        **on December 1st, 2007, at 8:00 p.m. standard time, and**  
24        **collected, paid into the district tax collector on or**  
25        **before April 30, 2008; or payable in quarterly amounts**

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1        **due January 31, 2008, April 30, 2008, July 31, 2008,**  
2        **October 31, 2008, and all taxes remaining or any**  
3        **subsequent installment not paid on or before the due**  
4        **date, the whole tax or any balance thereof shall at**  
5        **once become due and payable with interest of 1 1/2**  
6        **percent per month from December 1, 2007 on the balance**

7 due; to be added and collected by the collector. The  
8 tax collector is hereby ordered to collect according to  
9 law, taxes not paid for April 30, 2008; and no tax bill  
10 levied shall be less than \$20. Any omissions,  
11 additions, or new accounts assessed after December 1,  
12 2007 will be added for collection. If any portion of  
13 this resolution be determined to be invalid, the  
14 remaining portion of the resolution shall be deemed to  
15 be valid.

16 MODERATOR BURNS: Resolution for adoption  
17 of a budget and the statement of a tentative tax rate.

18 Mr. Gorman moves passage of the resolution. Second,  
19 Mr. Parra. Discussion? Mr. Cotnoir.

**20 MR. COTNOIR: I have several questions.**

**21 Is Clarion's closing going to affect the department's**

**22 budget next year?**

**23 CHAIRMAN COTE: I don't have a crystal**

**24 ball that I can see into the future, but I do know that**

**25 we'll have a decrease in revenue on, if not on the**

**60**

**1 property, on the tangibles we tax them on.**

**2 MODERATOR BURNS: Mr. Cotnoir, as a**

**3 manufacturing facility, they pay taxes on the land and**

**4 buildings, but not on the equipment. So if they clean**

**5 out the equipment and leave, we don't lose on the**

6 equipment, because we don't tax it, anyway. If they  
7 take their inventory, we lose the taxes on the  
8 inventory. If they demolish some buildings, we could  
9 lose some money there. That won't happen until next  
10 year, 2009.

11 MR. COTNOIR: The first two items on the  
12 budget page, payroll and overtime, how did you arrange  
13 to go from \$200,000 to 50,000 in overtime, or did you  
14 just throw it up into the payroll section?

15 CHAIRMAN COTE: Mr. Cotnoir, let me assure  
16 you, I just didn't throw anything up into the payroll  
17 section. The second thing, if you had listened  
18 during -- and I'm sure you did -- during my report, you

19 would have heard me profusely thank our union  
employees

20 for the concessions that they made to the board of

21 directors in helping us to come up with a balanced

22 budget that we could present to the taxpayers and ask

23 for no tax increase. Solely due to the unionized

24 employees. We cut the budget for overtime because of

25 concessions that were made by our union employees.

We

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1 cut the budget, but we didn't have to add to the budget

2 for pension because, again, our union employees made

3       concessions to the taxpayers of this district and gave  
4       up what they already had. They gave back things they  
5       already had, because they didn't want to have to affect  
6       the taxpayers in this district with the tax increase.  
7       That is what I was referring to when I thanked them for  
8       their efforts in being able to help us present this  
9       budget to you.

10               **MR. GORMAN:** Are you at liberty to discuss  
11       what kind of concessions, because there is a \$150,000  
12       difference in overtime. What kind of concessions? It  
13       has to be substantial to save 150,000.

14               **CHAIRMAN COTE:** They actually gave up some  
15       of their overtime callback, gave it back to the

16 district. That is how we were able to adjust that  
17 downward. They also gave up their entrance into the  
18 COLA system in the pension plan for an additional year,  
19 at a savings of \$40,000 to the district. When you add  
20 the two numbers together, you come up with that  
21 difference in the overtime payroll, and we were able to  
22 adjust that line item budget in a downward fashion to  
23 the number that was presented to you tonight on that  
24 budget.

25 MR. GORMAN: When you say overtime

1 callback, I know a while ago when I was involved with

2 another district, I don't want to see you guys get in  
3 trouble with the US Department of Labor, Fair Labor  
4 Standard Acts, if they come in the door over 32 hours,  
5 we're still paying overtime?

6 CHAIRMAN COTE: Yes, what we're doing is  
7 completely legal. No firefighter in my district -- and  
8 I'm sorry to say my district, but I feel responsibility  
9 not only to the taxpayers, but to the firefighters --  
10 other than in the performance of their everyday job, no  
11 firefighter in this district will be put in any greater  
12 danger than they have been in the past in the  
13 performance of their duties. That will not happen.  
14 Part of the reason for that is because we used to have

15 what was commonly referred to as mutual aid, as you  
16 know. When you got to a scene, if there was smoke and  
17 flames coming out the window, you got on the radio and  
18 said help, and the guy at fire alarm dispatched more  
19 help to you. What we have now with our neighboring  
20 districts is what can only be considered as automatic  
21 aid. Whenever a piece of equipment and manpower rolls  
22 out of our station, manpower and equipment is  
23 immediately dispatched from our neighboring districts  
24 to respond to the same call, to the same address, so no  
25 one piece of equipment is showing up on scene by

1       itself, without backup being at the end of the street  
2       right behind it. Because of that, we were able to work  
3       with our union employees, they were able to work with  
4       us, and give us some things back that allowed us to  
5       present this budget to the taxpayers.

6                   **MODERATOR BURNS:** Any other discussion?

7       There being no other discussion, I sense you're ready  
8       to vote. Those in favor of passage of this resolution,  
9       signify by saying aye. Opposed, nay. The ayes have  
10      it, motion carries.

11                   **CHAIRMAN COTE:** That is all I have.

12                   **MODERATOR BURNS:** Thank you. The next

13 order of business will be the election of officers.

14 I'm going to call on Domenic Terracciano to say a few

15 words.

16 MR. TERRACCIANO: Good evening, my name is

17 Domenic Terracciano. As you know, I've been a board

18 member since the installation of the board this past

19 year, and I've worked with the rest of the board and

20 the department to try and benefit the district and rein

21 in expenses. Gary calls me his numbers guy because I

22 don't come so much with an agenda, I come looking at

23 fiscal responsibility. I'm currently active in

24 discussions with central district with Chief Seltzer

25 researching the pros and cons of a possible merger.

1       **And I am merger neutral. I know it has been bandied**  
2       **back and forth over many meetings, we should do this,**  
3       **we should do that. I'm looking at the pros and cons**  
4       **from a fiscal basis.**

5               **I'm going to announce I am up for election**  
6       **tonight for another term for the board of directors. I**  
7       **have been informed this past week from our**  
8       **representation, Mr. Capaldi, that right now I'm in a**  
9       **situation that perhaps poses a conflict of interest.**

10       **So, in keeping with the openness, the transparency that**  
11       **this board has tried to bring to this department, I'm**

12 going to withdraw my candidacy for reelection to this  
13 board for this election for this term.

14 For those of you who I've worked with,  
15 thank you very much, and I will be seeing you again in  
16 the future at some point, I feel confident. Thank you,  
17 ladies and gentlemen, thank you.

18 MODERATOR BURNS: Thank you, Domenic.

19 Question to the clerk. For the number of openings  
20 available on the ballot for the district counsel, how  
21 many people qualified with nomination papers?

22 CLERK GOLOMB: Three people qualified.

23 MODERATOR BURNS: Mr. Beckman, Shirley

24 Matthews and Domenic Terracciano. Mr. Terracciano

has

25        **withdrawn, that means there are two candidates for two**

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1        **offices. Inasmuch as the offices are equal, neither**

2        **has any step in it, it is not necessary that we perform**

3        **a ballot. Therefore, there being only two candidates**

4        **and two openings, I'm going to direct the chair to cast**

5        **one ballot for Mr. Beckman, one ballot for Shirley**

6        **Matthews. The chair will rule that these two people**

7        **are elected.**

8                **CHAIRMAN COTE: I would like to cast one**

9        **ballot for --**

10                   **MODERATOR BURNS:** The secretary will do  
11           it. You want to cast a second ballot for them, I'll  
12           let you. Then we'll call it unanimous.

13                   **CHAIRMAN COTE:** That's okay.

14                   **MODERATOR BURNS:** Next order of business.  
15           Next order of business is the election of the clerk.  
16           Under the current rules and charter of this  
17           organization the clerk is elected, and how many people  
18           qualified with nomination papers?

19                   **CLERK GOLOMB:** One.

20                   **MODERATOR BURNS:** You?

21                   **CLERK GOLOMB:** Yes.

22                   **MODERATOR BURNS:** John Golomb was the

**only**

**23 one that submitted nominations for this job. There**

**24 being only one candidate, the chair is going to direct**

**25 the director of the council to cast one vote for John,**

**66**

**1 and the chair will declare that he's elected.**

**2 You also have one opening for the tax**

**3 assessor. How many people have qualified with**

**4 nomination papers?**

**5 CLARK GOLOMB: One.**

**6 MODERATOR BURNS: That person is David**

**7 Hood, of 77 Gervais Street.**

8 **CLERK GOLOMB: Maybe two, I think. It is**

9 **on the paper. Look at the other page.**

10 **MODERATOR BURNS: There is only one person**

11 **qualified to be nominated and with the proper**

12 **signatures for tax assessor. The chair is going to**

13 **direct the clerk of the district to cast one ballot for**

14 **David Hood and declare him the tax assessor elected as**

15 **of this evening. That takes care of elections.**

16 **Next order of business will be**

17 **announcements. Anyone want to make any**  
18 **announcements?**

18 **CHAIRMAN COTE: Couple of things before we**

19 **close. I would like to personally thank Domenic**

**20 Terracciano for the work that he's done with this**  
**21 board. He has been absolutely my numbers man for the**  
**22 year. He doesn't go anywhere without his calculator.**  
**23 He showed up for one meeting without it because it**  
**24 burnt up, I thought I was going to have another heart**  
**25 attack. But, Domenic, thank you on behalf of the board**

**67**

**1 of directors and the taxpayers that we represent, I**  
**2 would like to thank you for a job well done, and ask**  
**3 and request from me personally that you stay involved**  
**4 at the fire station, keep doing what you're doing and**  
**5 fighting the good fight.**

6                   **MR. TERRACCIANO:** Thank you, it's been an  
7 honor.

8                   **CHAIRMAN COTE:** Secondly, we had the  
9 meeting here tonight because the school was booked  
10 previous to our engagement. If you can believe that,  
11 because we do this every year. Because I want to be up  
12 front, we received Club Jogues tonight for free, there  
13 will be no charge to the district. It was set up as  
14 you see it set up here.

15                   I would like to thank Councilman Hyde from  
16 Hyde Music for the P.A. system that he provided for us  
17 tonight at no charge, he brought it in and set it up.  
18 All we did was help him carry some stuff in. Thank you

19 very much, sir.

20 We received this all, and because Domenic  
21 mentioned the transparency of this board, in keeping  
22 with that, we received the hall tonight for free, there  
23 was no money exchanged. We bartered it off. They're  
24 having their children's Christmas party here on the  
25 16th and we will transport Santa Claus on our fire

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1 truck from our station to the front door of this  
2 establishment for them in exchange for them letting us  
3 have the hall tonight at no charge. I think it was a

4        pretty good trade-off, it is for the kids, and keeping  
5        with the practice and tradition of firefighters in  
6        general, when it comes to doing something for the kids,  
7        they're usually the first ones on the line. I, as the  
8        chairman of the board, approved.

9                    With that, I want to thank everybody for  
10       coming tonight. I hope that when we hold our regular  
11       monthly meetings at the station that everyone who has  
12       been involved stays involved, and, yes, Mr. Gorman that  
13       even includes you. I use Mr. Gorman and Mr. Stephens  
14       as a benchmark. If I can make them happy, nobody else  
15       is going to catch me doing anything wrong and I look  
16       forward to them being there because they challenge me

17 on a monthly basis, and I need that sometimes. So  
18 thank you, and thank everybody who came tonight.

19 MS. LEFEBVRE: Would you introduce Jim  
20 Beckman to everybody?

21 CHAIRMAN COTE: Yes. We send out a whole  
22 lot of tax bills every year, and every year it seems to  
23 be the same faces every month at the monthly meetings  
24 at the fire department, and that is a shame. People  
25 don't know what they're missing out on, and they would

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1 understand the job and the life of a firefighter a  
2 whole lot better if they allowed themselves to be

3 informed, not only in Anthony, but in Coventry as a  
4 whole. I believe we have the best of the best.

5 Shirley, thank you for reminding me of  
6 that. I would like to first of all congratulate  
7 Shirley Matthews on her reelection to the board. Even  
8 her husband, because when we get Shirley, we get Bill,  
9 and they have both been irreplaceable this year. They  
10 are a team and they both worked very diligently.

11 Now, I would like Jim Beckman to stand. I  
12 would like to introduce Jim Beckman to everyone as the  
13 newest member of the board. Mr. Beckman, thank you  
for  
14 your interest, and I can't help but say I think you're

15 going to be sorry. I'm only kidding.

16 With that being said, just, again, thank

17 you from me personally, thank you, thank for being

18 here, thank you for having the faith in us, thank you

19 for supporting everything that we've tried to do this

20 year on behalf of the fire department, the taxpayers,

21 and we all really appreciate it, thanks.

22 MODERATOR BURNS: Any further

23 announcements to come before the body?

24 MR. GORMAN: I wanted to say to the board,

25 I know you guys had a big year this year, a lot of

1 accomplishments have been made, and you had a lot of  
2 that in front of you. From a taxpayer, I know I  
3 challenge you guys, but thank you, hats off to you  
4 guys, you did a good job.

5 MODERATOR BURNS: Any further business to  
6 come before this body? There being none, the chair  
7 will entertain a motion to adjourn. Chief Hartman.  
8 Seconded by Mr. Gorman. Motion made and seconded to  
9 adjourn. All in favor, signify by saying aye.  
10 Opposed, nay. Ayes have it. Thank you very much,  
11 ladies and gentlemen.

12 (MEETING CLOSED AT 8:50 p.m.)

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**CERTIFICATE**

**I, MELANIE M. CHACE, RPR, Notary Public, do hereby  
certify that the foregoing is a true, accurate, and  
complete transcript of my notes taken at the  
above-entitled proceeding.**

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

**27th day of December, 2007.**

**MELANIE M. CHACE, RPR, NOTARY PUBLIC**  
**MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: 04/07/11**

**IN RE: ANNUAL MEETING**