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

TOWN OF COVENTRY
2 **COVENTRY FIRE DISTRICT**

3

4 **PROCEEDING AT HEARING :**

:

5 **IN RE: :**

:

6 **ANNUAL MEETING :**

7

DATE: December 11, 2012

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

PLACE: Club Jogues

9 **184 Boston Street**

Coventry, RI

10

11 **BEFORE:**

12 **TIMOTHY WILLIAMSON, ESQUIRE, MODERATOR**

13 GARY COTE, CHAIRMAN

14 SHIRLEY MATTHEWS

15 JAMES BECKMAN

16 PETER PANKOWICZ

17 LOUIS COTE

18 THOMAS LACOLLE, TREASURER

19 JOHN GOLOMB, CLERK

20

PRESENT:

21

FOR THE BOARD ARTHUR CAPALDI, ESQUIRE

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Also Present:

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Chief Paul Labbadia

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Deputy Chief Robert Warren

Jeanne Lukowicz, Tax Collector

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1 (COMMENCED AT 7:02 P.M.)

2 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: My name is Timothy

3 **Williamson. I'll be your moderator this evening.**

4 **Mr. Clerk, if you could declare a quorum, I**

5 **believe we do have the amount required by law. If**

6 **the clerk could just declare a quorum.**

7 **THE CLERK: Yes, I'd say that we have a**

8 **quorum.**

9 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Thank you. We**

10 **have a quorum. At this time, I would ask Deputy**

11 **Chief Warren to review the emergency evacuation**

12 **plans.**

13 **DEPUTY CHIEF WARREN: Doors here, there's**

14 **doors over there. In the event you have to go**

15 **downstairs, downstairs to the left, go out that**

16 door, also.

17 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Chief, thank you.

18 At this time, I'd ask you to lead us in the Pledge
19 of Allegiance.

20 (PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE RECITED)

21 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Mr. Clerk, could
22 you do a role call, please.

23 THE CLERK: The Board of Directors, Gary
24 Cote is the chairman.

25 MR. COTE: Present.

1 **MS. MATTHEWS: Shirley Matthews.**

2 **MR. BECKMAN: James Beckman.**

3 **MR. PANKOWICZ: Peter Pankowicz.**

4 **MR. COTE: Louis Cote.**

5 **THE CLERK: Those are the board members.**

6 **And here we have the treasurer, Thomas Lacolle.**

7 **Here we have the legal representative for the fire**

8 **district, Judge Arthur Capaldi. There we have his**

9 **assistant. Her name I forgot. Anyway, and here**

10 **we have Chief Labbadia, and Deputy Chief Bob**

11 **Warren. At the receiving desk, you have the great**

12 secretary of the district, and we have the tax
13 collector Jeanne Lukowicz, and the other -- I
14 believe that covers the whole staff.

15 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Thank you,
16 Mr. Clerk.

17 THE CLERK: I didn't mention my name.
18 John Golomb, the clerk.

19 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Just some brief
20 rules. Registered voters who are residents of the
21 district are to be seated in the area designated
22 that's going to be to the right of the microphone.
23 This meeting is open to the public. Members of
24 the press and news media are here. They cannot

25 participate in any way. They have to be seated in

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1 the special area, which they've already done. The

2 rules of the meeting are as follows: Only

3 registered voters of this district shall have the

4 right to attend, participate, and vote on matters

5 brought before the meeting. Anyone who is not

6 eligible to vote shall remain in the designated

**7 areas for non-voters to observe, but they cannot
8 participate in any manner. They shall not shout,
9 clap, cheer, or distract or intimidate anyone.**

**10 There are -- no recording devices of any kind
11 shall be allowed by anyone in the meeting
12 including video or camcorder or telephone to
13 intimidate participants. To be recognized or to
14 be heard, an eligible voter shall stand and wait
15 to be recognized by myself and after recognition,
16 advance to the podium, give your name and address
17 and state your business. If you cannot get to the
18 microphone, the microphone will be brought to you.
19 An eligible voter shall speak only to the issue**

20 that's been before the body. Robert's Rules of
21 Order or Mason's Rules of Order do not apply to
22 this meeting. There shall be only one motion
23 before the body at any time, but there may be
24 motions to amend. All motions presented shall be
25 in writing. I shall make the final decision as

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1 to what is or was not out of order or as to the
2 propriety of any motion.

3 **All those recognized to speak shall not**
4 **speak any more than three minutes. However, other**
5 **people, voters, can give their time up to other**
6 **voters. All those who want to be heard on a**
7 **motion before the body shall be heard. And since**
8 **we have declared a quorum, the first business**
9 **before us is the minutes of the annual meeting**
10 **from 12-8-2011.**

11 **MR. GARY COTE: Motion to dispense.**

12 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: There's a**
13 **motion --**

14 **MR. BECKMAN: Second.**

15 **(VOICE VOTE: PASSED)**

16 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON:** The minutes of the
17 meeting of December 8, 2011, have been approved.

18 **Next, Chief Labbadia's report.**

19 **MR. GORMAN:** David Gorman, Hornbeam Road.

20 **Was there a discussion on the motion?**

21 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON:** No.

22 **MR. GORMAN:** Board vote only?

23 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON:** Yes.

24 **MR. GORMAN:** -- the minutes?

25 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON:** Just -- you had

1 your opportunities.

2 MR. GORMAN: I tried, but you called the
3 roll so fast you didn't give us an opportunity to
4 ask for discussion on the motion.

5 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Well, sorry I was
6 so quick, but next time -- Chief Labbadia, your
7 report.

8 CHIEF LABBADIA: I don't know if you guys
9 want to come up because I'm going to put the --
10 I'm going to jump right into the budget and some

11 things that went on throughout the year. The
12 mission statement for the Coventry Fire District
13 is to protect and enhance the quality of life of
14 the citizens of Coventry, the fire district
15 through preventing or minimizing the loss of life,
16 property, threatened by hazards of fire, medical,
17 rescue emergencies, hazardous material incidents
18 and disastrous situations therein.

19 All right. Talking about some new growth
20 and things that are going on in the district.

21 If -- I don't know if anybody drives down
22 Washington Street, but the Anthony Mill right now
23 is in the process of getting revitalized. They're

24 going to put 120 apartment units in there. That
25 should be done sometime in May. They're on the

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1 fast track to get it completed. We also have a
2 new subdivision going in in the Glenwood
3 subdivision. Nineteen new homes are being put in
4 there. Rhodes Technology has expansion that
5 consists of a large portion of the old Clarion
6 Corporation on Washington Street, where they are

7 putting new buildings up, they're doing a new
8 flammable liquids warehouse and also a
9 state-of-the-art laboratory and it's generating
10 some funds for the district, which is a good
11 thing.

12 Fire marshal's office, develops and
13 implements plans -- the fire marshal's office
14 develops and implements training programs for
15 businesses, schools, complexes, homes,
16 establishments, and practice emergency evacuation
17 procedures. On inspection and code enforcement
18 issues, the marshal responds to more than 100
19 alarms for fire code issues and/or fire cause

20 determinations besides his day-to-day duties. He
21 completed, besides his normal routine going out on
22 fire alarms, 101 smoke inspections and 10 plan
23 reviews.

24 **Coventry Fire District-Anthony Village is**
25 **the most densely populated per capita with 17,000**

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1 plus people. It serves an area of five and a half

2 square miles. Runs of the Town of Coventry to
3 date is 5,388 runs. Total run count for the
4 Coventry Fire District year-to-date is 2,135 runs,
5 expected somewhere over 2,255 runs. Rescue calls
6 themselves, we did 1,740 rescue calls; 1,399
7 rescue calls were in district, and 341 were out of
8 district. Fire calls, we did 395, 233 fire calls
9 in district and 162 out of district.

10 Let's get into some of last year's
11 budget, which is on the third page, I believe,
12 after the tax report. It has the final year's
13 budget. Some issues that we had to deal with this
14 year were multiple injuries, OJI's, of

15 firefighters being out on a disability injury for
16 over 12 months. We had two firefighters out,
17 which caused some additional overtime in the
18 overtime expenditure line. Hurricane Sandy cost
19 us a little overtime -- putting more manpower on
20 for the hurricane besides some winter storms. The
21 pension plan was changed, the contribution in the
22 pension plan we have to pay into was increased
23 from 17.25 percent, I believe, to 20 point
24 something percent. I think it's 20 point -- I
25 don't have it in front of me. I think it's 20.35

1 or something like that.

2 **Back taxes and medical coverage changes**

3 increased. Midstream, they told us because of the

4 claims that we had that they had to put a rider

5 onto the medical policy that increased the medical

6 coverage line. We also had back taxes for 2012

7 somewhere near \$325,448.69, and the prior year's

8 taxes, \$87,514.16. As far as prior year's taxes

9 go, the majority of the prior year's taxes are for

10 2011, and the rest of the taxes are what we didn't

11 collect in 2012.

12 We have some taxes that we're going to
13 abate tonight that's going to drop that figure a
14 little bit of the uncollected, but very minuscule.
15 I think it comes out to \$3,000 and change.

16 I'm going to get into the budget. I
17 broke the budget down so if you have any
18 questions, feel free to stop me in between. I
19 broke it down based on salaries. The first salary
20 on there is the tax collector's salary. That
21 salary is \$36,200. The treasurer is \$12,200.
22 Myself as the fire chief of the district is
23 \$74,160. My deputy chief is a part-time deputy.

24 He's 14,000. My fire marshal, his own fire
25 marshal in his division, is \$61,580. We have four

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1 lieutenants, we have four shifts, one per shift at
2 \$230,150. We have seven top-paid firefighters in
3 the district at \$384,300. We have four
4 second-class firefighters at \$179,900, and we have
5 a new probationary firefighter at 40,780, and we

6 also have a captain that's pending retirement.

7 And he'll hopefully be in front of you and the

8 retirement board and going to the doctor's by

9 January. And his figure comes out to 4,395.

10 We do a clothing allowance so we maintain

11 our uniforms and always look in a professional

12 manner. Clothing allowance is \$1,200 per

13 firefighter. There's 18 firefighters. Comes up

14 to 21,600. That is broken up in two payments of

15 \$600 each throughout the year, and throughout the

16 budget year.

17 Dental insurance is \$557 a year for

18 individual plan. We have six members on the

19 individual plan, and it's 1,749 a year for a
20 family plan, and we have 17 on the family plan,
21 including four retirees, which equals \$33,100.

22 Holidays, we have 10 holidays. That's
23 based on a 12-hour base holiday pay. The ten
24 holidays for 18 firefighters comes out to \$52,200.
25 Life and vision insurance, \$450 per year for 17

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1 firefighters, which equals \$7,650. Longevity

2 payments for the firefighters, there's 11 of them
3 that get it. The total for longevity comes to
4 \$48,100.

5 Medical insurance, which obviously keeps
6 going up, medical insurance is \$5,349 a year for
7 an individual plan, and there are six members that
8 are on the individual plan. It is \$12,837 a year
9 for a subscriber and their suppose, not a family
10 plan, and we have six of those. It's \$14,442 a
11 year for a family plan. We have eleven, including
12 four retirees and \$7,221 in lieu of health
13 coverage for one employee. Minus co-payments of
14 \$26,866, which equals \$253,600. Medical debit

15 cards. Medical debit card is used for Rx and
16 co-payments. We have 16 family members at \$3,000
17 per family, and the individual plan at \$1,500 and
18 the seven firefighters which equals \$58,500. This
19 is a way to save money on Blue Cross because it
20 was going through the roof and it was easier to
21 come up with a co-payment plan to lower our
22 premiums and make them a little lower.

23 Overtime is based on vacation. There's
24 228 days as far as everyone on the job entitled to
25 vacation time. Sick time is 186 days. Personal

1 time is 36 days, and the injury of 180 days equals
2 130,000, and what the firefighters did this year
3 is they gave up their minimum manning clause which
4 dropped it to three firefighters. We're going to
5 maintain the four firefighters but if it drops
6 below that four because someone called out, we're
7 not going to fill it. So, we're going to save
8 money in overtime by doing that.

9 Post-employment health plan. The

10 districts pay 9.5 percent per firefighter salary
11 for health coverage. It equals \$49,000. What
12 this is is so we don't have to give health
13 coverage to the firefighter after they retire. We
14 set up a payment plan where that money is put in
15 there. Then when he retires, he's on his own for
16 health coverage, after the 25 years of service.
17 Before we were paying their health coverage until
18 they were 65; and at a -- depending on how they
19 went out, either a family plan or a single
20 coverage, if they went out on a disability, then
21 it would be on the family plan. If they went out
22 on a straight retirement, it would just pay their

23 health coverage until age 65, until Medicare

24 kicked in.

25 Payroll taxes are 15,000 a year. The

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1 pension system went up to 20.15 -- that's the

2 number I was looking for earlier -- per

3 firefighter, which comes out to \$197,000. Sick

4 time buyout, when we did some contractual

5 bargaining with the collective bargaining unit, we

6 came down to, I believe it was 10 -- 11 sick days
7 a year from 20 something sick days a year. We
8 dropped it down; but in order to do that, we had a
9 buyout for the sick time which was at \$600 a year.
10 This is the last year for that buyout. They're
11 down to eleven sick days a year, and that comes to
12 \$10,200.

13 Contingency for \$500. That's
14 miscellaneous for the treasurer and myself for
15 payroll checks and things like that to pay bills.
16 Dues, as far as NFPA, subscriptions for the fire
17 marshal, fire training, as well as advertising the
18 annual meeting, comes to \$4,000 a year. Deficit

19 reduction line at 465,395. Additional money to
20 cover some -- the shortfalls that we do have in
21 the budget. Equipment new and repairs and
22 maintenance, the two sets of gear, we're probably
23 going to do some SCBA upgrades as far as one
24 annual maintenance eight vehicles per year and
25 three semi-annual maintenance on eight vehicles

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1 per year comes to \$45,000.

2 Facility RM is 5,000 -- yes, Mr. Budziak?

3 We have two engine vehicles, two pumpers. We have

4 one ladder truck. We have a special air supply,

5 which -- then we have a pickup truck for

6 day-to-day use, and then we have the staff cars

7 and the rescue. So, that comes to eight.

8 MR. BUDZIAK: What was wrong with that

9 ladder truck that was in the garage for four

10 weeks?

11 CHIEF LABBADIA: The ladder truck went

12 for its annual -- it has to go because it's still

13 under warranty. We sent it to Hartford,

14 Connecticut, which is the distributor that handles
15 all the PM's for the vehicle when it's under
16 warranty. So, it was there in Hartford,
17 Connecticut, for a couple of weeks.

18 MR. BUDZIAK: Well, four weeks. What was
19 the expense to replace it?

20 CHIEF LABBADIA: Nothing, at this time.
21 Actually, we had another district covering.

22 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Mr. Budziak, if I
23 may, let the chief finish his report and you can
24 ask your questions at the end because if we
25 start --

1 MR. BUDZIAK: You said if there's a
2 question, I can speak up and ask it. I raised my
3 hand, according to protocol.

4 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Sir, I also asked
5 you to come to the microphone.

6 MR. BUDZIAK: Thank you.

7 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Sir, I asked you
8 to come to the microphone.

9 MR. BUDZIAK: It's too hard for me to

10 walk.

11 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Then, sir, we'll
12 have the microphone come to you. This is for the
13 stenographer, sir, not to break your train of
14 thought but the stenographer cannot hear you
15 speak. So, a microphone will be brought to you.

16 MR. BUDZIAK: Well, I'm waiting for it.
17 Now, Chief, I lost my train of thought.

18 CHIEF LABBADIA: It's very difficult for
19 us to find a replacement ladder truck. There's
20 very few replacement vehicles in the state to
21 borrow. It's not like a rescue vehicle which
22 there's plenty to borrow. So, at that time, we

23 would let the other district cover the ladder call
24 runs, Hopkins Hill or Central Coventry.

25 MR. BUDZIAK: Why can't the company that

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1 we brought that truck from or are buying that
2 truck from send us a replacement? We're paying
3 enough money, Chief, \$60,000 a year, remember?

4 CHIEF LABBADIA: Yes. You're a hundred

5 percent right. It's not that easy. They don't
6 have that kind of truck readily available to
7 borrow out for -- sending it all over the state
8 and other states. Anything else?

9 **MR. GORMAN:** David Gorman. Question to
10 the chief was is that ladder truck normally manned
11 or does it matter if --

12 **CHIEF LABBADIA:** It's actually
13 cross-manned with the rescue.

14 **MR. GORMAN:** So, if the rescue's out, the
15 ladder truck is not manned. The ladder truck's
16 out, the rescue's not manned?

17 **CHIEF LABBADIA:** Yeah, pretty much. I'm

18 going horse. All right. Facility RM, we're
19 getting there. We have a septic system at the
20 fire station. That septic system is so old that
21 it's the old cardboard pipe that they used to use.
22 So, it's kind of collapsed and the septic system
23 is not working properly. So, I have to get a
24 company to come in and tie into the sewers, so
25 that money may be used for RM for facilities may

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1 be used to tie the sewer system into the station.

2 Fuel is based on last year's consumption. We went

3 from 18,000 a year for fuel, because of the prices

4 in fuel, it went up to \$31,300. Hydrants, we have

5 227 hydrants in the district, Kent County Water

6 charges us for the hydrants. It's \$557 per

7 hydrant, which equates to \$126,500. Insurance,

8 London Health manages our debit cards. It's

9 \$1,500 a year. Medical co-payment cards are

10 managed through New London Health and that's the

11 fee they charge us to manage the cards, and they

12 do a lot for that fee because they go after the

13 doctors, they chase down bills, they make sure

14 things are going back and forth. It's well worth
15 it. Insurance VFIS is broken down into property
16 liability and sick and accidental. Property
17 liability is \$30,000 a year. Sick and accidental
18 is 55,00 and there's a Workman's Comp. policy for
19 400 for the non-union employees or the
20 administrative employees that work for the admin.
21 part of it and that comes to \$85,400. Legal
22 attorney fees is one fee and that's for Judge
23 Capaldi and that's \$10,000 a year for as many
24 arbitration cases or legal issue that we have to
25 handle, Judge Capaldi handles it for that fee with

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1 the exception of tax sales, and tax sales we
2 charge an additional fee to the taxpayer at the
3 time of the tax sale when they redeem or pay their
4 back taxes.

5 Lease on ladder truck, 60,850. The final
6 payment is February 15, 2021. Lease,
7 Pitney-Bowes, that's for our postage and our copy
8 machine. We do a lot of postage. We have our own

9 postage machine in the tax collector's office.

10 That is \$1,460 a year. We have a line of credit

11 interest that we have every year. It's a running

12 line of credit for 500,000. That is \$9,000 a year

13 interest. We've got medical deductible for

14 injuries. Because our injuries have been -- we've

15 had a few injuries based on the amount of volume

16 and runs we do, the VFIS is now charging us a

17 5,000 co-pay before they handle any of the OJI's.

18 So, I guesstimated it at three people at 5,000 an

19 occurrence, which equals 15,000. We may not even

20 use 5,000 of that, but I put it in there in the

21 event that we did it, it was there. Fire alarm

22 maintenance account is a yearly account that we
23 pay to the Town of Coventry to maintain our fire
24 alarm office that we do all our dispatching
25 through. That account is \$2,500 a year. Each

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1 fire district in the town pays the same amount to
2 the Town of Coventry for fire alarm to maintain
3 the fire alarm division and all the equipment in
4 it. Service contracts, we spend like 6,000 a year

5 on service contracts, anywhere from telephone
6 systems, tax office software, firehouse software
7 that runs our programs in our firehouse to keep
8 track of our runs, keep track of payroll,
9 personnel, and Zoll Medical which is a life pack
10 12 which we use on our rescue, has to have a
11 service contract, it's a \$30,000 piece of equipment
12 and it's very expensive when it breaks. It's
13 easier to have a service contract. It costs us
14 less money in the long-run. And also Striker
15 Stretcher is a stretcher company that does PM's on
16 our stretcher, and we also have -- I missed one
17 that isn't there, but I'm going to tell you what

18 it is and it's a contract for -- we have a
19 generator that we put in our station in the event
20 that the power went down in the station, the
21 generator runs the whole station, and we have a
22 contract with someone to come in and do that
23 yearly to maintain the generator so it's in proper
24 running order and condition.

25 Streetlights. Again, we are in the

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1 **Coventry Fire and Lighting District. We pay for**
2 **street lights, a hundred thousand dollars a year**
3 **for streetlights. We did get a pretty good**
4 **savings in our utilities and our streetlights**
5 **because we changed our carrier. We got better**
6 **rate for the electricity in the price we're**
7 **paying. We changed from National Grid to a**
8 **private company, and it saved us a little money in**
9 **electricity. Supplies on an average, it's \$20,000**
10 **a year. That's for rescue and EMS supplies, which**
11 **is 10,000 a year. Station cleaning supplies,**
12 **which is \$6,000 a year and office supplies for the**

13 tax office and myself which is 4,000 a year.
14 Telecommunications, the land lines in the fire
15 station and also the cell phones that are in the
16 vehicles, and that comes to 46,200. Training, a
17 thousand dollars; utilities are budgeted for gas,
18 propane, water, and electricity at \$21,600.

19 The total budget is \$2,530,820. At this
20 time, I'd like to thank the Board of Directors and
21 the taxpayers of the Town of Coventry Fire
22 District for the opportunity of being the chief,
23 and it has been my honor and privilege to serve
24 with some of the most outstanding and highly
25 decorated firefighters of the Coventry Fire

1 District. Thanks, guys. Sincerely, Chief Paul

2 Labbadia.

3 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Questions? Why

4 don't you approach. If you cannot approach, the

5 microphone will be brought to you.

6 MR. GORMAN: Dave Gorman. Chief, in

7 regards to your first line under new growth within

8 the Coventry Fire District, what is the current

9 valuation on that Anthony Mill project?

10 CHIEF LABBADIA: Unfortunately, the town
11 made a special tax deal with them and because we
12 use the tax roll for the town, they value that
13 mill at \$800,000. At the end of the project, it
14 may be up to anywhere from 18 to 20 million
15 dollars.

16 MR. GORMAN: At the end of the project or
17 the end of special tax deal with the town?

18 CHIEF LABBADIA: Well, both.

19 MR. GORMAN: So, how much does the
20 Coventry Fire District stand to get from this
21 project this year and the projected five-year

22 income?

23 CHIEF LABBADIA: 800,000.

24 MR. GORMAN: Of Coventry Fire District

25 money? So, this year we're going to get \$800,000

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1 in tax revenue from them.

2 CHIEF LABBADIA: That's what it's valued

3 at.

4 **MR. GORMAN:** No. How much are we
5 projected to get from them; do you know?

6 **CHIEF LABBADIA:** I'm not sure exactly
7 what it is, maybe 20,000 or something like that.

8 **MR. GORMAN:** If -- what I'm trying to get
9 at is I believe the Town of Coventry made a very
10 bad deal on this mill project and it handcuffed
11 the taxes for the fire district.

12 **CHIEF LABBADIA:** Somewhat, yes, you're
13 correct; but that doesn't mean that we can't
14 change it once it's built out. I think there's a
15 provision in the charter, been looking at the
16 charter. I'm waiting to refer to legal counsel to

17 see if we have the right to have our own assessors
18 and assess it ourselves once it's built out.

19 MR. GORMAN: So, if I'm correct, \$800,000
20 is what it's taxed at currently or what it's
21 assessed at. It should be a \$20 million project.
22 So, we're losing out almost \$19 million?

23 CHIEF LABBADIA: For the first five
24 years, I believe, and then it tiers up after that
25 for 5 --

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1 **MR. GORMAN:** On our commercial tax rate,
2 what would that revenue be for this district, any
3 idea?

4 **CHIEF LABBADIA:** Substantial -- if it was
5 at its full value. We're going to do a lot --
6 we're going to support it. So, it's kind of
7 tough. That could give us anywhere from two to
8 three hundred runs more a year --

9 **MR. GORMAN:** Had this community or this
10 district had impact fees in place, at 120 units up
11 there, that would have been roughly, if you had a
12 thousand dollar impact fee per unit, \$120,000

13 additional revenue here. I know that because of
14 East Greenwich Fire District has a per unit impact
15 fee, and they have a \$2 million cash surplus on
16 hand in their impact fee account. So, I would
17 urge the board and the taxpayers here to think
18 about something in regards to an impact fee for
19 projects such as this, especially when we're
20 making deals with the town and being handcuffed.

21 CHIEF LABBADIA: Not only that, I think
22 the town council has to get a little more active
23 with the fire districts when it's going through
24 its planning process as far as development within
25 the community. So we have a chance to give our

1 side of the story and not just have to swallow

2 what was given to us.

3 MR. GORMAN: Thank you.

4 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Are there any

5 other questions? Gentleman in the hat.

6 MR. MC VINNY: John McVinny, Highwood

7 Drive. Chief, On Page 4, is this the actual spend

8 budget?

9 CHIEF LABBADIA: Yes.

10 MR. MC VINNY: Or is this just the

11 projected from last year?

12 CHIEF LABBADIA: No. This is the actual

13 last year's spent budget.

14 MR. MC VINNY: What was the actual

15 projected from last year?

16 CHIEF LABBADIA: We are a hundred

17 thousand over budget.

18 MR. MC VINNY: So, last year it was

19 roughly two-five?

20 CHIEF LABBADIA: Two-five. It's pretty

21 much stayed the same.

22 MR. MC VINNY: So, there was no increase

23 at all from last year's budget to this year's

24 budget?

25 CHIEF LABBADIA: Pretty much no because

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1 of the concessions that the union made, it's

2 staying the same.

3 MR. MC VINNY: Thank you.

4 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Mr. Duckworth.**

5 **MR. DUCKWORTH: Thank you, Scott**

6 **Duckworth, Washington Street. Mr. Moderator, I'll**

7 **direct to you then you can direct it to a member**

8 **of the staff. When did the fire district change**

9 **its charter giving it the authority to put in a**

10 **tax tier program dividing residential and**

11 **commercial properties?**

12 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Mr. Capaldi, can**

13 **you answer that question?**

14 **MR. CAPALDI: It has never done that.**

15 **MR. DUCKWORTH: Okay. I was at Central**

16 **Coventry's meeting last night. Are you**

17 familiar --

18 MR. CAPALDI: Yes, I am.

19 MR. DUCKWORTH: How is that going to

20 affect us?

21 MR. CAPALDI: That is a Superior Court

22 action between the Albion Fire District and the

23 taxpayer and that decision from Superior Court

24 applies to two parties in front of Superior Court.

25 Would it affect us? It would if we go to the same

1 judge, if we have to do that. It would have to be
2 challenged. Our actions here would have to be
3 challenged, but right now we have been doing this
4 for many years, and it would be my opinion at this
5 time that perhaps in the future we should be going
6 through to have a charter change.

7 MR. DUCKWORTH: All right. The
8 information I was presented last evening by the
9 special master assigned to run Coventry, Central
10 Coventry, was that all it's going to take is a
11 lawsuit by any commercial property and then the

12 commercial -- I'm sorry, the residential taxpayer
13 like myself would bear the brunt of paying forward
14 those taxes, which affected everybody in town?

15 MR. CAPALDI: What they did in the Albion
16 case, they gave the commercial people a credit to
17 be applied towards their future taxes. So, there
18 wasn't an additional tax placed upon the people.

19 MR. DUCKWORTH: I understand that --

20 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: If I could just
21 interrupt, and I don't want to really stop this
22 discourse, but you're speculating what may happen
23 in the future. Not saying that it won't happen
24 tomorrow, not saying that it won't happen next

25 week or next month --

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1 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I can guarantee you it
2 will happen tomorrow.

3 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Thank you, sir.

4 The point is it's not happening right now. As
5 such, it's not really properly before the board.

6 He can answer questions all he wants, but --

7 CHIEF LABBADIA: And also we're taking

8 **measures to put it through in January for a**
9 **charter change.**

10 **MR. DUCKWORTH: Mr. Moderator,**
11 **appropriately so, your statement, though, is we're**
12 **just going to wait and see if we get sued, we'll**
13 **deal with it then?**

14 **MR. CAPALDI: I don't wait for anybody.**
15 **I give advice, and my advice to this board was to**
16 **describe the case, and that it would be my opinion**
17 **that you should, as soon as possible, have a**
18 **charter change, and you can't do that until**
19 **January anyway.**

20 **MR. DUCKWORTH: So, we're all forewarned,**

21 it's on the way. Thank you.

22 MR. GARY COTE: If I may, when we went

23 back through our records, the way this district

24 has been taxing has been done this way for as far

25 back as our records go and that was 1986, okay.

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1 In my opinion, and I've read the charter two or

2 three times, it says in the charter, in my

3 understanding of it, my interpretation of it is is
4 that the fire district has the authority to tax
5 the same way as the Town of Coventry taxes and the
6 Town of Coventry taxes on a three-tiered system.

7 So, to me, our charter, from what it says, has the
8 right to tax as the Town of Coventry taxes, that
9 would be mean that the district has the right to
10 tax on a three-tier system, okay. And then when
11 we went back through our records as far back as
12 they go, 1986, that's the way it's been done in
13 this district. So, this board did nothing to
14 change that.

15 MR. DUCKWORTH: Agreed. Agreed,

16 Mr. Cote. Did the Town of Coventry go before the
17 General Assembly to get approval to do that?

18 MR. GARY COTE: I don't have the foggiest
19 idea. I don't have the answer to that.

20 MR. CAPALDI: Mr. Duckworth, the towns
21 have that authority. It's part of the General
22 Laws.

23 MR. DUCKWORTH: But currently the
24 districts do not, just so we're all on the same
25 page.

1 **CHIEF LABBADIA: You don't know that.**

2 **You're surmising.**

3 **MR. DUCKWORTH: I am from the Lime**

4 **Rock --**

5 **CHIEF LABBADIA: That's solely for Albion**

6 **Fire District. Solely.**

7 **MR. DUCKWORTH: Just so we're all on the**

8 **same page. It was precedent setting.**

9 **MR. CAPALDI: Sir, it is not precedent**

10 **setting until it comes from the Supreme Court of**

11 **the State of Rhode Island. Each Superior Court,**

12 the action applies to the parties before it. I'm
13 not saying that if you went to Superior Court on
14 this matter that another Superior Court wouldn't
15 rule the same way. I don't know that, but it's
16 not precedent until it goes to the Supreme Court.

17 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Are there any
18 other questions on the chief's report? I'm
19 going to forewarn you again, you're speculating as
20 to what may occur, and I think --

21 MR. GORMAN: They might be. I'm not.

22 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Legal counsel has
23 explained --

24 MR. GORMAN: It's in regard to Mr. Cote's

25 statement, can you just clarify your statement,

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1 just my own mind, you believe we have the same

2 ability to tax as --

3 **MR. GARY COTE:** According to our charter,

4 we have -- my understanding of it is that the fire

5 district has the same taxing authority as the Town

6 of Coventry. The Town of Coventry has the

7 authority to tax on its three-tier system,
8 residential, commercial, and industrial. My
9 interpretation, and I'm not a lawyer, I never
10 played one on TV, and I certainly didn't sleep at
11 a Motel 6 last night, but my interpretation of it,
12 from a layman's standpoint reading my charter,
13 reading a charter for the fire district, my
14 understanding of it is that we have the same
15 authority, and the same authority for taxation as
16 the Town of Coventry. So, if the Town of Coventry
17 taxes on a three-tier system, the fire district
18 has the same authority, according to our charter,
19 to tax on that three-tier system. Now --

20 **MR. GORMAN:** I would tend to agree. I
21 read both charters. I tend to agree with you on
22 that. How the case plays out, I don't know, but I
23 would -- I would ask how do we not have the same
24 authority, then, to assess Coventry Mill when we
25 lost all that money, have the same tax authority?

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1 **MR. GARY COTE:** I'm not sure we don't.

2 **MR. CAPALDI:** The charter clearly

3 requires your taxing power to be based upon the
4 assessments of the Town of Coventry. You can't
5 have your own tax assessment.

6 MR. GORMAN: We have our own tax
7 assessors.

8 MR. CAPALDI: Our charter says that the
9 tax assessor shall tax according to the
10 assessments of the town.

11 MR. GORMAN: Then why do we have our own
12 tax assessors?

13 MR. CAPALDI: Because your charter
14 requires it.

15 MR. GARY COTE: Again, to that point --

16 again to that point, our charter -- repeat what
17 our charter says about tax assessors, please.

18 MR. CAPALDI: The charter specifically
19 states that the tax assessor of this fire district
20 has the same powers and duties of the tax assessor
21 of the Town of Coventry. I think that's what Mr.
22 Cote is --

23 MR. GARY COTE: And will use the town's
24 assessments on said property within the district,
25 correct?

1 **MR. CAPALDI:** It has to. That's the
2 charter.

3 **MR. GARY COTE:** So, if the Town of
4 Coventry taxes it commercial, then the fire
5 district taxes it commercial. That's what the
6 charter says. If someone wants to take it to
7 court, Mr. Dion, you're more than welcome to. I'm
8 telling you what this Board of Directors and
9 interpretation of our charter is.

10 **MR. DION:** I asked you --

11 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Sir, if you'd step**
12 **to the microphone --**

13 **MR. DION: My name is Ray Dion. I have a**
14 **commercial property.**

15 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Mr. Dion, I'm**
16 **sorry. I've just been informed you are not --**

17 **MR. DION: No, I'm a taxpayer.**

18 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: You cannot**
19 **participate, sir, I'm sorry.**

20 **MR. GARY COTE: You can say anything to**
21 **me after the meeting you want.**

22 **MR. DION: That's the whole problem here.**

23 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Are there any**

24 other questions regarding the fire chief's report?

25 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Motion to accept.

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1 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: There's a motion

2 on the floor to accept.

3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Second.

4 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Is there any

5 further discussion?

6 (VOICE VOTE: PASSED)

7 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON:** Thank you. It's
8 been accepted. Mr. Cote, will you please read the
9 board of director's report.

10 **MR. GARY COTE:** I can certainly read a
11 board of director's report if I had written one,
12 and I certainly didn't because I'm not good at
13 writing anything down. All it does is confuse me.
14 When I speak to people, I'd rather speak from the
15 heart than off a piece of paper.

16 I can tell you that in the Coventry Fire
17 District, just like in the Town of Coventry, it
18 has been a very trying year financially. The
19 entire country is in an economic downturn. I

20 don't see any end to it in the near future. The
21 Coventry Fire District, under the leadership of
22 this Board of Directors and Chief Labbadia, have
23 done our best to stay within the budget that the
24 taxpayers approved for us last year. As Chief
25 Labbadia explained in his report, we had some

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1 catastrophic injuries that we did not and could

2 not in all likelihood plan for and we had some OJI
3 injuries, on-the-job injuries, that took
4 firefighters out for twelve months or a longer
5 period of time, which caused a great increase in
6 the overtime cost. We have done everything we can
7 as far as tightening our belt on matters that are
8 within our control, including going to our union
9 employees and asking for concessions yet again.

10 I feel like a broken record at this
11 meeting every year. I sit here and talk about
12 going to the union for concessions, and every year
13 they give us back more and more and more and they
14 did again this year. And I'm certainly not here

15 asking for anybody's sympathy for our union
16 employees. They chose their careers. They do
17 well. Most of them work second jobs. They give
18 us good service. I just want to make note of the
19 fact that each and every time that this board has
20 gone to our union employees and asked for
21 concessions, so we come here and present a budget
22 to the taxpayers that calls for no increase or as
23 little increase as humanly possible, our union
24 employees have come through and made those
25 concessions for us, and I want to thank them

1 publicly for doing it again this year.

2 Going forward is not going to be easy in

3 this fire district. Unfortunately, we have a

4 neighboring district who is suffering some

5 financial instability right now, and I think it's

6 a trend that has the opportunity to spread to

7 every fire district within the State of Rhode

8 Island, not just within the Town of Coventry.

9 This board, as your representatives, as the

10 representatives of the taxpayers in this district,

11 as the head fiduciaries for the taxpayers in this
12 district in the upcoming year will do everything
13 within our power to keep this project in line with
14 what you approve tonight. We will defend
15 vigorously any lawsuits brought against this
16 district because I personally feel as though we
17 are within our rights to do what we have been
18 doing, and I want to make one thing perfectly
19 clear. If that right -- Mr. Duckworth is right.
20 If the right to tax commercially is taken away
21 from this district in any court order, it will be
22 detrimental to every residential taxpayer in the
23 district because to support this district in the

24 future will mean a 30 to 40 percent raise in the
25 residential tax rate immediately. Immediately.

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1 Or we will be right where Central Coventry is now,
2 in the hands of the special magistrate with
3 someone else handling our finances for us. So,
4 when I tell you that, through this board and the
5 attorney that we have on retainer, we will

6 vehemently defend against any suit brought against
7 this district on behalf of the taxpayers. We will
8 do that. And I feel justified in doing that
9 because quite contrary to what may be the
10 commercial or industrial taxpayers in this
11 district feels, a responsible commercial property
12 is much bigger and more wide spread than it is to
13 a residential property and those services cost
14 money.

15 If we have a residential fire in my home,
16 they're going to respond with a ladder, two
17 engines, and a rescue. You can't do that on a
18 commercial piece of property. You strip the

19 entire Town of Coventry of fire service and
20 apparatus to respond to that commercial property
21 because you don't know what's there. They require
22 additional services. In my mind, we are justified
23 in requiring additional tax revenue from them. I
24 know that's not the way that the property and
25 commercial owners feel, and I don't blame them for

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1 feeling that way, but we have an obligation to the

**2 residential taxpayers in the Coventry Fire
3 District, not just the commercial taxpayers in the
4 Coventry Fire District, to maintain as level
5 funded budget as possible in these economic times.**

**6 You know, ten years ago when everybody's
7 budget was fat and happy, none of these questions
8 came up. But now everybody's struggling to get
9 by. Everybody's disposable income is not
10 disposable anymore. It's going to pay bills.**

**11 There is no more disposable income. So, these
12 questions now come to the top. This Board of
13 Directors is not doing anything differently than
14 has been done in this fire district since as far**

15 **back as our records show. This Board of Directors**
16 **has done nothing to change the way we taxed any of**
17 **our entities in this district. And we have always**
18 **strived to provide the best service your money can**
19 **buy, and I think we've been very successful in**
20 **doing that.**

21 **I thank you for the opportunity to serve**
22 **on this board. I thank this board for the**
23 **opportunity to be the chairman of this board, and**
24 **I thank you for your time tonight.**

25 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Thank you,**

1 Mr. Cote. Are there any questions regarding the
2 Board of Directors report?

3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Motion to accept.

4 MS. MATTHEWS: Second.

5 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Any discussion?

6 (VOICE VOTE: PASSED)

7 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: The ayes have it.

8 The report is accepted. The next agenda item will

9 be the presentation of the tax collector's report.

10 **AUDIENCE MEMBER: I make a motion to**
11 **dispense it.**

12 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: We have a motion**
13 **to dispense the presentation of the tax**
14 **collector's report. Is there a second?**

15 **AUDIENCE MEMBER: Second.**

16 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Any discussion?**
17 **Mr. Duckworth.**

18 **MR. DUCKWORTH: What would be the purpose**
19 **of discussing the report?**

20 **MR. LACOLLE: It's in the package. It's**
21 **already there.**

22 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Is there any**

23 objection to dispensing with the reading of the
24 tax collector's report?

25 MR. GARY COTE: I have an objection. I'd

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1 rather have her read it, so everyone hears it
2 coming from her. She is our tax collector. I'd
3 rather have her read it for the general public for
4 anyone who can't read it or for anyone who didn't
5 bring their glasses or whatever the reason is that

6 they're not capable of reading it tonight. We
7 traditionally have our tax collector read her
8 report at this meeting, and I would like to see
9 that tradition followed through tonight.

10 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Would you like to
11 withdraw your motion?

12 MR. LACOLLE: Withdrawn.

13 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: The motion is
14 withdrawn. The tax collector shall present her
15 report.

16 MS. LUKOWICZ: Coventry Fire District,
17 Tax/Finance Division report as of November 30,
18 2012: 2012 taxes collected, \$1,775,511.28. Back

19 taxes collected, \$355,819.29. Interest on back
20 taxes, \$96,491.20. Total taxes and interest
21 collected, \$2,227,821.77. Interest on invested
22 taxes as of 11-30-2012, \$42.05. Balance on hand,
23 11-30-2011, \$3,638.48. Total receipts and
24 interest, \$2,231,502.30. Transferred to
25 treasurer, \$2,227,822. Balance on hand,

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1 **November 30, 2012, \$3,680.30. Report on back**
2 **taxes to be abated, \$3,057.83. Uncollected taxes**
3 **for 2012, \$325,448.69. Uncollected taxes prior**
4 **years, \$87,514.47. Total uncollected,**
5 **\$412,963.16. Respectfully submitted, Jean**
6 **Lukowicz, Tax Collector.**

7 **MR. GARY COTE: Motion to accept.**

8 **AUDIENCE MEMBER: Second.**

9 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Is there a second**
10 **to that motion?**

11 **MR. LACOLLE: Second.**

12 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Any discussion?**

13 **CHIEF LABBADIA: Mr. Moderator, there's**

14 someone in the back --

15 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Can you come to

16 the microphone, sir, or do you want the microphone

17 brought to you?

18 MR. BUDZIAK: Name's Ray Budziak, 429

19 Fairview Avenue, Coventry, commercial taxpayer.

20 I'd like them fellas in the back to have that

21 professionalism that I pay \$1,200 a year for

22 uniforms to keep quiet to let me enjoy this

23 meeting.

24 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Gentlemen in the

25 back, if you're going to discuss anything, please

1 go outside. Is there any other questions as it
2 relates to the tax collector's report? There was
3 a motion and second. Any further discussion, Mr.
4 Budziak? Mr. Budziak, please allow the moderator
5 to address the issue. Sir, if you're going to
6 speak, go outside. If you're not going to speak
7 -- sir, please, if you're not going to abide by
8 the rules, you'll be asked to leave.

9 MR. BUDZIAK: I would like to know how

10 many properties were sold that were up for auction
11 that I read in the newspaper. I asked one of the
12 board members about that. He was there the day
13 that that came out in the newspaper, he was going
14 to get a hold of the chief. The fella that I
15 talked with was Louie Cote, and he was going to
16 have the chief come to my house and tell me how
17 many properties and how much they were going to be
18 sold off for. And I guess the chief and he don't
19 get along, because he never got to my house. So,
20 could the tax assessor please tell me how many
21 properties were sold off, how many people lost
22 their houses?

23 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON:** I think the
24 **attorney that handled the tax sales --**

25 **MR. CAPALDI:** A tax sale, we do not take

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1 **a person's house. At a tax sale, people come and**
2 **pay the taxes. The people that -- the landowner**
3 **has a year to pay those people back the taxes. Of**
4 **course, if they go that far, there's more interest**

5 and there's legal costs. So, it behoves a
6 homeowner to pay the taxes on time or at least
7 when they get the first letter from my office, and
8 my letters clearly indicate please pay the taxes
9 because if you don't and we go to a tax sale,
10 you're going to incur more cost. Now, again, a
11 tax sale is -- the person does not lose title to
12 their house. They do not lose their house. They
13 have a year to pay those taxes. All that happens
14 is someone comes in and pays the taxes for that
15 homeowner for that year or the back taxes. And I
16 think the last tax sale we had 15 -- 14 tax sales.

17 CHIEF LABBADIA: Fourteen houses went up

18 for tax sale.

19 CHIEF LABBADIA: They have one year to

20 redeem it back from the person that paid the

21 taxes.

22 MR. BUDZIAK: If they can't afford to pay

23 the tax that particular time, somebody else picks

24 up that tax, I don't know too much about this

25 business, I'm not one of them fancy fellas that

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1 knows the laws, but aren't those people charged
2 for any repairs that that particular person paid
3 on the repair of that piece of property?

4 MR. CAPALDI: No. The people who have it
5 at tax sale have no responsibility until that year
6 is passed, and then they have to go to Superior
7 Court, in order to get possession of that house,
8 and there's a hearing in Superior court. Then, in
9 that case, they will take over that property.

10 MR. BUDZIAK: So, eventually they do buy
11 that house for the price at the tax sale?

12 MR. CAPALDI: Very infrequently. In
13 fact, Rhode Island Housing does come in many times

14 and pays the taxes for the homeowner. There's a
15 special program for that.

16 MR. BUDZIAK: Thank you.

17 MR. GARY COTE: Mr. Budziak, I think this
18 comes back to part of what I said during my
19 report. We started out the year with 147 houses
20 scheduled for tax sale. We ended up going with 14
21 because we try to work with everybody. I've got a
22 tax collector that will take \$20-a-week payments
23 if that's what you have to do. The reason I bring
24 that up is because of the economic times that we
25 live in, we started with 147 homes. If you think

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1 any of these things, that any member of this board
2 ran for a position sitting here before you tonight
3 so we could put people out of their homes, I think
4 you people know us all better than that. That's
5 not what we ran for this office for. We ran for
6 this office so we could sit here and tonight
7 present a budget to you that calls for no tax
8 increase for another 12-month period of time

9 because we know what the economic conditions are,
10 not only in the town of Coventry and the State of
11 Rhode Island, but the entire country.

12 Mr. Budziak, 147, we're ended up with 14
13 out of 147. I think this district did everything
14 it could to allow those people an opportunity to
15 come current on their taxes; and the fact that
16 they couldn't is a sorry testament to the economy
17 in this country today, not a sorry testament to
18 the Anthony or Coventry Fire District.

19 MR. CAPALDI: Mr. Cote, the law is really
20 protective of the landowner. We have to give the
21 landowner a 90-day notice before sale, a 40-day

22 notice before sale, a 20-day notice before sale,
23 and we have to notify Rhode Island -- RIHMFC,
24 Rhode Island Housing, each time so that they can
25 come in and help the landowner. So, there is --

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1 the law does have built-in protection to give
2 these people an opportunity to come forward and
3 make an arrangement to pay the taxes with the tax
4 assessor.

5 **CHIEF LABBADIA: And I've got to give**
6 **Jeanne a hand because Jeanne does a fantastic job.**
7 **I torture her a lot. I come in that office every**
8 **morning asking her questions, but she's on top of**
9 **it all the time, and we do whatever we can for the**
10 **taxpayer making it the easiest we can for them to**
11 **come up with some kind of payment, whether it be**
12 **\$10 a week, whether it be \$20, whatever the case**
13 **may be, and it works out pretty well. It helps us**
14 **in the long-run.**

15 **MR. GARY COTE: Mr. Moderator, can we**
16 **move the motion?**

17 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Is there any**

18 further questions? Mr. Budziak had his hand --

19 MR. BUDZIAK: You know, when you say

20 that, isn't the interest still on that payment?

21 The chief just said \$10. Probably they owe so

22 much money, that \$10 don't even cover the

23 interest. So, it's still putting time on the

24 people where eventually, as Mr. Capaldi said,

25 after a year, they could come in and end up owning

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1 the property, paying the tax. I'm looking at it
2 from my own standpoint because pretty soon with
3 the rate you guys are raising taxes, you're going
4 to have my house. So, that's why I'm worried
5 about it.

6 CHIEF LABBADIA: Well, we're not raising
7 them. So --

8 MR. BUDZIAK: Well, you're not raising it
9 on the house, you're raising it probably on the
10 commercial --

11 CHIEF LABBADIA: Nope. Not at all. No
12 raise at all. But, again, Jeanne, it does make a

13 dent on people's interest and everything fi they
14 come it and make that payment?

15 MS. LUKOWICZ: If they do it regularly.

16 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: If there's no
17 further discussion, we have a motion and a second.
18 I would ask for a voice vote. All in favor to
19 accept the tax collector's report.

20 (VOICE VOTE: PASSED)

21 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Ayes have it. The
22 tax collector's report is accepted. Next agenda
23 item would be the treasurer's report from Tom
24 Lacolle.

25 MR. LACOLLE: This report is included in

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1 your packet if you want to follow along. I'm
2 going to just read it to you. Coventry Fire
3 District, treasurer's report for the fiscal year
4 ending November 30, 2012. Page one of two. The
5 following information shows the assets and
6 liabilities of the district as of November 30,
7 2012. Cash in bank, \$40,498. Certificate of
8 deposit, \$59,059. Taxes receivable, \$412,963.

9 **Accounts payable, \$81,121. Line of credit**
10 **payable, \$225,980. Ladder truck lease payable,**
11 **\$399,348. The certificate of deposit was for**
12 **post-retirement health insurance for the**
13 **firefighters prior to merging with the union from**
14 **Central. It matures on June 15, 2013. The**
15 **district has a line of credit which is also a tax**
16 **anticipation note from Coventry Credit Union in**
17 **the amount of \$500,000. Line of credit matures on**
18 **February 28, 2012, at which time it should be**
19 **renewed if there are no events of default, and**
20 **there have not been. Interest is paid quarterly**
21 **at the rate of 5.35 percent on the outstanding**

22 balance. The district entered a lease agreement
23 with Sutphen Corporation for the lease/purchase of
24 the aerial ladder truck on February 15, 2010, in
25 the amount of \$535,000. The least requires annual

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1 payments of \$60,850 with the final payment due
2 February 15, 2021. Total payments over the life
3 of the lease will be \$682,428. The district will

4 own the truck at the end of the lease term. A
5 fire prevention fund exists by law which provides
6 that money collected from smoke detector tests and
7 building plan reviews are to be used outside the
8 budget for fire prevention purposes. During
9 fiscal year ended November 30, 2012, \$9,215 was
10 collected and \$9,000 was spent. As of November
11 30, 2012, there was \$15,479 available in the fire
12 prevention account. The results of operation,
13 revenue and expenditures, shown on the following
14 page as follows: Expenditures. Administrative
15 salaries, \$70,225. Clothing allowance, \$19,625.
16 Holidays, \$20,275. Life and vision care, \$7,650.

17 Longevity bonus, \$52,648. Medical and dental
18 insurance, \$296,000. Overtime, \$280,883. Medical
19 debit card, \$64,086. Post-employment health plan,
20 \$42,414. Pension, \$210,166. Payroll tax,
21 \$14,520. Salaries plus cardiac payments for the
22 firefighters and the chief and the deputy chief,
23 \$1,063,260. Total personnel: \$2,141,752. And
24 expenditures, contingencies, \$482. Dues,
25 subscriptions, and advertising, \$6,083.

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1 **Equipment, new equipment, repairs and maintenance,**
2 **mostly repairs and maintenance, \$40,886.**

3 **Facilities repairs and maintenance, \$3,605. Fuel,**

4 **\$31,459. Hydrants, \$126,536. Insurance, VFIS,**

5 **\$80,236. Insurance, London Health, \$1,053. Legal**

6 **retainer, \$10,000. Lease payment on the ladder**

7 **truck, \$60,850. Lease from Pitney Bowes, \$1,098.**

8 **Line of credit interest, \$11,286. Medical**

9 **expenses, \$13,420. Radio project with the town,**

10 **which is the fire alarm system, \$5,000. Service**

11 **contracts, \$5,918. Street lighting, \$103,767.**

12 **Supplies, the rescue, for the station, and tax**

13 office, \$19,836. Telecommunication, \$6,471.
14 Training, \$461. Unemployment benefits, \$1,716.
15 Utilities, \$21,205. Total from operations,
16 \$551,368. Total expenditures of \$2,693,120.
17 Receipts from taxes collected, \$2,131,331.
18 Interest on taxes collected was \$96,491. Interest
19 on bank balances is \$61. Rescue recovery revenue
20 is \$349,946. Fire prevention and miscellaneous
21 revenue is \$8,771. Total receipts was \$2,586,600
22 and the deficit was \$106,520.

23 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Motion to accept?

24 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Motion to accept.

25 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Is there a second?

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1 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Second.

2 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Any discussion?

3 MR. CONNELL: My name is Connell. I have

4 a question. On the chief's presentation, first

5 item has a \$307,000 dollar budget deficit. On

6 this treasurer's report, the line says \$106,522.

7 What's the discrepancy?

8 **MR. LACOLLE:** The chief is counting the
9 prior year plus the current year.

10 **CHIEF LABBADIA:** Yes. I'm counting the
11 prior year plus the current year.

12 **MR. CONNELL:** How can you count the
13 current year, it hasn't started yet? It just
14 started.

15 **MR. LACOLLE:** It's the year prior to this
16 one.

17 **CHIEF LABBADIA:** That is what's owed on
18 the line of credit that we borrowed from the bank,
19 plus the overage of this year's budget. Following
20 me, Mr. Connell or no?

21 **MR. CONNELL:** Okay. I have another
22 question. I'd like some information about the
23 rescue recovery fund. What does it get used for
24 and why is it separate from the rest of the
25 budget?

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1 **MR. LACOLLE:** It's used for the budget.

2 **MR. GARY COTE:** It's shown as income on

3 the budget and it gets used to support the general

4 fund, the budget.

5 MR. CONNELL: Goes in the general fund?

6 MR. GARY COTE: Absolutely, every penny

7 of it.

8 MR. CONNELL: The chief would tell me

9 what's the charge for rescue or ambulance run to

10 the hospital?

11 CHIEF LABBADIA: It varies. It depends.

12 There's no charge to the taxpayer. It's billed to

13 your insurance company. If there's anything left

14 over after the insurance company, we wipe that out

15 for any town resident, whether it be a district

16 resident, but the average run depending on the

17 type of call it is could be anywhere from 400 to
18 \$700 a call.

19 MR. GARY COTE: Per call.

20 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Any other
21 questions --

22 CHIEF LABBADIA: 400, 700, depending on

23 if it's ALS. It depends on what they give you,

24 how they hook you up, what they give you as far as

25 an IV, it depends. There's a lot of factors that

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1 play a part.

2 MR. GORMAN: Dave Gorman. I noticed in
3 last year's expenditures, but we have level
4 funding. Essentially, you're proposing the same
5 exact budget?

6 CHIEF LABBADIA: Yes.

7 MR. GORMAN: Are there any line item
8 changes?

9 CHIEF LABBADIA: No. It's pretty much
10 close to the same budget except for the overtime
11 line because of the reduction in the minimum

12 manning.

13 MR. LACOLLE: Few small differences, but

14 pretty much level funded.

15 MR. GORMAN: What does a one-cent tax

16 increase raise?

17 MR. GARY COTE: \$16,000.

18 MR. GORMAN: Also, I guess for the

19 treasurer, I know what the fire details -- I don't

20 see a detail line in or a detail line out on this

21 expenditure. Where does that --

22 MR. LACOLLE: Details break even because

23 we collect money for details.

24 MR. GORMAN: The monies that have come

25 in, the monies have to go out somewhere and it's

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1 not listed on here.

2 MR. LACOLLE: It would be zero.

3 MR. GORMAN: Under receipt, there would

4 be revenue as to the revenue line, right?

5 MR. LACOLLE: It goes into the same

6 account, whatever is spent --

7 CHIEF LABBADIA: It goes into that total

8 collected account.

9 MR. GORMAN: So we don't really account

10 for every dollar bill that comes in?

11 MR. LACOLLE: Yes, we do. They both go

12 into one account.

13 MR. GORMAN: Where is that account on

14 this line?

15 MR. LACOLLE: It's not on here. I can

16 tell you what the detail -- I'll tell you what the

17 net line was. Payroll detail pay. It's a

18 positive -- negative \$42 which means we collected

19 \$42 more than we paid firefighters in the course

20 of the year and that would be netted with what you

21 see for salaries.

22 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Mr. Duckworth.

23 MR. DUCKWORTH: I noticed there are some

24 small changes, they're small, but the R & M, fuel

25 charges; but going forward, I'm just going to

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1 suggest a format change for this, for the

2 treasurer's report, similar to what the town does.

3 **Maybe turn it landscape wise and have the prior**
4 **two years and then the proposed budget so that we**
5 **can see those line changes that --**

6 **CHIEF LABBADIA: We normally do that on**
7 **our monthly statements. Every month we have --**

8 **MR. DUCKWORTH: I'm finding myself**
9 **switching back and forth between the presentation,**
10 **which was very thorough; and this one, it's**
11 **difficult to see all the small changes.**

12 **MR. GARY COTE: Scott, we've been trying**
13 **to get it right for a couple of years because**
14 **every year no matter how much we put in the**
15 **package, somebody, much like yourself, will stand**

16 up and say wait a minute, it could have been, it
17 could have been, it could have been.
18 Unfortunately, I don't think we're ever going to
19 get it 100 percent right, but you're absolutely
20 right. We could change the landscape of it on the
21 paper, a couple -- like the chief said, we have
22 meetings regularly at the district at the fire
23 station every month or almost every month, we cut
24 back a little bit in the summer, and when you come
25 in, you get a budget sheet every month that shows

1 two prior years plus the current year we're
2 working on, on that budget sheet.

3 MR. DUCKWORTH: I do my spreadsheets
4 every week, and I've got four months out there,
5 and the month I'm on it's highlighted. So, a
6 similar thing would make it a lot easier for us to
7 read.

8 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Any other
9 questions regarding the treasurer's report? Mr.
10 Gorman.

11 MR. GORMAN: On the front here, under

12 that line of credit, 5.35 percent, that interest,
13 is the rate quarterly or is that the annual
14 interest rate?

15 MR. LACOLLE: It's the annual rate.

16 MR. GORMAN: The annual rate is at
17 5.35 percent --

18 MR. LACOLLE: Yes.

19 MR. GORMAN: I know the answer, but I'm
20 going to ask it. Have we audited our books at all
21 in the recent history? I know we've always, in
22 years past, always had a review, but we've never
23 had an audit, and it was apparently last night at
24 the Central Coventry meeting that the auditor

25 found an \$800,000 current order, which, in part,

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1 caused some of the issues. So --

2 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: I think you've got

3 one question about an audit. Want to get into

4 that first --

5 MR. GORMAN: Sure. I guess the question

6 is, I know we've done reviews. For years we used

7 to have Nadeau --

8 MR. GARY COTE: We haven't done a
9 forensic audit in the six years that I've been
10 sitting here before you, at least that long.

11 CHIEF LABBADIA: Very expensive.

12 MR. GORMAN: The cost of an audit, I
13 know, in Central Coventry is 12,000, and the books
14 and the numbers are much larger on a \$6 million
15 budget for one year. I would presume that the
16 cost here, receipts being a lot lower, would,
17 let's say, it would be \$10,000, you know --

18 MR. GARY COTE: Let's say they would be.

19 MR. GORMAN: Would it make sense to begin

20 an audit process at some point? I'm just asking

21 if it would make sense --

22 MR. GARY COTE: I don't know where in the

23 current budget that we're presenting tonight you'd

24 find an additional ten or twelve thousand dollars

25 to do that this year. I think what Mr. Beckman --

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1 and I thought he was being sarcastic, but

2 apparently he wasn't, you know, at this point,

3 that calls for a penny increase for the tax rate,
4 could come up with the money because we're
5 presenting a bare bones budget --

6 MR. GORMAN: I recall Chief Mruk's old
7 reports like \$3,500 annually to have Nadeau do a
8 review, I think is what they called it.

9 CHIEF LABBADIA: That wasn't really an
10 audit.

11 MR. GARY COTE: Qualified review. It was
12 a qualified review. It wasn't even an
13 unqualified. It was a qualified review.

14 CHIEF LABBADIA: We may be able to do
15 that in the near future, depending if the plan

16 review fees come in the way they're supposed to
17 come in. There's a possibility there will be some
18 extra money that's going to be there, but there's
19 some other things contractually that we have to do
20 like a vent that we were supposed to be putting in
21 the station this year. And that's --

22 MR. GORMAN: I'm only raising -- the
23 concern was, and how it was presented at last
24 night's meeting next door, if it had been caught
25 three years earlier, it may not have been -- there

1 would have been an issue, but not as deep.

2 CHIEF LABBADIA: I've got to tell you

3 when we do our rolls and our tax rolls, besides

4 the tax assessor, which technically is Joanne

5 Lukowicz -- I mean Joanne LaRue does it and then

6 Jeanne backs it up to make sure everything's

7 proper after she does the roll. So, we have

8 checks and minuses there which wasn't happening in

9 your district unfortunately.

10 MR. GORMAN: Just --

11 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON:** Any other
12 questions regarding the treasurer's report? It's
13 been moved and second. Again, with a voice vote.

14 **(VOICE VOTE: PASSED)**

15 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON:** The ayes have it.
16 The treasurer's report has been accepted. I now
17 go to Chairman Cote for the presentation of the
18 resolutions. First resolution to adopt the -- are
19 we doing all thirteen individually? We have
20 thirteen resolutions --

21 **MR. GARY COTE:** I'm just going to read
22 them.

23 **MR. GORMAN:** Are we going to vote on them

24 as a package or individually?

25 MR. GARY COTE: Yes.

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1 MR. GORMAN: Can I make a motion to vote

2 on them individually?

3 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: If I may, I think

4 the two biggest resolutions --

5 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I second that motion.

6 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: -- are the 2013 --

7 and the tax rate. Do you want each and every
8 resolution voted on separately or can we bundle
9 eleven out of the thirteen?

10 **MR. GORMAN:** I can tell you what I don't
11 want bundled, and you tell me how you want to look
12 at it.

13 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON:** If we're going to
14 have a motion on the floor, it's got to be in
15 writing. So, I'll just -- with ballots and
16 everything. So, if your motion is to not allow
17 them to do that in normal fashion, we're going to
18 have to take a vote.

19 **MR. GORMAN:** What's normal?

20 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Normal is he reads**
21 **them and then there's a vote. Correct,**
22 **Mr. Chairman?**

23 **MR. GARY COTE: Correct.**

24 **AUDIENCE MEMBER: All or nothing --**

25 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Up or down.**

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1 **AUDIENCE MEMBER: I make a motion that**

2 we vote on them individually.

3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Second the motion.

4 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: I need the motion
5 in writing.

6 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: The question is
7 going to be who's going to do the count. The
8 clerk would have to give a count because unless
9 there's someone else here that's been recognized
10 by everyone as being the official counter, the
11 clerk has to do the count, correct?

12 CHIEF LABBADIA: Correct.

13 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: So, not to have to
14 do it by ballot, I'm going to ask the people who

15 are voting yes to stand. The people that are
16 voting no, when it's their turn, they stand. It
17 will make it easier for Mr. Golomb to do the vote.
18 Is that okay? Let's get this done first. The
19 motion is to do the resolutions as a vote on each
20 and every resolution separately.

21 MR. GARY COTE: And it's been seconded.

22 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Motion is made by
23 Michael Stevens to vote on each resolution
24 individually and not all together. There has been
25 a second.

1 **(VOICE VOTE)**

2 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: We're going to**

3 **have to do a count on this. Everyone that is**

4 **voting yes in favor of the motion, please stand.**

5 **Mr. Golomb, please do the count.**

6 **(COUNT TAKEN)**

7 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Do we have a**

8 **number in favor?**

9 **MR. GOLOMB: Seventeen.**

10 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Seventeen in**

11 favor. Would those that voted in favor please sit
12 down. Those that are voting no or against the
13 motion please stand up.

14 THE CLERK: Fifteen.

15 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Do we have a
16 number?

17 THE CLERK: Fifteen.

18 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Fifteen are
19 opposed. The ayes have it. The motion would be
20 done individually. So, Mr. Cote, start off,
21 please, by reading the first resolution on Page 1.
22 Then we'll do a voice vote --

23 MR. GARY COTE: Thank you, sir. Be it

24 **resolved that the Board of Directors be and is**
25 **hereby directed and empowered to install**

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1 **additional hydrants when and where needed.**

2 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Is there a motion**
3 **to accept the resolution?**

4 **AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'll make that motion.**

5 **AUDIENCE MEMBER: Second.**

6

(VOICE VOTE)

7

MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Any opposed? The

8

ayes have it. Resolution Number 2, Mr. Cote.

9

MR. GARY COTE: Be it resolved that the

10

Chief of the Department be and is hereby directed

11

and empowered to remove the fire alarm system and

12

have radio alarm boxes installed where required

13

and new street lights where required.

14

MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Is there a motion?

15

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'll make that motion.

16

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Second.

17

MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Discussion?

18

MR. DUCKWORTH: Scott Duckworth,

19 Washington Street. Can I have the chief explain
20 this one, give some detail on it.

21 CHIEF LABBADIA: Years ago, if you
22 remember on the poles, telephone poles, there were
23 master boxes -- game wire boxes, and you can pull
24 them and that alarm would go with the fire alarm
25 and it would dispatch the trucks out. Now, what

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1 we do now is instead of using those style boxes on

2 **commercial buildings, we use a radio box that**
3 **sends a signal out instead of through lines on the**
4 **telephone poles.**

5 **MR. DUCKWORTH: So, is that going to**
6 **make -- the chief going to have a mandate so we**
7 **can mandate radio boxes installed on commercial**
8 **buildings, those that have alarm systems?**

9 **CHIEF LABBADIA: Yes. And pretty much**
10 **we're all up to date pretty much.**

11 **AUDIENCE MEMBER: We don't have anyone**
12 **that needs one right now.**

13 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Any other**
14 **questions?**

15 **(VOICE VOTE: PASSED)**

16 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Ayes have it.**

17 **Third resolution.**

18 **MR. GARY COTE: Be it resolved that the**

19 **Board of Directors be and is hereby empowered to**

20 **renew the insurance on the firefighters and to**

21 **renew liability and other insurances that may**

22 **become due. Also, continue paying into the Rhode**

23 **Island State Retirement System for all the**

24 **employees that are presently enrolled.**

25 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Motion to accept**

1 the resolution.

2 MR. BECKMAN: I'll move that motion.

3 MS. MATTHEWS: Second.

4 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Discussion?

5 (VOICE VOTE)

6 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Ayes have it.

7 Resolution Number 4.

8 MR. GARY COTE: Be it resolved that the

9 chief of the department or his designee is hereby

10 directed and empowered to designate a fire lane in
11 front of any building within the Coventry Fire
12 District as he deems it necessary.

13 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Motion to accept
14 the resolution.

15 MR. BECKMAN: I'll make that motion.

16 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Second that motion.

17 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Any discussion?

18 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Discussion.

19 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Let's go to the
20 gentleman sitting next to Mr. Gorman first, then
21 we'll go to Mr. Budziak second.

22 MR. STEVENS: Michael Stevens. I support

23 **this. I'm just asking that you enforce it. There**
24 **are many businesses in town that have a fire lane**
25 **and the owners themselves --**

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1 **MR. GARY COTE: You had a request --**

2 **MR. STEVENS: If we're enforcing it,**

3 **given them the power to have restrictions --**

4 **CHIEF LABBADIA: We have the power to**

5 **tell the business that they have to put one in.**

6 **As far as me telling them they have to adhere to**
7 **it, that would be the police department, and I**
8 **will pass that on --**

9 **MR. STEVENS: Thank you.**

10 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Someone bring the**
11 **microphone to Mr. Budziak.**

12 **MR. BUDZIAK: My question is similar to**
13 **what Mike Stevens just said. I see these fire**
14 **lanes everywhere. I see fire trucks parked in**
15 **there and the fellas going in and getting their**
16 **supper. Is that what those fire lanes are for?**

17 **MR. GARY COTE: It's designated for**
18 **firefighters.**

19 **CHIEF LABBADIA: It's a fire lane. It's**

20 **for a fire truck. That's why they put it there.**

21 **MR. BUDZIAK: So, they can --**

22 **CHIEF LABBADIA: But they shouldn't be.**

23 **If they are --**

24 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Chief. Chief.**

25 **Chief. The press is still here. Are this any**

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1 other questions regarding Resolution Number 4?

2 (VOICE VOTE)

3 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Ayes have it.

4 Resolution Number 5.

5 MR. GARY COTE: Be it resolved that the

6 Board of Directors be and is hereby directed and

7 empowered to hire sums of money as may be needed

8 to meet the needs of the district or to renew the

9 outstanding notes when due, that such notes shall

10 be signed by the treasurer and the chairman of the

11 Board of Directors.

12 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Is there a motion

13 to accept that resolution?

14 **MR. BECKMAN: So moved.**

15 **MS. MATTHEWS: Second.**

16 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Any discussion?**

17 **(VOICE VOTE)**

18 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Ayes have it.**

19 **Resolution Number 6.**

20 **MR. GARY COTE: Be it resolved that the**

21 **District Tax Collector be and is hereby directed**

22 **to freeze the tax amount levied on real estate to**

23 **any persons or person currently receiving the 1981**

24 **exemption, or who shall qualify for the freeze in**

25 **2013. The freeze shall be granted to any**

**1 inhabitant to persons (husband and wife, widow,
2 widower) 65 or over living in retirement on a
3 fixed income of \$17,500. Any person that is not
4 granted the freeze may appeal the tax collector's
5 decision of this matter to the Board of Directors
6 in writing.**

**7 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Motion to accept
8 the resolution.**

9 MR. BECKMAN: Make that move.

10 **AUDIENCE MEMBER: Second.**

11 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Discussion?**

12 **Questions?**

13 **MR. GORMAN: This resolution, it's a new**

14 **resolution this year?**

15 **CHIEF LABBADIA: No.**

16 **MR. GORMAN: Is it something we do**

17 **annually?**

18 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Annually.**

19 **MR. GORMAN: What is the cost to the**

20 **district by doing this? Do we know how much the**

21 **district is saving or losing or --**

22 **MR. GARY COTE: Mr. Gorman, I honestly**

23 don't know off the top of my head. It's --

24 CHIEF LABBADIA: It's right around 12,

25 14,000.

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1 MR. GORMAN: This is the same as the Town

2 of Coventry's?

3 MR. GARY COTE: Yes, it does.

4 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Are there any

5 other questions?

6 (VOICE VOTE)

7 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Ayes have it.

8 Resolution Number 7, which is on Page 2.

9 MR. GARY COTE: Be it resolved that the

10 Board of Directors is hereby directed and

11 empowered to continue implementing a direct

12 billing to insurance carriers and health plan

13 companies for rescue services rendered by the fire

14 department rescue squads with the stipulation that

15 the taxpayers would not be obligated to pay any

16 amount for this service and the fire department

17 would accept the payment any insurance company --

18 any insurance carrier or health plan company
19 allocate for such services rendered. All funds
20 generated from this direct billing shall be
21 deposited to special rescue recovery fund to be
22 used in the operation of the district budget.

23 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Motion to accept
24 the resolution.

25 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'll make a motion to

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1 **accept.**

2 **MS. MATTHEWS: Second.**

3 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Any discussion?**

4 **(VOICE VOTE)**

5 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Ayes have it.**

6 **Resolution Number 8.**

7 **MR. GARY COTE: Be it resolved that the**

8 **Board of Directors be and is hereby directed and**

9 **empowered to continue leasing the aerial ladder**

10 **truck for the sum not to exceed \$535,000 on a**

11 **lease purchase agreement of 15 years at \$60,850**

12 **per year, nine years remaining.**

13 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Motion to accept**

14 the resolution.

15 MS. MATTHEWS: I'll make the motion.

16 MR. BECKMAN: Second.

17 (VOICE VOTE)

18 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Ayes have it.

19 Resolution Number 9.

20 MR. GARY COTE: Which is the first one on

21 Page 3. Be it resolved that the Coventry Fire

22 District require all new plats that are being

23 developed within the Coventry Fire District

24 boundaries require underground utilities, five

25 homes or more. The chief shall require the

1 developer or owner of said plat or subdivision
2 install at their expense wireless radio fire alarm
3 boxes. The fire chief shall designate location,
4 manufacture type, and acceptance after
5 installation for the fire district.

6 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Motion to accept
7 the resolution.

8 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Make the motion.

9 **AUDIENCE MEMBER: Second.**

10 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Any discussion?**

11 **(VOICE VOTE)**

12 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Ayes have it.**

13 **Resolution Number 10.**

14 **MR. GARY COTE: Be it resolved that the**

15 **Board of Directors be and is hereby directed to**

16 **bill insurance carriers for hazardous material**

17 **incidents within the Coventry Fire District**

18 **boundaries using pay scales set forth by the Rhode**

19 **Island Fire Chiefs' Association. All funds**

20 **generated will be put into a hazardous material**

21 **recovery fund to be used for requiring new fire**

22 department equipment.

23 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Motion to accept

24 the resolution.

25 MS. MATTHEWS: I'll make that motion.

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1 MR. BECKMAN: Second.

2 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Any discussion?

3 (VOICE VOTE: PASSED)

4 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Resolution Number

5 11 on Page 4.

6 MR. GARY COTE: Be it resolved that the
7 Board of Directors be and is hereby directed and
8 empowered to adopt a budget for the operation of
9 the fire district for the ensuing 2012-2013 fiscal
10 year in the amount of \$2,530,820.

11 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Motion to accept
12 the resolution.

13 MS. MATTHEWS: Motion.

14 MR. BECKMAN: Second.

15 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Discussion? Mr.
16 Gorman.

17 MR. GORMAN: I'd like to modify the

18 resolution, and I'd like to add \$15,000 to the
19 budget for the purpose of an audit, not to exceed
20 bringing the total budget up to \$2,545,820. I
21 feel that we absolutely need this, being only a
22 one-cent tax increase. You said a tax increase of
23 one cent gets you 16,000, divided by the number of
24 houses I feel is a very small price to pay for
25 surety to make sure that our books are clean

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1 annually.

2 MR. BECKMAN: Are you asking --

3 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: First off --

4 MR. GARY COTE: This is discussion,

5 correct?

6 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Yes. And there

7 also has to be an issue as to whether or not an

8 audit -- mandate an audit. We haven't heard

9 anything --

10 MR. CAPALDI: And audit is not mandated

11 under the charter.

12 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: So, any other --

13 **MR. GARY COTE: Mr. Gorman, the chief**

14 **said, when he spoke earlier --**

15 **MR. GORMAN: With all due respect, I've**

16 **heard this and that and that and this annually,**

17 **and some things don't get done. I've had members**

18 **of the bargaining unit put it in writing things**

19 **don't get done annually. I'm not going to sit**

20 **here and pay my taxes annually and not have the**

21 **books closed. It would behoove every single**

22 **member on this board to support this motion, so**

23 **your hands are clean annually, and the people here**

24 **know that we don't have an issue here. Doesn't**

25 **make any sense for you not to support this motion.**

1 MR. GARY COTE: Well, it does if it calls
2 for a tax increase. It does make perfect sense to
3 me not to support this motion if it calls for a
4 tax increase because, Mr. Gorman, unlike a lot of
5 the people that you have sitting behind you over
6 there and any more tax increases on my property is
7 going to put a for sale sign in the front yard of
8 my house. And I really don't want to leave the

9 town that I've been living in for 54 years, and
10 you know everybody thinks a penny here, a penny
11 here, a penny here it don't mean anything. But
12 when you add all those pennies up at the end of
13 the year, it means a lot for somebody in my
14 situation, and I know I'm not the only one in this
15 district in that situation. So --

16 MR. GORMAN: And it means a whole lot to
17 everybody else in this situation when we have a
18 problem 3, 4, 5, 10 years down the road that
19 compounds out and now it's more than a penny. Now
20 it's \$1.50, now it's a \$1.75.

21 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Gentlemen, I'm

22 sure this debate can go on for a long time, very
23 salient points, but the issue right now is the
24 motion, the form of the motion, also questions as
25 it relates to whether or not an audit is required,

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1 is there any authority that requires an audit --

2 **MR. GORMAN:** The will of the people

3 requires --

4 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON:** Excuse me. Or can
5 he make a motion to change any of the by-laws?

6 **Certainly can't do the charter off the floor.**

7 **MR. CAPALDI:** No. He cannot change the
8 by-laws from the floor, certainly not the charter.

9 **The charter is actually silent on the audit. So,**
10 **there's no mandate for an audit.**

11 **MR. GORMAN:** And I don't believe we're
12 trying to change the charter or the by-laws.

13 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON:** No, no. The only
14 suggestion I was making that if it was mentioned
15 in the charter or the by-laws, there be an
16 amendment. He's already answered the question.

17 **Second question, there's nothing about an audit**
18 **that exists in by-laws. Okay. So, why don't we**
19 **see your motion in writing.**

20 **MR. GORMAN: My motion is, be it**
21 **resolved, to clear this up, be it resolved that**
22 **the Board of Directors be -- is hereby directed**
23 **and empowered to adopt a budget in the operation**
24 **of the fire district for the ensuing 2012-2013 in**
25 **the amount of \$2,545,820, that's an additional**

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1 15,000 for what's budgeted today. Several other
2 resolutions is, one, is to resolve that we have
3 the audit --

4 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON:** Let's be clear for
5 the record. What your motion is, just so we can
6 do the section --

7 **CHIEF LABBADIA:** May I talk on the
8 motion, please, or talk --

9 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON:** Let's get the
10 motion --

11 **CHIEF LABBADIA:** I would want him --
12 request that Mr. Gorman amend the motion.

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1 CHIEF LABBADIA: Yes. I don't think we
2 have to raise the budget to do it or raise the
3 taxes to do it. We have a deficit line that we
4 can pull the money from the deficit line, and I
5 request that Mr. Gorman keep the budget where it
6 is, and I will find the money within my budget to
7 do it.

8 **MS. MATTHEWS:** I want to know, are you
9 requesting a forensic audit or are you just -- or
10 a regular audit? I mean there's a big difference
11 in price -- and a forensic audit isn't necessary
12 every year, but what are you -- what kind of
13 audit --

14 **MR. GORMAN:** Annual financial audit.

15 **MS. MATTHEWS:** But not a forensic audit?

16 **MR. GORMAN:** A forensic audit will run
17 you a hundred thousand dollars.

18 **CHIEF LABBADIA:** So, David, if you can do
19 that, I can find the money in the deficit line and
20 take it from that deficit line without increasing

21 the taxes.

22 MR. GORMAN: With some surety --

23 MR. GARY COTE: All you have to do,

24 David, is write a resolution stating that, and we

25 don't have to change any of these other numbers

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1 and that resolution can be accepted from the

2 floor. Be it resolved that the Board of Directors

3 is hereby empowered to do an audit --

4 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: You have to**
5 **withdraw this motion before we get to the next**
6 **motion.**

7 **MR. GORMAN: I'm going to --**

8 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: We're still on**
9 **this motion.**

10 **MR. GORMAN: I'm going to motion to table**
11 **it based on the adoption of the next two**
12 **resolutions. I'm going to motion to table my**
13 **motion that's on the floor right now.**

14 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: But you can't**
15 **table the motion unless it passes. You can**
16 **withdraw it, and put it in at a later time.**

17 **MR. GORMAN: I'll withdraw it.**

18 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Okay. So take**

19 **this back. You have a second motion. That's**

20 **being withdrawn. So, the first motion --**

21 **MR. GORMAN: My second motion is under**

22 **this resolution.**

23 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: The second motion**

24 **is not under this resolution?**

25 **MR. GORMAN: It's a new resolution.**

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1 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Why don't we this.**

2 **We're on Resolution Number 11. It's been moved**

3 **and seconded. Are there any other questions**

4 **regarding Resolution 11 for the fiscal year**

5 **2012-2013 in the amount of \$2,530,820? If there**

6 **are no further questions, then we'll vote on that**

7 **and then move to the next resolution. Are there**

8 **any further questions? As far as Resolution**

9 **Number 11, all in favor please state by saying**

10 **aye. Any opposed? The ayes have it. Resolution**

11 **Number 11 passes. Resolution Number 12, still on**

12 Page 4.

13 MR. GARY COTE: Bear with me, folks,
14 because this is a long one. Be it resolved a
15 tentative tax rate of 28 cents on each \$100 of
16 rateable property of the Coventry Fire District be
17 levied and assessed on the inhabitants thereof and
18 others owning property therein. A special tax on
19 industrial and other commercial property shall be
20 levied at a rate not to exceed 53 cents on each
21 \$100 of rateable property as determined by the tax
22 assessors for the purpose of lighting the streets,
23 hydrant rental, fire department and incidental
24 expenses of the district for the ensuing year,

25 that said taxes be assessed in the fire station at

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1 Anthony, Rhode Island, on December 1, 2012 at
2 8 P.M. standard time and collected, paid into the
3 district tax collector on or before April 30,
4 2013, or payable in quarterly amounts due
5 January 31, 2013, April 30, 2013, July 31, 2013,
6 and October 31, 2013, and all taxes remaining on
7 any subsequent installment not paid before the due

8 date, the whole tax, or any balance thereof shall

9 at once become due and payable with interest 1 1/2

10 percent per month from December 1, 2012, on the

11 balance due, to be added and collected by the

12 collector. The tax collector is hereby ordered to

13 collect according to law taxes not paid by

14 April 30, 2012, and no tax bill levied shall be

15 less than \$20. Any omission, additions, or new

16 account assessed after December 1, 2012, will be

17 added for collection. If any portion of this

18 resolution be determined to be invalid, the

19 remaining portion of the resolution shall be

20 deemed to be valid.

21 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Motion to accept**
22 **the resolution.**

23 **AUDIENCE MEMBER: Motion to accept.**

24 **AUDIENCE MEMBER: Second.**

25 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Discussion?**

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1 **(VOICE VOTE)**

2 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Ayes have it.**

3 Resolution Number 13.

4 MR. GARY COTE: Be it resolved that the

5 Board of Directors be and is hereby directed and

6 empowered to abate from the 2012 tax roll

7 uncollected taxes in the amount of \$3,057.83. In

8 explanation, these taxes are generated from

9 companies that have gone out of business and are

10 no longer collectable.

11 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Motion to accept

12 this resolution.

13 MS. MATTHEWS: Motion to accept.

14 MR. BECKMAN: Second.

15 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Any discussion?

16 (VOICE VOTE)

17 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Ayes have it.

18 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: If we can just

19 take a two-second recess, I need to talk to --

20 (PAUSE)

21 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: There's going to

22 be a motion to amend the agenda by adding a

23 resolution which will be Resolution Number 14.

24 MR. GORMAN: I motion to amend the agenda

25 to add an additional resolution --

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1 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Is it one**
2 **resolution or more than one?**

3 **MR. GORMAN: It's one. It's cut down to**
4 **one now.**

5 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: So, this**
6 **Resolution Number 14, why don't you read it into**
7 **the record.**

8 **MR. GORMAN: Resolved that the district**
9 **shall have an annual financial audit by a third**
10 **party professional audit firm. The district shall**
11 **audit the books of the district within 90 days of**

12 closing the books. The district shall draft RFP's
13 annually for such services.

14 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Is there a second
15 to this motion?

16 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Second.

17 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: There's a second.
18 Any discussion?

19 MR. GARY COTE: I'm not sure that 90 days
20 is long enough to get an RFP out and get a
21 suitable amount of responses to that RFP, David.
22 I really don't. You say within 90 days of the
23 close of the books. I'm going through it -- and
24 90 days is just not enough response time to get

25 reasonable RFP's from qualified companies.

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1 MR. GORMAN: The spirit or the intent

2 would be, I look at next year -- look at it this

3 year, I would say let's get the RFP's out the

4 door. When they come back, audit the books for

5 December 31 we're going back, whenever the RFP's

6 get back. Next year, though, we should start the

7 RFP for this year, 2013, start the RFP process in
8 September --

9 MR. GARY COTE: So, we're actually --
10 feasibly we can send out two RFP's right now?

11 MR. GORMAN: Correct.

12 MR. GARY COTE: One for last year and we
13 could accept one for this year --

14 MR. GORMAN: I honestly don't really care
15 where -- what you do, December 31st backward, but
16 going forward within 90 days, that audit should be
17 commenced --

18 MR. GARY COTE: We sent out an RFP on it
19 now, we close our books November 30th, if that's

20 when we close our books, we close our books

21 November 30th --

22 MR. GORMAN: And I would actually give

23 you a leeway because I know most audit firms or

24 accounting firms from January 1 to, let's say,

25 April are probably swamped.

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1 MR. GARY COTE: What you're saying and

2 what you're looking for is probably not going to

3 put an audit in our hands 11 days into December to
4 come to this meeting. If you don't close your
5 books until November 30th, you close your books,
6 you come to the special meeting the second Tuesday
7 following the first Monday of the third month of
8 last year --

9 MR. GORMAN: You would be reporting last
10 year's audit next year.

11 MR. GARY COTE: Right.

12 MR. CAPALDI: Mr. Cote, I would think
13 that what you would want is an audit before your
14 next financial town meeting. That could be done
15 any time prior to the next financial town meeting.

16 That is what I would think you would want to do.

17 MS. MATTHEWS: Mr. Beckman and I have a

18 question. What he's saying, would that be a

19 charter change because to make a resolution every

20 year, so is it something like he's saying

21 annually, is it a resolution or a charter change?

22 MR. CAPALDI: I would not consider that

23 to be a charter change. It's really a direction

24 to the Board of Directors on what your actions are

25 going to be next year. I don't believe -- I don't

1 like the word "annual." I would like to see the
2 board have that discretion during the year. I
3 haven't looked into the legality of this motion
4 saying that it has to be done annually.

5 **MR. GORMAN:** I can definitely amend --
6 I'd be more than happy to amend the motion just to
7 clarify it.

8 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON:** If there's a
9 dispute with that in the charter change whether or
10 not it cannot be put in and do this for this

11 year --

12 MR. CAPALDI: If I determine that it

13 should be part of the charter, then this will be

14 illegal anyway.

15 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Well, the question

16 he's asking, it's a resolution regarding an audit

17 and you said -- your suggestion was to have --

18 MR. GARY COTE: Take the word "annually"

19 out, David. You'll get it done for this year, and

20 we'll move forward with it in upcoming years

21 depending on our legal advice. We may have to do

22 this resolution every year, or we may have to

23 adopt our charter -- we may have to amend the

24 charter. But take the word "annually" out, and
25 move forward with the resolution for this year

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1 because I think the majority of the people sitting
2 behind you would like to see what you're asking
3 for and like to see an audit done of the books.
4 I'm not so sure they want to see it done
5 annually --

6 **MR. GORMAN: One of my questions and**

7 maybe one of you -- I've asked in the past. Why
8 do we continually bring these resolutions
9 annually?

10 MR. BECKMAN: Same way we can't say
11 annual.

12 MR. GORMAN: But wouldn't that be the
13 power of --

14 MR. BECKMAN: The taxpayers have the
15 right to say on the ladder truck, don't turn the
16 lease in, done. See you later.

17 MR. GORMAN: Once you enter into it --

18 MR. GARY COTE: They have the right to
19 say turn off every street light in the district.

20 We don't want to pay that hundred thousand
21 dollars.

22 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: This gentleman
23 can't keep up with the both of you. Do you want
24 to amend your motion --

25 MR. GORMAN: I'll amend the motion.

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1 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Amend your motion.

2 **MR. GORMAN: Amended motion, resolved**
3 **that the district shall have a financial audit by**
4 **a third party special audit firm. The district**
5 **shall audit the books of the 2012 -- of the 2012**
6 **books as soon as practical. The district shall**
7 **draft RFP's for such services. Does that work?**

8 **MR. GARY COTE: And that report will be**
9 **ready for the 2013 annual meeting.**

10 **MR. GORMAN: That report shall be made**
11 **available for the 2013 annual meeting.**

12 **MR. CAPALDI: I hate to do this, really,**
13 **because you're almost there. What was the last**
14 **part of that resolution, please?**

15 **MR. GORMAN: That the district shall**

16 **draft RFP for such services --**

17 **MR. CAPALDI: That is done by state law.**

18 **That's not necessary in your resolution.**

19 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: The auditing firm**

20 **has to be qualified to do the audit --**

21 **MR. GARY COTE: Not only that --**

22 **MR. GORMAN: I would want competitive**

23 **bids. I wouldn't want to go into --**

24 **MR. CAPALDI: It's required by state law.**

25 **This is a public body, and there's laws governing**

1 what we do.

2 MR. GORMAN: I prefer to leave that in

3 there, but --

4 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Okay. The motion

5 before -- read that into the record, please. I'm

6 going to try this. That the district shall have a

7 financial audit by a third-party professional

8 audit firm. The district shall audit the books of

9 the district for Fiscal Year '12 to present at the

10 annual district meeting in 2013.

11 MR. GARY COTE: Second.

12 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: The district shall

13 draft an RFP, a request for proposal, for such

14 services. That is the motion before. Now, is

15 there a second to that motion?

16 MR. GARY COTE: Second.

17 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: There's a second

18 to that motion. Discussion?

19 MR. LACOLLE: Just one question. You say

20 for Fiscal Year 2012. Could you say for Fiscal

21 Year Ending November 30, 2012, so there's no

22 question about which fiscal year.

23 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Absolutely.

24 MR. LACOLLE: It's our fiscal year, not

25 his.

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1 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Right. Fiscal

2 year November 30, 2012, for presentation at the

3 annual -- in the year 2013. Okay. Question,

4 Mr. Cotler.

5 MR. COTLER: Mr. Gorman didn't put any

6 price on that. What happens if the proposal comes
7 in at twice what he thinks it's going to come in
8 at?

9 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: That's a very good
10 question and that's the reason you get to vote up
11 or down on the motion.

12 MR. BECKMAN: It's also advertised with
13 the fee, so you can ask that, too. Free to ask
14 for bids.

15 MR. GORMAN: I agree with you.

16 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: So, that's the
17 motion. It's been seconded. Is there any further
18 discussion?

19 (VOICE VOTE)

20 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Mr. Golomb, your

21 job. Everyone that wants to approve this motion,

22 please stand.

23 (COUNT TAKEN)

24 CHIEF LABBADIA: Mr. Moderator,

25 Mr. Golomb said there's 22.

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1 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: 22. Those voicing**
2 **their objection to this motion please stand.**

3 **(COUNT TAKEN)**

4 **CHIEF LABBADIA: Mr. Moderator,**
5 **Mr. Golomb says there's 12.**

6 **MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: 12 opposed. The**
7 **ayes have it. The resolution passes as read into**
8 **the record. Are there any further resolutions off**
9 **the floor? If there are no further resolutions**
10 **off the floor, we will go to the next agenda item**
11 **which is the election of Board of Directors.**

12 **MR. GARY COTE: Mr. Moderator, if I may,**
13 **we have three positions up for re-election this**

14 year, and neither of the three positions have an
15 opponent. So, I would respectfully request that
16 the clerk of the district cast one vote for each
17 of the board members that are up for re-election
18 and we forward.

19 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: With that motion,
20 is there a second?

21 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'll second it.

22 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Discussion?

23 MR. STEVENS: Michael Stevens. The three
24 candidates filled out the paperwork as expected?

25 MR. GARY COTE: Absolutely.

1 MR. STEVENS: Thank you.

2 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Any other

3 discussion?

4 (VOICE VOTE)

5 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: The ayes have it.

6 MR. GARY COTE: I would ask, as the

7 chairman of the Board of Directors, I would ask

8 those three board members to stand, and I would

9 ask that the clerk of the district cast one vote

10 for each board member for the record.

11 THE CLERK The clerk casts one vote for

12 James Beckman, two-year term; one vote for Peter

13 Pankowicz, two-year term; and one vote for Louis

14 Cote, Jr., two-year term. There are no

15 opposition, no negative votes. Thank you.

16 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Thank you,

17 Mr. Clerk. Next agenda item, new business. Is

18 there any new business? Any new business off the

19 floor?

20 MR. GARY COTE: Motion to adjourn.

21 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Second.

22 (VOICE VOTE: PASSED)

23 MODERATOR WILLIAMSON: Thank you.

24 (EXHIBITS 1 AND 2 MARKED FOR

25 IDENTIFICATION)

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1 (CLOSED AT 8:59 PM)

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C-E-R-T-I-F-I-C-A-T-E

2

I, RONALD M. RONZIO, Notary Public, do
hereby certify that I reported in shorthand the
foregoing proceedings, and that the foregoing
transcript contains a true, accurate, and complete
record of the proceedings at the above-entitled
hearing.

6

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set
my hand and seal this 11th day of January, 2013.

7

8

9

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11

RONALD M. RONZIO, NOTARY PUBLIC/CERTIFIED

COURT

REPORTER

12

13 MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: July 24, 2013

14 IN RE: Coventry Fire District Annual Meeting

15 DATE: December 11, 2012

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