



Town Manager Report for the week ending January 16, 2026

On Monday I met with Richard Delfino, the new RI Commerce Director of Municipal Affairs, to discuss opportunities in which their office could help with some economic development. I advised him our 3 main corridors for commercial activity, which accounts for only 15% of the properties here in Coventry, are Tiogue Ave, Centre of NE, and Sandy Bottom Rd. He advised that a lot of the grant money has dried up, but his office is looking for additional funding from the state and federal government.

On Tuesday we had a marathon Council meeting at which we appointed our new Town Solicitors, David Iglioizzi and John Verdecchia, who already had been serving the Town in an interim capacity to the permanent roles. We also had a vibrant discussion over the School Committee approved Teachers and School Related Personnel contracts that were up for ratification. Superintendent Cowart made a great presentation on all of the financial impacts of the new contracts and after much debate the Council referred the contracts to the Finance Committee for further review. They will be meeting on Wednesday January 21 at 600 in Chambers. At the meeting the Council also passed the Retail Cannabis Ordinance which is the guiding document for any new businesses that want to apply to have a retail license to sell cannabis in Coventry. This was something the Town was required to do since the residents of Coventry passed the referendum question in 2022 allowing it.

On Tuesday I attended the RI league of Cities and Towns Executive Board meeting in which we discussed the League's legislative priorities for this General Assembly session including one that Director McGee has testified on for the past several years asking the state to maintain their sidewalks along state roads and being liable for anyone who may be injured as a result their poor condition. Right now, the Town is responsible.

On Thursday staff and I met with Coventry Land Trust to discuss their priorities, policies, and access to the conveyance funds that the Town maintains on there behalf as a department of the Town. They currently have funds to purchase new properties and we will be researching to see if those same funds can also be used to maintain the properties they currently own and for things such as appraisals for new purchases.

We had our monthly call with the Auditor General, Chief of Municipal Finance, our auditors, and the School Dept to review the audit and provide an update on our deficit reduction plan which is tied closely to the teacher's contract. He was pleased we are doing our due diligence by sending the contracts to the Finance Comm. and is looking to get the deficit reduction plan approved by both the School Comm. and Town Council.