

## COVENTRY

# Schools look to make charity donations easier

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COVENTRY – The Coventry School Committee discussed changes to an ordinance indicating the regulations for clothing collection bins that would make it easier for business owners to place them on their property.

Superintendent Craig Levis said the ordinance had previously included a lot of stipulations and requirements that made it difficult to obtain and maintain a collection box, such as those often provided by Goodwill. They are notorious for being a prime place for dumping and can often overflow if the bins are not emptied on time.

The town council passed an amended ordinance on Sept. 26 of last year.

“It’s a good way to support the community,” he said. “I know I’m constantly using it. I think it’s a good service to provide.”

The ordinance requires that a permit be obtained by the town clerk to place a collection bin, and the permit must be renewed on a yearly basis with a \$25 renewal fee, a \$10 permit fee and a \$25 ini-

tial application fee. There is a penalty of \$100 for each violation, including things like bins in unpermitted locations, failure to respond to maintenance requests and failure to adhere to permit requirements among others.

Principal of Black Rock Elementary School Alicia Reniere said that the school is currently in the midst of a clothing drive/swap where people can drop off clothes and members of the community who are in need can shop them.

“I just wouldn’t want to have competing things going on,” she said.

Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School Principal Arthur Lisi said the middle school also holds regular clothing drives.

Levis said the school clothing drives were more geared toward helping members of the school community, while the collections bins would benefit the community at large. School committee chair Katherine Patenaude said the ordinance updates would make it easier for people to donate and would also help keep the bins emptied.

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“Otherwise people just throw things in the trash, and more ends up the landfill that could have been recycled,” she said. “When people have to pay for something maybe they’ll be more responsible.”

Committee member also Donna Kalunian noted that Goodwill even accepts clothes with slight damage and holes to recycle them.

“I don’t think this will infringe on what people do,” Levis added, noting that the changes were primarily about the schools being good com-

munity partners.

In other school committee news, members approved two additional, part-time instructors for the pre-school programs at Tiogue and Washington Oak Elementary. Levis said that through early intervention students are eligible for district services beginning at age 3 and there are many students currently enrolled, so the increase

is based on student need. The committee approved a 4-hour per day registered nurse at Tiogue, and a 3-hour per day teaching assistant at Washington Oak. Money from the FY 17 budget has been allocated to compensate the employees and the staffing increase will also be reflected in the FY 18 budget.

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