

Town of Willington

Board of Selectmen
40 Old Farms Road
Willington, CT 06279
(860) 487-3100
(860) 487-3103 Fax
www.willingtonct.gov

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Regular Meeting Minutes
Hybrid; TOB, Common Room & Virtual Meeting

March 4, 2024
6:00 PM

**Minutes are not official until approved at the next regular meeting*

First Selectman Peter Tanaka called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM with the following in attendance:
Selectman Matt Clark, Selectman Andy Marco not present.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes

Selectman Matt Clark moved to approve the minutes of the February 5, 2024 regular meeting,
First Selectman Tanaka seconded.
2 Yes (Tanaka & Clark) 0 No. Motion carried.

Present To Speak

Public participation is encouraged. Speakers are limited by appropriateness, staying on topic, and maintaining decorum. Time may be limited to maintain progress. Please request to reserve time during the meeting if you wish to speak to a specific agenda item.

Peter Latinsics spoke regarding concerns about the Emergency Services Facilities committee and urges the BOS to consider adding more townspeople to the committee and not have as many firefighters.

Correspondence

None to report

First Selectman's Status Report

Willington Day- The committee has begun to form, Melissa McKinnon has stepped up to head the committee. First Selectman Tanaka asked her to work with the Parks & Rec committee, as well as fire departments to make this a success. If you are interested in joining reach out to Melissa at willingtonday@aol.com. Information will be posted online.

Cyber Security has become a bigger and bigger issue. BOS as well as Education have chosen a vendor to protect against cyber-attacks.

Town Memorandum of Understanding with the union for 4-day work week expires in 2 weeks, instead of making a decision to keep or end it, we are extending the temp contract until 6/30 in order to negotiate with the union.

CIRMA coming in Wednesday to inspect all town buildings and schools for insurance purposes.

Fire at High Chase Assisted living facility last Monday, the fire didn't damage the building, however, the fire suppression system did. Residents were displaced and put up at the Rodeway Inn for 24 hours and they have since been given another place to live for the time being. The town will receive reimbursement for the cost of putting the residents up at the hotel from the state in the near future.

Public Works

Shannon read report from DPW Director Troy Sposato

Patched potholes.

Cleaned catch basins.

Maintenance of mower in prep for Spring.

Maintenance & washing of trucks.

Painting & Maintenance of plows.

Roadside Mowing.

Chipping Brush.

Finished roof & siding of DPW carport; it is complete.

Installed bulletin board at the town office building for Human Services & Parks and Rec

Installed new cross culvert on Daleville Road to fix drainage issue.

Fixed sinkhole on gravel portion of Mason Road.

New Business

Power Storage- State Citing Council has cited a 5mw battery storage facility on Blair Road between Blair & Village Hill Road- extends into Stafford, the access road is on the Stafford side of the line, but the facility is on the Willington side. This takes out the peaks and valleys of the power system. The company building it is willing to put on a public forum to discuss noise impacts to townspeople. Selectman Clark asked if there was any response from residents in the area, First Selectman Tanaka said there has not been.

Assessment Time Waiver received from Cable Technologies requesting an exemption for the filing for the property tax. They did not file in time, nor did they file an extension on time. They went to the Assessor who said based on CGS 12-94e, the BOS can exempt them from the penalty if they have experienced a hardship. The owner has passed away and have a new owner and accounting manager, they missed the time frame. The total penalty is undetermined as it will be calculated with the new Mill Rate but is in the vicinity of \$6,477.00 Selectman Clark moved to waive the penalty of \$6,477.00 which can be adjusted as needed.

First Selectman Tanaka seconded, 2 yes (Tanaka & Clark) 0 no motion carried.

First Selectman Tanaka moved to approve Property Tax Refund for Shawn G Farrington in the amount of \$158.87.

Selectman Clark seconded.

2 yes (Tanaka & Clark) 0 No. Motion Carried

First Selectman Tanaka moved to approve Property Tax Refund for Danny P Panciera in the amount of \$3,350.08.

Selectman Clark seconded.

2 yes (Tanaka & Clark) 0 No. Motion Carried

First Selectman Tanaka moved to approve Property Tax Refund for Terra A Leblond in the amount of \$120.02.

Selectman Clark seconded.

2 yes (Tanaka & Clark) 0 No. Motion Carried

First Selectman Tanaka moved to approve Property Tax Refund for Justin M. Atkins in the amount of \$280.98.

Selectman Clark seconded.

2 yes (Tanaka & Clark) 0 No. Motion Carried

First Selectman Tanaka moved to approve Property Tax Refund for Vault Trust in the amount of \$417.51.

Selectman Clark seconded.

2 yes (Tanaka & Clark) 0 No. Motion Carried

First Selectman Tanaka moved to approve Property Tax Refund for Kailey Wilson in the amount of \$70.88.

Selectman Clark seconded.

2 yes (Tanaka & Clark) 0 No. Motion Carried

Stage Removal in common room of TOB. First Selectman Tanaka would like to remove the stage as it's a tripping hazard, decreases capacity, and takes space away from Registrar storage. Mike Makuch suggested checking for asbestos before removal. Stephanie Summers asked how usable the floor will be after removal. It's believed that the floor will be usable if unattractive.

Emergency Services Facilities Building Committee- First Selectman Tanaka moved to create an Emergency Services Building Committee which will consist of 8 members made up of 3 (2 voting, 1 alternate) members representing the Willington Hill Fire Department (WHFD) 3 (2 voting, 1 alternate) members representing the Willington Fire Department #1 (WFD1). 2 members from the community with minimal or no ties to either fire department and preferably with some capital planning and/or construction experience. 1 non-voting, non-committee-member recording secretary. The charge of this committee is as follows:

1. Identify emergent Fire Department facility issues. Develop and initiate a plan with consideration for immediate and long term needs and financial responsibility.
2. Engage both fire departments, fire marshal, selectmen, emergency management, police, and any similar agencies to understand current and future **programmatic needs that might drive** facility needs.
3. Review previous studies for information related to service needs that effect facility needs.
4. Review previous studies for information related to condition and effectiveness of current facilities.
5. Determine and recommend engagement of consultants or similar professionals to assist in the following:
 - a. Collect and evaluate data on historical emergency services/public safety needs based on type, severity, and location.
 - b. Pursue any available forecasts of future emergency services/public safety trends or demands based on type, severity, and location.
 - c. **Ascertain any opportunities to meet programmatic needs of the town without unneeded duplication of resources/programs/etc.**
 - d. Determine best locations of resources to address those needs as effectively as possible using currently available town and department properties, or alternate location(s)-known as a station location study.
6. Recommend use of currently available funds to further design efforts for both short- and long-term projects:
 - a. Continuation of WFD1 design work for Station 13 @ 426 River Rd
 - b. Continuation of WHFD design work for 25 Old Farms Rd
7. Develop and recommend an emergency services facilities plan (ESFP) **or "Building Plan"** of major capital items for all related services, including pricing estimates.
8. Seek information on and support pursuit of funding including, but not limited to donations, grants, state and federal funds, and local funds.
9. Seek design contracts for any portions of the ESFP that are approved.
10. Seek construction contracts for any portions of the ESFP that are approved.
11. Communicate progress of committee work through public meetings, outreach, forums, etc. as appropriate throughout the term of the committee
12. Provide assistance to and oversight of work, in the Town's name, up to delivery of completed project(s)
13. Provide final report once committee's work is done, or no further progress is expected.

BOS opted to table until the next regular meeting to ensure a vote from the full board.

Tricentennial Committee- In April of 2023, an Ad Hoc Committee for the town 300th Anniversary, was formed, and to this date, nothing has been done. Therefore, First Selectman Tanaka moved to staff a 300th Anniversary Committee which will consist of members made up of the Parks & Recreation Director, Town Historian, Members of the Historical Society, Fire Departments, and up to 7 community members with James Callahan as Acting Chair.

Selectman Clark seconded 2 yes (Clark, Tanaka) 0 no. Motion Carried

Willington Woods Contract-Authorization to investigate new contract, last one done by First Selectman Eldredge in 2009, contract has opener every 5 years for re-negotiation. Provides for \$30,000 cap to what we can charge Willington Woods for water. We have been spending approximately \$40,000 a year and are reimbursed for \$30,000 so we are losing about \$10,000 a year. Also covers septic, which we did not have any coverage for septic upkeep until about a month ago. First Selectman moved that we authorize him as town representative to look into renegotiating contract.

Selectman Clark Seconded 2 yes (Clark, Tanaka) 0 no. Motion carried.

Report from State Police:

February 2024 Monthly Report from Troop C: 276 calls to Troop C for service included 13 accidents, 11 criminal investigations, 0 burglaries, 0 larcenies, 150 non-reportable matters and 6 arrests. Motor vehicle enforcement included 101 total traffic stops, 1 onsite DUI, 2 arrests, 1 misdemeanor summons, 53 infractions, 15 written warnings, 30 verbal warnings.

First Selectman Tanaka is going to discuss with the Tolland Town Manager to get a better report from the State Police including more granular information.

Bolton Assessor Contract, we share our Assessor with Bolton, the contract goes from 10/1-9/30 and is a 3-year contract. They are asking for changes to the contract so First Selectman Tanaka will consult with the attorney before he makes any decisions. We will have more information at the next BOS meeting.

Discussion on regionalization of Dog Warden and updates to Dog Pound that are needed. There are new state regulations on dog pound requirements.

Selectman Clark read letter from Kathy Demers supporting the appointment of Laura Rodriguez. First Selectman moved to appoint Laura Rodriguez to Conservation Commission term ending 12/1/2025

Selectman Clark seconded.

2 yes (Clark, Tanaka) 0 no. Motion Carried.

Union Contract, town employees have approached the town to initiate negotiations, and we have been asked to release some employee information. First Selectman Tanaka checked with the attorneys to ensure we were clear to release the information requested. BOS and BOF to be included in the discussion. We will reach out to Bruce Lawler as it gets closer, negotiations to commence in May.

Old Business

Due to lack of a quorum and the need to cancel the last BOS meeting, we did not formally move to accept the budget presented last week. First Selectman Tanaka moved that we submit budget to BOF so it's on record.

Selectman Clark Seconded for discussion.

Discussion as to how we move forward, we have many issues that need to be addressed and that it would be helpful for CIP and BOF meet with the BOS to discuss. Will invite Christina Mailhos to next BOS meeting.

Present to Speak

Bob Shabot wanted to touch on the Fire stations, suggested fire departments combine to 1 main station and 1 sub-station. Nice to see departments working better together recently than they have in the past.

John Blessington discussed the previous regime not allowing for discussion, and that the new administration is doing well by allowing people to speak during meetings, shows transparency. He also mentioned that the previous selectperson had voiced concerns about allowing present to speak during budget discussions and pointed out that she didn't do that either and that it's not necessary if the public is allowed to speak during the meetings.

Mike Makuch referring to the Fire Department Building Committee- supports getting public input, but a little concerned pushing the subject off longer because the situation is not getting less emergent. Stated emphatically that two weeks from now we need to get this moved. First Selectman Tanaka wants to make sure that the entire board is present and both parties represented with the vote. Hopes that the facilities study is made available to the public.

Michelle Cunningham wanted to acknowledge the informal tenor and remind people how you speak about other people in town. Be careful about your words in public.

Melissa McKinnon wanted to discuss joining Willington Day Committee.

Peter Latincsics agreed about the need for transparency and echoed earlier concern about the committee being unbalanced with public representation.

Stephanie Summer voiced concerns about the lack of public representation on the FD Building Committee, and it's heavily weighed, and that the BOS should have the committee pick the strongest most knowledgeable to be the "captain". Also spoke about throwing out numbers for inflation rates as they include exemptions and suggests that the BOS looks into the statutes. Also wanted to ask about how raises were put into the budget. Said that the appointment of Laura to the conservation commission is a great idea.

Mike Makuch reiterated that his feeling is that the firefighters in town despite their vested interest in new firehouses, are just as invested in this town as anyone else, and maybe even more so given they are the ones running into burning buildings and responding in bad weather.

Good & Welfare

Selectman Clark asked about displaced High Chase residents and was informed that they were all moved to new facilities.

First Selectman Tanaka moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 PM.

Selectman Clark seconded the motion.

2 Yes (Tanaka & Clark) 0 No. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon Rittner
Recording Secretary
Town of Willington

THIS IS A DRAFT DOCUMENT

I move to create an Emergency Services Building Committee which will consist of 10 members made up of 3 (2 voting, 1 alternate) members representing the Willington Hill Fire Department (WHFD) 3 (2 voting, 1 alternate) members representing the Willington Fire Department #1 (WFD1). 1 Member from the BOS, 1 member from the BOF, 2 members from the community with minimal or no ties to either fire department and preferably with some capital planning and/or construction experience. 1 non-voting, non-committee-member recording secretary. The charge of this committee is as follows:

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