

**TOWN OF WILLINGTON  
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES  
DECEMBER 12, 2022**

First Selectwoman Erika Wiecenski called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM and read the call of the meeting:

The electors of the Town of Willington and all persons who are entitled to vote in Town Meeting on the matters mentioned in the following warning are hereby warned and notified to meet in Town Meeting at the Old Town Hall; 11 Common Road, Willington, at 7:00 P.M. on Monday, December 12, 2022, for the following purpose:

**ITEM I**

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen, will defer the revaluation of real property for the assessment year commencing October 1, 2023, until the assessment year commencing October 1, 2024.

**ITEM II**

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Finance, will authorize the appropriation of \$16,500.00 from the Capital Projects Fund – LOCIP – Schofield Road Drainage Phase I for engineering to, to contract with BETA Group, Inc. to provide a concept plan and opinion of cost development, which will be reimbursed by the State of Connecticut Local Capital Improvement Program.

**ITEM III**

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Commission, will authorize the appropriation of \$32,250.00 from the American Rescue Plan Act Funds to provide for retention bonuses for town employees.

**ITEM IV**

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Commission, will authorize the appropriation of \$17,000.00 from the American Rescue Plan Act Funds to provide for retention bonuses for fire department employees.

Dated at Willington,

This 21<sup>st</sup> day of November, 2022. Willington Board of Selectmen, Erika G. Wiecenski, Liza Boritz & James Bulick.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski then asked for nominations for a moderator.

**Matt Clark moved to nominate Peter Tanaka as moderator.**

**John Blessington seconded the motion.**

**Vote: All in favor**

**Jayson Righenzi moved to vote by voice/hand.**

**Laurie Semprebon seconded the motion.**

Discussion was held. Peter Latinsics stated that he opposed the motion strongly. John Blessington was in agreement.

**Vote taken regarding voting by voice/hand:**

**Yes: 25 No: 12 Abstain: 0**

**Motion passes.**

Item I was read by moderator:

*To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen, will defer the revaluation of real property for the assessment year commencing October 1, 2023, until the assessment year commencing October 1, 2024.*

**Item I was moved by Laurie Semprebbon.**

**Jennifer Tehan seconded the motion.**

Discussion was held: Kara Fishman, Willington Assessor was in attendance. Ms. Fishman noted that OPM has divided the state by planning region and Revals will be done by county instead of individually. Because of the shift, Legislation has allowed us to postpone a year to bring in line with the new schedule. As she is new to town as Assessor, giving her an extra year will allow her to properly assess the properties in town, given we were without an Assessor for almost a year. This will put us on the schedule that has been recommended by the State. If we put it off a year it will be 4 years between the next Revaluation and we will be on a 6 – 4 year schedule versus the normal 5 -5 year as we have in the past.

**Peter Latincsics moved to decide Item I by paper ballot.**

**Matt Clark seconded the motion.**

**Vote: Yes: 5, No 25 Abstain: 0**

**Item I was then called to a vote (by voice/hand):**

**Yes: 39 No: 2 Abstain: 0**

**Motion passes.**

Item II was then read by moderator.

*To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Finance, will authorize the appropriation of \$16,500.00 from the Capital Projects Fund – LOCIP – Schofield Road Drainage Phase I for engineering to, to contract with BETA Group, Inc. to provide a concept plan and opinion of cost development, which will be reimbursed by the State of Connecticut Local Capital Improvement Program.*

**Item II was moved by Elisabeth Woolf**

**Jenn Tehan seconded the motion.**

Moderator then opened floor for discussion. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that the Schofield Road drainage project has been on the CIP plan for over 30 years at an estimated cost of \$350,000. The CIP plan had earmarked \$35,000 to cover the cost of engineering, but since they started to look into the project further, it was decided it is more complex and will need more engineering than \$35,000 will get us. Our Town Engineer also recommended we seek an additional Engineering firm to assist. After seeking Engineering firms through CRCOG, the \$16,500 will cover a vendor who will perform data collection base mapping, a conceptual design, rights of way and an opinion of more realistic (to date) cost that will be brought to CIP. The new firm will also assist us in seeking grant funding to help cover the cost of the project.



Because the project has perpetually been stuck at year 5 (from the 1990's – due to the complexity and cost), the original \$350,000 projection realistically is closer to \$100,000-\$200,000 for engineering and \$2 million to complete.

This \$16,500 will help us have a real concept of the drainage plan.

This is not associated with the MS-4 mapping project (that was recently approved at a previous town meeting). The project consists from the bottom of Schofield Road at Route 32 all the way up to Village Hill Road. It was noted that if you've ever been on Schofield Road in a rain storm, you don't want to – it is dangerous. The water has nowhere to go – it runs down the road to Route 32 and into the people's yards. It has been in need of repair for many years. Although it is not paying for a design, it is a sensible step and it needs to get done.

Peter Latincsics moved to vote on this item by paper ballot.

**Item II was called to a vote (by voice)**

**Vote on Item II: Yes 41 No 1 Abstain: 0**

**Motion passes.**

Item III was then read by moderator.

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Commission, will authorize the appropriation of \$32,250.00 from the American Rescue Plan Act Funds to provide for retention bonuses for town employees.

**Item III was moved by Laurie Semprebon.**

**Jenn Tehan seconded the motion.**

Moderator opened floor for discussion. Christina Mailhos, Chairman of the ARPA Commission was present. Ms. Mailhos explained that the Commission was formed about a year ago and the Commission discusses and determines how to spend the funding which is about \$1.7 million.

This particular project came to the commission by the Board of Selectmen. It was determined that it is an appropriate use of funding and there was a lot of support for it by the public. She added as Chairman of this Commission, she felt it should go to Town Meeting, because several of the members of the ARPA Commission would personally benefit from it.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski added that the basis of the proposal was to give back to our employees who may not be eligible for other bonus payments offered throughout the state. It would be a one-time bonus and only for those who were employed by the Town between March 2020 to November, 2021. She added that this would be similar to what other towns have done. Unionized State employees have also received COVID related bonuses as well. It is a small give-back to the work they have done and made sure services continued in town. Department heads will receive a \$2,000, the Business Manager would receive \$3,000 (because of the number of hours worked were extraordinary and time shifted between BOE and Town). Other eligible employees would receive up to \$1,000 being pro-rated based on their employment during that timeframe. First Selectwoman Wiczenski added that elected officials and volunteers are not eligible.

Discussion was held.

We are always trying to be considerate and not increase taxes, but we also need to be aware that we do not compensate our employees like other towns – we have lost employees who have gone to neighboring towns to make \$20,000 more. The least we could do is give the bonus to the employees.

We should reinvest in our most valuable assets – our town employees. It is a way to thank our employees and let them know we appreciate them. Think about yourself if you go about your job day in and day out & someone recognizes that and how you feel or maybe more importantly if you go above and beyond and no one noticed at all. It is a way to try to slow the revolving door syndrome.

These people never gave up or stopped working – they don't get bonuses for a thankless job.

Well played by making the motion to vote by voice instead of written ballot. Whether or not I am for or against this motion, I now have a bunch of people standing to get a bonus who will watch me vote and this is why the paper ballot was the way to go. I will abstain.

Not all government employees are getting bonuses. You sign up to public service for the pay and the benefits. 70 % of Americans are looking for additional jobs and inflation is going up.

It is important that this is coming to town meeting and that the residents are able to voice their vote. A public vote at town meeting should be transparent and it is important for the people to see they have support.

It was also clarified that the funding will not come from the operating budget or our General Fund.

**Peter Latincsics moved to vote on this item by paper ballot.**  
**Nicholas Tella seconded the motion.**

**Vote: Yes: 9 No: 28 Abstain: 0**  
***motion (on voting by paper ballot) fails.***

**Item III was called to a vote (by voice/hand)**  
**Vote on Item III: Yes: 36 No: 5 Abstain: 2**  
**Motion passes.**

Item IV was read by moderator:

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Commission, will authorize the appropriation of \$17,000.00 from the American Rescue Plan Act Funds to provide for retention bonuses for fire department employees.

**Item IV was moved by Laurie Semprebon**  
**Jenn Tehan seconded the motion.**

Moderator opened floor for discussion.

ARPA Chairman Christina Mailhos noted that the background for this item is the same as the previous item. The ARPA Commission agreed to bring to Town Meeting for the townspeople to vote on it.



A comment was in opposition, noting they would rather see the funding go towards equipment instead.

**Brian Sempredon motioned to move the question because the discussion would be same as previous item.**

**John Tehan seconded the motion.**

**Vote on moving the question to vote:**

**Yes: 24 No: 10**

**Item IV was called to vote:**


**Yes: 39 No: 3 Abstain: 1**

**First Selectwoman Wicinski moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:44 PM**

**Ralph Tulis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor**

Respectfully Submitted,



Robin H. Campbell  
Town Clerk

RECEIVED  
WILLINGTON, CT.

2022 DEC 13 P 3:58



TOWN CLERK

