

**TOWN OF WILLINGTON
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 23, 2024**

First Selectman Peter Tanaka called the meeting to order at 7:03 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 Tuesday, January 23, 2024 for the following purpose:

ITEM I

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Finance, will authorize the appropriation of \$20,000 from the Capital Reserve Fund to Account #04-4049 CES Plumbing Projects, for Plumbing at Center School.

ITEM II

To see if the townspeople, will authorize the amendment to Town Ordinance concerning the abatement for Volunteer Firefighters to comply with CT Public Act 21-83

ITEM III

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Finance, will authorize the appropriation of \$74,500 from the Reserve Fund to 04-4052 for the 2024 Revaluation.

ITEM IV

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Finance, will authorize the appropriation of \$74,178 from the Capital Reserve Fund to 04-4051 for a used 2012 ELGIN Street Sweeper from Chadwick-Barrow.

Dated at Willington, This 2nd day of January 2024.

Willington Board of Selectmen: Peter Tanaka, Matt Clark & Andy Marco

First Selectman Tanaka then asked for nominations for moderator.

Stef Summers nominated Andy Marco as moderator, seconded by Michelle Doucette-Cunningham. A vote was taken.

All in favor.

0 No.

Motion passes.

Ralph Tulis moved to waive a second reading of the call; seconded by Michael Makuch.

Vote was taken

All in favor

0 No.

Motion passes.

ITEM I was moved by Peter Tanaka, seconded by Michael Mackch:

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Finance, will authorize the appropriation of \$20,000 from the Capital Reserve Fund to Account #04-4049 CES Plumbing Projects, for Plumbing at Center School.

Moderator then opened the floor for discussion:

Phil Stevens, Superintendent of schools spoke, noting that this funding is for work to be done at Center School and they are hoping to address 3 projects:

- replacing 4 classroom sinks & countertops, faucets, shut-off valves, etc.
- repairing a leak in the women's restroom which entails new plumbing and replacing flooring in a small space.
- a wall-hung toilet in the boys room which could be an issue in the wall.

Superintendent Stevens noted that the intention is to get as much done with the funding as possible, but clarified they will not exceed the amount that has been approved and if one item eats the entire amount, that is all that will be accomplished.

Moderator then called ITEM I to a vote:

All in favor

0 No.

Motion passes.

ITEM II was moved by Rebecca Sinosky, seconded by Michael Makuch:

To see if the townspeople, will authorize the amendment to Town Ordinance concerning the abatement for Volunteer Firefighters to comply with CT Public Act 21-83.

Moderator then opened the floor for discussion:

Michael Makuch of Willington Hill Fire Department gave an overview of the project noting that the ordinance has been in effect for the past 15 years. Recently, the State laws have changed, which include language and increases to the abatement amounts, which will have to be amended into our existing ordinance.

Mr. Makuch then explained that this abatement-tool has improved the level of retention of volunteer fire-fighters.

Michelle Doucette-Cunningham stated that she is in support of this program but asked why there was a change in the language which allows those who are behind in their taxes to now be eligible to receive the abatement, where the old version of the ordinance stated they were not if their taxes were in arrears.

Mr. Makuch said that he was very passionate about this one change and gave an example of one time when his mortgage company (who escrows his tax payment) ended up paying his taxes a few days late. Although it was only a few days, his tax payment was technically "delinquent" due to another's actions and he would have not been eligible to receive the benefit. He felt it to be unfair – especially to those who put in so many volunteer hours.

The steps and tiers have been removed in the new version of the ordinance. Mr. Makuch noted that the members get their steps in and become eligible after 2 years of service and the departments see a lot of volatility of the members in those first 5 or 6 years.

Andy Marco asked if the abatement is an effective tool in retaining members? Michael Makuch said it is effective and will be more so once the changes take effect. He also noted that he has not participated in the program because he was serving on the Board of Finance and Selectmen over the past several years, but now looks forward to being able to use it.

Stef Summers spoke in favor of the abatement, noting that the increases as set by the state will have an impact of \$15,000 on the budget which is minimal.

Ralph Tulis asked if the abatement wouldn't be more beneficial to apply the funding towards taxes that are in arrears? Mr. Makuch said it was more challenging to apply the funding backwards, that is why they worded it to be paid in the current year.

Moderator then called ITEM II to a vote.

All in favor

0 No

Motion passes

**ITEM III was moved by Peter Tanaka, seconded by Michelle Doucette-Cunningham:
To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Finance, will authorize the appropriation of \$74,500 from the Reserve Fund to 04-4052 for the 2024 Revaluation.**

Moderator opened the floor for discussion.

First Selectman Peter Tanaka stated that the revaluation must be done by statute, every 6 years. We asked for an extension last year, therefore it must be done this year. Our Assessor sought bids and the company that was chosen provides more services and came in at the lowest cost.

Moderator then called ITEM III to a vote.

All in favor

0 No

Motion passes.

**ITEM IV was moved by Michelle Doucette-Cunningham, seconded by Stef Summers:
To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Finance, will authorize the appropriation of \$74,178 from the Capital Reserve Fund to 04-4051 for a used 2012 ELGIN Street Sweeper from Chadwick-Barrow.**

Moderator opened floor for discussion:

Public Works' Director Troy Sposato was in attendance. He noted that the sweeper we are using now was purchased for \$5,000 several years ago and is 28 years old. It only has one side broom, where the new one has 2 and is hydraulic. It comes with 15 main brooms and 120 side brooms. We will receive \$1,000 trade in towards the purchase of this sweeper.

Moderator called ITEM IV to a vote:


All in favor

0 No

Motion passes.

First Selectman Peter Tanaka moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 PM

Respectfully submitted,



Robin H. Campbell, CCTC
Willington Town Clerk

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WILLINGTON, CT.

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TOWN CLERK