

# Town of Willington

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## BOARD OF FINANCE

**Regular Meeting Minutes  
Via Public Online Video Conference**

**August 19, 2021  
7:00 PM**

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

Members Present (a quorum of 4 members is required to conduct business):

Geoff Prusak – Vice Chairman  
Pete Tanaka – Secretary  
Matt Clark  
Stephanie Summers  
Christina Mailhos  
Lisa Woolf – Alternate

Members Absent:

Mike Makuch – Chairman  
Brenda Abrams – Alternate

Also Present:

First Selectwoman Erika Wieceński  
Laurie Semprebón - Treasurer  
Members of the Public

**Vice Chairman Geoff Prusak called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.**

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Pete Tanaka made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of July 15, 2021.**

**Stef Summers seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 5 Yes (C. Mailhos, P. Tanaka, M. Clark, S. Summers, G. Prusak), 0 No**

**Motion passes.**

## PRESENT TO SPEAK

Laurie Semprebón of 271 Turnpike Rd. stated: I was extremely disappointed for those who voted against appropriating money for the building committee at the last meeting. The voters voted on the budget; the Board of Finance's job is to appropriate when needed, not to go against the voters of the town of Willington. People have been complaining for years that we need to do something about the schools – we have a building committee who are giving of their time and expertise to work on this and they're charged with recommendations. They can't get experts and they can't get recommendations without money. I don't know what the point of refusing is. Maybe people are assuming what their decision is going to be, but that's not what this board is for. The building

committee is to come up with recommendations and then the town of Willington will vote on whatever is put before us, and will make a decision yay or nay. The budget has already been voted on and those funds have been appropriated. So you refusing to assign those funds makes no sense to me and it's very frustrating that you're going against the process that's supposed to happen in this town.

John Blessington of 29 Mason Rd. stated: I'm hearing that the town has already approved funding this and therefore we must spend it. Ironically, recently Superintendent Stevens announced that the project to replace the roofs on both Center and Hall schools has been canceled by Kosta Diamantis, the Deputy Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, and Director of the Department of Administrative Services Office of Schools, Construction Grants, and Review. Now that's a long and impressive title but I don't know of any law, regulation, or ordinance that gives the Deputy Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and Director of the Department of Administrative Services Office of Schools, Construction Grants, and Review the power to overrule the people of Willington once they have voted in Town Meeting. The people have voted twice. On the first occasion they voted to replace the roofs at the cost of \$1 million. More than a year passed. Many construction projects were completed over the course of that year, but the Superintendent failed to complete this project. His failure was an expensive one, because now he announced that because of increased prices due to COVID, the cost of the project has increased to \$1,600,000. Still, once again, the people voted to replace the roofs. These roofs badly need to be replaced. They're town buildings and it is the duty of the town to keep them in good repair. It is a truism that the most rapid decline of any building will begin with a leaky roof. These roofs badly need to be replaced and these roofs must be replaced. There were no dissenting votes at the Town Meeting. The Town is obligated to complete the project. So, how did we get to where we are now? The Deputy Director etc. etc. came to town to look at a project for which he had already given his approval, and then he rescinded his approval. I have never heard of this happening. It's almost as if someone in Willington invited him here to do so. But the deputy director cannot cancel a project, he can only refuse the promised state funding. The town is still obligated to finish the project and pay for it out of the Capital Reserve Fund. It is my opinion that our next step is to replace the roofs, and after that the School Building Committee should consider its deliberations.

Michelle Doucette Cunningham of 41 Liska Rd. stated: thank you, John, for raising the issue of the roofs; I agree that they are very important and we should move ahead with fixing the roofs. Certainly a lot of things have been outside of our control over the last year and a half, and moving ahead, fixing the roofs is an important process. However, I want to correct the record that we do not own Hall School, it is owned by the Hall Foundation, and if we no longer use it as a school, it goes back to the Hall Foundation. However, it is in our town's best interest as steward of that resource that we should repair the roof, because we've been using it as a school. I believe to the best of my understanding that whether or not it is reimbursed does not negate our responsibility for taking care of our infrastructure. It's not smart to be pennywise and pound foolish and not invest the money in resources that are under our control. If that's something that we have to move ahead with, I support that initiative and would agree with that. However I also believe and very strongly support that those two things do not have to happen separately. We know that our schools are inadequate for what we need. The buildings are over 100 years old for Hall School and substantially inadequate at Center School; I don't know the exact age, but it

could be 70 years or so. Those buildings are not serving us well. We could save operational costs and get better services out of a bigger school. We, as a town, have appointed a School Building Committee (SBC) to do our research for us and give us recommendations as citizens. I would strongly urge the Board of Finance not to consider this something that has to be sequential. We have to address the issue of aging infrastructure, whether or not we repair the roofs aside. We can do both at the same time. There's nothing saying we cannot allow the SBC to continue their process. We've asked them to do this work on our behalf, and hindering them now after it's already been approved to move ahead and have a building committee is, in my mind, pennywise and pound foolish and really reflects poorly on this board. I would urge you to please go ahead and give them the resources that already been approved and have been talked about for years – there's really no surprise there – to allow them to do the research the Board of Education couldn't. We weren't experts on property or what's appropriate and we need their information to be able to make an informed decision as the citizens of Willington. Please allow them to do the research that they need to do so that we can make good decisions. It's going to come back to the town anyway; we have to make the decision on whether we're going to build a new school, but we've asked them to go ahead and do the research. I urge you to allow them to do the job we've asked them to do.

Peter Latincsics of 97 Trask Rd. stated: I'm pleased to hear that there's consensus that the school roofs are important to this community. I have been attending the Board of Finance meetings on this topic for the last 3 years, asking the question of why this project is not moving forward. As John reiterated and Michelle ably substantiated, the projects have been approved on multiple occasions. It's puzzling to me why the project was not completed this summer as scheduled while our professionals were working on it this spring. It's entirely unclear to the community. I asked at your last meeting that the school roofs be put on this agenda so that all of these issues can be put into context. I don't see the school roofs on your agenda. I attempted this week to go to the BOS meeting to ask these same questions, because I think many townspeople are concerned about the roofs. I'm not sure what happened, but there was no BOS meeting; there was no agenda and no cancelation, so I failed in that effort. Now I see tonight that it's not even on your agenda. I think it's essential for the SBC to have the trust of the community. I don't see how we can garner that trust if we cannot meet the obligations we've already accepted as a town for the school roofs, which are such an important asset to this community. Center School was built by Willington and does not revert to the Halls. As a community we have been the beneficiaries of the Hall family. They gave us the school in good repair and I like to think that we, in our time, can do the same thing; regardless of how it's used in the future, we should not abandon such an important building on our community or our K-3 elementary school. Please address why it is not on your agenda this evening. I don't see how we can act on this issues if there isn't full transparency for the entire community.

Ralph Tulis of 12 Lohse Rd. stated: I believe at that last meeting, July 15, that Mr. Tanaka requested that the roofs project be included in this meeting's agenda for discussion. Obviously it is not. The unfortunate circumstance is that no-one would know that it would be discussed tonight if it's simply added to the agenda by a motion by the members of the board, which short circuits the public's ability to be aware of what's discussed and to offer input if they have some. The roof project has been voted on multiple times in Town Meeting. The grant to reimburse the town is what DAS and OCS allegedly canceled. It doesn't mean that we can ignore the fact that

the voters wanted this work done. We are willing to accept the extra cost because we have been dragging our feet on this project for some time. I think that discussion of both issues – the roofs and the funding of consultants for SBC - be on the next agenda so that any townspeople who would like to offer their thoughts have the opportunity to do so have some notice. With respect to funding consultants for SBC, if you look back at the CIP minutes for February 12, 2020, one of the discussions there was that the \$100,000 for professional services was going to be split over 2 years, not given to the committee in one lump. I don't know if that's still the case, but would hope that someone with more knowledge can confirm or deny that because obviously there's been a new CIP in 2021.

## **SEATING OF ALTERNATES**

**Pete Tanaka made a motion to seat Lisa Woolf for Mike Makuch.**

**Stef Summers seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 5 Yes (S. Summers, M. Clark, P. Tanaka, C. Mailhos, G. Prusak), 0 No**

**Motion passes.**

**Pete Tanaka made a motion to add School Roofs to the agenda under Old Business.**

**Matt Clark seconded the motion.**

Pete commented that he had been in touch with Chairman Makuch, who had mentioned that the topic could be added to the agenda during the meeting, as it's a regular meeting. After hearing Ralph's comments that it's not here so that the town can comment, he'd still like to add it to tonight's meeting to touch on it briefly and then make sure that it's on the next agenda so that the town can speak up on it. He does believe that a number of people have heard about it, since we've heard from a number of people on the topic.

**Vote: 6 Yes (C. Mailhos, G. Prusak, S. Summers, M. Clark, P. Tanaka, L. Woolf), 0 No**

**Motion passes.**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **1) Public Health Crisis Update-**

#### **a) General update**

Pete stated he saw a map showing Willington in red for high COVID numbers. If you looked at the numbers, it says if there's between 4-15 out of 100,000 residents, it puts you in the red. If he's not mistaken we have about 6,000 residents, so if we have 0, we're white, and 1 or more we're in the red?

Selectwoman Wiczenski replied that it's a slightly more complicated formula than that, but it's a 2-week average. As of today, our percentage is 17.1% of 100,000 as reported by the Department of Public Health; 7 positive cases last week and 7 the week before that put us into the red. For a small town like Willington, it doesn't take much to be in the red. It's not as easy as doing simple math. At one or more cases, we are not in the red.

**b) Update on federal funding (American Rescue Plan)**

Selectwoman Wiczenski shared that she has no new update. At the Town Meeting there were some initial funds extended. Nothing has been extended since then and we haven't received any new funds. No news on the committee.

**2) School Roofs – Discussion**

Pete commented that getting the roofs fixed is incredibly important and that the schools came to the BOF in December of 2018 regarding this project. The question he has for Mr. Stevens is that he's heard rumor that the temporary repairs that were done have let go and are starting to leak some, especially during that July 17<sup>th</sup> rain.

Superintendent Stevens was not available to comment.

Pete continued that it's incredibly important that we get the roofs fixed. It was his understanding as a member of this board and as a townspeople at the meetings that we were going to get these fixed. There was some question when the funding went through whether we were going to get the refund from the state or not. It was his understanding, along with Barry Walle's at the time, that we wanted to get this done regardless of whether there was state funding or not; these are important buildings to the town and it was important to get these roofs fixed.

Discussion was held regarding who holds decision-making power over this project now, the next steps available to the BOF to get the project moving forward, and the standing of state reimbursement for the now more expensive project.

Selectwoman Wiczenski commented that her understanding was that the state funding portion of the project was canceled by Director Diamantis. That would leave the entire cost on the Town of Willington. She urged the BOF to look at what that means and involve the Business Manager in this discussion to understand the ramifications of completely funding the project without state funding.

Laurie Semperebon commented that, though this project has been voted on, she thinks it would have to go back to Town Meeting now that the state has withdrawn money. The people of the town voted to go forward with this project with the understanding that the money would be reimbursed by the state. We would have to ask the townspeople if they wanted to fund this entire thing themselves.

Stef Summers added that another reason it would definitely have to go back to Town Meeting is the number increased.

Pete Tanaka clarified that this topic did go to Town Meeting at the increased \$1.65 million, but he would have to review the notes to see if wording regarding the reimbursement was included.

Matt asked if more temporary repairs were being made to the roofs, and asked whether the roofs were leaking with the rain today.

**Christina Mailhos made a motion to have Chairman Makuch send the Board of Education a letter expressing the Board of Finance's concern about the school roof project.**

**Pete Tanaka seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 6 Yes (S. Summers, P. Tanaka, C. Mailhos, M. Clark, L. Woolf, G. Prusak), 0 No  
Motion passes.**

Pete requested that the School Roofs be added to the next regular meeting agenda. Stef suggested requesting that the Superintendent attend that meeting.

**3) School Building Committee-consultant funds appropriation**  
Geoff highlighted the memo that the BOF received.

**Attachment #1**

Pete asked if there was language regarding a motion. He recalled Ralph Tulis' point during Present to Speak about two \$50,000 amounts and whether there is any change in that.

Stef commented that there's nothing that says the appropriation would be spent, it's saying that's the amount that was requested and approved in the CIP program, plus approved by the voters at referendum, to pay for an array of expertise that's needed for the big charge on the SBC. I don't see that an appropriation for the amount that's been requested and approved is saying "spend this amount in the fiscal year". There have been other examples of money being appropriated in this way that hasn't been expended fully once the issues were addressed.

Pete replied that he doesn't believe anyone thought that it meant that they had to spend it all. If it's \$50,000 in one year, and \$50,000 in the next year, that's different than \$100,000 "use it when you want to".

Stef replied that the SBC may not know the cost of expertise and consultation and how it will spread out in the period of their charge. They may need more up front or more in a latter year. She doesn't see the point in tying their hands and saying they have to do it this way regardless of what their needs are as a committee.

**Matt Clark made a motion that the BOF approves spending \$100,000 for consultants to work with the Willington School Building Committee with approximately \$50,000 allocated for analyzing the remodeling and adding wings to Hall School, and \$50,000 allocated for analysis of a new construction K-8 school.**

**Pete Tanaka seconded the motion.**

Matt commented that he has gone to SBC meetings and listened to the rest on video, and he'd like to have a report from the group on what their progress is. Other than meeting in executive session and doing communications and Frequently Asked Questions, and putting together a big meeting with Director Diamentis, they haven't don't any analysis. There haven't been any figures, budgets, estimates, and I can't see where there's been much accomplished. The way this is going, the SBC is going to move forward with only one avenue which is a brand new K-8 school. My understanding is, when this went to Town Meeting there was a lot of discussion about different options for meeting the school building needs of our children. It was not simply moving forward only with a new construction K-8 school.

Stef stated that she can't favor dictating what the SBC's decision is going to be. That's exactly what's been discussed at length. This is a committee that's charged with researching, with the help of some expertise. By the way, all \$100,000 is in the first year of the CIP plan, not 50/50. She doesn't think the BOF should subdivide and tell them how much money of that \$100,000 to use when they don't even know what their recommendations are going to be or what they're researching fully.

Pete commented that each \$50,000 chunk is for half of the charge of the committee. By separating, it makes sure that the entire charge of the committee is covered and that they don't spend \$100,000 only going one direction. He thinks it's important that the BOF encourage them to fulfill their entire charge.

Stef replied that there are more than 2 options on the table and she feels that's like putting on handcuffs for something that should be up to the determination of this committee that we've spent lots of time seating and putting our faith in.

Pete suggested the friendly amendment "**allocated for analyzing the remodeling and reuse of an existing school**", as they may find that Center School is the better option to utilize. That would more accurately reflect the full scope of the charge of the committee.

Motion now reads: **the BOF approves spending \$100,000 for consultants to work with the Willington School Building Committee with approximately \$50,000 allocated for analyzing the remodeling and reuse of an existing school, and \$50,000 allocated for analysis of a new construction K-8 school.**

Stef commented that she still thinks this is re-legislating and re-designating what the intent of that should be when it was already discussed and passed into a budget. Pete disagreed, because the \$100,000 was "in support of the committee" and the committee's charge is reflected completely in this motion.

Stef replied that there's no way to know that one isn't going to take \$75,000 and one \$25,000 by the very nature of the difference of the two. It's too complex to say this can be done in a simple dollars and cents way.

Geoff offered a friendly amendment to remove the specific amounts. Pete elaborated by adding the friendly amendment "**approximately half**" in place of the original amounts, in order to give both options given equal footing for analysis.

Motion now reads: **the BOF approves spending \$100,000 for consultants to work with the Willington School Building Committee with approximately half allocated for analyzing the remodeling and reuse of an existing school, and approximately half allocated for analysis of a new construction K-8 school.**

Stef commented that the SBC may not come up with just one or two options; there may be four or five options, which the town has already seen in the study that was done in 2017 that all this derives from. To limit it to two things is oversimplification of something that's much more complex than the motion and doesn't apply the full array of rationale and what it takes to

research these complex issues. It's in the budget for this fiscal year for the SBC to spend \$100,000 on expertise to research its options for the town. I don't believe this group is going to ignore a whole swath of the potential answer to this longstanding problem for our town.

Matt stated that as far as he can tell, every time it's suggested that the SBC do anything regarding remodeling and adding onto Hall School that there's one roadblock after another. The intent of this motion is to free up the money for the SBC to do its job as specified in the Town Meeting, look at the two different options, and then have public hearings for comment and suggestion. I don't think they're going to treat it equally at all. They've had 6 or 7 meetings, and they've already gone and looked at a new land acquisition 3 times for almost half the meetings. They didn't have a chairman yet and they broke into executive session to look at land acquisition. This solves the problem and makes sure they stick to the charge.

**Pete Tanaka made a motion to move the question.**

**Vote: 3 Yes (M. Clark, P. Tanaka, G. Prusak), 3 No (S. Summers, L. Woolf, C. Mailhos)**  
**Motion fails.**

Christina commented that the motion needs to include the account that the money comes from – it's in the CIP plan, but she doesn't have the account in front of her. She added that she has questions about the RFP process; who is going to lead that and how that's going to happen, if there's a boilerplate RFP for this, if there are consultants on the state bid list, because that's going to define what the scope of work is. She doesn't think it's the BOF's place to decide what the scope of work will be, just to say what the appropriate use for the money is and then to send it to Town Meeting.

Lisa agreed that the BOF's role for the town is not to direct how people spend the money, just to say whether the money is there or it's not there, if it's being utilized appropriately, and then the town is the one that's supposed to decide. The BOF is often reminded of that during budget season; it's a department's job to bring the idea and project forward and the town's job to vote on it. She doesn't think it should be defined how the SBC uses the money.

**Vote: 2 Yes (M. Clark, G. Prusak), 4 No (C. Mailhos, S. Summers, P. Tanaka, L. Woolf)**  
**Motion fails.**

Location and use of the funds was discussed.

**Pete Tanaka made a motion to table the item until we get an appropriately written motion to discuss.**

**Geoff Prusak seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 5 Yes (M. Clark, P. Tanaka, C. Mailhos, L. Woolf, G. Prusak), 0 No, 1 Abstain (S. Summers)**  
**Motion passes.**

#### **4) Ambulance Service to the Town of Union**

##### **a) Special Meeting Scheduling**

Geoff stated that Mike Makuch has been in touch with the appropriate people regarding this topic. Based on availability, the invitation has been set for August 30 and is waiting on a response from the other parties.

##### **b) Continued discussion**

Pete stated that he believes that the BOF was told by WFD#1 that even if we didn't hold the Primary Service Area (PSA), that we would still be called on mutual aid because that's the way it works. It's his understanding that whoever holds the PSA is called first, and it's up to the town of Union to find someone to hold that. He believes this should be kept in mind when going into negotiations.

#### **5) Reports of representatives to other committees, etc.**

##### **a) School Building committee**

No update.

##### **b) Board of Education bargaining agreement**

Matt shared that they had two meetings and Mr. Stevens presented data indicating that the proposal from the union was at the bottom third for salary increases for surrounding towns and like towns. He shared that he made a recommendation to ask for a 3-year extension rather than a 2-year extension.

##### **c) Town Employee bargaining agreement**

Pete shared that the first bargaining meeting was set for tomorrow, but due to the union's request are in the process of rescheduling another week.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### **1) Town wide tree conditions-letter from Mr. Maloney**

**Attachment #2 & #3**

A letter from concerned resident was shared, as well as the Tree Warden's response. Discussion was held on specific points outlined.

Pete commented that there is a tremendous problem with dead trees, due to both the ash borer and tent caterpillar. The town has lost a tremendous number of trees that need to be taken care of, relatively soon. He asked that Mike Makuch write a letter to the town Public Works asking them to come up with some type of plan and expenditure on what it's going to cost to fix this. The July 17 rain did a tremendous amount of damage to our roads and there was a lot of money spent on that, so he'd like an update on what that cost as well.

Stef noted that this could be an annual budget issue that the Public Works director may pinpoint because it's a major costly issue that has public safety fallout that we have not fully addressed yet. If we did it smartly in league with utilities, we may be able to address some of it year by year; start with the ones that are most likely to fail. As the BOF, what hit me with this letter and this whole issue, it's not a one-off and she's wondering how we can think about it or how the Public Works director can help us think about a program for this that really addresses it. It seems like it's a particularly big issue in our small town.

Pete commented that there is a line item for trees, if he's not mistaken. Stef agreed, but that it's only about \$20,000. Pete noted that the problem right now is that the town is frontloaded by the two infestations coming through and killing a large number of very large trees. He's hoping to get an idea of the financial implication that are going to be hitting us.

Geoff commented that it's almost impossible to do a giant project and get rid of everything, so it's something to be mindful of it and how to take care of it in the future.

## **2) Treasurer's revenue report**

**Attachment #4**

The revenue report was displayed.

Pete asked about the negative numbers in the last column. Treasurer Laurie Semprebon clarified that because this is the new fiscal year, the town hasn't gotten any state funds yet, and explained how to read each column.

Stef asked if property tax receipts are low because the deadline date is August 2. Laurie replied that she wasn't sure without having that in front of her, but knows we have had money coming in and are in good shape.

Stef asked if the first half property taxes is about what the receipt should be. Laurie replied that the funds that the tax collector brings in at the end of the month usually doesn't go into the bank account until the early part of the next month. In this case, there was a \$2.5 million deposit that went in on August 6. That number should be reflecting a higher amount.

Selectwoman Wiecenski shared that Revenue Collector Janice Clauson's records show a collection rate through today of 56.65% for a total of \$7,616,291. There are people who waited until Monday, August 2, and the big escrow payment comes in rather late as well. For comparison, we are right on target with where we were collection-wise in July of 2019.

## **3) WHFD tax abatement**

### **a. Submission letter**

**Attachment #5**

### **b. Chairman Makuch's "opt out"**

**Attachment #6**

Geoff noted that Mike Makuch submitted his "opt out" letter for tax abatement and provided time for questions. No questions were asked.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

All correspondence was forwarded to board members.

## **PRESENT TO SPEAK**

Peter Latincsics of 97 Trask Rd. stated: I wanted to return to the school roofs issue that you will contact the BOE in the form of a letter to seek clarity on what's going on. I can share with you that when I attended the BOE meeting previous to their last meeting, Superintendent Stevens reported to the BOE that he was contracting with a contractor to make temporary repairs to both roofs, similar to what the town did when we had that Town Meeting last winter when we did

patches to the roofs. I'm not sure how desirable that is, so you may want to ask questions about that. More importantly, I think you should address in your letter, understanding better the confusion about why the project that was scheduled for this summer was suspended. I can only believe that that happened because the Superintendent represented to the state of Connecticut that our SBC has elected to build a new K-8 school. We know that has not happened as I am on the committee and we are exploring all directions. We haven't selected a single direction. We are following our charge by keeping an open mind and looking at every option. If that's the case, I don't understand why the state of Connecticut would believe we have committed to a new school. If we have not, those funds are available now. I suggest you pursue that question in your letter to the BOE.

Laurie Semprebon of 271 Turnpike Rd. stated: I have a problem with people making assumptions about our hired professionals. I think unless you've asked that person a question and had a conversation with that person, can we please not assume things about people. I have great respect for most of the professionals that we have in this town and in the school district and I don't think we should be maligning them in public meetings without facts.

Matt Clark stated: I would've asked that question, had Superintendent Stevens attended this meeting: why the state of Connecticut communicated to him that they would not reimburse us for roofs. It doesn't make any sense. Why did that happen? Who brought this up? I would like to know the answers to those questions. I think it's completely appropriate that we ask those questions.

## **GOOD & WELFARE**

Geoff thanks everyone for bearing with him and commented that maybe sometime before the next millennium we will be meeting in person again.

Matt congratulated Geoff on doing a great job chairing the meeting.

**Pete Tanaka made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:37pm.**

**Matt Clark seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 6 Yes (L. Woolf, C. Mailhos, M. Clark, P. Tanaka, S. Summers, G. Prusak), 0 No  
Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Marysa Semprebon*  
Recording Secretary

## Willington School Building Committee

40 Old Farms Rd., Willington, CT 06279

sbc@willingtonct.org

To: Mike Makuch, Willington Board of Finance Chairman

From: Katherine Viveiros, Willington School Building Committee

Date: August 4, 2021

Re: School Building Committee Request to Board of Finance to Access CIP Funds

Please see the School Building Committee responses below regarding the concerns from Board of Finance members shared at your last meeting.

### ***Concern #1: Request for funds was not on a School Building Committee agenda***

Action may be taken as a result of discussions following an executive session. At the July 7 School Building Committee meeting, following discussion held during item 8. *Executive Session, i. Review of site for potential land acquisition*, a motion was made to make a formal recommendation to the Board of Finance to appropriate funds for consultants in the amount of \$100,000. The action taken by this committee followed public meeting protocols, however this specific item was added to the August 4 School Building Committee meeting agenda as well.

### ***Concern #2: Examples how funding could be utilized***

An email request was sent on Tuesday, July 13, that highlighted the use of the funds requested. The request for funds was made following an executive session and the committee identified a need for funding to hire various consultants. The following is a list of examples how the School Building Committee could utilize funds to evaluate options for a renovation or reconfiguration of an existing building or new building, in no particular order:

- **Recording secretary**

Individual who records meeting minutes, correspondence, and documentation at every committee meeting. It is the responsibility of the secretary to maintain accurate committee records.

- **School enrollment forecaster**

Individual/group who provides and utilizes up-to-date information that can be used to identify trends and predict future school enrollments. A student enrollment projection would be produced and is necessary to submit a grant application to the State.

- **Owner's project manager**

Their role is to act on behalf of the owner to oversee the planning, design, construction, and/or commissioning of a project. OPM's are experts in all areas of design and construction and offer the owner valuable and unbiased advice throughout all stages of a project. This includes items such as budgeting, scheduling, code compliance, and efficiencies as well as providing guidance on potential uses of existing facilities. In addition, an owner's project manager is familiar with the State of CT guidelines and process with respect to reimbursement by the State for future school projects, whether it be a renovation or new school.

- **Architect**

Architects are responsible for the project planning, design and construction administration and work hand-in-hand with other professionals such as specialty consultants, engineers, and professionals to deliver a complete design within the client's budget and expectations.

- **Engineer**

Engineers implement architectural plans to ensure the strategic design and completion of a building. This typically includes construction of structural, civil, electrical, plumbing, mechanical and HVAC systems.

- **Traffic study engineer**

An engineer that addresses the planning, design and operation of roads and adjacent land uses, and evaluates the needs of existing roadways related to each new project.

- **Land surveyor**

Surveyors update boundary lines and prepare sites for construction with precise measurements to determine property boundaries for engineering, mapmaking, and construction projects.

- **Environmental site engineer**

An engineer who uses the principles of engineering, soil science, biology, and chemistry to develop solutions to environmental problems to improve recycling, waste disposal, public health, and control of water and air pollution. An environmental engineer will also assist with soil classification and soil management of existing and/or new sites.

Based on the information in this memo, the School Building Committee respectfully requests the Board of Finance to ask the Board of Selectmen to hold a Town Meeting to appropriate \$100,000 for school building committee consultants as previously approved by voters at the 2021-2022 annual town meeting.

Willington Board of Selectmen and  
Board of Finance  
40 Old Farms Road  
Willington, Ct 06279

July 13, 2021

Re: Correspondence, Emerald Ash Borer Beetle

Dear Selectmen &  
Board of Finance:

Directly across the street from my property I counted twenty-five Ash trees abutting the electrical lines on the Town right-of-way. Seven of the trees are dead and in immediate risk of falling. Within the next several months the trees will fall and remove the electrical lines and close the road. Hopefully no one will get injured.

I watched the July 7<sup>th</sup> Selectmen's meeting and wanted to express a concern. The Director of Public Works identified over two hundred dead trees on Town right-of-way or directly adjacent, identified at risk of falling. Following the discussion, the resolution was to have the Public Works Director guide the single vendor to target a few trees a month under the current tree cutting budget of twenty four thousand dollars and "wait until next budget season".

If the Town fails to mark all of the dead or dying trees before the trees lose their leaves, within the next two months, we will not be able to identify them until spring of 2022. The Town should immediately mark all dead trees, allocate money to hire contractors to remove and treat trees. The town leaders should educate themselves and townspeople as to a plan to remove dead trees and availability of treatment. I suggest you review the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection fact page:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Forestry/Forest-Protection/Managing-Emerald-Ash-Borer-in-Connecticut>

Suggested action plan:

1. Allocate two hundred thousand dollars to remove the two hundred trees that the Public Works Director has identified as dead.
2. Determine if you want to attempt to save and treat specific Ash trees.
3. Identify those trees to be saved.
4. Allocate funds for treatment and move quickly to treat the trees.
5. Open a RFP to identify contractors to remove dead and dying trees, treat

diseased/salvageable trees, and include language for favorable rates for residents to use this contractor(s) for removal and treatment of trees on residential property. If the contractor is on location doing work it makes sense to allow residents to access that same contractor to remove or treat a tree in the vicinity. This may require one or more contractors and one or more scopes of work in the RFP, contractors to remove and a DEEP certified contractor for treatment.

6. Create a waiver system for the Town and residents allowing the town to remove trees that may be on residential property but are dead and an immediate threat to roads and electrical lines.

7. Contact Eversource and the Public Utility Regulatory Authority to request Eversource remove dead trees in Willington. <https://portal.ct.gov/pura>

This is a public health and safety issue for residents and must be addressed immediately, or there will be widespread damage, electrical outages and possible physical harm to the residents.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Maloney', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard E. Maloney  
6 Marco Road  
Willington, Ct 06279  
860-429-9662  
[richardmaloney@yahoo.com](mailto:richardmaloney@yahoo.com)

Well, Steph it is a major concern. And a complex problem. Trees are dying daily, so that 200k suggestion could be an annual cost. There are 100s of trees that should be taken down right now with no sign of abatement. Eversource has been responsive in removing trees that threaten power lines. I am fearful that people will be injured by falling branches and other tree failures. I am often surprised by trees that appear healthy and fail.

As tree Warden I will do a tree risk assessment on any tree within the public right-of-way. Many at risk trees have the trunk/roots outside the right-of-way, yet the branches threaten public space. In that case it is the homeowner who is the responsible party. If the tree is too close to power lines for a homeowner removal, Eversource may be able to help.

GAM

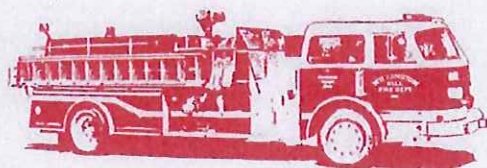
**TOWN OF WILLINGTON, CONNECTICUT**  
**STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE -**  
**BUDGET AND ACTUAL - BUDGETARY BASIS - GENERAL FUND (UNAUDITED)**  
**July 31, 2021**

	Budgeted Amounts			Variance	
	Original	Final	Actual	With	Percent of
	2021/22	2021/22	7/31/21	Final Budget	Final
				Over (Under)	Budget
<b>REVENUES</b>					
Property taxes	\$ 13,473,474	\$ 13,473,474	\$ 3,587,193	\$(9,886,281)	-73.4%
Intergovernmental	3,792,265	3,792,265	-	(3,792,265)	-100.0%
Licenses, fees and permits	128,500	128,500	26,622	(101,878)	-79.3%
Investment income	20,000	20,000	281	(19,719)	-98.6%
Other revenues	38,500	38,500	1,305	(37,195)	-96.6%
Total revenues	<u>17,452,739</u>	<u>17,452,739</u>	<u>3,615,400</u>	<u>(13,837,339)</u>	
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>					
Current:					
General government	1,288,389	1,288,389	115,005	(1,173,384)	-91.1%
Public safety	152,439	152,439	31,232	(121,207)	-79.5%
Public works	1,475,110	1,475,110	146,002	(1,329,108)	-90.1%
Education	8,962,009	8,962,009	287,785	(8,674,224)	-96.8%
Regional School District No. 19	4,379,900	4,379,900	111,900	(4,268,000)	-97.4%
Miscellaneous	504,058	504,058	159,174	(344,884)	-68.4%
Debt service:					
Principal payments	150,000	150,000	-	(150,000)	-100.0%
Interest and fiscal charges	54,408	54,408	2,200	(52,208)	-96.0%
Capital outlays	228,864	228,864	28,127	(200,737)	-87.7%
Total expenditures	<u>17,195,177</u>	<u>17,195,177</u>	<u>881,425</u>	<u>(16,313,752)</u>	
Excess of revenues over expenditures	257,562	257,562	2,733,975	2,476,413	961.5%
<b>OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES)</b>					
Assigned Fund Balance	1,055,230	1,055,230		(1,055,230)	-100.0%
Transfers out	(1,312,792)	(1,312,792)	(1,312,792)	-	0.0%
Total other financing uses	<u>(257,562)</u>	<u>(257,562)</u>	<u>(1,312,792)</u>	<u>(1,055,230)</u>	
Net change in fund balance	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	1,421,183	1,421,183	

Unassigned Fund balance, July 1, 2021

# Willington Hill Fire Department Inc.

24 Old Farms Road  
Willington, CT 06279



July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Willington Hill Fire Department  
24 Old Farms Rd  
Willington, CT 06279

Town of Willington  
40 Old Farms Rd.  
Willington, CT 06279

Board of Selectman- Erika Wiecenski, Aliza Boritz, and John Blessington  
Board of Finance- Chairman Michael Makuch

The Willington Hill Fire Department is submitting the following names to the town. These members have met the requirements for the Town of Willington Firefighters Tax Abatement.

The Executive Board of the Willington Hill Fire Dept, as of the Executive Board meeting on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, verifies that the following individuals meet the requirements of the Town of Willington Firefighters Tax Abatement.

These individuals have meet the following requirements for the Year July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 10% of the in town call volume, 64 of the 639 calls, at least 5 drills out of 24 and 6 of the 12 meetings.

**Gerald Chartier**, 12 Mason Rd, 43 years of service from 1978 to 2021, 71 calls, 17 training sessions, 10 meetings, Lieutenant Car 749/Chief Engineer/Firefighter/EMT, eligible for \$1000.

**Jeremy Chartier**, 12 Mason Rd, 12 years of service combine from 1999 to 2021, 104 calls, 20 training sessions, 9 meetings, Lieutenant car 649, Firefighter/EMT, Treasurer, eligible for \$1000.

**Richard Claus**, 54 Daleville Rd, 52 years of service from 1969 to 2021, 197 calls, 9 training sessions, 12 meetings, Deputy Chief Car 149/Firefighter/EMT, eligible for \$1000.

**Harold Oehler**, 4 Y Road, 22 years of service from 1999 to 2021, 71 calls, 12 training sessions, 7 meetings, Firefighter/EMT, eligible for \$1000.

**Rebecca Sinosky**, 51 Ruby Rd, 25 years of service from 1996 to 2021, 162 calls, 12 training sessions, 11 meetings, Captain Car 449 /Firefighter/EMT, eligible for \$1000.

**Thomas Smith**, 16 Cosgrove Rd, 43 Years of service from 1978 to 2021, 90 calls, 17 training sessions, 11 meetings, Firefighter/Engineer/Recognition Chair, eligible for \$1000.

**Thomas Snyder**, 49 Willington Hill Rd, 30 years of service from 1991 to 2021, 131 calls, 15 training sessions, 11 meetings, Chief Car 49/Firefighter/EMT, eligible for \$1000.

# Willington Hill Fire Department Inc.

24 Old Farms Road  
Willington, CT 06279



**David Varle**, 152 Old Farms Rd, 11 years of service from 2010 to 2021, 79 calls, 18 training sessions, 8 meetings, Vice-President/Lieutenant Car 749/Firefighter/EMR, eligible for \$1000.

These individuals meet the administrative requirements of the abatement.

**James Harvey**, 32 Cowels Rd, 45 years of service from 1976 to 2021, 51 calls, 17 training sessions, 12 meetings, Building Administrator/Firefighter, eligible for \$750.

**James Knight**, 5 St. Moritz Circle Ext., 20 years of service from 2001 to 2021, 47 calls, 16 training sessions, 10 meetings, President/Captain Car 549/Firefighter/EMR, eligible for \$750.

**Michael Makuch**, 52 Clover Springs Rd, 38 years of service from 1983 to 2021, 23 calls, 6 training sessions, 8 meetings, Building Committee Chair/Firefighter/EMT, eligible for \$750.

**Samuel Wheeler III**, 139 Pinney Hill Rd, 25 years of service combine since 1970, 18 calls, 7 training sessions, 8 meetings, Secretary/Firefighter, eligible for \$750.

Sincerely

Willington Hill Fire Department  
President- James Knight  
Vice President- David Varle  
Secretary- Samuel Wheeler III  
Treasurer- Jeremy Chartier

TO:

Board of Finance

Board of Selectmen

Tax Collector's Office

Assessor's Office,

As in past years, my volunteer service to the town via the Willington Hill fire Department has earned me eligibility for the Town's tax abatement program (see attached). While I am very proud of my 38 years of service and truly appreciate the abatement program, I feel that the potential of an appearance of impropriety as the Board of Finance can make decisions governing the WHFD, where I earn this abatement, must be avoided. As such, I am again respectfully declining the abatement for this year and asking that those who administer it, leave my taxes "unabated".

Sincerely,

Mike Makuch

Chairman,

Willington Board of Finance

RECEIVED  
WILLINGTON, CT.

2021 DEC 16 A 9:29

  
TOWN CLERK