

# Town of Willington

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## BOARD OF FINANCE

**Emergency Meeting Minutes  
Lower Level Conference Room**

**December 19, 2019  
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):

Mike Makuch - Chairman  
Geoff Prusak – Vice Chairman  
Barry Walleth  
Peter Tanaka  
Stephanie Summers  
Christina Mailhos - Alternate

Members Absent:

Randy Belair

Also Present:

Erika Wieceński – First Selectwoman  
Donna Latinsics – Business Manager  
Phil Stevens – Superintendent of Schools

Chairman Mike Makuch called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

## SEATING OF ALTERNATES

**Peter Tanaka made a motion to seat Christina Mailhos for Randy Belair.**

**Stephanie Summers seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 5 Yes (M. Makuch, G. Prusak, B. Walleth, P. Tanaka, S. Summers), 0 No**

## BUSINESS

Superintendent Stevens informed the board that there are two boilers at Hall School, both of which are over 40 years old. One of them was in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for next year. At that time, they thought the boiler replacement was reimbursable, but they are not. He informed the Board that one of the boilers went down today. It has been leaking water and EMCOR was trying to find the leak, but today the section where it was leaking completely failed. There are multiple sections in each boiler, and to replace the section that failed is estimated to be \$10,000 – 15,000. It is an expensive part because it is an old boiler and hard to find and will require numerous man hours to replace. Replacing that section will not bring the boiler up to like-new condition.

Superintendent Stevens continued that the second boiler was operating at 50% capacity and also needed work. Today, they took a drawer part from the failed boiler to help the working one operate more efficiently. The second boiler is under constant monitoring and is operating above 50%, keeping the school at about 65 degrees. He detailed that if there is a cold stretch, it will be difficult to keep the building inhabitable, and if the second boiler fails as well, there will be no heat at Hall School. They are working with the insurance company to make sure backup portable heating would be able to be brought in in that situation to avoid the pipes freezing, but students would likely be out of school.

Superintendent Stevens said that EMCOR believes that the flue contains asbestos. He said that they tested the flue today and that the results will take 5 days. If the results come back positive for asbestos, it must be done and adds approximately \$10,000 to the bill whether it's a repair or a replacement. In addition, students can't be in school during the asbestos abatement, but they can be present for the replacement of the boiler. He continued that the company believes they can do the abatement in 3 to 4 days, then the air has to be tested, and then they can work on the boiler.

Superintendent Stevens detailed three options moving forward:

- \$10,000 – 15,000 to replace the section plus \$10,000 for asbestos abatement, for a total of \$20,000 – 25,000, which would be a patch and a new boiler would still be requested in CIP for 2020-2021
- replace one boiler, which was in CIP already – the company has agreed to honor last year's quote of \$59,350 plus \$10,000 abatement, for a total of \$69,350
- replace both boilers for \$120,000 plus \$10,000 abatement for a total of \$130,000

Superintendent Stevens detailed that the EMCOR tech who knows the system said that the replacement boiler is readily available and that they can install it and get it running. The tech said that if there is a potential for leaving the building in the near future, they wouldn't recommend replacing both boilers, as they believe they can take more parts from the failed boiler to help keep old one running.

Superintendent Stevens continued that he emailed the Board of Education to let them know what was going on and that there is a policy in place stating that in case of emergency, the Superintendent has authorization to take care of that emergency and update the Board of Education at the next meeting. He stressed the urgency of the situation. He continued that the abatement cost was from the state bid list and that there is a good chance the company could come out and perform the abatement during the holiday break.

Superintendent Stevens stated that to buy a new boiler, they would have to put 35% down (\$20,773) to EMCOR plus pay for the abatement at \$9,500. The issue has to go to Town Meeting but the Board of Education would cover the cost so it can be taken care of quickly.

Peter Tanaka inquired whether there would be energy efficiency savings with a new boiler compared to repairing the old one. Superintendent Stevens replied that he believes so and that with a full replacement, the new boiler would be used as the main and older boiler would be put on low fire so it is less taxed. Barry Wallett stated that it doesn't make sense to patch it and we

should just get a new boiler, as they'd just buy a new one in the spring anyway. He stated that even if the building is only used as a school for 5 more years, they should have one good boiler.

Christina Mailhos inquired about the timeline. Superintendent Stevens detailed that whatever the Board of Finance approves at this meeting, the Board of Selectmen would have to call a special meeting and they would then call a Town Meeting around January 7. He stated that due to the quick nature of the emergency, he doesn't have exact quotes yet, but will pass them along as soon as they are available. He suggested adding 10% to the numbers presented here to make sure enough funds are available, and that the actual number would be available by the time of the Town Meeting. He continued that he will sign with EMCOR and the asbestos abatement company tomorrow. The asbestos removal company is on the state bid list and does not require additional bids, so they can be booked to complete that work while the students are out of the building and EMCOR will order the boiler.

Superintendent Stevens reminded the Board that the education budget is at a deficit due to special education costs. The Board of Education budget can front the \$30,273 for down payment and abatement due to committed funds yet unused in the fiscal year, but will need that money replenished. Clarification was made that beyond the initial expense fronted by the Board of Education to get the project moving, the remaining expense of the boiler should be paid to EMCOR out of the Capital Reserve Fund, eliminating the chance that more money than necessary is transferred to the education budget.

Geoff Prusak asked for more clarification on why the asbestos needs to be done. Chairman Makuch replied that companies will not work on these projects if asbestos is present.

Christina Mailhos inquired further about plans if the second boiler fails before a replacement. Superintendent Stevens replied that they would have to get some source of heat in there so the pipes don't freeze, whether portable propane heaters or boiler company, they could manually operate the working sections, or they could drain the building. All of those options would be expensive and result in no school for students. Christina Mailhos clarified whether there is a source of emergency funding available, to which Superintendent Stevens replied that there is not emergency funding, but that that was why the Board of Education has the policy for the Superintendent to be able to transparently spend funds if necessary in an emergency.

**Chairman Makuch made a motion to recommend that the Board of Selectmen call a Town Meeting to appropriate \$77,000 from the Capital Reserve Fund, 04-4037 HMS Boiler, for the purpose of emergency boiler replacement and associated abatement at Hall Memorial School.**

**Stephanie Summers seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 6 Yes (M. Makuch, G. Prusak, B. Wallett, P. Tanaka, S. Summers, C. Mailhos), 0 No**

**Peter Tanaka made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:22pm.**

**Stephanie Summers seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 6 Yes (M. Makuch, G. Prusak, B. Wallett, P. Tanaka, S. Summers, C. Mailhos), 0 No**

Respectfully submitted,

*Marysa Semprebon*  
Recording Secretary