

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

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

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Meeting Minutes
Lower Level Conference Room

March 18, 2019
6:30 PM

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

First Selectwoman Wiecenski called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM with the following in attendance: Selectmen Makuch & Blessington, and residents. First Selectwoman Wiecenski then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes:

Selectman Blessington moved to approve the minutes of March 4, 2019.

Selectwoman Makuch seconded the motion.

Vote: 3 Yes (Wiecenski, Makuch & Blessington) 0 No.

Present to Speak

Joseph Rondeau of Mirtl Road stated that he is looking for permission to put a couple of benches on either side of the Veteran's Memorial at the Senior Complex. Mr. Rondeau is the Chairman of the Veteran's Memorial stated that a few Veterans will be fixing up the grassy area on April 13th. The benches are being made by the June Norcross Webster Foundation and will have a concrete base. Mr. Rondeau then presented a photo of what the benches will look like. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that the Scouts will most likely be able to help them with the work as well.

Phil Monte stated that he had sent a letter to the Selectmen back on October 15, 2018 requesting to see more of a display of flags from the Senior Center to the Library in honor of Veteran's Day. He noted that in years past, there used to be 12 American Flags that lined the green; to now only having 4. With the letter, he had suggested a form for those wishing to donate flags for the project; but hadn't heard anything back from the Selectmen. He then sent another letter on February 11, 2019 with the same information; noting he would like to see them up for Memorial Day. The second letter also had a sample/draft donation form and information on seeking permissions to put the flags up along the State roads; but hadn't heard back.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski apologized that no communication had come back to Mr. Monte; but noted that the Selectmen had discussed the matter both times that the letters were received. At that time, the Board decided that they did not want to move forward with this because of the length of it and there did not seem to be any uniformity to it; such as it is two different roads; the poles are not lined up on the same side of the road, and we would have some in front of residential properties as well. There were also discussions about the donation of the flags; which is always nice the first year or two; but then the financial responsibility could then fall upon the town to pick it up. Selectwoman Makuch stated that the other discussions were about the residential properties; and getting the proper approvals, how would we go about that; noting that we don't own all of the land and poles; - we can't just go ahead and affix flagpoles to them.

Mr. Monte then asked if he were to be the one to get permission from the residential properties and purchase the flags, would it be acceptable to display them? He noted that he displayed them just before Veteran's Day at the TOB and the Senior Center; and took them down a week afterwards.

Mr. Monte stated if you go into Ashford, Union or any number of towns, you see a display of 12-15 flags along their town greens; or Main streets and they line the entire way. He would like to see the same here. The VFW is also in favor of this and has offered to donate some flags as well.

Selectwoman Makuch then asked if the flags would be displayed permanently, or for a short term? Mr. Monte stated it would be short term -- a few times per year -- a week before Memorial Day and Veteran's Day and then take them down a few weeks afterwards. The flags on the Town Green are displayed from Memorial Day and are left up until Veteran's Day; which he would like to stay the same. This is a good way to show our patriotism and support for the Veterans.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that she is not opposed to starting a committee as long as they are willing to do the work of putting them up and taking them down; otherwise this would make more work for our Public Works' Department. The other question would be if it is appropriate if the flags are not lit? Mr. Monte clarified that the other towns who have flags displayed along their town greens do not have them lit up; they are only put up for a few months at a time. She then stated that the Selectmen would be able to form the committee; but will have to add to the agenda.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to add item C to New Business: Exploratory Flag Committee
Selectwoman Makuch seconded the motion.

Vote: 3 Yes (Wiecenski, Makuch & Blessington) 0 No.

Correspondence

A list of Correspondence was available for the Selectmen.

First Selectman's Status Report

First Selectwoman Wiecenski said she is happy to report that we are down to 2 openings; and once the Treasurer is appointed, will leave the Tax Collector position, in which interviews will be held tomorrow for that.

The Human Service Assistant position closed last Friday, and Jennie will be holding interviews shortly.

We have reached out to the contractor about the front steps, but they are non-committal with a date for replacement; as they are still waiting for warmer weather. As soon as we get more information, First Selectwoman Wiecenski will pass it along.

Public Works

First Selectwoman Wiecenski introduced our new Public Works' Director, Troy Sposato, who was in attendance. Troy began his first day this morning and comes with many years of experience. First Selectwoman Wiecenski welcomed Mr. Sposato and said she is hopeful this is the beginning of a long, happy career with the Town of Willington.

In addition, First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that the crew was out working on the dirt roads in town as there have been several concerns about those road conditions. .

New Business

A. Appointment

First Selectwoman Wiczenski noted that we received a resignation letter from Tish Ignatowicz, who has accepted the account analyst position. The resignation letter is effective end of business day today, March 18th. In addition to the resignation, we have also received letters of endorsement from the Democratic Town Committee and Republican Town Committee of Diane Bulick.

Ms. Bulick comes to us with over 20 years of experience in financial accounting and 18 years' experience of tax preparations. The Selectmen thanked Ms. Bulick for stepping forward taking over this very important role.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski moved to appoint Diane Bulick as Treasurer for the Town of Willington; effective March 19, 2019; expiring November 18, 2019.

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

Selectman Blessington said this is a hard position to fill and thanked Ms. Bulick for stepping forward.

Vote: 3 Yes (Wiczenski, Makuch & Blessington) 0 No.

Ms. Bulick will be sworn in this week.

B. Potential Animal Pound boarding contract with the Town of Tolland

Tina Binheimer, who is also an Animal Control Officer for the Town of Tolland stated that she has been tasked by the Tolland Town Manager to speak with neighboring towns to see they would have any interest in boarding Tolland's animals. ACO Binheimer noted that this is just in an exploratory phase; but has been told that the Tolland pound is dilapidated and in danger of closing.

ACO Binheimer presented statistics in both Tolland and Willington; noting that most impounds are released (returned home) very quickly and we don't have a lot that stay longer than a day. She then noted that Willington has more adoptions than Tolland, but that is due to cat adoptions (Willington has more feral cats from the farms around town). ACO Binheimer is suggesting a rental fee of \$500 per month to board only. Tolland would send their own officers to take care of all of the animals and would supply their own food, care, etc.

The potential boarding would possibly bring revenue of \$6,000 per year to Willington. ACO Binheimer noted that this is very common. Coventry, for example has been boarding in Vernon for years and it seems to work out for both towns.

Selectman Blessington stated that he does not see a downside – we should make a two year contract if we go ahead. First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated that she would be in favor of this. ACO Binheimer clarified that this is very exploratory. Tolland will be getting a new Town Manager soon, and it is uncertain what the future holds for the Animal Pound.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski moved to begin the discussion of contracting animal boarding with the Town of Tolland in Willington and to approve boarding in order to begin discussions.

Selectwoman Makuch seconded the motion.

Vote: 3 Yes (Wiczenski, Makuch & Blessington) 0 No.

C. Exploratory Flag Committee

First Selectwoman Wiczenski picked up the discussion from earlier, noting that she does not have an issue with starting a committee. There are several questions that still have to be answered. How many people should be on the committee? She added that she would like the Committee to come back to us with detailed procedures; where they will be placed, when they will be put up and taken down and the financials. She is hopeful that there will be more than just Mr. Monte on the committee.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to begin a Flag Display Committee with a minimum of 3 people and maximum of 5.

Selectwoman Makuch seconded the motion.

Vote: 3 Yes (Wiecenski, Makuch & Blessington) 0 No.

Selectman Blessington moved to appoint Phil Monte as Chairman of the Flag Display Committee.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski seconded the motion.

Selectman Blessington stated that Mr. Monte can bring us names of appointees to a future Selectmen meeting and they will be appointed as well.

Vote: 3 Yes (Wiecenski, Makuch & Blessington) 0 No.

The charge of the committee will be to seek out some specific information; seek residential permissions as well as the school, and state. Who will put them up and take them down and when they will be put up and taken down. Selectwoman Makuch warned that not just anyone is allowed to climb a telephone pole; and the Town will need some assurances that the process of that will be done the proper way.

Old Business

A. Approve CIP Plan (out years)

First Selectwoman Wiecenski recapped that we did not have the detailed report at our last meeting, therefore we were not able to approve it. Since then, the plan was finalized. The Selectmen have already voted in favor of year one.

CIP Chairman Stuart Cobb was in attendance. He stated that he wanted to touch on some things that were brought up at the last Board of Finance meeting – for one; funding the school roofs. Our understanding is this is a timely thing to be fixed; but they also need lead-time to get the paperwork to the state and approvals need to be done soon to get the ball rolling. – if it were something we wanted to put into a bond, you have to know that there is a lot of work and time involved when securing one; noting that we do have the numbers if we chose to do so. He then asked why would we want to finance something if we have the money to cover the cost and then would get reimbursements for - it doesn't make sense. The CIP Committee decided to use the fund balance to implement the roof replacement and getting the 66% back from the state and be done with it.

One of the proposals brought up at CIP (from a Board of Finance member) was to issue a bond now and put the school roofs and the public works projects and or a potential fire house in there now. Chairman Cobb noted that the thought of the Committee was that we are still paying roughly \$3 million debt on the library bond until 2027, why would we bond more? He then clarified that the CIP Committee has always tried to follow is that we do not want to raise the tax rates - we try to keep the annual expenditure per capita fairly low. If we were to implement a bond now, there would be an overlap of paying for the library as well as the new bond; both would significantly impact the tax rate; not to mention hinder the town from doing other capital projects, such as getting a new phone system or upgrade equipment; because we are now inundated with bond payments. Chairman Cobb also clarified that bonding comes at a cost. – It costs approximately \$60,000 - \$80,000 just to get a bond; and that is on top of the interest. He added interest on a \$4 million bond is a lot of money. He then said that these are all things that the CIP Committee considered. Chairman Cobb also noted that the Committee only considered the requests that were submitted and they did not receive a request for a new roof – they cannot evaluate what was not given to them.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked Chairman Cobb for his comments. She then noted that one of the BOF members had asked us to consider other options. She stated that the CIP Committee considered every option and held many weeks of discussions – going over every project. She clarified that the CIP Plan goes from the Committee to the Board of Selectmen; where it is approved it is then given to the Board of Finance to be

implemented and considered in all of the budget planning and lastly goes to Town Meeting to be voted on by the residents. The member on the Board of Finance that suggested revamping the plan is also a member of the CIP Committee; but did not attend a lot of those CIP meetings. Now at the BOF level, he wants to have a discussion on what should have or should not have been done. She asked if it is even appropriate place for those changes to be made? Is it at the level of the BOF – that changes the CIP plan?

Peter Tanaka (who is a member of the Board of Finance) said it has to be approved by the Board of Finance and the BOF Members should be able to bring up those concerns and ask the Selectmen to review it and if you determine that it is unfounded then just pass it back the way it is. First Selectwoman Wiecenski clarified that her issue was that it seemed as if it was requested to have the CIP work be done again and the member had the opportunity to discuss the matters, but was not at a lot of those meetings. Chairman Cobb cautioned that you have to

Have a sense of discussion on the three road projects (two of them are Schofield and the other is the lower end of Village Hill) and while they are not ideal, you have to know what the priorities are to the town ; you have to determine what is more important; fixing a road where there have been no major accidents or water over the roads or putting a roof on a school or creating more debt. He said we know it needs to be done, but it is a matter of prioritizing. First Selectwoman Wiecenski said this is not the first year these roads haven't been put on the plan; it has been on the plan since 1990 something and yet here we were still discussing the same project year after year. These road projects seem to be continuously be pushed out to year 5. This year we actively spoke of working really hard to get them to the top of the plan and the best way to do that – and we thought it would involve some bonding; but with the roof project needing to be done, we just could not make it work in this year. The intent was to see it moved up next year or the year after the very latest.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski added that a lot of work was done by the CIP members who put a lot of effort in discussions on these roads and the new road, Liska that just came on this year which came in at approximately \$750,000. She noted that the place for those revisions would be at the Selectmen's level; not the Board of Finance. She then expressed some frustration because the CIP Committee did their job and it wasn't just someone who wasn't aware of it; but rather a member of CIP who did not attend multiple meetings but wants to go back and begin discussions all over again.

Robert Jellen stated that one of the greatest concerns with being a resident off of Village Hill Road is the fact that we have dealt with that as long as he can remember. All it would take is for one school bus accident in the lower part of Village Hill Road. The town has done as best as they can to fix it; but there is a large number of people who travel that part of the road, which is very narrow. The water that covers the road has been plaguing the town for years. To hear that this problem could be pushed out to potentially 2027 could be a big problem. He said he wants CIP and people who live in other parts of the town to be aware that this is not something to be pushed off – it has to be dealt with as soon as possible. First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked Mr. Jellen and stated she thinks if both schools weren't in need of such repair, then the road would have made it in the plan, but the Committee did not think we could afford it all at once. She added that there were serious discussions to see how we can push it up in the plan. She added next year they will focus on trying to move it up.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that it was very surprising to see this project on the plan for so many years and it was discouraging to not be able to push it through. When you start seeing the numbers and an urgent project such as leaking roofs come up has to take priority. That is where we came to once again. Our job is to approve the CIP plan that will go forward.

**First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve the CIP Plan 2023-
Selectwoman Makuch seconded the motion.**

Vote: 3 Yes (Wiecenski, Makuch & Blessington) 0 No.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked Chairman Cobb, Mr. Tanaka, the other CIP members and Donna Latincics for their hard work in preparing the plan.

B. Discussion –Solar Rendering at Button Hill

Don Berg presented revised drawings of the project for the Selectmen to review. First Selectwoman Wiczenski noted that she has done some research on this project and found the Housing Authority made a motion and seconded to have Mr. Berg spend money for said drawings; but there was no vote, at a meeting held on February 26. She then clarified that there is no record to show a vote was held; which should be rectified before moving forward.

The Selectmen reviewed the revised drawings. Mr. Berg stated that he just came from a Housing Authority meeting and the board made the following motion:

“The Housing Authority would like to inform the Selectmen that we support a concept of adding solar power to Button Hill providing it is financially viable and that the termination is a work in progress. The resolution does not allow Don Berg to make application at this time but to determine what land is available to install solar panels at Button Hill.”

Mr. Berg then pointed out the area within the lease line to the Selectmen; noting that it is not big enough to move forward. He then said that at this point in time he doesn't have authorization to install panel one on this property. He then asked the Selectmen if they will support solar and support the energy and expertise that he is providing to the town. He noted there is very restricted at this point and it is very difficult to make a determination of cost savings as well as benefits until he is able to install the first panel. He then asked the Selectmen if they would allow the Housing Authority to install a panel on the ground within their lease line and would they consider allowing the Housing Authority to install additional solar panels outside of the lease line, but within the 200' setback? He then noted it is all town land.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated that she has an issue with giving him permission for a project that has not been approved by the Housing Authority. By the sounds of the motion that was made, they just want to know if the Selectmen think it is ok. She then clarified that it is hard for them to authorize a project that isn't approved.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski said the Housing Authority is able to use the land as long as it is within their lease agreement; and encouraged Mr. Berg to review the language in the lease document. She added that she appreciates that the Housing Authority wants to make sure everything is OK before they move forward, but she is not sure if this is the correct way to begin. She suggested that they should know what the costs are going to be and be willing to spend the money to do the project. She then warned that they might not even be able to get the proper zoning permits in which there has been no authorization to even apply for such permit. She then clarified that she believes looking into solar is a good idea, but it is very different than saying that the Board of Selectmen say you can put it wherever you want. Mr. Berg said that he is more interested in putting the panels on the ground rather than the buildings for various reasons, one being that there is a danger of snow potentially sliding down on people and the other, is the roof models are more expensive.

At a recent meeting held with our Zoning Agent, it was determined that the Housing Authority might not qualify in the application process based on the restrictions. One of the options is that the town to extend the lease line, but the Zoning Agent has expressed concerns about ground panels; one being sun glare reflecting back into people's homes as well as other issues. First Selectwoman Wiczenski clarified that the Zoning Agent is not able to put a lot of work into this because an application hasn't even been filed. Mr. Berg then stated that he cannot file an application until he is authorized.

Selectman Blessington said there is nothing he likes less than a catch 22 situation. First Selectwoman Wiczenski clarified that the Housing Authority hasn't given him any permission, other than to spend \$600 to have drawings made up to show the solar panel locations. She clarified further, in order to file an application, they have to grant authority to do so; which would allow them to go before Planning and Zoning. Seeking approvals from

the Selectmen are in the right order of the process at this point. First Selectwoman Wiecenski then cautioned that the Selectmen should not be making any alterations to the lease line for a project that may not even come to fruition.

Selectman Blessington asked if the Selectmen would be able to give Mr. Berg a process to follow before he goes through all of work to find that the Selectmen won't adjust the lease. Selectwoman Makuch stated that it seems like there is a lot of data missing right now. We are getting a lot of drawings of where you would like things to go, but there is no justification to back it up. First Selectwoman Wiecenski added that the first thing that needs to be done is for the Housing Authority to approve the project and approve the application process.

Robert Shabot stated that the most important thing to do is to get feedback from Planning and Zoning and see if it is even possible to do what the Housing Authority is looking to do and noted that there are setbacks put in place for a reason, therefore it is a good idea to get those facts before starting any project.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski then recommended that Mr. Berg look at the lease to see what they are able to do within the land line and what those restrictions are; then get the approvals by the Housing Authority to go through Planning and Zoning. Selectman Blessington suggested to set up a meeting with members of the PZC, (or their representatives) with Mr. Berg to discuss so he can figure out what needs to be done to move this forward. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that the communication lines have been open since this started. She has been speaking with Mike D'Amato all along and Mr. Berg has also met with him as well. She then stated that Mr. Berg has been informed that this can be a lengthy process. Selectwoman Makuch said that the Selectmen can't vote on something that does not have any details. The Selectmen will continue working on this.

C. Budget Update – Financial Services

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that the Selectmen had put in a line of \$10,000 in the approved budget for new Financial software, but we received new quote from PowerSchool, just before the Board of Finance meeting last week. The PowerSchool software also owns the current software (Phoenix) that we are currently using and there would be less data to migrate and less external work if we plan to continue on with PowerSchool. As a result, First Selectwoman Wiecenski brought this up at the last Board of Finance meeting, and has asked for the BOF to increase that line from \$10,000 by \$40,000; which is more realistic with the quote that came in. The BOF said they would rather have the number given to them now than coming back to them later.

Because of the increase, the Selectmen's budget is now changed from what was originally voted on. The increase will bring the budget request up to 2.5%; from \$55,522 to an additional \$85,522. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that it was best to give the information to the BOF as soon as possible; mentioning it had taken a while to get the quote. First Selectwoman Wiecenski told the Selectmen that she wanted to make sure this was formally accepted by the Board as a whole. Selectman Blessington stated that the Selectmen probably should accept the new numbers.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to amend the Board of Selectmen budget request to \$3,489,021 a 2.5% increase; which is an additional \$30,000 from the original budget.

Selectwoman Makuch seconded the motion.

Vote: 3 Yes (Wiecenski, Makuch & Blessington) 0 No.

Good & Welfare

The Board of Assessment Appeals met last week and had made some real estate changes to the Grand List, which was originally up .61%. Many of the changes were a result of a decrease of \$139,050; bringing the Grand List Assessment to .58% instead.

Tish Ignatowicz has officially resigned as Treasurer effective close of business day today. First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked Ms. Ignatowicz for her 10 years of service as Treasurer. Ms. Ignatowicz stepped up at a time

of a vacancy 10 years ago which was difficult to find someone to fill the position. We look forward to continuing to work with the Town in her new capacity as Account Analyst.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked the Democratic Town Committee and the Republican Town Committee in working together to endorse Diane Bulick as the new Treasurer.

There will be a meeting on Wednesday March 20th at 7PM at E.O. Smith for a presentation on a proposed roof replacement project. The meeting will be held in the library for those interested.

The Connecticut State Police have submitted a breakdown of the calls that we receive monthly in town. First Selectwoman Wiecenski met with our new liaison, Sergeant Stephen King and Lieutenant Cory who broke down the data. Unfortunately, the data mostly shows activity on Route 74 and Route 32. Selectwoman Makuch stated that this distinction is still helpful, rather than just having a bubble; because Routes 32 and 74 are in line with our residents; whereas I84 is not residential.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated it is not too late to purchase your tickets to Alice in Wonderland at Hall Memorial School. The performance will be this Friday and Saturday evening. The children always put on a good show, under the direction of Jason Phillips and will not disappoint. Tickets are available at the library, at one of the schools or at the door.

At the next meeting, Selectwoman Makuch will officially be changing her name to Liza (Aliza) Boritz. This will coincide with the start of the new Treasurer in which some of the official Town Documents will need to be revised with new signatures.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 PM

Selectwoman Makuch seconded the motion.

Vote: 3 Yes (Wiecenski, Makuch & Blessington) 0 No.

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Campbell
Administrative Assistant

TOWN OF WILLINGTON, CT

Received for record March 21, 2019

At 1:20pm Maurice Agantot