

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

Board of Selectmen
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Regular Meeting Minutes
Via web interaction (via Zoom platform)

February 16, 2021
6:30 PM

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

First Selectwoman Wiecenski called the meeting to order at 6:30PM with the following in attendance; Selectman Boritz, Selectman Blessington and residents.

Approval of Minute

Selectman Blessington moved to approve the BOS Budget workshop minutes of February 1, 2021 as written.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski seconded the motion.

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

Motion Carried.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve the BOS Regular minutes of February 1, 2021 as written.

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

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

Motion Carried.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve the BOS Budget workshop minutes of February 8, 2021 as written.

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

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

Motion Carried.

Present To Speak

Karen Ann Caldwell spoke on behalf of the Library Board. As the current Chair of the Library Board we have a vacancy on the Library Board and Rebecca Cartabiano has submitted a letter of interest. It is her belief that the Library Board would benefit greatly from a Board member who has a financial background. She feels that Ms. Cartabiano will bring expertise related to budgets and a background in financials with a nonprofit that will bring value to the Board and the decisions made.

Rebecca Cartabiano spoke to the Selectmen. She expressed interest in the open vacancy on the Library Board. She is a Willington resident and an active patron of the Library and is interested in becoming a member and assisting with projects.

Correspondence

A list of Correspondence was available for the Selectmen to view.

First Selectman's Status Report

First Selectwoman Wiczenski provided a few updates.

The Selectmen's office is working with DEEP to develop a contract for the STEAP grant Old Town Hall project which includes a new septic system and interior renovations.

The Emergency Communications Task Force has put out a survey to the residents. The survey was posted on our Town website, Social Media and was included in the Schools digital backpack. Currently we have about 250 responses to the survey that is a positive response. Once all the data has been compiled, the Emergency Communications Task Force will provide recommendations to the Board of Selectmen.

The School Building Committee has not met since our last meeting. The next scheduled meeting will be Monday February 22, 2021 at 6:30 PM. The Town Website is being updated to include the School Building Committee be added to Boards and Commissions. If you currently receive public notices residents will want to update their subscription to include the School Building Committee if they so choose to be included in receiving notifications.

Furnace replacement in Finance. The Selectmen's Office has submitted a line item transfer request to the BOF cover the approved Vendor expense. It is anticipated to be on the BOF agenda for the meeting schedule this Thursday February 18, 2021. We cannot commit to the service until the transfer request has been approved.

The LOTCIP Grant for the Route 32 project. Additionally the First Selectwoman will be submitting a line item transfer request to the BOF. The line item transfer request will come out of our current fiscal budget to cover the design cost of \$22,000 to receive a \$999,999.00 grant.

TOB repair, it has been identified that the flat roof section over the kitchen, the common room door breezeway and the Human Services Food Pantry is leaking. Public Works removed the wet ceiling tiles and insulation and placed buckets under the obvious areas that are leaking in each of these areas. Initially the leak was coming through the light fixture, it is encouraged to not use the light if possible. The Public Works Director Mr. Sposato is working with a contractor to determine the next course of action. Additionally the Selectmen's office filed a property insurance claim. It's important to note that Public Works shovels this roof area off every time it snows so that water isn't accumulating.

Mold in the TOB, First Selectwoman Wiczenski wants to discuss the Mold and air quality at the TOB at our next BOS meeting to discuss our options, mitigation and document preservation.

Public Works

Mr. Sposato reported the following that has been done by Public Works

- Continuation of Trash pickup at park.
- Cleaned site lines around Town
- Installed new light bulbs in garage
- Checked sections / cleaned off catch basin tops
- Shoveled off roof at TOB and took down insulation and ceiling tiles in kitchen area
- Lindon Tree is removing some hazardous tree's on Old Farms Rd. by Center School
- Washed Trucks
- Pick-up and delivery of a tractor for the school project / Pat's Power equipment

Mr. Sposato provided an update related to Public Works snow budget. Currently Public Works has been out a total of 13 times, which is 123 hours plowing and sanding. This reflects a combination of regular hours and overtime hours. We have used 1,655.5 tons of salt thus far this winter season. PW has used \$59,193.53 of the budget year to date. Currently we received a salt shipment this past Saturday. In comparison the Town salt shed can house 200 tons of salt all of which is used in 1 to 2 storms.

New Business

A. Library Board – Appointment

First Selectwomen Wiczenski started the discussion advising that in the Selectmen's packet they should have received the resignation letter from Sarah Jean from the Library Board. That leaves us with a vacancy. The Selectmen's office received a letter of interest to be appointed to the Library Board; additionally a letter from the current Library Board Chair KarenAnn Caldwell.

Selectman Blessington expressed unhappiness with the current state of affairs. The first time he is hearing about Sarah Jean resigning from the Library Board was when he received his packet for this meeting on Friday. He advised this is a political elected official. Once upon a time there was a custom in the Town for the Chair of Committees to notify each political party to give them an opportunity to submit that political party's candidate for endorsement. The last Library Board vacancy; a Republican resigned and a Democrat was the replacement. Now we have another Democrat when we should have equal representation. Selectman Blessington expressed to Ms. Cartabiano that based on her letter she has a lot of talent, education and experience. Selectman Blessington asked Ms. Cartabiano when she thinks the Library can open for good.

Ms. Cartabiano responded by saying she doesn't have enough information at this time to determine when the Library can open for good. Without researching and understanding the constraints it is difficult to make a recommendation.

Selectman Blessington discussed that the Library closed last year due to COVID crisis along with other Library's from surrounding Towns. It is his belief that Libraries were allowed to open in early October 2020. The Towns of Ashford, Stafford and Tolland Libraries opened at that time. Willington has opened a bit with curbside service, senior day, Library reservations etc. It is his belief that the small opening is not enough and stressed that the Library has had a lot of problems with ordering new books and maintaining new best sellers. It was expressed that the Library Board budget is \$15,000.00 currently this fiscal year the Library has spent only \$1,600.00 which is only 10%. Selectman Blessington continued to air various grievances pertaining to the Library Board.

Selectwoman Wiczenski reminded Selectman Blessington that the current charge is to fill a vacancy on the Library Board with a willing resident with interest. It is not fair to expect a potential candidate to be able to solve a years' worth of problems without having sat on this Board previously. You have aired your grievances of the Library, do you have a specific question for the potential candidate?

Selectman Blessington stated that we received a letter from the current Co Director of the Library Board and has endorsed Ms. Carabiano. The question posed to Ms. Carabiano was "does this mean that you will vote to make her the Director? Will you feel obligated to vote in favor of her as the Director?"

Ms. Carabiano responded by saying no, she doesn't feel obligated to vote for anyone as she is independent.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski Moved to appoint Rebecca Cartabiano as a regular member of the Willington Library Board of Directors; effective 2/17/21; expiring at the next election; 11/2/21. Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she respects Ms. Carabiano for sitting through the air of grievances against the Library Board. There wasn't much of a question however to Selectmen Blessington point, a letter of resignation is sent to the Town Clerks Office. The Town Clerk then disseminates information. It is unknown at this time who or what political parties the Town Clerk alerted of this resignation. It was advised that it is not a requirement to be a political individual or belong to one of the major parties here in Willington to serve on a Board. Ms. Carabiano has come forward with a willingness to serve without a political affiliation. It's clear that she has a willingness to serve the residents of Willington on behalf of the Library.

Selectman Blessington advised that he will go with Ms. Carabianos experience and hopes that they can work together in the future. He advised he will vote in favor of Ms. Carabiano.

**Vote: 3 Yes (Blessington, Boritz & Wiecenski) 0 No.
Motion carried.**

First Selectwoman Wiecenski spoke to Ms. Carabiano that she will need to be sworn in by the Town Clerks office before attending the next scheduled Library Board Meeting. She thanked Ms. Carabiano for her willingness to serve.

Old Business

A. COVID-19 Update

First Selectwoman Wiecenski provided an update Willington has had cumulative 208 COVID cases with 13 probable cases which is an increase of 13 cases since our last meeting on February 1, 2021.

Vaccines; we have gone into phase 1B which includes individuals 65 years of age and older. As of data derived on February 10, 2021 DPH shared data on vaccines thus far of our total population in 1B. This includes medical personnel, first responders and 75+ community 400 1st doses have been administered (6.2% of our residents), of that 135 residents were over the age of 75. With that said 50% of our 75+ residents have received their first dose vaccine. Our Human Services Department is still assisting seniors that need help navigating the VAMS scheduling system. Please contact Human Services if you need assistance, they can be reached at 860-487-3118. Additionally we are working with our Human Services and our State Senator with the potential to host a vaccine clinic in town.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski wanted to remind residents that although we currently have our front door locked we are open by appointment. Please contact the office that you need prior to your visit to schedule a mutually agreeable time to conduct business. We are working in this fashion to ensure social distancing between departments for the safety of our residents and staff. Business is still being conducted daily, no resident has been turned away. We have installed a new doorbell at the front door to assist in alerting our staff that someone is at the front door. Knocking has proved to be problematic as the offices are far away from the front door. This new process should mitigate that problem and streamline our appointment flow.

Present to Speak

No one was present to speak

Good & Welfare

First Selectwoman Wiecenski provided some updates.

The Town of Willington received a thank you from the United States Census 2020. It states; The U.S. Census Bureau Hereby Recognizes the Town of Willington as an invaluable member of the 2020 Census Community Partnership and Engagement Program. We appreciate the efforts you made in making the Partnership Program a success and heling achieve a successful 2020 Census. Signed by; Dr. Steven D. Dillingham, Director U.S. Census Bureau

You can find COVID information from <https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus>

Mobile Food Share will be here at the TOB this Wednesday February 17, 2021 from 11AM to 11:30 AM. Contact Human Services with any questions. We are currently using a drive through model and is open to everyone. First Selectwoman Wiecenski wanted to thank the core volunteers many of who are from the Senior Center.

Please if you can support our small businesses and restaurants.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski provided an update to the group of the Troop C Police Report for January 2021

334 - Total calls for service	14 - Accidents
12 - Criminal Investigations	1 - Larceny
250 - Non Reportable Matters	6 - Arrests
42 - Traffic Stops	1 - Onsite DUI
1 - Arrest	8 - Infractions
6 - Written Warnings	29 - Verbal Warnings

Reminder that all of the Towns Meetings are still being held virtually and can be viewed live or on the Towns YouTube page. There is a link on the Town Website on the left hand that states Online Boards and Commissions Meetings. Inside that page will be a link to the Willington You Tube channel.

There has been some discussion to move the Willington Day date this year to the end of August. This would move this away from Memorial Day weekend for a multitude of reasons. We are still unsure of restrictions due to COVID and the restrictions that will be in place in hosting a safe event. Stay tuned to specific date, time and detail.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski wanted to share that she learned of the passing of past employee Robin McBreaity. She expressed that she was very sad to hear and wanted to express thoughts and prayers out to her family. Robin was a Town of Willington staff member previously and the Town appreciated all that she did. She was a proud daughter of a Connecticut Police Officer.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 PM

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Sharpley
Administrative Assistant
Town of Willington