

# TOWN OF WILLINGTON

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Board of Selectmen  
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## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Regular Meeting Minutes  
Via web interaction (via Zoom platform)

March 1, 2021  
6:30 PM

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

First Selectwoman Wiecenski called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM with the following in attendance; Selectwoman Boritz, Selectman Blessington, Emergency Communications Director Stuart Cobb, Finance Business Manager Donna Latinsics, Public Works Director Troy Sposato and residents. Selectwoman Boritz excused herself at 7:20 PM

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to move Agenda Items C. CIP Plan 2021-2026 and Agenda Item D. Approve FY 2021-2022 of New Business forward in-between Present to speak and Correspondence to accommodate Selectwoman Boritz who will need to depart the meeting early. Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.  
Vote: 3 Yes (Wiecenski, Boritz & Blessington) 0 No.  
Motion Carried.

### Approval of Minutes

Selectman Blessington moved to approve the BOS Budget workshop minutes of February 16, 2021 as written.  
First Selectwoman 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 16, 2021 as written.  
Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion.  
Vote: 3 Yes (Wiecenski, Boritz & Blessington) 0 No.  
Motion Carried.

### Present To Speak

No one was present to speak

### New Business

#### C. CIP – Approve CIP Plan 2021-2026

Stuart Cobb started the discussion by saying there were a total of 57 CIP requests from various Town Agencies this year that were evaluated. At the conclusion of the Committees evaluation process, 20 projects have been included in year 1. Vehicles are typically leased with an occasional exception. Funding sources can be local funds (tax payer money), general reserve (which is still tax payer money but set aside

in previous years that allows us to flatten the curve of highs and lows.) Fund 17 which is the revenue from ambulance billing which is typically used for emergency service related projects which can include the purchase of an ambulance, air packs, vehicles etc. LOCIP is a revenue source from the State that is available for projects that fit the criteria. There is an historic dollar amount threshold from year to year that we try to stay within however this year we are higher mainly due to two particular projects. This includes the replacement of fire alarm panels at our two schools which adds up to roughly \$100,000.00 and the funding for the School Building Committee consultant services for roughly another \$100,000. The fundamentals of the worksheet were discussed and projects that we are already committed to, the bonding for the Library, fire truck payments, Public Works equipment, some breathing apparatus etc. Moving on to line 29, the Committee puts funds into Capitol Reserve as placeholders for projects which varies from year to year dependent on the needs. Column Z to AA with dollar amounts reflects money set aside the next column is the funding source. There are many projects for the Schools, mostly due to heating and ventilation and paving projects most of which have been pushed out pending the work being done by the School Building Committee. Currently there are \$1.2 million dollars of project requests just for the Schools to maintain the buildings infrastructure. The School projects have been pushed out to year 5, you will note there is a plan A and a plan B dependent on a new school or renovations to our existing schools. \$1.2 million certainly exceeds what we can authorize annually, the thought is to do some sort of bond. If the decision is to renovate existing schools the project list will increase.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski commented that line 29 Capitol Reserve is reflected in the Selectmen's budget. Column A in our next fiscal year, reflects dollars that can be utilized depending on the funding source which can affect our budget bottom line. It was discussed holding off on approving the BOS budget until the CIP Committee had made some decisions. Items that come out of fund source 930 also comes out of the Selectmen's budget.

Selectman Blessington asked Mr. Cobb to clarify the ventilation with the School, he recalls there was a State Mandate.

Mr. Cobb responded by saying he didn't believe it was presented to CIP as a State Mandate from the Superintendent. His focus was more so on the fire alarm panels.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski responded by saying that there was a lot of discussion in the development of the school reopen plan regarding ventilation. In that investigation the Superintendent found that installing a ventilation system was a more robust costly process than originally thought. They were able to achieve enough ventilation filtration by purchasing air purifiers for each room to prevent heat loss with a costly ventilation system. It was decided to not move forward with the original project of purchasing and installing a ventilation system which required the hiring of an architect and other unforeseen costly resources to prevent heating loss. While this was not mandated, it was encouraged to increase ventilation. The TOB had also purchased the same air purifiers as the Schools to increase ventilation in each area of the building. Moving on to the CIP worksheet, keep in mind that we did very little in last year's CIP so this list of projects is typically more than we would approve in one year. We thought it was necessary to carry forward the projects from last year. There is a fire panel at Center School, chip sealing and relining the lower parking lot at Center School, Fire panels at Hall School, painting the Library at Hall School, resurfacing the gym floor at Hall School and heat on the stage at Hall School. Public Works has moved to radios that can utilize the State tower and we had immediate success. This allows PW staff to connect with each other from any place in town. The Schools are looking into district 9 moving to the same system for safety and security reasons for \$16,408.00. Pouring the concrete in the basement floor at the TOB which has been a priority due to our mold issue identified. It is imperative that we move forward with that project. In efforts to ensure hybrid meetings to forecast the need to pivot due to the Pandemic we purchased some audio visual equipment to assist in streaming meetings, facilitating hybrid meetings while we are in this pandemic and moving forward for accessibility for residents. This first piece was purchased utilizing COVID funds. What you see here is the remainder of the cost for such equipment. Security



System monitoring, our current vendor is no longer providing this service. Part of that change we would need to replace the fire and security panels Town wide. There is a replacement for flooring in just the Land Use area. Replacing a dump truck at Public Works, replacing the F-350 PW Directors vehicle and replacing a small dump truck. These three vehicles were in the CIP plan last year and carried over to this year. The STEAP funding for the salt shed is reflected again from last year. Engineering for Schofield Rd. drainage for \$15,000, Phase 1 work on Village Hill Rd. drainage for \$35,000. First Selectwoman Wiecenski asked Mr. Cobb to speak about the Talmadge property plan.

Mr. Cobb responded by saying the Conservation Commission has identified a piece of property that is coming up for sale that is adjacent to some of their existing property on Mason Rd. Negotiations are currently under way to determine cost that is agreeable to all parties. The plan is to ask the State to pay a portion of it if possible. In years past the State has approved project reimbursement up to 50%. The appraisal and surveying is occurring now utilizing funds that are already in the Conservation Commissions open space fund.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski continued on with the worksheet with the last 3 projects for year 1, WFD#1 replace 10 SCBA cylinders, WFD#1 replacing the fit test machine, (this machine is shared by both Fire Departments) and lastly the pickle ball court at River Rd which is replacing the volleyball court. While CIP is an advisory Committee to the BOS it is up to the BOS to approve the plan in order to move forward towards our annual Town Meeting. The appropriations are approved through the budget process and referendum.

Selectman Blessington stated here comes the Pickle ball court again, is nobody playing volleyball anymore?

First Selectwoman Wiecenski responded by saying the volleyball court is rarely used. We had high hopes that the volley ball court would be utilized more, it is mostly used by children as a sand box. Pickleball has become more popular. There are currently lines for pickle ball on the basketball court but that means dividing time between pickleball and basketball. Currently the basketball court is heavily used. When the Recreation Department offered pickleball it meant that basketball couldn't be played at the same time. Based on needs of residents it made sense to repurpose the volleyball court to pickleball. The discussion was to repurpose the sand, moving some over to Hall's pond and building a small sandbox near the play scape area with the remaining sand.

Selectman Blessington wanted some clarification on the consultant for the School Building Committee. Who makes the decision of what consultant to hire?

First Selectwoman Wiecenski responded by saying the decision of who to hire as a consultant would be the School Building Committee. They will submit a Request for Proposal (RFP) the School Building Committee would review the submissions / bids and interview consultants. The SBC would ultimately decide which consultant to use. It was reiterated that hiring a consultant does not mean a project is moving forward, the Committee is determining the cost only.

Selectwoman Boritz stated that the consultant services would be up to \$100,000. The funds would be held until needed.

**Selectwoman Boritz moved to accept the CIP Proposed Plan as written.  
Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.**

Selectwoman Boritz noted that when we present this to the BOF and have feedback then we will know if there are adjustments that we need to make. We have had conversations over the past year related to the economic times being uncertain. While we have been in a decent place so far. She feels ok in pushing this forward and trimming some dollars as needed based on recommendations from the BOF.

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

**D. Approve FY 2021-2022 Selectmen's Budget**

First Selectwoman Wiecenski started the discussion by sharing the BOS budget. The budget currently stands with a 7.5% increase of \$264,189.00. Some of the line items discussed in CIP are reflected in the BOS budget under Capital Expenditures with an increase of \$165,299. There is a decrease in the Capitol Reserve (\$88,656.00) there is a line item in the PW budget for repayment of lease for three vehicles. At the bottom there is an overall net increase of \$100,235.00 over the current fiscal year. We have put less into Capitol Reserve and put more into Capital Expenditures. To sum all of this up, \$264,189 is the total increase of that \$100,235.00 is part of the CIP plan.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski asked Ms. Latincsics to clarify where Public Works Cable, telephone and internet is presented in the budget. TV and internet appears to come out of 181.530 which represents TOB Telephones?

Ms. Latincsics responded to say she will look into it and send and get back to the group.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski advised the topic has derived from a review of PW cable and internet expenditures. PW absolutely requires internet however we believe there is some cost savings without paying for cable when they are only utilizing it for weather. We are investigating if there is a way to stream needed information through services such as Roku streaming stick to find some cost savings that wouldn't include a recurring cost. Additionally we found some cost savings with bundling in Town owned phones to include PW, Animal Control & the Selectman's.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski recapped the Selectmen's budget to highlight the increases. A discussion was held with Mr. Sposato the PW Director on his request for additional laborers. The consensus was to add resources in a step approach by adding only 1 laborer in this budget while removing the contracted snow removal. This will allow for this new position to be in a truck plowing snow. It was prefaced that in this plan we would hire 1 laborer however when they plow snow that individual would receive an upgrade in pay to a Driver for the time spent plowing.

Mr. Sposato clarified the duties between a Driver and a Laborer. A Driver drives the truck and pulls trailers for needed equipment whereas a Laborer would be performing the work needed. The most cost effective way would be to hire a laborer to perform the work needed while providing the upgrade to a Driver when necessary.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski continued on with the remaining increases. The next line item to increase is line 186 tree removal services which is \$50,000, this request is double from last year's budget. We have been working with Lindon Tree Service where they took a total of 15 trees down in the parking lot of Center School and the corner of Old Farms & Rte. 74. The Total cost for that service is about \$6,000 for a very small section of damaged trees.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved on to Diesel fuel, we were able to achieve a cost savings of \$10,000 by negotiating at the onset of COVID. We were able to lock in at \$1.64 a gallon over \$2.15 price we were paying.

Selectmen Blessington wanted to go back to the PW 1 new laborer position to have a discussion.



A discussion was held on the expected duties of the laborer. In summary a Driver drives the truck and pulls trailers for needed equipment whereas a Laborer would be performing the work needed. The most cost effective way would be to hire a laborer to perform the work needed while providing the upgrade to a Driver when necessary which is \$1.98 difference in pay. If the decision is to cut the 1 requested laborer position then the snow removal contractor would have to be added back in. In summary we do not have a facilities Director these duties fall on PW to assist with problems at the Library, the Old Town Hall the Town Office Building, senior Center etc. The reality is outside of the Director PW has 4 full time staff members which is a relatively small crew for the amount of areas that require coverage and maintenance. It was also noted that staff member time is split between PW and the TS. There is no question that we are understaffed in this area.

**Selectwoman Boritz moved to approve the BOS Budget as proposed.  
Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.**

Selectman Blessington started the discussion. He advised that we have beat this budget to death and we have taken it as far as we can. He stated that he is having a very hard time with the large increase. In discussions of cutting he feels that any proposal he gives the answer is it cannot be cut. He believes the budget will pass so he is going to abstain from voting on this budget tonight.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski responded by saying that he was asked specifically in our budget meetings where he felt cuts could be made and he gave no recommendations. We are trying to move in a direction that best fits the needs of the town. Every cut comes with a consequence, last year with COVID we pushed projects off they need to get back on the table. The opportunity to collaborate and craft a budget with consensus has occurred. What we are presenting is the basic needs to operate the Town adequately.

Selectman Blessington stated he understands however he still has a problem adding a new person in PW. He understands we need more staff however we need to cut to the bone in this budget. Tree removal he doesn't feel is necessary.

Selectwoman Boritz commented that there will never be a point that we are all satisfied. We have to work within the parameters given to us. That fact of the matter is costs increase. It is unreasonable to expect a flat budget year after year that is not reality. Once BOF reviews and provides guidance then we re-work the budget at that point. Our job is to put forth a budget that we think is going to be the wisest investment for the Town. It is her belief that we are doing that in a very moderate way.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated for the record that we have a motion on the table. The proposed FY 2021-2022 BOS budget is \$3,791,949.00 with an increase of \$264,189.00 7.5% over the current fiscal year.

**Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Boritz) 0 No, 1 Abstain (Blessington)  
Motion Carried.**

Selectwoman Boritz left the meeting

#### Correspondence

No Correspondence To Report.

#### First Selectman's Status Report

First Selectwoman Wiecenski provided some updates.

The STEAP Grant for the Old Town Hall Septic has been approved. We are working with DEEP to secure a contract.

The Emergency Communications Task Force meeting is set for March 3, 2021. The Committee will be meeting to discuss the survey results and to make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen.

The School Building Committee will now meet the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month. The next scheduled meeting is March 17, 2021.

Roof over the kitchen and common room: The Public Works Director Mr. Sposato worked to install heat tape along the pitched portion of the roof and this seems to have stopped any leaks. Mr. Sposato is working with our insurance company to see if we have a valid claim to fix the issue that is the pitched portion of the roof. This roof was last worked on in 2015, unfortunately that company is no longer in business.

LOTICIP Grant for the Route 32 project: The BOF authorized a transfer for the design costs of \$22,000 to receive a \$999,999.00 grant. We are moving forward with this project.

Furnace replacement in the Finance Office: this project is complete.

#### Public Works

Public Works Director Troy Sposato provided an update.

- Fixed the gutters on the TOB.
- Installed heat tape to melt the ice dam over the common room at the TOB.
- Patched pot holes around town.
- New furnace in the Finance Office was installed
- Washed trucks
- Road side mowing
- Fixed some of the dirt roads
- Cleaned off catch basins around town.
- Changed oil in the sweeper and the loader
- Cleaned shop
- Held Eviction sale
- Removed hazardous Ash tree's from Old Farms Rd. and Center School parking lot.

#### New Business

E. Appointments – Economic Development Commission Vacancy

a. Letter of Interest from Cheryl Mitchell was discussed for the EDC Vacancy

**First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to appoint Cheryl Mitchell as a regular member of the Willington Economic Development Commission; filing a vacancy effective 3-1-21 expiring 3-3-24. Selectman Blessington Seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 2 Yes (Blessington & Wiecenski) 0 No.**

**Motion carried.**



F. Tax Refund

First Selectwoman Wiecenski Moved to refund \$170.43 to Honda Lease Trust on a Certificate of Correction.

Selectman Blessington Seconded the motion.

Vote: 2 Yes (Blessington & Wiecenski) 0 No.

Motion carried.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski Moved to refund \$1,483.87 to The Law Offices of Patrick C. Roy on a Certificate of Correction.

Selectman Blessington Seconded the motion.

Vote: 2 Yes (Blessington & Wiecenski) 0 No.

Motion carried.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski Moved to refund \$87.00 to Thomas & Martha Stark on a Certificate of Correction.

Selectman Blessington Seconded the motion.

Vote: 2 Yes (Blessington & Wiecenski) 0 No.

Motion carried.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski Moved to refund \$1,752.47 to Core Logic on a Certificate of Correction.

Selectman Blessington Seconded the motion.

Vote: 2 Yes (Blessington & Wiecenski) 0 No.

Motion carried.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski Moved to refund \$2,721.00 to Core Logic on a Certificate of Correction.

Selectman Blessington Seconded the motion.

Vote: 2 Yes (Blessington & Wiecenski) 0 No.

Motion carried.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski Moved to refund \$2,482.72 to Core Logic on a Certificate of Correction.

Selectman Blessington Seconded the motion.

Vote: 2 Yes (Blessington & Wiecenski) 0 No.

Motion carried.

Old Business

A. COVID-19 Update

First Selectwoman Wiecenski provided an update Willington has had cumulative 214 COVID cases with 14 probable cases which is an increase of 6 cases since our last meeting on February 16, 2021.

As of last Thursday we dropped from the red alert level to orange. We have seen a large decline over the month of February. It is anticipated that if these numbers stay on trend that we may be out of orange alert

level by the next reporting set on March 11, 2021. While this is a positive trend we still ask residents to remain cautious.

The Governor announced a big pivot in vaccine rollout that now has the cohorts by age. We had planned to add out staff to the VAMS system as one large group as we are considered an essential workplace. We will continue to upload our staff in the allowed age groups as they become eligible. Today eligibility was opened up to those 55-64 as well as school staff (Teachers, Custodians, Paraprofessionals, Food Service, Administrative Staff, and Bus Drivers) and child care providers.

EHHD will conduct a vaccine clinic for our eligible staff on Tuesday March 9, 2021 at Hall School. The details of this endeavor are being handled by the Superintendent's Office.

On February 24, 2021 a small vaccine clinic was held in partnership with the Town of Vernon, EHHD and Access Agency. I had been speaking with Mayor Champagne about the possibility to get our vaccine number up for our seniors. Details all fell into place by the end of business last Monday. Our Human Services worked quickly to identify seniors 65 and over that needed a vaccine. In addition we scheduled a second dose appointment for the same people for March 24, 2021. Thank you to Mayor Champagne, Lt. Bill Meier, Richard Gold and Sherry from Access Agency, and Rob Miller from EHHD for setting this in motion. Lastly a huge Thank you to Jennie Arpin for working in a very brief window to make sure we could fill all the spots so we had no vaccine left unused. Thank you to our volunteers Bethany Cologna & Alex Moore for answering the very last minute call for assistance.

Willington vaccine data as of February 24, 2021 is: 667 total 1<sup>st</sup> doses (11.37%), 195 1<sup>st</sup> doses for 65+ (42.76%), 196 doses 75+ (70.25%). The numbers for these 2 groups is within the State average. The Town will continue to offer assistance with vaccine appointments as needed. We first began as the need to assist with technology for our seniors but will continue as needed.

It was shared with the BOF that the Governor's office indicated that we will not have a budget process similar to last year unless there was an overwhelming need or outcry from municipalities.

The current emergency declaration extension is set to expire on April 20, 2021 and we do not yet know if it will be extended or the implications if it just expires. I will keep everyone posted.

The Audio Visual equipment we purchased with CRF funds came in and we are beginning to plan for a hybrid meeting as allowed. The new equipment was tested during a meeting last week, we have a few things to adjust. We are hopeful that we can move forward towards a hybrid meetings then eventually to having the ability to record and stream our meetings once fully in person.

The Current estimates from the Federal American Rescue Plan for Willington ranges from \$1,087,797 to \$1,304,583. It is understood that this comes with less restrictions and can be utilized to capture lost revenue. Previously we received about \$60,000 however with much stricter restrictions as to the use of the funds.

#### Present to Speak

No one was present to speak



Good & Welfare

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

339 - Total calls for service	7 - Accidents
4 - Criminal Investigations	0- Burglaries
0 - Larceny	266 - Non Reportable Matters
6 - Arrests	6- Misdemeanor Summons
57 - Traffic Stops	1 - Onsite DUI
1 - Arrest	11 - Infractions
5 - Written Warnings	35 - Verbal Warnings

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

Mobile Food Share will be here at the TOB this Wednesday March 3, 2021 from 11AM to 11:30 AM. Contact Human Services with any questions.

Please if you can support our small businesses and restaurants.

Willington Day will be held August 28, 2021 with a rain date of August 29, 2021.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski reflected on the past year. Next week marks a year that we have been in a pandemic. Please remember to wear your mask, wash your hands & socially distance.

**First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 PM**

**Selectmen Blessington seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Blessington) 0 No.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Heather Sharpley  
Administrative Assistant  
Town of Willington

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2021 MAR -3 P 2: 23

  
TOWN CLERK