

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

Regular Meeting Minutes

In person & Via web interaction (via Zoom platform)

November 1, 2021

6:30 PM

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

First Selectman Wiecenski called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM with the following in attendance in person: Selectman Blessington & Selectman Boritz and residents in person and via Zoom.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes

Selectwoman Boritz moved to approve the minutes of October 18, 2021, as written.

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

3 Yes (Blessington, Boritz & Wiecenski) 0 No

Present To Speak

Peter Tanaka, 125 Mason Road: After watching the meeting on the 18th, I was a little disturbed about the conversation regarding the Connecticut State Troopers at the Town Meeting on the Building Committee. Primarily I was disturbed because it was there that I learned that Erika and Liza had received threats that they had considered credible. That disturbs me greatly. First I am curious to see if criminal complaints were filed with Troop C because this is an obvious violation of Connecticut General Statute #53A183. It's not only important for the First Selectman and the Selectmen to file reports because of their personal needs but what I think we need to do is make sure that in the future, public officials are not harassed online. I have a great deal of concern about that. That government business be able to be done without fear. Secondly I was wondering if the troopers on the scene were notified that this had occurred because sometimes you may have communicated that with our Commander but if the officers on the scene don't know that they are walking into a situation that is less than ideal there. They need to know what the concerns are before they show up. And lastly, I was a little concerned that the stated reason for the troopers being there from the troopers was to enforce the mask mandate and I understand that there is an issue with disruptions at Board of Education meetings nationwide and why it would be important in this situation. However, I think that reason should have been stated. To say that they were there because of threats to public officials, which is serious, would have been more truthful than to say that they were there for mask mandates. I found the reasoning separate and disingenuous. Lastly, I know that election day is tomorrow and I would like to thank John Blessington for his service to the community. He's done this for I don't know how long, longer than I've known, and I know the reason that you do that isn't for the pay but for the love of community and I would like to thank John for that.

Selectwoman Boritz: I know that we don't usually respond but Peter, I thank you for your thoughts. I do want to say though that the two issues regarding State Police are not separate, indistinct issues. They are a

combined issue. Generalized threats have been made to those who support mask mandates. They are the same issue. They are not separate issues. To be clear, those two things are completely tied together.

Arthur Christensen: My comments tonight consider a post on Facebook by First Selectwoman Wiecewski regarding some letters that have been sent to Willington residents as well as some comments made by Selectwoman Boritz about the same issue. The First Selectwoman noted that some anti-abortion letters have been mailed to homes of Democratic candidates as well as homes of those who have Democratic signage in their yards. She goes on to say this behavior is harassment and the police have been notified. All appropriate. Selectwoman Boritz echoes this sentiment by commenting on a different post of these same letters saying and quote "The actions of a very conservative individual who definitely aligns themselves with the Republican party or at the least is very anti-Democrat." End quote. Boritz also says quote "This is representative of the ideals the WRTC has been professing this election season." End quote. Selectwoman Boritz's comments go from an assumption to an outright lie. There is nothing in these letters to indicate the political leanings of anyone as there is no mention of any party. The assumptions made on content but do you not know any Democrats or Independents to be religious or anti-abortion. When in this election cycle has the WRTC posted, talked about or professed any religious content. They haven't and your comment about them is a blatant falsehood. As we learn from the Town Attorney's letter, the actions of an individual is not the reflection of a group. There is also the hidden assumption that these letters only went to Democrats therefore this person is not a Democrat. How could you possibly know that? What if others in town received this letter, tossed it in the garbage where it belongs or chose not to share it or report it. You can't say anything about these letters without certainty. Based on the limited information that you have, you've done it anyway as public officials. And finally, the most egregious act in the situation is the First Selectwoman's final comments in her post. Quote, "Whomever sent this is surely voting. Send them a message of your own by voting for Willington's entire Democratic team on Tuesday, November 2nd." End quote. This leaves us with two possibilities. 1) This is a political stunt perpetrated by somebody who wants to keep religion a hot button topic in town until after the election is over. Or 2) these letters are real, people are concerned so much so that the police have been involved and the First Selectwoman took this opportunity to capitalize on those fears and use them to promote her re-election and the election of the Town's Democratic slate. I honestly don't know which one is worse, but I'm going to let the Town decide. Thank you.

Correspondence

None.

First Selectman's Status Report

- A. **LOTCHIP:** This begins at Hall School and includes a roadwork project along Route 32 to the Mills and is now moving forward. Mike D'Amato is working with CT DOT with some concepts that need to be finalized and then they will formally endorse the project. It will then go to CRCOG and then on to the bid process for the design portion.
- B. **STEAP Grant:** Nothing to report. Will follow up with Planning & Zoning on their questions at their next meeting.
- C. **School Building Committee:** Last meeting was held October 20th. The committee voted to contract with Dr. Peter Prowda for the enrollment survey. The committee is actively working to develop an RFP for an Owner's Project Manager. The next meeting is Wednesday, November 17th at 6:30pm via Zoom.

- D. American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funding:** The committee met on October 25th. Discussion was held on the community survey that will be sent out. Advocated for a larger, more formal committee structure via a town ordinance. Will have a draft proposal of the ordinance for the November 15th BOS meeting for review.
- E. Union Negotiations:** Should be formally meeting in the month of November.
- F. Conservation Commission, Talmadge Property:** Signed the sales agreement last week for the remaining piece of the Talmadge property, on Mason Road. The CT DEEP Grant program deadline has been extended again to November but the Conservation Commission is prepared to submit it this week.
- G. COVID:** As of 10/27/2021, the Town has a 58.39% fully vaccinated rate; that represents 29 new fully vaccinated individuals. Since the last meeting, there have been 7 new positive COVID cases. Vaccine has been approved for younger children.
- H. CadleRock:** The properties will transfer tomorrow to the Town of Ashford and the Town of Willington for the Tax Sale as the redemption period is ending. The deeds will be recorded and the properties will be the Towns'. There is pending litigation regarding CadleRock. The owners are challenging the tax sale and filed an action to nullify it. The Towns filed for a quick disposition of the case -- basically states that the law was followed, CadleRock knew of the tax sales and they did not redeem by paying the back taxes in the allotted time frame. Our tax attorney is confident in the outcome and he fully expects us to prevail.
- I. Break-in at the Town Office Building:** An alarm went off in the Town Office Building on Saturday, October 23rd, at approximately 8:35pm. The Public Works Director was notified by the security company and he asked the Connecticut State Police to respond. Neither the Public Works Director or First Selectwoman Wiczenski were able to physically get to the building. There have been multiple false alarms in the past and believed this was another. From the visuals on the camera, everything looked clear at that time. CSP did respond within about 30 minutes and found nothing from the outside of the building. On Tuesday morning, the First Selectman's office was notified by Superintendent Stevens that there had been a situation at the school on Friday evening. Superintendent Stevens requested to review the cameras to see if it captured anyone in the area to match his video. When reviewing the footage, 2 individuals were observed on a quad in the parking lot of the TOB, they walked away and onto Old Farms Road. We then looked further to see if there was any other activity potentially connected to what was believed to be the false alarm on Saturday. The footage showed what appeared to be the same 2 people on the same quad. They gained access to the attic from the roof. There is footage of them entering the front of the building through the attic door. Within 10 seconds, they had set the alarm off and within 90 seconds they were out of the building on their quad and driving away down Old Farms Road. Once we had confirmation of this incident we contacted CSP on Tuesday afternoon and made a report and worked to get the Troop our footage late Tuesday night. The information from CSP was released on Thursday. The First Selectman's Office released information to staff immediately after making statements to State Police that was then followed up with an email to Selectmen and all Staff. The focus is on the safety of all employees and security of the building and the contents within the building. Looking at what additional security measures may need to be put in place.

Public Works

Public Works Director Troy Sposato reported a list of the items performed at Public Works recently:

- Roadside mowing.
- Installed pipe at the end of Mason Road that was causing flooding in Winter time.
- Cleaned up trees from the storm.
- Changed the trash at River Road Park.
- Cleaned catch basins.
- Washed and waxed the dump trucks.
- Hauled a load of clay for the baseball fields for Parks & Rec.
- Completed the Marco Road culvert project.
- Dug out and widened the edges on Lohse Road Extension.
- Conducted interviews for the Assistant Transfer Station Operator. An offer has been made and we are waiting to hear back on that.
- Put out signs for the upcoming municipal election for the Registrar's Office for the date of the election.
- Moved furniture at the Town Office Building.
- Burned the brush pile at the Transfer Station today.

EMCOR update: AC units have been installed at the Senior Center and the project is now complete.

New Business

A. Award contract for emergency communications software

The Emergency Communications Task Force had recommended to the Board of Selectmen the use of Everbridge for the Town's emergency communications software. This is what has been budgeted for and Everbridge is a State Contractor.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to award the contract for Emergency Communications Software to Everbridge for 3 years totaling \$18,941.44.

Selectman Boritz seconded.

3 Yes (Blessington, Boritz & Wiecenski) 0 No. Motion carries.

B. Tax Refunds

First Selectman Wiecenski moved to refund Corelogic an overpayment in the amount of \$766.40.

Selectman Boritz seconded. Motion carries unanimously.

First Selectman Wiecenski moved to refund Donna Hansen a Certificate of Correction in the amount of \$25.19.

Selectman Blessington seconded. **Motion carries unanimously.**

First Selectman Wiecenski moved to refund Honda Lease Trust a Certificate of Correction in the amount of \$510.13.

Selectman Boritz seconded. **Motion carries unanimously.**

First Selectman Wiecenski moved to refund Peter & Margo Nielson a Certificate of Correction in the amount of \$89.01.

Selectman Blessington seconded. **Motion carries unanimously.**

First Selectman Wiecenski moved to refund Linda Schoen a Certificate of Correction in the amount of \$99.26.

Selectman Boritz seconded. **Motion carries unanimously.**

First Selectman Wiecenski moved to refund Toyota Lease Trust a Certificate of Correction in the amount of \$663.59.

Selectman Boritz seconded. **Motion carries unanimously.**

First Selectman Wiecenski moved to refund Toyota Lease Trust a Certificate of Correction in the amount of \$354.48.

Selectman Blessington seconded. **Motion carries unanimously.**

C. Approve the 2022 Holiday Schedule

The Town Office Building will be closed in observance of the following holidays for the year 2022:

<u>Holiday</u>	<u>Day Closed</u>
New Year's Day	Friday, December 31, 2021
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Monday, January 17, 2022
President's Day	Monday, February 21, 2022
Good Friday	Friday, April 15, 2022
Memorial Day	Monday, May 30, 2022
Selectmen's Day	Monday, June 20, 2022
Independence Day	Monday, July 4, 2022
Labor Day	Monday, September 5, 2022
Columbus Day	Monday, October 10, 2022
Veteran's Day	Friday, November 11, 2022

Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 24, 2022
Day after Thanksgiving	Friday, November 25, 2022
Christmas Day	Monday, December 26, 2022
New Year's Day 2022	Monday, January 2, 2023

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve the 2022 Town Office Building Holiday Schedule as presented.

Selectman Boritz seconded.

3 Yes (Blessington, Boritz & Wiecenski) 0 No. Motion carries.

D. Approve Board of Selectmen 2022 Regular Meeting Schedule

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING SCHEDULE - 2022

1ST & 3RD MONDAY (EXCEPT HOLIDAYS) @ 6:30 P.M.

TOWN OFFICE BUILDING

Jan. 03, 2022	Jul 05, 2022 (Tuesday)
Jan. 18, 2022 (Tuesday)	Jul 18, 2022
Feb. 07, 2022	Aug. 01, 2022
Feb. 22, 2022 (Tuesday)	Aug. 15, 2022
Mar. 07, 2022	Sept. 06, 2022 (Tuesday)
Mar. 21, 2022	Sept. 19, 2022
Apr. 04, 2022	Oct. 03, 2022
Apr. 18, 2022	Oct. 17, 2022
May 02, 2022	Nov. 07, 2022
May 16, 2022	Nov. 21, 2022

Jun. 06, 2022

Dec. 05, 2022

Jun. 21, 2022 (Tuesday)

Dec. 19, 2022

Jan. 03, 2023 (Tuesday)

Jan. 17, 2023 (Tuesday)

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve the Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting schedule for 2022 as proposed.

Selectman Blessington seconded.

3 Yes (Blessington, Boritz & Wiecenski) 0 No. Motion carries.

Old Business

None.

Present to Speak

Jim Bulick, Laurel Drive: I just want to thank Selectman Blessington for his many years of service to Willington. He's been on the Board of Selectmen for at least as long as I can remember, which is at least a couple of decades. Thank you John. I appreciate it.

Peter Latinsics, 97 Trask Road: I also would like to thank Selectman Blessington for his service to the Town. The minority representative on the Board of Selectmen is a very important part of the American political process. The fact that John was able to conduct himself as well as he has given the high levels of sarcasm, condescension and at times, outright rudeness of the majority members of the Board of Selectmen make me appreciative of his efforts on behalf of the town. John, I hope you remain active in public life and Willington thanks you for your service. Godspeed. Thank you.

Good & Welfare

Mobile Food Share will continue at the TOB next Wednesday, November 10th from 11:00am to 11:30am as a drive through model. This is open to all.

Please continue to support our small businesses and restaurants, as they need our support, if you are able.

The VFW will be hosting a Veteran's Day event Saturday, November 13th at 11:15am at the Veteran's Memorial across from the Senior Center. Encourage our residents who are available to attend that day.

Municipal elections will be held on Tuesday, November 2nd from 6:00am to 8:00pm. They are here at the Town Office Building, not at Hall Memorial school.

September Monthly Report from Troop C: *342 calls to Troop C for service included 13 accidents, 14 criminal investigations, 1 burglary, 1 larceny, 198 non-reportable matters and 7 arrests. For motor vehicle enforcement: 113 traffic stops; 2 DUIs, 0 arrests, 2 misdemeanor summons, 46 infractions, 22 written warnings and 41 verbal warnings.*

Last week, the Selectmen's Office met with Lieutenant Gregorzek who is the new Commander at Troop C to continue the working relationship between the Town of Willington and the Connecticut State Police.

Selectman Blessington: Sad to announce that Lenny Todd, who was a longtime resident of the Town of Willington and a Selectman in Town, and who was also one of the few remaining World War II veterans has passed away.

Selectwoman Wiecenski: He meant a lot to our community. He did work at Center School and with the Boy Scouts. Our community is thankful not just to his service here in Willington but his service to the country as well.

Selectwoman Boritz: Tomorrow is Election Day and things have gotten quite heated and tense in Willington over the last few months. At the end of the day, we are all still Willington residents and regardless of the outcome of the election, I would like to take a moment that I am appreciative of all of the work, not just the Board of Selectmen, but everyone that has served on a Board or a Committee, everyone that has run in an election. It's impossible to know what this feels like until you're doing it. For everyone who is putting themselves out, for everyone who is going to support candidates tomorrow, for everyone who is going to vote, I appreciate all of the efforts and all of the support. Regardless of who anyone votes for, I appreciate the engagement in the process and I hope as we move forward as Willington residents, regardless of the outcome tomorrow, we are doing so understanding and appreciating each other in the community. That's my wish for Willington; we move forward with as much love in our hearts as possible.

Selectwoman Wiecenski: Take a moment and recognize the incredible amount of work that our Registrar of Voters and our Town Clerk's Office has put in to make this a safe and fair election in the Town of Willington. None of this could happen without Christina Psathas and Suzanne Chapman. They work diligently to make sure this process results in a fair and safe election.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 PM.

Selectman Boritz seconded the motion.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Kelsey Allard
Recording Secretary
Town of Willington

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TOWN CLERK