

Town of Willington

Board of Selectmen
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Regular Meeting Minutes
In person & Via web interaction (via Zoom platform)

December 20, 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 in person: Selectwoman Boritz and Selectman Bulick and residents via Zoom.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes

Selectwoman Boritz moved to approve the minutes of December 6, 2021, as written.
Selectman Bulick seconded the motion.

3 Yes (Boritz, Bulick & Wiecenski) 0 No. Motion carried.

Present To Speak

Peter Latincsics, 97 Trask Road: I wish to address the entire Board of Selectmen regarding the last Board of Selectmen meeting. It was very disturbing and discouraging for me as a town resident to witness what can only be described as a conscious effort by the Town Democratic leadership to slander the reputation of our Town Republican leadership. That's what is evident by Democratic Chair Mike Makuch's disparaging speech aimed at Jim Bulick, the newly elected Republican Selectman at the Selectmen's meeting on December 6th, 2021. He started the meeting with a verbal attack on Mr. Bulick; citing issues from the previous election, issues that divide the townspeople, issues that were resolved by the Democratic process by town voters on Election Day. We expect our town leaders to lead with integrity, ethics, and professionalism. Electors are required to act in the best interests of their constituents and the town. Real leaders know how to work to unify the townspeople for the betterment of themselves and the Town. Instead, we witnessed partisan political theater with the intent to bully and damage the reputation of Mr. Bulick, while simultaneously encouraging the continuing divide that has regrettably become too common in our town. We viewed no leadership skills on display during Mr. Makuch's speech; Willington deserves and expects better. Thank you very much.

Correspondence

Correspondence list presented to the BOS; all correspondence is on file in the First Selectwoman's Office.

First Selectwoman's Status Report

- A. **STEAP Grant:** No new update. The Easement from the Old Town Hall property to the Town Green was passed at last week's Town Meeting.
- B. **School Building Committee:** No new update. The Committee is meeting tonight.
- C. **LOT/CIP:** No new update.

- D. TOB Basement Project:** Currently scheduled for the week of January 17th for ServiceMaster to come in for the cleaning of the basement and then early February for Jake's Foundations to complete the concrete pour.
- E. Truck Lease:** The public hearing was held on the truck lease last week and the lease agreement should be closed on within the next week. The new dump truck will be ready any day. The F450 is still being built at Hartford Truck; they are waiting for the body which is expected to be ready in a month. Still waiting on the F350 from Ford; expected date is now February/March 2022.
- F. ARPA:** The Ordinance was passed at Town Meeting last week. The Ordinance now has to be published and then there is a 15-day wait period for it to become effective. The BOS will be able to appoint the members after January 4, 2022; the next BOS meeting after that date would be January 18, 2022.
- G. Union Negotiations:** The third discussion was held today and both parties have agreed to a new contract. Waiting for the language in writing from both parties and then will move to ratify.
- H. COVID-19 Update:** As of 12/16/2021, the Town has a 61.0% fully vaccinated rate. The 18-24 age range is currently at only 29%. Currently children ages 5 to 11 are at a rate of 22% vaccinated. Working with Eastern Highlands Health District to clarify the 18-24 year age range to see if this accounts for college students that live in town, who may not be original to town and are only here temporarily for college. Since the last meeting, there have been 45 new positive COVID cases; cumulatively that is 406 cases and 50 probable cases total. Willington is in the Red Alert Category still. Willington is currently at 54.8 cases per 100,000 as of last Thursday; 2 weeks ago this infection rate was 19.5% per 100,000. This data is showing an increase across the State. The recommendation from the state is that if you're fully vaccinated and you're in a community that is in the red, which is all but 5 towns in the State, everyone should wear a mask in indoor public settings and then take additional precautions recommended by CDC. If you are not fully vaccinated, you're encouraged to wear a mask indoors in all public spaces and when close to people outside your household as well as to avoid close interactions with people outside of your household in indoor and outdoor settings, including large and small events. Selectwoman Wiecenski wants to urge all residents that are eligible, ages 5 and up, to get vaccinated. If you have questions about the vaccine, please consult with your physician.
- I. TOB Employee Holiday Party – 12/17/2021:** As an update, there has been a handful of cases within the Town Hall. They were not as a result of spread in the Town Hall and they did not cause a spread at Town Hall. These were isolated incidents. Out of an abundance of caution, the staff holiday party was canceled but the TOB still closed early and staff went home early. This is not what was planned; we wanted to encourage the staff being together and celebrating them and the year of work that they have done. Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked every member of the staff for the tremendous work that they've done over the past year. She stated we are almost 2 years into this pandemic and we have had to pivot many times to balance the work that needs to be done in town offering services to the community, and maintaining the health and safety of not only our residents but staff. They have been willing to change with us and get the job done. Selectwoman Wiecenski can't right now say enough about our staff and how hard they have worked. It was disappointing but rest assured we'll be celebrating them in some positive way when it's safe to do so.

Public Works

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

- Changed the trash at River Road Park.

- Blew the leaves off the edges of the gravel roads.
- Chipped brush along the edges of the road in a few spots around Town.
- Fluid filmed all of the plow trucks.
- Roadside mowing around Town.
- Installed new signs on Daleville School Road & Marco Road. Still having signs stolen in that area.
- Picked up wood that was cut down by the contractors over the Summer time on the sides of the road.
- Continuously working on the trucks and equipment.

Old Business

A. Appointments

a. Region 19 Re-Appportionment Committee

The BOS appointed 2 members from Region 19 Board of Education(BOE) at the last meeting, the Town Clerk filed notice to the State and then was notified by the State Department of Education that their interpretation of the statute is that they need 2 members of Willington's BOE. Sarah Smith and Bob Jellen have resigned and we now need to appoint 2 Willington Board of Education members to the Committee. The Board of Education had their meeting last Tuesday night and has sent forth two members that are willing to serve on this Committee.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to appoint Ann Grosjean as a Regular Member of the Region 19 Reapportionment Committee; effective immediately – expiring once the charge of the Committee has completed.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded.

3 Yes (Boritz, Bulick & Wiecenski) 0 No. Motion carried unanimously.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to appoint Laura Rodriguez as a Regular Member of the Region 19 Reapportionment Committee; effective immediately – expiring once the charge of the Committee has completed.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded.

2 Yes (Boritz & Wiecenski) 1 No (Bulick). Motion carried.

New Business

A. Approval of 2022 Budget Workshop Calendar

First Selectwoman Wiecenski is currently meeting with Department heads to review their budget requests for 2021/2022. Then a complete budget will be presented to the BOS on January 18th, 2022. First Selectwoman Wiecenski suggests that the BOS hold 3 budget workshops to discuss the budget and then department heads can attend to defend their requests as needed. If additional meetings are needed, these meetings can be added as needed.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUDGET MEETING SCHEDULE - 2022

TOWN OFFICE BUILDING or Via Zoom

Jan. 18, 2022 Budget Presentation to the Board (@ BOS Meeting)

Jan. 24, 2022 Budget Workshop at 5:30pm

Jan. 31, 2022 Budget Workshop at 5:30pm

Feb. 07, 2022 Budget Workshop at 5:30pm

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve the 2022 Budget Workshop Calendar as presented. Selectman Bulick seconded.

Selectwoman Boritz stated that this is a better meeting schedule for the budget workshops than the previous years.

Selectman Bulick asked First Selectwoman Wiecenski when she starts working on the budget and she replied that she has already started on it. Selectman Bulick asked if there has been any guidance received from the Board of Finance as of yet and First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that no, no guidance has come from the Board yet.

3 Yes (Boritz, Bulick & Wiecenski) 0 No. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Appointments

a. Karen Caldwell – Capital Improvement Program Committee

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to appoint Karen Caldwell as a regular member of the Town of Willington Capital Improvement Program Committee; effective December 21, 2021; expiring December 8, 2023.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded.

3 Yes (Boritz, Bulick & Wiecenski) 0 No. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Nicole Fusco – School Building Committee Recording Secretary

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to appoint Nicole Fusco as the Recording Secretary for the School Building Committee; effective immediately; expiring June 30, 2022.

Selectman Bulick seconded.

3 Yes (Boritz, Bulick & Wiecenski) 0 No. Motion carried unanimously.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked both for their willingness to serve.

Present to Speak

None.

Good & Welfare

Mobile Food Share will continue at the TOB this Wednesday from 11:00am to 11:30am as a drive through model. This is open to all residents.

Please continue to support our small businesses and restaurants, as they need our support.

CIP and BOF are still in need of a recording secretary. Please contact the Selectman's Office if interested.

The Annual Tree lighting was a wonderful community event! Thanks to Alan Humphrey and the Parks & Recreation Department for sponsoring. First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked Walt & Linda West for the decorating of the Town tree; this year they used white lights and it looks beautiful.

A reminder that masks are required in all Town Buildings regardless of vaccination status. Help us keep our staff and visitors safe.

With COVID-19 cases once again rising across the State, please be reminded that if you are sick, please stay home and get tested. If we all do our part together, we can get through this.

A 2nd COVID vaccine clinic by Griffin Health will be held at Hall Memorial School on December 29th from 3:30pm to 8:00pm. The clinic will have first dose, second dose or booster shot for all age ranges. They will have Moderna, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. The clinic on December 8th was successful with 78 boosters, 16 first dose vaccines for adults and 39 first dose vaccines for pediatrics. 4 second dose vaccines were also given. First Selectwoman Wiecenski wishes to thank Griffin Health, CT DPH, and the Superintendent for working to put the clinic together for our residents.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski wished everyone a happy holiday. No matter what you celebrate, we hope that you are able to do so with your family and friends safely. We won't see you again this year so Happy New Year! 2021 was a heck of a year and we look forward to us moving forward together.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she wanted to address the comments that were made earlier in Present to Speak. The comments that were made were made by a resident. Whether we agree with them or not, we hear all kinds of comments by our residents, oftentimes directed at us and what we need to do is work to move in a direction that no resident feels that they need to come to this Board and feel the kind of divide that we've seen. I think we can work together and I look forward to us moving in a positive direction. But I can speak for myself, there was no concerted effort by any leadership at this table to make disparaging marks against the Selectmen. Our residents are entitled to express their opinion in Present to Speak. I have been on the receiving end of it multiple times; so while we may not agree with it, we hear our residents and we try to do better by them.

Selectman Bulick stated that he wishes to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Selectman Boritz seconded the motion.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Kelsey Allard
Recording Secretary
Town of Willington

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WILLINGTON, CT

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TOWN CLERK