

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
Via web interaction (via Zoom platform)

February 22, 2022
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 and Selectman Bulick and residents via Zoom.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes

Selectwoman Boritz moved to approve the SPECIAL “budget workshop” meeting minutes of February 7, 2022, as written.

Selectman Bulick seconded the motion.

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

Selectman Bulick moved to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 7, 2022, as written.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion.

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

Present To Speak

Merritt Knight: Calling about the town tax assessor. I don't know if you received the paperwork from Janice; a (communication) email that should be pretty much self-explanatory. Apparently, it's left to my understanding; other than the way we got treated. We've called numerous times, we have paperwork where the thing is you know really messed up, the assessments on our trucks. We did everything we could do on our end. We called for over three months trying to get it straightened out. We finally got a hold of somebody on the 9th, (the girl in the office) and she said that they had finally dropped the assessment from \$63,000.00 to \$6,000.00. I mean we should never have gotten treated that way and it should have been a simple fix. That's about it, I just wanted to bring it to the people's attention. Thank you.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked Mr. Knight for expressing his concerns and Selectman Bulick apologized to Mr. Knight for the treatment, especially as he is a longstanding business owner in the Town of Willington.

Correspondence

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

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that Mr. Knight sent a communication to the Selectman's Office with some concern of what is believed to be an error on the assessment of a vehicle that he owns. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that her concern as well as Mr. Knight's concern is that he began asking for clarification/correction in October for this assessment. It was not until after the tax due date of February 1st that the information was shared with him. This is not acceptable and should not have happened. By the time, the Selectman's Office was notified and made aware of the situation, the Assessor's Office was able to

rectify the issue but not without some concern. Mr. Knight is a longstanding business owner in this community and whether it be his business or a personal matter, the taxpayers deserve better, as well as a better response from everyone within the Town Hall. For the record, that assessor is no longer with the Town of Willington. By no means, does this make up for the treatment or the lack of response.

Correspondence from the Town Clerk that has been requested to be read into the record:

Dear Willington Board of Selectmen,

Recently, at a BOS meeting held on November 24, 2021, Carol Jordan & Jackie Kulig were both re-appointed as regular members of the Conservation Commission with expiration dates of December 15, 2024.

At the time of their re-appointments, it was assumed the terms were in accordance with the Conservation Commission Ordinance that was adopted in 1967; original publication: Volume 4, Page 400. However, it was brought to my attention by Kathy Demers, that the December 15th expiration date is incorrect; noting that the original publication states that all member terms must expire on December 1st (not the 15th).

Attached are copies of the original Ordinance as referenced above and the incorrect compilation version of the ordinances from the website where the incorrect (12/15) expiration dates were derived from.

The website version is now updated and references the original Ordinance.

Lastly, the appointments should be in alignment with the original Ordinance dates, therefore, in closing, please note the appointments for Carol Jordan and Jackie Kulig should be effective December 2, 2021; expiring on December 1, 2024, respectively.

If you could kindly read this correspondence into the next regular BOS meeting, this clarification should justify their appointments. I will forward a copy of this letter to them for clarification as well.

Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

Kindest Regards,

Robin Campbell Town Clerk

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to add item B to Old Business for the clarification of appointments of Conservation Commission members.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion.

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

First Selectwoman's Status Report

- A. STEAP Grant:** In communications with CT DPH and beginning to work with a contract's specialist. From there, the Town will move into the procurement phase and then the project will go out to bid for the work that needs to be performed.
- B. School Building Committee:** At the February 16th meeting, the Committee met with the OPM from Colliers, Scott Pellman. Mr. Pellman discussed an overview of what to expect and will have a timeline for the March 2nd SBC meeting. Brief discussion was held for a renovation/addition project to Hall Memorial School from a SBC Committee member. The Committee will be discussing further options with the OPM in the coming weeks.

- C. **LOT/CIP:** No new update.
- D. **TOB Basement Project:** This project is complete with the remediation and concrete pour. The only remaining portion is for the documents to be gone through.
- E. **Truck Lease:** Still waiting for the F-350; no build date as of yet
- F. **ARPA:** Due to the holiday on 02/21/2022, the ARPA Commission will meet again on 02/28/2022.
- G. **Microsoft 365 Project:** This project is underway with IT and has included moving all documents to a cloud-based server, renewing the Microsoft licenses to the town, and creating a new willingtonct.gov domain. The email addresses for Staff will change to willingtonct.gov from willingtonct.org, as well as the website for the Town changing to willingtonct.gov. Thank you to Novus IT for their tremendous work on this project.
- H. **Union Negotiations:** Heard from the Union 02/22/2022. Awaiting final changes and then can move to ratification.
- I. **Staffing:** On Friday, February 11th, 2022, the Town Assessor gave notice that he was resigning immediately. Working to find an interim solution for replacement; in the interim, Rachel Pierce (the Assistant Town Clerk, who is the former Assistant Assessor) has been helping out in the Assessor department. She is currently finding quite a few things that need to be done that were not done previously.
- J. **COVID-19 Update:** As of 02/16/2021, the Town has a 63.0% fully vaccinated rate; that is an additional 104 fully vaccinated residents. Since the last meeting, there have been 7 new positive COVID cases; cumulatively that is 623 cases and 69 probable cases total. Willington is still in the Red Alert Category but there has been a sharp decline. Willington is currently at a case rate of 13.6 cases per 100,000 as of last Thursday, whereas at the last BOS meeting, that was a case rate of 65.8 cases per 100,000. With the decrease in cases, I would like to recommend going back to in-person meetings. The hybrid meeting model can be used until April 30th at this time. At the next meeting, I would like to discuss the possibility of lifting the mask mandate in town buildings and going mask optional. There will be a staff meeting this week to hear the staff's input on this matter.

Selectman Bulick asked about the contract with the OPM for the School Building Committee project and if it has been reviewed/signed. First Selectwoman Wiczenski replied that the contract has been reviewed by the town attorney and then it will be signed.

Public Works

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

- Tree clean-up in various locations around town;
- Multiple plowing and sanding trips due to the weather;
- Washed the dump trucks;
- Installed new batteries and changed the oil in the loader;
- Insulated pipes in the basement of the TOB due to the temperature change with the concrete floor;
- Installed two downspouts at the TOB to deflect rain;

- Repaired the cab mounts on the F-350;
- Emptied and changed the trash at River Road Park;
- Installed new signs on Moose Meadow Road;
- Patched potholes in various locations around the town.

As an update, the mold remediation at the Town Office Building has been completed. A fogging in the building was completed on Monday. Documents still need to be reviewed before they can be placed back into the basement.

Discussion occurred in regard to Moose Meadow Road. Friday afternoon there was a phone call from a resident on Moose Meadow Road with a concern about an area of the road around his mailbox. DPW went out and reviewed the area and observed the damage. A construction company hauled materials down the road earlier in the day but ultimately the responsibility of the roads is on the Town to maintain. The DPW crew has placed signs on the road (Caution, BUMP, and Rough Road Ahead) to warn drivers of the road condition. DPW Director Sposato reported that there is approximately 3,900 feet of Meadow Moose Road to be repaired from the Turnpike Road intersection to the Tinkerville Road intersection. The road will need to be reclaimed, regraded, the drainage replaced, three catch basins to be fixed and then ultimately repaved. The road will need to be fixed in the Spring as soon as possible. The first estimate is roughly \$408,000.00 for repair of the road (this does not include drainage pipes, catch basins, guard rail, etc.). Discussion continued on the repairs and damage on Moose Meadow Road and the need to request additional funding from the Board of Finance to complete the road project.

Old Business

A. Discussion of Town Clerk's Communication

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to amend the appointments of Carol Jordan and Jackie Kulig to be retroactive to December 2, 2021, and expiring on December 1, 2024.

Selectman Bulick seconded.

Discussion: Town Clerk Campbell thanked Kathy Demers for bringing this to her attention so that it could be corrected as it was a typo when reviewing previous terms. First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked Town Clerk Campbell for rectifying this issue and also thanked Kathy Demers for all of her work with the Conservation Commission.

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

B. Budget Discussions

The current budget has the corrections as discussed in the last meeting, as well as the information for the Finance Department (the support for the accounting software) and the decrease in the computer expense line item and now the budget shows a 9.8% increase for the Selectmen's budget.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she wants the Board to think about the direction the Assessor's Department should move. It's important to realize that all of the taxable revenue comes from this department. The Town's Grand List is a direct result of the efforts in the Assessor's Department. While the work that needs to get done is done, there are many things that may be overlooked or neglected with not enough time in the office. The right Assessor is key to delivering quality and accurate Grand Lists. If we continue to cut short such a vital department, First Selectwoman Wiecenski is concerned that the taxpayers will pay an increased burden for a departmental deficiency. First Selectwoman Wiecenski recommends that the Board budgets on the higher side for this position at the original suggestion of \$60,000.00; but will continue to try to find an Assessor for the office. Discussion was held on the position of the Assessor and the work and hours that need to go into this position.

New Business

A. Tax Refunds

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to refund Justin Riox a certificate of correction in the amount of \$69.88.

Selectman Bulick seconded.

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

B. FY 21/22 snow budget update

Currently there is an estimated \$12,000.00 left in the snow budget for this fiscal year; that is without approximately \$8,000.00 in salt that was just delivered as well as the contractor that snow plowed for the most recent storm this weekend. Currently to date, 1,733 tons of salt has been used which is \$147,919.58, the crew has been called out 19 times which is equal to 137 hours. Last year, the crews were out 158 hours. This number doesn't include if it snowed during the day, if there were icy conditions during the day or if snow drifts were pushed back, this is only the amount of times they have been called out after hours. Last year road salt was \$55.50 a ton, this year it is \$78.00 a ton; the treated salt is currently \$88.00 a ton.

C. Approve CIP Plan

CIP Chairman Mailhos shared the 2022 Capital Improvement Program plan. This year the plan is separated by each department. There are a few suggestions for projects to be sent to ARPA for consideration of funding. There is \$345,923.00 being added into the capital reserve for this year (this is for projects that are upcoming in the next few years). The bold line items are leases or committed payments for each year. The un-bolded items are the recommended purchases for the 2022/2023 fiscal year (Year 1) The first item is a new dump truck; the Committee is recommending purchasing this outright this year with capital reserve funds due to future upcoming payments on other projects. The second item is an excavator (\$79,000.00) that would come from the capital reserve fund; the pavement management software system would come from fund 930. Village Hill drainage (\$60,000.00), Schofield Hill drainage (\$35,000.00) (phase one for engineering) would come from LOCIP funds; the automatic generator for public works (\$69,000.00) and this could potentially be funded by ARPA. The CIP Committee made a request to the ARPA Commission to consider certain requests this year.

For the Fire Department, the 800 MHz radios are a joint submission from both fire departments; this is another request submission to ARPA. The bolded line items are the SCBA air packs (coming from the 900 fund) and the lease payment on the Spartan which will come from Fund 17. Also included is the engineering for the station for Willington #1 (\$80,000.00) from Fund 17, the repair of the driveway aprons for Willington #1 (\$30,000.00) from Fund 17, the purchase (lease payments) for Willington Hill to replace their first response vehicle from Fund 17, refurbishing the engine tank for Willington Hill, and then the ambulance purchase and lease payment for Willington #1 from Fund 17. The schools' projects included leveling the sidewalk (fixing the tripping hazard issues) with funding from the capital reserve fund, as well as the installation of band room air conditioning (possibly an ARPA consideration). The rest of the school projects have been removed for the time being, with the consideration of a school project (either renovation or new); the current capital improvements projects for the school are estimated at over \$1 million dollars if they are to be done. The school building committee construction project is currently estimated at \$18 million as a placeholder number; a bond anticipation note would be done in the next few years. The assessor reevaluation is included from the capital reserve fund; parks and recreation has submitted a workout pavilion project but may request ARPA funding consideration. The number that is included into the operating budget, from the capital improvement program, is \$709,500.00. Overall, for the year, it is a consideration of \$2.36 million dollars for the plan. The CIP plan is included in the Selectman's budget and is a net increase of \$64,465.00; there was a significant increase in capital reserve but a significant decrease in capital expenditures.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve the CIP plan as presented.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded.

Discussion: Discussion was held on the CIP plan and how the CIP committee worked to compile the plan as presented, along with the idea of bonding the bigger projects. Selectman Bulick inquired about the excavator that was included in the plan. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that the machine would be crucial to the public works department for the various work projects that they complete.

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

D. Approve Board of Selectmen's budget for submission to the BOF

With the changes that were discussed earlier, Business Manager Latincsics stated that the new budget increase would be a net increase of \$816.00 for the Assessor line item. The new Board of Selectmen budget would be \$4,066,632.00. The overall budget increase would go from \$362,340.00 to \$363,156.00; the percent increase would go from 9.78% to 9.81%.

Selectwoman Boritz moved to approve the 2022-2023 Board of Selectmen budget in the amount of \$4,066,632.00 as presented.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski seconded.

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

First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked Business Manager Latincsics for all of her hard work on this budget and all budgets during this season. First Selectwoman Wiecenski also thanked Christina Mailhos for her hard work as chair of the Capital Improvement Program. The Board of Selectmen budget presentation to the Board of Finance will be Thursday, March 3rd, 2022.

Present to Speak

Ralph Tulis, 47 Village Hill Road: I was listening to the conversation about Moose Meadow Road and the damage that was done, and I just want to throw out a few comments. It's my understanding Milton Beebe, who is a local contractor, is doing the site work over at Love's. It would be most likely their vehicles that traversed Moose Meadow and probably precipitated the damage that has been found over there. Just keep in mind that they are going to be paving their facility when the weather permits as well as Polster Road that they've lowered. I would think that maybe it's worth approaching them to see what kind of a deal we can work out since it maybe they who caused the damage because I think that the haulers should have known that our local roads can't handle the kind of axle loads that their trucks imposed. Anyone check to see what kind of loads they were hauling? It would be nice to know what those axle loads actually were. Now I understand that we can't restrict truck traffic but why can't we restrict or limit axle loads on our pavement because obviously most of our roads, particularly roads like Moose Meadow were never designed or built in anticipation of those kinds of axle loads. Another consideration, Beebe may have the equipment to do full depth reclamation for prepping for pavement at their disposal and being a local company, they may be amenable to at least. If we don't ask, we don't get; that's the bottom line. Enough on that. Back to in-person hybrid or Zoom... quite frankly, I like Zoom meetings. I do miss the in-person but the nice thing about adjusting to the technology that we have at our disposal is that Zoom affords more people to attend more meetings and they wouldn't normally be attending meetings if it wasn't for Zoom. Quite honestly, I would love to see it continue; or at least the option to be able to attend any town meeting via Zoom. That's all I have to say tonight.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that there will be conversations in the upcoming days about the damage to Moose Meadow Road and the repairs that will be needed.

Good & Welfare

January Monthly Report from Troop C: *341 calls to Troop C for service included 16 accidents, 13 criminal investigations, 0 burglaries, 0 larcenies, 227 non-reportable matters and 17 arrests. Motor vehicle enforcement included 78 total traffic stops, 3 onsite DUI's, 4 arrests, 3 misdemeanor summons, 27 infractions, 20 written warnings, 25 verbal warnings*

Mobile FoodShare will continue at the TOB every other week; the next one will be next Wednesday, March 2nd and March 16th 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.

A reminder that as of right now, masks are required in all Town Buildings regardless of vaccination status. The Board of Education has extended the mask mandate past February 28th to March 11th but will move forward and make a decision on their own.

Selectman Bulick inquired about Willington Day. Melissa McKinnon stated that a date has not yet been chosen. If you are interested in joining the Willington Day Committee, please feel free to reach out to the Selectman's Office.

The Willington Road Race will be back on for Saturday, May 28th, after a 2-year hiatus.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 PM.

Selectwoman 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.

2022 MAR 15 A 10:35


TOWN CLERK



OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK WILLINGTON, CONNECTICUT

Robin H. Campbell Town Clerk
Rachel L. Pierce, Assistant Town Clerk

February 8, 2022

Willington Board of Selectmen
40 Old Farms Road
Willington, CT 06279

Re: Conservation Commission member Appointment clarification

Dear Willington Board of Selectmen,

Recently, at a BOS meeting held on November 24, 2021, Carol Jordan & Jackie Kulig were both re-appointed as regular members of the Conservation Commission with expiration dates of December 15, 2024.

At the time of their re-appointments, it was assumed the terms were in accordance with the Conservation Commission Ordinance that was adopted in 1967; original publication: Volume 4, Page 400. However, it was brought to my attention by Kathy Demers, that the December 15th expiration date is incorrect; noting that the original publication states that all members terms must expire on December 1st (not the 15th).

Attached are copies of the original Ordinance as referenced above and the *incorrect compilation* version of the ordinances from the website where the incorrect (12/15) expiration dates were derived from.

The website version is now updated and references the original Ordinance.

Lastly, the appointments should be in alignment with the original Ordinance dates, therefore, in closing, please note the appointments for Carol Jordan and Jackie Kulig should be effective December 2, 2021; expiring on December 1, 2024, respectively.

If you could kindly read this correspondence into the next regular BOS meeting, this clarification should justify their appointments. I will forward a copy of this letter to them for clarification as well.

Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

Kindest Regards,

Robin Campbell
Town Clerk

/rhc

Enclosures: Ordinance reference (page 6 of the Ordinance book (online posting);
Original Ordinance (Page 400 from Volume 4) dated 1967

Copy: K. Demers – Chairman, Conservation Commission
C. Jordan & J. Kulig – Conservation Commission
Conservation Commission File – Town Clerk's office

40 Old Farms Road Willington, CT 06279
Phone 860-487-3121 Fax 860-487-3103
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Enclosure from Town Clerk