

Town of Willington

Board of Selectmen
40 Old Farms Road
Willington, CT 06279
(860) 487-3100
(860) 487-3103 Fax
www.willingtonct.gov

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Regular Meeting Minutes
In person; TOB, Downstairs Room

June 6, 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, Selectman Bulick in person and residents in person and via Zoom.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes

Selectwoman Boritz moved to approve the meeting minutes of the May 2nd regular meeting, as written.

Selectman Bulick seconded.

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

Present To Speak

John Blessington, 29 Mason Road: I noticed from the minutes that they are going to be discussing using ARPA funds to purchase cameras and I am really not too happy with this. I think we already have too many cameras everywhere. But what I don't know, what's the use going to be for these cameras? Are they going to be looking for speeders, or what? And viewing will be strictly limited? Who gets to view these things? I almost think I would rather have it if these cameras are gonna film, they should be available to everybody. Because otherwise if there's a question, everybody gets to see them. And the fact that they can be edited under carefully controlled circumstances and that makes me nervous; the fact that they can be edited at all. From what I understand it would be about \$214,000.00, which would be the immediate cost for the system and this would be paid for by ARPA funds, but in subsequent years how much would it cost to maintain an operating system? Thank you.

Herb Klei, 76 Turnpike Road: I am here probably more for information on the Assessor; as you know, I've been fighting since last October and keep getting put off and everything. And I just don't know how the new assessment will be handled; will I have to pay higher or where do I go from here? That's what I'm trying to find out.

Matt Clark: I want to speak to the item on the agenda regarding ARPA Employee retention. I don't know whether or not this is paying bonuses to town employees. It doesn't say that but I think that's what it means. I was just wondering how the town was going to work through the conflict of interest between ARPA funding which has town employees serving on that committee and those people getting bonuses and money if they are voting for themselves. If that does, then how would that work? Does that mean all employees would get bonuses, some employees, employees who worked, employees who showed up in person, employees who didn't show up in person. I'm not quite sure how that would work so those are my comments. Thank you.

Correspondence

Correspondence list presented to the BOS; all correspondence is on file in the First Selectwoman's Office. Each Selectman received correspondence from the School for the 8th grade graduation.

First Selectwoman's Status Report

- A. **STEAP Grant:** Currently still awaiting the updated contract from CT DPH; they have been going back and forth with the AG's Office on changes. STEAP funding for 2022 has opened; project allotments are up to \$500,000.00. We will be meeting with staff to review potential projects of interest as well as checking to see if there are any regional projects. If either Selectman has a project suggestion, please reach out to Kelsey with that information. The projects decided upon will come before this Board.
- B. **School Building Committee:** SBC met last Wednesday and there was discussion on the potential appraisal of a private property. The Land Assessment Subcommittee is working on that. The next meeting for the SBC is next Wednesday, June 15th at 6:30pm. Meetings are now hybrid here at the Town Office Building as well as via Zoom.
- C. **LOTICIP:** The LOTICIP project on River Road from Hall School to the Mills was sent out via RFP and there were not any responses. All of our indications were that with the increased federal funds for infrastructure projects across the state, this project was too small in scope for firms that are already overwhelmed with work. A direct solicitation has occurred, and we are waiting for that to come back and then this Board can potentially approve a vendor.
- D. **Truck Lease:** It has been almost a year, but the town is still awaiting the F-350; there is no new information available for a build date from Ford as of last week.
- E. **ARPA:** The ARPA Commission held a public hearing on May 24th and after the public hearing, several projects were approved including computer upgrades for TOB staff (this would allow us to have one device instead of two), Wi-Fi upgrades that are needed and network upgrades at the TOB cabinet, a summer camp supplement for residents (which will allow up to 50 children per week free of charge, Willington residents only), a fuel bank supplement (\$25,000.00), a forestry plan for the Mason Road tract, and building materials for park structures at Fenton Ruby were approved for the Conservation Commission. The Commission also approved funds for the Commission's expenses (\$2,000.00), most notably for legal notices that are placed in the newspaper. The Commission met this afternoon to discuss additional project submissions including a retention bonus plan for employees, flags/grave markers/monument repairs, and a storage box for DPW to utilize during evictions. Some of those items have been moved forward to a public hearing. The employee retention plan that was previously approved by the BOS was moved forward to the ARPA Commission for discussion today and has been agreed upon to move it forward to a public hearing for discussion. The next ARPA Commission meeting is Monday, June 27th at 1:30pm and the next public hearing is tentatively scheduled for July 11th.
- F. **Staffing Update:** Since the last meeting, the town has welcomed new staff members: Ivan Ruhnke is the new Assistant Transfer Station Operator and Heather Sharpley is back with us as the town Payroll/Personnel Coordinator. Michael Fitzcordoba left to take a position closer to home. Richene Ference has been hired as the new Account Analyst and will be starting on Tuesday, June 21st. That brings the Town back to full staff, with the exception of the Assessor position at this time.
- G. **COVID-19 Update:** As of 06/03/2022, the Town still has a 69.0% fully vaccinated rate. Since the last meeting, there have been 63 new positive COVID cases; cumulatively that is 716 cases and 82 probable cases total. Willington is in the Red Category as the case rates continue to increase.

Willington is currently at a case rate of 21.9 cases per 100,000 as of last Thursday, at the last meeting this rate was 17.1. Please continue to be cautious and respectful of others. These numbers are all relative and are not reflective of those that have not tested at a medical facility, such as those with home tests. The State has increased hospital admissions and deaths recently. Once again, thank you to all of the healthcare professionals who are working overtime and tirelessly to treat both COVID and non-COVID patients alike.

Selectwoman Boritz began a discussion in regard to the amount of COVID cases that may not be reported and if there is a way for better accuracy with tracking cases in town.

Public Works

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

- Continued sweeping and grading throughout the town (which is now completed);
- Installed curbing from the winter plow damage and backfilled them;
- Continued with roadside mowing, mowing of the sightlines, and mowed around the retention ponds;
- Mowed the Transfer Station & DPW Garage;
- Picked up trash on Turnpike Road;
- Dug out waterways;
- The trees were removed and the fencing was moved on Moose Meadow Road in preparation of the Moose Meadow Road project;
- Installed the two TV's at the TOB (the Fire Department borrowed them during Covid);
- Cleaned the shop;
- Fixed the ceiling tiles in First Selectwoman Wiecenski's office due to the mice;
- Filled the sinkholes and patched the holes in the roadways around town; and,
- Fixed the Red Oak stop sign last Thursday and then it was removed again over the weekend so that was replaced again on Monday.

As a Moose Meadow Road update, the work has begun. Today the first culvert was replaced and tomorrow another culvert will be replaced. DPW is installing three new culverts and removing stumps, edging the road, and changing the basin tops. Currently the DPW is awaiting the 15-inch piping so that the new basins can be set.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that on top of the regular Public Works duties, the crew has been maintaining the TOB as well. Thank you to Troy and his staff (specifically Jay) for helping with the mice problem.

Old Business

A. Potential ARPA project – Employee Retention

At the last meeting, the Board discussed and approved the Employee Retention bonus proposal that was

discussed. ARPA is discussing this proposal and the process moving forward. First Selectwoman encourages residents to attend the ARPA meetings and the ARPA Public Hearings.

In that proposal, the potential bonuses for elected officials were not included. ARPA funding excludes payments to elected officials and that leaves the potential for these bonuses to come from town funds. In the current budget, the town is currently on track to return funds to the town.

Selectwoman Boritz stated that given what was discussed at the last meeting, last month, one of the things that she would like to do is re-consider the bonus for the First Selectwoman. The workloads and time did not increase for the individual selectmen, but that was different for First Selectwoman Wiecenski who put in a tremendous amount of additional work (including picking up test kits and masks on weekends, etc).

Selectman Bulick stated that last time he was not in favor of giving elected officials any compensation based on the argument of knowing what they were getting into when they ran for office. He thought it was an easier decision to compensate the regular employees with a bonus.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski said that she would argue that in no way did the Registrars know what they were getting into with the pandemic occurring. Their stipend did not change and there was no overtime pay, but the amount of time they worked increased significantly. They work on behalf of the town just as much as the town's hired staff. Never did anyone imagine a pandemic or the additional work that would have to go into each position in the past few years.

Selectwoman Boritz said the Registrars, the Treasurer, and the First Selectwoman are essentially town employees for the positions they fill. When you look at the work that is done by the elected officials, the quantity of the work and the significance of the work for the town, it is no different than the unionized staff. They are essential employees as well.

Discussion continued on the ARPA employee retention proposal for the elected officials in town (First Selectwoman, Registrars, and Treasurer).

New Business

A. Tax Refunds

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to refund Jeremy J. Chartier an overpayment in the amount of \$206.63.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion.

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

B. Appointments

a. Janice Clauson – Appointment as CCMC Certified Tax Collector

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to appoint Janice Clauson, as a certified Connecticut Municipal Collector; effective retroactive to May 19, 2022 – expiring April 11, 2024.

Selectman Bulick seconded the motion.

Discussion: Ms. Clauson will be filling the rest of her original term but now as a Certified Collector. Ms. Clauson passed her exam in December and had to be in the position for three years (April 2019 to April 2022) and has now received her CCMC Certification. Her term will remain the same; April 11, 2020 – April 11, 2024.

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

First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked Revenue Collector Clauson for her dedication and hard work.

b. Nicole Fusco – School Building Committee Recording Secretary (Reappointment)

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to appoint Nicole Fusco, as the recording secretary for the School Building Committee; effective July 1, 2022 – expiring June 30, 2023.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion.

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

c. Samantha Sperry – Board of Finance Recording Secretary (Reappointment)

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to appoint Samantha Sperry, as the recording secretary for the Board of Finance; effective July 1, 2022 – expiring June 30, 2023.

Selectman Bulick seconded the motion.

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

d. Brenda Sullivan – Housing Authority Recording Secretary (Reappointment)

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to appoint Brenda Sullivan, as the recording secretary for the Housing Authority; effective July 1, 2022 – expiring June 30, 2023.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion.

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

e. John Tehan, as representative to CRCOG Regional Planning Commission

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to appoint John Tehan, as representative to the CRCOG Regional Planning Commission, on behalf of the Willington Planning & Zoning Commission; effective June 7, 2022.

Selectman Bulick seconded the motion.

Discussion: Selectman Bulick asked if the Planning & Zoning Commission had forwarded this appointment, First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated yes.

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

First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked all who were re-appointed for their continued willingness to serve.

C. Award Contract – Propane

Two bids were received this year for the annual propane contract.

Superior Energy was \$2.099 per gallon of propane; their regular labor rate was \$175.00 per hour, the after-hours labor rate was \$250.00 per hour, and the holidays/weekend labor rate was \$350.00 per hour. Their trip charge if applicable was \$100.00 per normal trip and \$200.00 for after house and holiday/weekend trips. The trip charge was defined as being for service calls or additional service.

High Grade Gas Service was \$1.9586 per gallon of propane; their regular labor rate was \$109.00 per hour, the after-hours labor rate was \$109.00 per hour, and the holidays/weekend labor rate was \$109.00 per hour. Their trip charge was not applicable.

Selectman Bulick moved to award High Grade Gas Service the propane bid for the 2022/2023 fiscal year for the Town of Willington at \$1.9586 per gallon of propane and \$109.00 per hour for labor rates including regular time, after hours, and holidays and weekends.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion.

Discussion: Selectman Bulick asked who the current supplier is to the Town and First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that currently Superior Energy is the supplier. DPW Director Sposato stated that he would recommend High Grade Gas Service because their service in the past has always been superior.

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

First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked both bidders for their submittals.

D. Award Contract – Land Use Flooring

This was a CIP project to replace the flooring in the Land Use Office. The flooring was tested recently and is non-asbestos containing. Originally the main flooring was the only portion of this project to be completed, but the land use office annex floor also needs to be replaced.

Booth Flooring submitted a quote for the replacement of both areas for \$12,382.00.

Dalene Hardwood FLG Co. submitted a quote for the replacement of both areas for \$9,712.41.

Schneider's Flooring America submitted a quote for the replacement of both areas for \$7,775.25.

This replacement of flooring would be to use carpet tiles.

DPW Director Sposato stated that the carpet tiles would be the best option for this flooring in case of moisture in the Land Use Office and the need for future replacement. Two layers of the flooring will be removed.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to award *Schneider's Flooring America* the contract for the Land Use Dept Flooring replacement based on their quote of \$7,775.25.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion.

Discussion: Discussion continued on the project and the work that is involved for the floor replacement. DPW Director Sposato would recommend Schneider's Flooring America for this project. Selectwoman Boritz inquired about the replacement of the carpet floor tiles if necessary.

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

E. Approval of Job Description for Assessor position

The current draft of the job description for the shared Assessor position has been shared with the Selectmen. This would be a shared position with the Town of Bolton for the Assessor. Discussion continued on the makeup of the job description. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that it is our goal that both boards will approve a job description and then we can post the Assessor position to be filled as close to the July 1st date as possible.

Selectwoman Boritz made a motion to approve the job description for the Assessor position as written.

Selectman Bulick seconded the motion.

Discussion: First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated she looks forward to moving forward with this and getting the position filled but she thanks Rachel for her assistance in the office, as well as Rich Lasky, the Assessor in the Town of Franklin, who has also been assisting as needed.

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

F. Potential ARPA project – Traffic Camera Request

Resident Mike Makuch has proposed this traffic camera request project to the Board of Selectmen for potential ARPA funding. M. Makuch gave an overview of the traffic camera request project. The system is a sample of the options for the different cameras and the different types of setups and the poles that would be required. The pricing included in the proposal of \$214,000.00 is up to date as of April 2022. The cameras can be used in emergency situations, which might be criminal or might not be criminal and can be used for public safety. Every time the cameras are viewed, that user is logged and tracked, and there is no way to edit the videos. Options one through seven are all to be placed on state roads and that would require the need for discussions with the State. The cameras would record who is coming on and off of the highways and entering the town through the major gateway roads.

Selectman Bulick inquired about ongoing costs, and how the cameras would be connected. M. Makuch said these would all be IP based cameras and the data would typically be recorded by a software company that

manages secure databases and meets all legal requirements. Many towns do not maintain their own databases. M. Makuch stated the maintenance of the costs is small considering the installation cost.

Selectwoman Boritz stated that this request would go to the ARPA Commission and to the town residents to discuss. The benefits to the town include keeping track of road conditions, traffic accidents, etc.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that as she reviews this proposal, it would not be to monitor the residents, but those who are coming in and out of Willington. The cameras would be located only at the major entrance/exit points. There are multiple questions to be answered before ARPA and before the public, such as; *Is this something that has been on a CIP list? Has this been considered before? What are the ongoing budgetary costs? What are the ongoing costs associated with the storage (here on a server or cloud based)? What if someone hits one of these poles (all at major intersections)?* The lack of law enforcement directly in town is one of the biggest concerns. Who is monitoring these and how would the town use it? Selectwoman Boritz stated that the Board still needs to actively work towards answering these questions and to see if it's a barrier or if we are saying it's only a barrier.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to move forward the proposed public safety traffic camera request to ARPA.

Selectman Boritz seconded.

Discussion: First Selectwoman Wiecenski said that the proposal will move forward to the ARPA Commission for discussion but will remove the option of cameras by the schools and will inform the ARPA Commission that this proposal is also still being discussed within the BOS. This is the best option to get this information out to the Commission and to the public for discussions while the Board works on gathering more information and getting certain questions answered.

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

M. Makuch stated that he realized the error of leaving out the ongoing costs so he has reached out to the Vendor for an answer. He also stated that it is not legal to use the traffic cameras for traffic enforcement. M. Makuch thanked the board for their consideration of this project.

G. Discussion of Transfer Station Fees

MidNeroc has approved new vendors and has made some potential changes which would incur unexpected costs to the town. The Board would need to approve the fees and then it would need to be approved at a town meeting, as is the town ordinance for the Transfer Station. Currently the Transfer Station accepts tires (up to 19-inches) and charges \$2.00 per tire; this would now be a charge of \$5.00. The current vendor charges \$2.00 a tire and the new vendor would charge \$3.00 a tire. Currently the Transfer Station accepts truck tires (19-inches to 24-inches) and charges \$10.00 per tire; this would now be a charge of \$15.00. The current vendor charges \$10.00 a tire and the new vendor would charge \$12.00 a tire.

Currently propane tanks are not accepted at the Transfer Station. For a 20-pound propane tank (regular grill tank), if the tank is dented or not in good shape, the tank would be a \$3.00 charge to the town. If the tank is acceptable to the vendor, then the vendor would pay the town \$7.00. The town could charge \$3.00 per propane tank, because the company would need to make the decision on its acceptability. If there is anything larger than a 20-lb propane tank, the charge would be \$20.00 for the tank for disposal, so the charge to residents would be \$20.00 to pass along the cost.

Discussion followed on the transfer station fees and the possible vendor surcharge that may be put forward as well.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjust the Appendix F, the fee schedule, for the transfer station to increase the smaller tires to \$5.00 and the truck tires, 19 and over up to 24-inches to \$15.00 and add 20-pound propane tanks at \$3.00 per tank and the 40-pound propane tanks for \$20.00.

Selectman Boritz seconded.

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

Selectman Bulick stated to note that there are no other price changes at this time in the transfer station fees.

H. Discuss and act on the Board's intention to jointly file, with the Town of Ashford, for a DECD remediation grant in the amount of \$300,000.00 for the Cadlerock property.

Willington now owns the former Cadlerock property in the Town of Willington. In the past, the town has jointly applied with the Town of Ashford for a \$300,000.00 DECD grant and the Town of Ashford submits the grant. Last year at this time, the town did not own the Cadlerock property.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve a joint grant application with the Town of Willington (*corrected to Town of Ashford*) in the amount of \$300,000.00 to the Department of Economic and Community Development for the remediation of the former Cadlerock property.

Selectman Bulick seconded.

Discussion: Selectman Bulick inquired if the Town of Willington now owns the Cadlerock property and First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that yes, the town owns the property now, through the tax sale process.

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

Present to Speak

Matt Clark: Thank you. I had a couple comments. I think town employees voting on their own bonuses is wrong. I would hope that the town leaders would show good judgment and either ask town employees who are members of the ARPA committee to abstain from voting or the town employees bonuses be approved outside of the ARPA Committee through the Board of Finance. Either approach is a good idea. That is prudent. The First Selectman has asked us to attend ARPA meetings, we can't attend ARPA meetings because ARPA meetings are held in the middle of the day when taxpayers are working. I would ask the Board of Selectmen to propose an ordinance to the townspeople for approval in a town meeting mandating that public meetings be conducted after normal business hours, when the public can actually attend the meeting. Townspeople should be able to attend ARPA meetings, not just the ARPA public hearings. Same thing goes for CIP which meets in the middle of the day, when the townspeople can't attend. Regarding the cameras, I agree with the First Selectman, I'm not sure either. Are those camera materials available to the townspeople? Can you post that on the website somewhere so that we can have an idea of what this means? Second to lastly, the Board of Selectmen agendas, if we could have them be more carefully written to inform citizens. Discussion of transfer station fees is quite different from a proposal to increase transfer station fees; the same thing with the cameras, I had no idea what those cameras were, just cameras. So lastly, I saw that there is a parcel of land available for sale, right next to Hall School and I was wondering if the SBC was aware of that being for sale. Thank you.

Good & Welfare

It is with great sadness that First Selectwoman Wiecenski shares the loss of three former Town/BOE staff members in the past month: Former resident Pat Godbout, a former Town Clerk who served for almost 20 years, passed away in early May. Former resident Marlene Carr, who was a Kindergarten teacher at Center Elementary School for over 30 years, passed away. She helped to start the Kindergarten class at CES in 1968 and saw it through until her retirement in 1999. Many residents have recently spoken kindly of their time with her. And most recently, Mr. Richard Claus, a current resident who served as the Dog Warden for 28 years. Their service to the Town of Willington left an indelible mark and will all be remembered with fondness. Our heartfelt condolences go out to their families and we will keep you all in our prayers.

Mobile FoodShare will be at the TOB this Wednesday, June 8th from 11:00am to 11:30am as a drive through model.

As always, please support our small businesses and restaurants in town. As of late, many businesses have been closing early as they do not have staffing available, as they were able to in pre-Covid times.

April Troop C Report: 349 calls for service; 10 accidents, 11 criminal investigations, 0 burglaries, 2 larcenies, 192 non reportable matters and 9 arrests. 129 total traffic stops. 3 onsite DUI's, 4 arrests, 0 misdemeanor summons, 44 infractions, 24 written warnings, 51 verbal warnings.

May Troop C Report: 370 calls for service; 8 accidents, 7 criminal investigations, 0 burglaries, 0 larcenies, 237 non reportable matters and 7 arrests. 114 total traffic stops. 4 onsite DUI's, 5 arrests, 1 misdemeanor summons, 42 infractions, 17 written warnings, 41 verbal warnings.

Unfortunately due to the threat of severe weather, Willington Day was canceled. This was not an easy decision for the Committee and this decision was made out of caution for residents that would be attending. The Committee will be discussing the possibility of a late Summer or early Fall date to reschedule.

As a note, the Assessor's Office is closed this week due to training at UCONN.

The Town Office Building will be closed Monday, June 20th in recognition of Juneteenth Day. Our next regular Board of Selectmen meeting will be on Tuesday, June 21st.

A reminder, the tax office will be closed on Thursday, June 30th for the preparation of the end of the year closing and the beginning of the tax season on July 1st.

I will also note the date of EO Smith's graduation is Monday, June 20th and graduation ceremonies at Hall School will be on Friday, June 17th. My congratulations to all of those students moving forward with their education and I wish good luck to all in their future endeavors after high school, whether it's college, technical school, or adult employment.

Selectman Bulick moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 PM.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski seconded the motion.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Kelsey Allard
Recording Secretary
Town of Willington

RECEIVED
WILLINGTON, CT.

2022 JUN 17 A 10:47


TOWN CLERK