

Town of Willington

Board of Selectmen
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Regular Meeting Minutes
In person; TOB, Downstairs Room

June 21, 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: Selectman Bulick and residents in person and Selectwoman Boritz and residents in person and via Zoom.

Pledge of Allegiance

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to add Item D to New Business: Tax Refunds.
Selectman Bulick seconded.
3 Yes (Boritz, Bulick & Wiecenski) 0 No. Motion carried.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to move Item A of New Business to the next item of business before Approval of Minutes.
Selectman Bulick seconded.
3 Yes (Boritz, Bulick & Wiecenski) 0 No. Motion carried.

New Business

A. Proclamation for Herb Arico's 100th Birthday

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved the following proclamation:

100th Anniversary of the Birth of Herbert Charles Arico

WHEREAS, Herb Arico was born on June 30, 1922, and has been a resident of Willington for 52 years and will celebrate his 100th birthday this year; and,

WHEREAS, Herb Arico served from June 1942 to September 1946 in the United States Army Reserves during World War II; and,

WHEREAS, Herb Arico married his loving wife Lucille, in August of 1967 and they were blessed with two children, and 11 grandchildren; and,

WHEREAS, Herb Arico was a teacher for 61 years; with 58 years as a Business Teacher at Windham High School; and,

WHEREAS, Herb Arico has served as a Willington Board of Education member for 45 years and Region 19 Board of Education member for 12 years; and,

*WHEREAS, Herb Arico has served on numerous professional and community boards and volunteered with many community organizations; and,
WHEREAS, Herb Arico is joined by friends and family today to celebrate this exciting milestone in his life. He is commended for his dedication to Education, Service to his Country and the Willington Community; and,*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Willington Board of Selectmen and residents in the Town of Willington proclaim June 30, 2022, to be Herb Arico Day.

FURTHERMORE, I do hereby encourage all fellow residents, family, and friends to pay tribute to Herb Arico on his 100th birthday and wish him health and happiness in all his days to come.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the Town of Willington this 21st Day of June 2022.

Selectman Bulick seconded.

Discussion: First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated it is her honor to celebrate Mr. Arico's birthday. A reception for Mr. Arico was held prior to the start of the meeting tonight. Mr. Arico was a teacher for many years at Windham High School and serves on the Willington Board of Education and Region 19 Board of Education.

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

Mr. Arico thanked First Selectwoman Wiecenski for the proclamation.

Approval of Minutes

Selectman Bulick moved to approve the meeting minutes of the June 6th regular meeting, as written.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski seconded.

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

Present To Speak

Christine Psathas: First I would like to thank the Board of Selectmen for considering a one-time bonus for elected officials. Suzanne Chapman and I have been working together since 2014. We know what to expect and how to manage the responsibilities of preparing for voting events but nothing prepared us for the pandemic of 2020. It was not business as usual for many, including the Registrars. We did not have the option of working at home. In order to do our job, we needed to be connected to the state's voter registration system. So although the town building was closed to the public, we continued to go into the office and work together. The Secretary of State did not give us a pass on the 2020 voting events. Pandemic or no pandemic, the presidential preference primary in August and the presidential state election in November had to be held. With physical distancing, PPE, sanitation and cleaning requirements in place, we felt confident that by holding the primary in the regular voting location of the town office building, since primaries typically have a lower voter turnout, the voters and elected officials would feel comfortable. But when it came time to plan for the November election with historically higher voter turnout for this election, we knew that the usual voting location was not ideal to implement safety protocols required by the state. We approached Superintendent Stevens and requested the use of the gym at Hall Memorial School. He supported and worked with us to make this change. Suzanne then designed, ordered, and prepared for mailing over 3,600 postcards notifying voters of the new polling location. We also planned an additional voting location for absentee ballot counting and election day registration at the town office building. We contacted, hired, and trained 21 election officials, more than double the usual number. It was a challenging year but we were pleased to hear from many voters and our election

workers that they felt comfortable with our protocols to provide a safe voting experience that November. We spent many, many more hours than usual, than during a normal presidential preference primary and election year by planning and implementing safety measures to successfully ensure that our workers and boaters were comfortable during an uncomfortable time. Thanks.

Donna Cook, 77 Common Road: Three brief things... One, I just want to thank you for honoring Herb. It's encouraging to see somebody who has had such a wonderful life dedicated to service and hopefully it'll be encouragement to others to do the same. Next, I just want to encourage the Board of Selectmen to carefully consider contacting Eversource to find out if our electrical grid is capable of handling additional drains on it. I know that sometimes as communities get more and more electric cars and other things, that it can cause problems with the grid. I know that we've been experiencing some brownouts at our house. I don't know why, but I just wanted to share that. Finally, I would like to officially request that any town meetings, where there's going to be a vote, that all votes be done by paper ballot and that it's prepared appropriately ahead of time, so that people can vote their conscience and not their peer pressure group. Thank you.

Correspondence

Correspondence list presented to the BOS; all correspondence is on file in the First Selectwoman's Office. CT DEEP sent correspondence announcing the grant award to the Town of Willington for the State of Connecticut Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant, not to exceed \$81,250.00. Previously, the Conservation Commission was authorized to apply for this grant. This is for the Talmadge estate parcel that would add to the land track on Mason Road. We had expected to receive 50% of the purchase price (\$125,000.00) and we were awarded 65% of the price. Congratulations to the dedicated members of the Conservation Commission for their efforts and diligent work to make this grant possible, specifically Kathy Demers and Carol Jordan.

First Selectwoman's Status Report

- A. STEAP Grant:** The contract was signed last week with DPH and the town is now awaiting the finalized, signed contract to be returned from the State. We are cognizant of the timing with the two town events in the Fall.
- B. School Building Committee:** The June 15th SBC meeting was canceled due to the lack of quorum. The next SBC meeting is Wednesday, July 6th at 6:30pm. Meetings are now hybrid here at the Town Office Building as well as via Zoom.
- C. LOTCIP:** Still waiting for the direct solicitation and then to approve a vendor and move forward with the design portion.
- D. Truck Lease:** There is no new information available for a build date from Ford, but the order has not been canceled which is a good sign.
- E. ARPA:** The next ARPA Commission meeting is Monday, June 27th at 1:30pm and the next public hearing is tentatively scheduled for July 11th.
- F. COVID-19 Update:** As of 06/16/2022, the Town still has a 69.0% fully vaccinated rate; there has been no change since the last meeting. Since the last meeting, there have been 11 new positive COVID cases; cumulatively that is 727 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 17.1 cases per 100,000 as of last Thursday, at the last meeting this rate was 21.9.

Selectman Bulick stated that he has heard from residents that the ARPA meeting time is very challenging for some to attend. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that the Commission could discuss that when they meet, but the public hearings will always be held in the evening, as decided by the ARPA Commission.

Public Works

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

- Continued roadside mowing, including the mowing around Halls Pond;
- Chipped brush from storm debris;
- Cleaned the shop;
- Serviced several of the fleet vehicles;
- Patched the holes in the roadways around town;
- Fixed the Red Oak stop sign; and,
- Removed items for the Town Clerk's Office.

As a Moose Meadow Road update, the DPW crew has been actively working on the project since Monday, June 6th. Two new cross culverts were installed; one is 15-inch and one is 18-inch. 3 new catch basins were installed. And a new portion of the drainage was installed with one new basin and the pipe across the road today.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked the DPW crew for the work that they are doing.

New Business

B. Appointments

On June 7th, the First Selectwoman's Office officially received a letter of resignation from Richard Palmer, the town's Fire Marshal for the past 26 years. She thanked Mr. Palmer for his 26 years of service to the town in the capacity of Fire Marshal. He still wants to take part in the Fire Marshal service by taking the position of Deputy Fire Marshal.. R Palmer has recommended Trevor Gantick, current Deputy Fire Marshal, to be the new town Fire Marshal.

a. Trevor Gantick, Fire Marshal

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to appoint Trevor Gantick, as the Town of Willington Fire Marshal, effective July 1, 2022.

Selectman Bulick seconded.

Discussion: First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that Trevor has been the Deputy Fire Marshal for the last three years and has stepped in when needed. Thank you Trevor for your willingness to step forward into this critical role for the town.

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

b. Richard Palmer, Deputy Fire Marshal

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to appoint Richard Palmer, as the Town of Willington Deputy Fire Marshal, effective July 1, 2022.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded.

Discussion: First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked Dick Palmer for his continued willingness to serve. Mr. Palmer thanked the town for the opportunity to serve.

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

C. Job Description for Senior Center Coordinator – Possible Action

The Senior Center Coordinator is a new position that has been added with ARPA funds. The Senior Center has had a volunteer who has run the Senior Center for the past few years but is now stepping down. This is a union, hourly position and would be for 25 hours a week (9:00am to 2:00pm). The draft job description includes this position as being the municipal agent of the elderly, as they would primarily be working with the seniors. Human Services Director J. Arpin inquired if the Willington Seniors, Inc. would be able to view the job description and offer input. Selectwoman Boritz & Selectman Bulick both agreed to table this until the next meeting.

D. Tax Refunds

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to refund CCAP Auto Leasing, LTD. a certificate of correction in the amount of \$264.99.

Selectman Bulick seconded the motion.

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

Old Business

A. Potential ARPA project – Employee Retention

The discussion continued on the employee retention bonus for the elected positions of treasurer and registrar of voters.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to award a one-time bonus of \$2,000.00 to each of the following current elected officials: Treasurer, Democratic Registrar of Voters and Republican Registrar of Voters with surplus funds from the FY21/22 budget contingent on ARPA approval of similar funds for non-elected officials.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded.

Discussion: The idea behind the proposal to the Board and the proposal to the ARPA Commission is to have the entire staff recognized. ARPA funding does not speak to giving elected officials pay, which is why this request is for the surplus funds from the FY 21/22 budget. The ARPA Commission is reviewing and discussing the paid staff bonuses at the next meeting on Monday, June 27th.

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

Present to Speak

Alex Moore, Chief of Willington Fire #1: I just want to thank Dick Palmer for all of his years as Fire Marshal for the town, as well as working with both departments.

Good & Welfare

The tax bills for the 2021 Grand List will be mailed out next week. Payment is due July 1, 2022; however, you have 30 days to pay without penalty. All payments must be received in our office by August 1st to avoid an interest penalty of 3%. Any paid bills received in our office before July 1, 2022 will not be posted until that day. The tax office will be closed to the public on June 30th to close the year and prepare for the July 1 tax cycle.

Mobile FoodShare will be at the TOB this Wednesday, June 22nd from 11:00am to 11:30am as a drive through model.

As always, please support our small businesses and restaurants in town. The new Flat Penny Kitchen (at the old River & Rail location) should be open soon!

As a reminder, next Thursday, June 30th will be the 100th Birthday of Herb Arico. Thank you to Herb and his family for joining us tonight to celebrate.

Selectman Bulick stated that he saw the Historical Society is looking for funding to make the Tavern ADA compliant; he was wondering if they submitted an ARPA request for that.

As a reminder, each individual board and commission makes the decision on their meetings, so if you have questions about their meetings, please contact the boards or commissions directly.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 PM.

Selectman Bulick seconded the motion.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Kelsey Allard

Recording Secretary

Town of Willington

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TOWN CLERK