

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
Hybrid; TOB, Common Room

December 19, 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: residents in person and Selectman Bulick and residents via Zoom.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve the minutes of December 5th, as presented. Selectman Bulick seconded.

2 Yes (Bulick & Wiecenski) 0 No. Motion carried.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve the special meeting minutes from December 6th, as presented.

Selectman Bulick seconded.

2 Yes (Bulick & Wiecenski) 0 No. Motion carried.

Present To Speak

John Blessington, 29 Mason Road: Mr. Blessington expressed his dismay for the town meeting last week and how voting was performed. He also stated that one individual in town, an elected official, said we have a right to know whose voting and whose on our side. Mr. Blessington stated that he took this as a threat that if you vote against the employees, they'll know about it. Mr. Blessington also expressed his displeasure that the last item on the agenda was not discussed in length and he stated this was the worst example of a town meeting. He requested that the town make voting by paper ballot the default for the town meeting items.

Peter Tanaka, 125 Mason Road: Mr. Tanaka stated that he is the Chairman of the Emergency Services Efficiency Committee and that he believes the Committee has accomplished what they set out to accomplish under the Committee's current formation. He suggested possibly a reform of the committee with fewer members that are made of one singular towns person as well as the chief and president of each department to keep the lines of communication open and to continue to work on the issues present.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that this will be added to a future agenda to review the charge for the Committee that came from the Selectmen.

Nick Tella, 49 Mirtl Road: Mr. Tella stated that it was concerning at the town meeting for one person to say they wanted to see who's with the people in the town. Mr. Tella stated that he would like to see the BOS discuss making sure none of the government elected officials have their families benefiting from property in town; no government person should have their family benefit from the town. Mr. Tella also stated that the town should have 24 hours of voting on town items to have more voices heard.

Stephanie Summers: Ms. Summers spoke in favor of Mike Makuch filling the term for Selectman with the BOS. Ms. Summers mentioned that Mr. Makuch has handled a plenty of issues that have arisen in the past, he is broadly known and he is well versed in town government.

Correspondence

No correspondence received as of last Friday.

First Selectwoman's Status Report

- A. STEAP Grant for OTH Septic:** The topographic survey needed on the project will be completed over the next few weeks with the town engineer.
- B. School Building Committee:** The School Building Committee met Wednesday, December 7th and discussed the impact to the mill rate for taxpayers for either of the projects. The Finance Subcommittee will be meeting this week to further prepare information to send out to the public. The Committee is holding community events to gather feedback on the project; the next upcoming event will be Wednesday at the Senior Center. A Public Forum will be held January 26, 2023, with a snow date of January 27. This will be the last large event prior to the SBC voting to move one of the options to a referendum; the referendum is being planned for early March. There will be two direct mailers sent with key information and meeting dates. The first mailer should go out this week and will include information to access a survey to help gather information prior to the February SBC regular meeting. The next School Building Committee meeting will be Wednesday, December 21st at 6:30pm.
- C. LOTCIP:** The Town is still awaiting CRCOG's review.
- D. Truck Lease:** This item is on tonight's agenda for discussion.
- E. ARPA:** The ARPA Commission met today and moved eleven items to a public hearing. The Public Hearing will be Monday, January 9th at 7:00pm here at the TOB, as well as via Zoom. The next ARPA meeting will need to be a special meeting due to the January Monday holidays.

Selectman Bulick inquired about an architect for the SBC that was put out to bid. First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated that QA&M was selected as the vendor and the information should be ready for mid-January. Selectman Bulick also inquired about the mailers that will be sent out to town residents.

Public Works

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

- Backfilled the edges on Moose Meadow Road;
- Installed curbing on Moose Meadow Road. This week the asphalt curbing and the looming will be finished and the road will be completed;
- Finished mowing the retention ponds;
- Roadside mowing is still continuing around town;
- Plowed the first snowstorm last week;
- Washed the trucks;

- Repaired minor issues on a few trucks post the first storm; and,
- Repaired a post for Parks & Rec at the River Road Park.

A. Status of Public Works Director Vehicle

Last Monday, the Town was notified that our 2022 model order that was placed July 1, 2021 was canceled. The Town cannot order a 2023 model as those vehicles have now closed for ordering. DPW Director Sposato and First Selectwoman Wiecenski met with two dealerships to help get information on the possible options. DPW Director Sposato has been working to find a new replacement vehicle. Monaco Ford has one diesel truck available, priced at \$66,985.00. Putnam Ford, Enfield Ford, and Family Ford have gas vehicles available. Ray Seraphin has a truck with a plow for \$51,200.00 but the vehicle is fueled by gasoline. Discussion has occurred on whether or not a replacement truck is necessary for the DPW Director or if the town can purchase a smaller, less expensive vehicle such as a Ford Explorer, although gas would still be an additional expense as it is not currently budgeted for in the current year's budget. Discussion continued on the need for a new vehicle for the DPW Director. Once further information is available for the leasing portion, the Town will move forward with a new vehicle.

Old Business

A. Board of Selectmen – Vacancy

The original process to fill a vacancy was 30 days for the Board to appoint a candidate to the Board of Selectmen, before that appointment moves to the town officers of the vacant party.

Matt Clark spoke to the Board and stated that he could contribute to the effective management of the town due to his prior work experience. Mr. Clark stated that he ran previously for the First Selectman position and received 710 votes. His goals would be to improve progress on financial management, CIP process, transparency, and town employee morale. He stated he would like to bring a focus to economic conditions in Willington, as well as view the town's grand list every year. Mr. Clark stated he presented the Economic Outlook for Connecticut to the BOF and would want to do the same work on the BOS. A suggestion that he made at the first BOF meeting he attended was to reserve assets that would need to be replaced or maintained. He also stated he would work with Jim & Erika on how the town budgets and how the town manages its reserve funds. Mr. Clark stated he had heard from numerous town employees and their families about employee morale and the BOS should reach out to employees and get their suggestions to improve the morale.

Mike Makuch thanked the Board for their consideration. Mr. Makuch spoke about his commitment to Willington and his service to the town over the years. He mentioned the assets that he feels he can bring to the table for the town, as well as his budget experience, HR experience, ethics training, and his experience as Board of Finance Chairman. Mr. Makuch explained his possible goals for the next 11 months on the Board and his extensive emergency services background. Mr. Makuch stated that he hoped to stay with the School Building Committee and to continue with due diligence; met questions based on merit opposed to politics. Would vote on BOS things based on what is right for the Town of Willington.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated this position is to fill a vacancy and would only be until the election in November 2023.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to appoint Mike Makuch as Selectman; effective December 20, 2022, expiring November 21, 2023, to fill a vacancy.
Selectman Bulick seconded.

Discussion: Selectman Bulick stated that having change on the BOF as we start on the budget season is disruptive to the town, and the school building committee is in a lot of turmoil and leadership has resigned, so with Mike leaving that committee it would cause more confusion on that committee.

1 Yes (Wiecenski) 1 No (Bulick). Motion carried.

Selectman Bulick moved to nominate Matt Clark to fulfill the vacancy until the next election to fill the vacancy of Selectman.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski seconded.

Discussion: Selectman Bulick stated that he liked the comments Matt made about bringing folks together and transparency and keeping a close eye on fiscal matters and that he has experience from having spent time on the BOF and EDC. Selectman Bulick stated that we also cannot discount the fact that Mr. Clark received 710 votes as First Selectman in the last election.

1 Yes (Bulick) 1 No (Wiecenski). Motion carried.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she was disappointed the Board could not fill the vacancy within the 30-day process. On December 31st, the time period will expire for the Board to fill the vacancy and at that point the Town Clerk will notify the elected town officers of the party of the vacancy for the next steps.

Selectman Bulick stated that he is also disappointed that there was no agreement and he thinks Mr. Makuch's absence from the Board of Finance and the School Building Committee would be at a critical time and would be very hard on the town. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that even with M. Makuch's absence from the BOF, the Board has many capable members that will be able to move forward.

Selectman Bulick asked to remind folks about the town officers and First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that it is herself and C. Psathas that are the elected town officers from the vacant party and they would make the appointment.

New Business

A. Appointments

a. Jennifer Miller – Town of Willington's Animal Control Officer

Jennifer Miller has been our interim Animal Control Officer; she was our main candidate during the interview process. Jen was an Assistant to T. Binheimer; she is also the Animal Control Officer in Stafford.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to appoint Jennifer Miller as the Town of Willington Animal Control Officer; effective January 1, 2023; expiring December 31, 2023.

Selectman Bulick seconded.

Discussion: Selectman Bulick inquired if J. Miller was licensed as an ACO. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated she is certified; she also had the knowledge of the town dog pound. Selectman Bulick inquired if it's the same amount of hours and First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that it's an on-call position.

2 Yes (Bulick & Wiecenski) 0 No. Motion carried.

Present to Speak

Peter Latincsics, 97 Trask Road: Mr. Latincsics wanted to express two concerns; he stated that the last Town meeting was not one of Willington's finest moments of the town. He stated he did not have any objections

to anyone's opinions; but people were shouting over people having the floor, there were people having cross conversations, there were people expressing their opinions of what may or may not have been said. He felt as though there was an angry group of town employees at that meeting and their behavior was unacceptable. His second concern is that the Selectmen were not able to come together to fill the vacancy on the BOS.

Ralph Tulis: Mr. Tulis asked for the explanation of the STEAP and LOTCIP projects. He voiced his thoughts on the DPW truck and to ask if they'll take the plow off if the town doesn't want it. Mr. Tulis stated that if M. Makuch is appointed to fill the Selectman's vacancy, he would no longer be a BOF member and would lose his position as the BOF representative on the School Building Committee. Mr. Tulis stated M. Makuch is a very valuable asset for the Committee and it would be a loss.

First Selectwoman Wicewski explained that STEAP is a grant to put in a septic system at the Old Town Hall and LOTCIP is for the sidewalk project from Hall School to the Mills on Route 32.

Stef Summers, 4 Y Road: Ms. Summers stated that when someone is putting their hat in the race for a new position, that they are well qualified for and have the inclination to make that move, it is generally bad to say it would create issues for the position they are currently in. Ms. Summers stated there are experienced people on the Board of Finance and she has faith in the process.

Good & Welfare

- A. Mobile Food Share will be here this Wednesday, December 21st from 11am - 11:30am. As a reminder, this is open to all Willington residents, as well as residents from other towns in Connecticut.
- B. Please continue to support our small businesses and restaurants, if you can.
- C. The School Building Committee will be holding the next Committee Engagement Event on Wednesday, December 21st from 1:00 to 2:00pm at the Senior Center.
- D. The Annual Tree Lighting was a wonderful event again this year. Thank you to the Parks & Recreation Department for sponsoring the event, the Human Services Department for their participation and to Walt & Linda West for the decorating of the Town tree on the Green and for jumping in whenever is necessary. Thank you to all who helped sponsor and decorate the trees that the Parks & Rec's Department donated.
- E. Shout out to Willington Fire Department #1 for their holiday spirit and participating in out of town holiday events this season. They won first place at the Tolland Light Parade.
- F. A reminder, that the Town Office Building will be closed Monday, December 26 in recognition of the Christmas holiday and again on Monday, January 2nd in recognition of New Year's Day.
- G. As a reminder, the second installment of real estate property taxes, personal property taxes, and the supplemental motor vehicle taxes are coming due. The supplemental motor vehicle taxes will be mailed out shortly. The final day to pay without interest is Wednesday, February 1st, 2023.
- H. First Selectwoman Wicewski wants to wish you all a happy holiday. Tonight is the second night of Hanukkah and we wish all those celebrating a joyous and peaceful season. Merry Christmas to

those who celebrate and a very Happy New Year to all. We hope that no matter what celebration you observe, you and your family have a safe and healthy holiday season.

Selectman Bulick stated a happy Hanukkah and Merry Christmas to all.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 PM.

Selectman Bulick seconded the motion.

2 Yes (Bulick & Wiecenski) 0 No. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelsey Allard

Recording Secretary

Town of Willington

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WILLINGTON, CT.

2022 DEC 29 P 1:59


TOWN CLERK