

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

Board of Selectmen
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Meeting Minutes
Lower Level Conference Room

March 2, 2020
6:30 PM

**Minutes are not official until approved at the next regular meeting*

First Selectwoman Wiecenski called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM with the following in attendance: Selectman Blessington and residents. Selectwoman Boritz was absent.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes:

First Selectwoman Wiecenski clarified that there was an error in the posting of the minutes last week; where the last two pages of the actual minutes were missing and an incorrect scan was added. The documentation has since been corrected, republished on the website and sent out via e-blast today. She apologized for any confusion in the event of multiple publications but she wanted to make sure everyone got the complete/correct version.

**First Selectwoman Wiecenski Selectman moved to table the approval of minutes.
Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.**

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that Selectwoman Boritz is not here due to illness.

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Blessington) 0 No

Present to Speak

Todd Bissonnette asked what an eblast is. First Selectwoman Wiecenski explained that the eblast is the terminology used for the public notices that are sent out. She then explained how to sign up for public notices on the town's website: willingtonct.org; where residents can subscribe to minutes and public notices.

Mr Bissonnette then asked if the notification of the newly posted minutes show that they were revised. First Selectwoman Wiecenski clarified that the minutes were not altered, and did not want to confuse anyone.

Ralph Tulis stated that he had sent First Selectwoman Wiecenski an email in regards to the charge of the SBC and is hopeful that she will take some of his comments into consideration. Mr. Tulis added that Hall Memorial School sits in a historic district; which may open the door to possible additional renovation funding. He said he has stated before that the school is a gem and it is over 100 years old – he would hate to see it become abandoned by the town and suggested that it might find its way to becoming administrative offices for the BOE if no longer used as a school. He is hopeful the town will take his suggestions into serious consideration.

Mr. Tulis then stated that he has concerns regarding the charge considerably leaning towards only building a new school. It does not explicitly say anything about other possible considerations as far as the buildings

are concerned. – This troubles him; knowing what the enrollment is; we might be able to make something work with what we have rather than build a new building.

Lastly, Mr. Tulis noted that we are not going to be able to get an accurate cost estimate for a new school without having a site. Anything up to that point is a guesstimate and that troubles him as well.

Elaine Newcomb presented documentation regarding the historic district to the Selectmen that she obtained from Wikipedia and stated that she has many concerns about a new build; her greatest concerns are about the fiscal health of this town as well as the state; noting she does not think the availability is going to be there for the state to pick a lot of this stuff up. We have 2 schools and either of them should be able to accommodate our population. Ms. Newcomb added that her understanding is the Selectmen's budget is representing an 11.6% increase and the BOE budget was presented at a 3.25% increase; noting that she does not think times are good in Willington.

Ms. Newcomb then suggested for future meetings, the Selectmen should consider giving handouts or show a projection of their discussions (for example the charge of the SBC); so the audience can read along. It is frustrating when the Selectmen are discussing the wording of "item 5" and the residents are not able to understand what they are talking about until after the minutes have been posted.

Selectman Blessington said 2 months ago (as of tomorrow); he was rushed to the hospital. He said he wants to thank the ambulance crew and both Fire Departments for their speed and professionalism in getting him there. He also thanked the residents for the well wishes, cards and visits- everyone has been very nice to him. Robin Campbell and First Selectwoman Wiecenski welcomed Selectman Blessington back.

Correspondence

A list of Correspondence was available for the Selectmen.

Status Report

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that she will be touching on the items on the agenda and moved to the next item on the agenda.

Public Works

Troy Sposato was present. He reported that the crew has been busy with the following:

- Cleaning out waterways around Town
- Patched holes around Town
- Working on repairs on the sweeper and getting the sweeper ready for the season
- Installed a new mail slot in the tax collectors door
- Repaired door in the clerk's office
- Meeting with DEEP in Hartford about fuel tank removal
- Trash at RRRC
- Monthly inspections of fire extinguisher at Public Works
- Installed new rocks at the end of Mirtl Rd and Clint Eldredge Rd

New Business

- A. Discussion – Replacement of Fuel Tank at Public Works

Last week, First Selectwoman Wiecenski mentioned at the meeting that DEEP had informed us that they were going to be at Public Works on the following day to red-tag the fuel tank because it has reached it's end of life (30 years old). First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that the replacement tank is in this year's CIP plan and we were awarded STEAP funding last August, but have been waiting on the DOT to process a contract for us to utilize the funding to begin the removal of the tank and adding a replacement tank as well as erecting a new salt shed.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that DEEP was kind enough to let us know they would be here on Tuesday, so we were able to fuel our trucks, buses and emergency vehicles. She noted that she and Troy attended an appeal hearing at DEEP on Thursday to plead our case. As an outcome of the meeting; an agreement was drafted and we were granted an extension until March 20th; however we need to have a contract in place and signed by that date or it will be shut down. She clarified by having a contract in place will allow us to begin the removal of the fuel tank and install a replacement. Since we signed the agreement; DEEP has come back out and unlocked the tanks; which allows us to use the fuel that is currently in the tanks. Troy estimates that we have a little over a month's worth of fuel. First Selectwoman Wiecenski said that she asked the BOF to hold an emergency meeting after their special budget meeting last week; asking them to appropriate the funds from the CIP project so we may begin the process of Town Meeting. We already knew we were going to call a Town Meeting for the two roof projects at Center and Hall School. This will allow us to move quickly in accordance with DEEP's requirements of getting a contract signed by March 20th. She added that she is concerned if we only sign a contract that allows the tank to come out of the ground; we won't have a replacement to go in it's place and the STEAP funds might not become available in the timeframe we need; but DEEP has given us a deadline of October 1, 2020 (if we have a signed contract) to remove it.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that our Business Manager Donna Latincics looked through the budget and believes we have enough funds to cover the entire replacement; so we don't have to rely on STEAP funding for the removal and replacement. In the meantime, Troy is seeking bids for the project and has received one already from KROPP Environmental that includes several options. The highest bid came in at \$186,693; and he is looking at another option that comes in at around \$170,000. First Selectwoman Wiecenski anticipates she will be looking to go before the BOF to seek transfers to get the remaining \$70,000 to complete the project. We are looking at replacing the tank with an above ground tank and we should not have any more issues once the new tank is in place.

Selectman Blessington noted that we have known this was coming for a while. First Selectwoman Wiecenski agreed that we knew we would have to do this and Troy had come to her about the same time DOT was getting ready to award the STEAP funds last year; but we were waiting on the funding. She had also talked to a representative at DOT who had apologized for the hold up on their end to get the contract moving. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted what she does not want to do is just sign a contract to get the fuel tank removed without having a replacement plan in place.

B. Call Town Meeting

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to call the town meeting:

**TOWN OF WILLINGTON
NOTICE AND WARNING
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING**

The electors of the Town of Willington and all persons who are entitled to vote in Town Meeting on the matters mentioned in the following warning are hereby warned and notified to meet in Town Meeting at Old Town Hall; 11 Common Road, Willington, at 7:00 P.M. on Wednesday, March 11, 2020 for the following purpose:

ITEM I

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen, will adopt a resolution to establish a school building committee for the Center School partial roof replacement project.

ITEM II

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen, will adopt a resolution to authorize at least the preparation of schematic drawings and specifications for the Center School partial roof replacement project.

ITEM III

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen, will adopt a resolution that authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to apply to the Commissioner of the Department of Administrative Services to accept or reject a grant for the Center School partial roof replacement project.

ITEM IV

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Finance, will authorize the appropriation of \$448,350 from the Capital Reserve Fund for the Center School partial roof replacement project.

ITEM V

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen, will adopt a resolution to establish a school building committee for the Hall Memorial School roof replacement project.

ITEM VI

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen, will adopt a resolution to authorize at least the preparation of schematic drawings and specifications for the Hall Memorial School roof replacement project.

ITEM VII

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen, will adopt a resolution that authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to apply to the Commissioner of the Department of Administrative Services to accept or reject a grant for the Hall Memorial School roof replacement project.

ITEM VIII

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Finance, will authorize the appropriation of \$605,050 from the Capital Reserve Fund for the Hall Memorial School roof replacement project.

ITEM IX

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Finance, will authorize the appropriation of \$100,000 from Capital Projects Fund – LoCIP for the Public Works Underground Diesel Tank Replacement to be reimbursed by the State of Connecticut Local Capital Improvement Program.

Dated at Willington, this 2nd day of March, 2020, Willington Board of Selectmen.
Selectwoman Blessington seconded the motion.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted the reason there are so many questions on the agenda is due to state requirements for us to apply for reimbursement from a school construction grant; and there are 2 separate projects; requiring their own set of 4 questions.

Selectman Blessington asked how much we have in the Capital Reserve Fund? First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that she is not sure of the exact number but clarified that these projects were in the approved CIP Plan and less what was spent on the roof patching already. – These items were already factored into the budget. Selectman Blessington noted that we do need to maintain the roofs that we currently have.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that the date we chose to hold the meeting was so we could move forward and allow time to get a contract signed before the deadline assigned from the State.

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Blessington) 0 No.

Old Business

A. School Building Committee – Discuss Submissions of Candidates Appointments & Charge

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that the Selectmen did not discuss any of the candidates at the last meeting; noting that they were anticipating Selectman Blessington's return and felt it would be important for the full board to discuss. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that she was made aware around 5PM that Selectwoman Boritz would not be here tonight due to illness; therefore they might want to wait until the next meeting to discuss.

A draft charge was presented and discussed at the last meeting; and also attached to the last meeting minutes when they were posted. First Selectwoman Wiecenski clarified that the second page of the draft; (which showed an agenda) was a working document, drafted back in October when we began looking at a School Building Committee – it was not part of the draft charge. Ralph Tulis clarified that it was not presented at the meeting; but rather included in the minutes. First Selectwoman Wiecenski agreed; noting that no alterations were made to the document and the Selectmen chose not to discuss at the last meeting.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski said that we can table the discussion one more week until we have a full board. She then clarified that item D1 does not say a new school; it defines *a pre k-grade 8 school to meet Willington's educational needs in cooperation with the Board of Education*. – this is the language we took to Town Meeting specifically so we did not pigeon hole ourselves into a new school on a new site – it rather gives us the opportunity to work either way; even if it is renovating one of the schools. The Committee will decide on what is best.

Selectman Blessington noted that item D2 reads: *Recommending a competent architectural and engineering and other appropriate services for the preparation of plans and specifications for constructing, furnishing, and equipping the school*. He stated he does not like the word constructing; which, to him; reads as “building new”. First Selectwoman Wiecenski clarified that the word “construction” would apply with a renovation project; noting in the Friar Study that was done, it spelt out the options. Moving everyone to one building would require renovation and construction. Selectman Blessington stated the way he reads it as “constructing” is different than “construction”. Constructing means to build and he thinks we need to find a different word for that.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that she would also like to add wording to number 5; which reads: *Finding and recommending a site to meet school construction and Town needs if necessary*. She noted that item may or may not be needed in a renovation project. Selectman Blessington was in agreement.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted item 10 should be reworded to read: *Identify potential future uses of the two current school facilities if a new site is chosen*. She added even if we went to one building; we would have to look at either one of them. She understands that we do not own Hall School; if we end up no longer using it as a school; but she doesn't think it precludes us from entering into holding a conversation with the Hall Foundation about potential uses. She clarified that we need to look at all of the potential uses.

Selectman Blessington asked if anyone has spoken with the Hall Foundation about the possibilities. Superintendent Stevens said yes he has spoken with them. Selectman Blessington then asked if he could say anything that was taken from the conversation without disclosing too much? Superintendent Stevens noted that they (the Hall Foundation) does not want to see the building torn down – that is why it was taken off of the list of options from the study. The Hall Foundation values the building and would like to ensure it will have some use. They would like to be involved in the conversation and thought process if it is no longer to be used as a school; if it comes to that. Selectman Blessington asked if they want the building back if it is no longer used as a school? Superintendent Stevens noted that he thinks it might strap them financially if returned to them. First Selectwoman Wiczenski noted that she believes they would like to see the building be used. Selectman Blessington said that is a good idea to take into account of future plans and to know where we stand before we begin. He added that we should have a plan to save it because it is a beautiful building. First Selectwoman Wiczenski noted that she believes people are connected to Hall School and will want to see it have future usage.

Selectman Blessington noted that he would like to wait until we have a full board to discuss this further.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski noted that the list of appointments have been submitted to the Selectmen and asked Selectman Blessington if he had a chance to review. Selectman Blessington noted he would also like to table until we have a full board; which will give him more time. First Selectwoman Wiczenski noted that the Board of Education was at a deadlock on the nomination to represent them. The BOE voted to send two people to serve on the SBC; however we only have one seat for them on the board. We can tell them to only send us one name or we can decide to make two seats on the 11 member board; making it 12 instead. Selectman Blessington said we will have to discuss that.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski moved to table items A & B of old business.

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiczenski & Blessington) 0 No.

Present to Speak

Maureen Lowechoalee welcomed Selectman Blessington back. She then told Selectman Blessington that she submitted information to the Selectmen and Board of Education regarding CREC project management and opportunities that might be available to the town a few weeks ago. She will be sending an electronic copy as well and make sure he has seen it.

Ms. Lowechoalee added that Eastconn CREC has cooperative purchasing - they offer above and beyond competitive pricing on gas, oil tanks, etc. The Town will also be eligible to get pricing. They offer free consultation and is available in the regional area. She noted that she will also send information to the Selectmen for that as well. First Selectwoman Wiczenski noted that we have a similar resource through CRCOG.

Superintendent Stevens noted that he will have the Board of Education add the nomination of SBC member in their next agenda.

Elaine Newcomb stated that there seems to be added confusion with the school building committee; now that there have been two names submitted from the BOE – if they add that additional member, it will now make the board an even number of voting members; and they might want to take that into consideration before deciding on that. First Selectwoman Wiczenski then clarified if that extra member were added; would make the board a 12 member board with 11 voting members; clarifying that the Ex-officio (Superintendent) is a non-voting member. Ms. Newcomb then asked to go over the list again. First Selectwoman Wiczenski noted the board would be designed as follows:

- * First Selectman or his / her designee
- * 1 Member of the Board of Finance
- * 1 member of the Board of Education
- * Superintendent Ex-officio
- * 1 BOE Staff member
- * 1 member that has construction industry experience (as required by the state)
- * 5 members at large

Ms. Newcomb asked what the definition of construction experience is? First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that it is vague. She added that we have some more than qualified candidates who have applied.

Maureen Lowechoalee then stated that Selectman Blessington's earlier reference under the SBC charge; noting the wording constructing is defined as brand new renovation; so you will have to find a spot to add wording of construction and renovating – it has to have both words in it to have either or to open the area either way.

Good & Welfare

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she cannot be happier to have Selectman Blessington back with us and is on the mend.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that she received a note from an individual who owns property in Willington named Louise Colli shared her positive reactions with Town employees. Ms. Colli noted that she has had wonderful interaction with various departments at the TOB and everyone has been very helpful to her. We often hear things that do not go right; but she went out of her way to let us know that the staff here really helped. First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked Ms. Colli for sharing that.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked Ms. Kelly's first grade class at Center School for having her at Read Across America Day. It was a great day to start the week!

This Thursday, the Selectmen's budget will go before the Board of Finance on March 5th.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that our Treasurer has resigned. Her last day was February 28th. Neither party has brought forth a candidate as of yet. We are looking at what we can do in the interim; however whoever fills the position must be a resident in Willington. We are hopeful someone will come forward – if anyone is interested, please let us know.

We had a resident come in and complain about ATV's and dirt bikes riding around town – now that the weather is turning better. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that she is looking into some avenues to try to stop the activity. There is a certain area on Mirl Road where they are trespassing. We are keeping an eye on that.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:21 PM.

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Blessington) 0 No.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Campbell
Office Manager
Town of Willington