

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN Special Meeting Minutes

Board of Selectmen
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**Town Office Building
Selectmen's Conference Room**

**March 9, 2020
6:30 PM**

First Selectwoman Wiecenski called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM with Selectman Blessington & residents. Selectwoman Boritz was absent.

A. Discuss and Appoint Temporary Treasurer

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that our Treasurer resigned on February 28th and had given us several weeks' notice. Both of the Democratic and Republican Town Committees were made aware and we were hopeful both would find a replacement; however no one has come forward. She also noted that this has always been a very difficult position to fill.

In the meantime, First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated many suggestions have been given to her; noting that this position must be filled by someone who is a resident; per Town Ordinance. She added that we have a resident; who is also a union employee, offer to take on the position temporarily (on a 3 months basis) and do the bare minimum to get us through. She clarified that the bare minimum will be bank requisitions, monthly reports; maintaining appropriate balances, (to cover outgoing bills) and distributing treasurer payments; such as Simple IRA and Health Savings Accounts.

Because this involves a union employee, a Memorandum of Agreement; noting that the employee will be taking on additional work; with no additional pay from the union position; but rather a stipend of the treasurer's salary. The agreement will only be in effect for three months. The individual is Tish Ignatowicz and she is not looking to do both jobs; but noted that she understands that we currently have a need.

The MOU also has an "outclause" either the employee or the Town could walk away from this before the three month period is up. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted by having the MOU in place will give us a little more time to see if someone will come forward as well as give the Selectmen an opportunity to see where we want to go – perhaps we might want to look at changing the position from being elected; thus needing to change the Ordinance – and that would be a bigger conversation at a different time.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski then noted that we did not add a "present to speak" item on the agenda; noting that there were some residents in attendance; but was open to holding discussions as long as Selectman Blessington was in agreement. Selectman Blessington was.

Selectman Blessington asked if the union is not going to try to take advantage of this on the MOU. First Selectwoman Wiecenski clarified that the MOU is very clearly spelled out; lining up the work items the employee will do; noting that either party can back out before June 10th (noting that would be the three month mark if it were voted on tonight). The agreement then goes on to say it shall not exceed the June 10th date; and the town should continue to seek a replacement Treasurer.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski then clarified that Ms. Ignatowicz will not be doing the full work of the Treasurer; and it is going to involve the Finance office; which is something we have been trying to separate; but we also know it is a critical function – and we can't just have anybody doing it. Selectman Blessington noted the fact that it is a critical position – he isn't overly happy with it; but cannot come up with a better solution at this time.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski said that we worked hard with Diane to separate the functions; but no one has come forward and we can't make anyone do it. The language that is currently read in the Ordinance “ *the Town Treasurer shall hold office for the term for which he or she is elected and until his or her successor is elected and has qualified* ” is unrealistic. Selectman Blessington noted that the way he understands it is that the current Treasurer's name should remain on the checks until replaced.

Jim Bulick was present. He noted that ideally the Treasurer moves the money around and reconcile the statements but you will want someone else to come in and do the accounting tasks. He warned that the Treasurer should not have any access to the journal or accounting entries. The separation point is very important; you could have someone a cancer or crumbling foundation diagnosis away from temptation and you don't want that. Mr. Bulick then stated that it is also very important to keep the new financial software moving forward as well. First Selectwoman Wiecenski agreed; noting that as of July 1st the Finance office will be implementing the new software; which will add one more level of insanity to that department; so as you can imagine; there are a lot of moving pieces in that department. She added that we have had a temp working down there ;who was hired in the fall; and working on separated functions between the Treasurer and the Fiscal office; however she is not a resident. Mr. Bulick then asked if the temp would be able to reconciling the statements. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that would have to be done by the Treasurer, who must be a resident; however state statute notates that the Treasurer can appoint a deputy; (and our Ordinance does not reference one; therefore there is no requirement of being a non-resident); however the deputy must be appointed by the Treasurer; not the Selectmen. First Selectwoman Wiecenski clarified that this is not the most ideal option; but it is the only one that makes sense; as we are going into our second week without a Treasurer.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she encourages both political parties and asks them to spread the word to see if anyone wants to come forward. We all know that both sides are working on it; but there is not an overabundance coming forward. By having the MOU in place will give us some time. In the meantime, she noted that it could also give the Selectmen time to discuss the possibility of changing it from elected to appointed. It would require holding a town meeting. Selectman Blessington stated that is not up for discussion tonight; but should be discussed at a future Selectmen's meeting. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she agrees; noting that this gives us the opportunity to speak and while this isn't the first option she would choose; it has given us an option of getting very basic / minimal functions going so we can make sure there is money in the bank to cover our payments.

Selectman Blessington said we do not necessarily need someone with a MBA or a degree in Accounting; although it would be the best thing. First Selectwoman Wiecenski agreed; but noted although it has a job description, it's an elected position. Selectman Blessington said that we don't have to look for someone with a master's degree in accounting; and should get the word out – maybe someone will realize they fit the position after all.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to appoint Tish Ignatowicz as interim Treasurer; effective March 9, 2020; not to exceed after three months or June 10, 2020.
Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski reiterated that we have a MOU that will handle the union's perspective and will move forward with it. In the event someone comes forward before that; we will move away from this. She then thanked Ms. Ignatowicz for offering to help out – this was something that came up in a side conversation.

The minimal functions that will be done (reconcile bank accounts, maintain appropriate balances for all bank accounts; provide monthly reports, and distribute Treasurer payments as required). First Selectwoman Wiecenski

then clarified that the payments are HSA and IRA payments. She then noted that Ms. Ignatowicz would then be able to appoint a deputy to assist her. Mr. Bulick noted that the MOU could be altered to omit certain things if the Selectmen see fit. First Selectwoman Wiecenski clarified that the MOU is between the union position and the Treasurer position. It would not have any authority of the work of the Treasurer. Mr. Bulick suggested adding boundaries. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that we did with the minimum tasks that are noted on the agreement and within the department.

Selectman Blessington then clarified that the union agrees that the items on the agreement are not covered by the union. First Selectwoman Wiecenski states that it really speaks of the work she is doing in the union. Selectman Blessington then asked if we could cut one of those tasks before we appoint her? First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she will need to be doing functions of the Treasurer. She added what she believes the functions on the accounting side are being questioned. She then cautioned that we currently have three employees in the Finance office; a Payroll Coordinator; Business Manager and Account Analyst. If we were to take away all of those functions and put on to one of the other employees, we are looking at a different union issue with the payroll coordinator and the Business Director is not able to take on any extra work. Selectman Blessington then asked if any of the work can go to the Temp? First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that she does not know if the union would agree to give work to a Temp; clarifying if we were to give all of the work Tish does down there to a temp; we would essentially be taking her job away. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that she certainly hears the concerns that Mr. Bulick is bringing up; it is certainly why no one entertained prior to because it would be mixing the pot and back to where we were in the first place. We can look at how to do a different way of accounting in this timeframe; possibly looking into having an audit done when it is over. She added that she does not think the union would agree in giving a union employees work away. Selectman Blessington agreed and noted that he knows the union would not want that. He added that it is not the best solution but the only one we have right now so we will have to go along with it.

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

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she will add this to the regular agenda for the next meeting to discuss further.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:53 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:
Robin Campbell
Office Manager

TOWN OF WILLINGTON, CT
Received for record 03/10/2020
At 1:55pm Amy R. J. [Signature]