

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

Board of Selectmen
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Meeting Minutes
Lower Level Conference Room

February 5, 2018
6:30 P.M.

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

First Selectwoman Wiecenski called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM with the following in attendance:
Selectmen Makuch & Blessington and residents. First Selectwoman Wiecenski led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes:

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve the special minutes of January 16, 2018 at 5:00 PM
Selectwoman Makuch seconded the motion.

Vote: 3 Yes (Wiecenski, Makuch & Blessington) 0 No.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve the regular meeting minutes of January 16, 2018 at
6:30 PM

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

Vote: 3 Yes (Wiecenski, Makuch & Blessington) 0 No.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve the minutes of January 23, 2018 at 6:00 PM

Selectwoman Makuch seconded the motion.

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Blessington) 0 No 1 Abstain (Makuch)

Present to Speak:

Tom Buccino, who owns the Mill Works property on Route 32 was in attendance. He expressed his concern about the traffic study that was performed on the stretch of road in that area. Mr. Buccino stated that he has had several conversations with the Selectmen's office in the past regarding the traffic flow, speed and failure to yield to pedestrians who are crossing the road.

Some time, over the summer, the First Selectman (at the time) had sent a letter to the State Traffic Administration to request a reduction in speed heading southbound on Route 32 and increased signage to enforce the speed as well as encourage knowledge of the upcoming of the crosswalk to oncoming traffic. Mr. Buccino added that the neighboring Federated Church and Hall School also have similar issues as well.

In the past, the Mill Works has tried to in traffic calming procedures such as requesting police presence and adding cones to outline the crosswalk. While the police presence seemed to have the most success, it is not a regular occurrence. Mr. Buccino added that they find that the traffic does not slow much for the cones.

After reading the study that was performed, Mr. Buccino stated he was surprised that the OSTA not only denied the request to reduce the speed limit, they recommended increasing the speed limit on each side of the road. He added that several of the residents and occupants of the Mill Works are in disapproval and have signed a petition in opposition of the report.

Pastor Keith Anderson, who was representing St. Pauls Church was also in attendance and supported Mr. Buccino's statements. He added that it has become troublesome for residents to try to cross the road, as traffic does not even slow down; adding that he has had several conversations with the Pastor of the neighboring Federated Church, who also deals with the same issues. He stated that something needs to be done because even people who try to cross the street to get to the school have issues and it is a dangerous situation.

Alice Cassells noted that the Federated Church has also found it to be a dangerous situation while trying to cross the street from their parking lot.

Selectman Blessington said he thought the Federated Church had a crossing guard. Ms. Cassells said they no longer have a crossing guard (with the exception of the VBS event in the summer), but rather use cones to try to slow the traffic on a regular basis.

Tom Buccino added that the Mill Works area has recently been listed on the CT State register of historic places as well as the National Historic Register. As a result of the VCI study preparations into the Register, one of the recommendations was to add traffic calming measures and make the area more pedestrian friendly. Mr. Buccino stated that alone should serve as enough justification to request for the town to reconsider the findings of the study.

Mr. Buccino then submitted a letter to the Board of Selectmen to incorporate in with the discussions under item New Business A.

Correspondence:

A list of correspondence was available at the meeting and in the Selectman's office.

First Selectman Status Report

First Selectwoman Wicewski noted that we have now received LoCIP funding from the state and will be able to begin some of the projects that were waiting on funding, especially towards spring when the weather turns.

Public Works:

Derek reported that the crew has been busy with the following:

- Make sand/salt mix
- Vehicle/equipment repair
- Cleaning vehicles
- Push up salt deliveries
- Back blade gravel roads with backhoe
- Dig out swale on Sharps Mill to keep water off road to prevent icing
- Plowing & sanding of roads municipal lots and sidewalk
- Road side brush and tree removal
- Frame in door between Assessors office and Town Clerk

New Business

A. OSTA study review – Route 32

First Selectwoman Wiecenski continued the discussion on the report from the Office of the State Traffic Administration; which was completed in December. She clarified when she received the phone call from OSTA, it was during her first week in office and did not have much background at that time.

She did note that one of the suggestions was that the Traffic Administration had stated that they would like to move the signs in the area around and closer to the mills. She added that the biggest issue is that we are dealing with a State road. She clarified although she is the LTA (Local Traffic Authority); that mostly pertains to our local roads, not the State roads. The area in question is North of Fisher Hill Road; and the speed limit will stay the same coming down the road (heading away from the mills); but they found that the existing speed limit signs are in a different placement of where they should be; noting that the marking is currently not accurate (even though it has been that way for the past 30 years) and we have now brought attention to the matter. - They are simply adjusting the signs for the speed limits that are there.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she can contact the OSTA again and ask them to reconsider changing the speed limit in that area based on the concerns of the residents and business owners. She added that there are things we can do to deter the traffic, noting that some things have already been done before – and police presence seems to work best, but we do not have a police force. She then added that the solar “your speed limit” signs are available, but they do come at a cost. Selectwoman Makuch stated that those signs are not always effective in changing the habits of drivers; noting it may not do much to help.

Ms. Cassells stated that it would be helpful to have State Police presence in the area. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that is not always an option to us. Selectwoman Makuch added that we can look at other options for traffic calming rather than spending money on signage that might not work. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that the “your speed limit” signs might work for a little while, until they figure out there is no surveillance associated with it.

Mr. Buccino said that a combination of the flashing speed limit signs and having a random police officer running radar might be more effective.

Pastor Anderson suggested adding signage near the crosswalk areas might help as well.

Selectman Blessington said he feels the best way to slow the traffic for pedestrians would be to add a crossing guard in the area. He suggested it has worked in the past for the Federated Church.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski then read a letter from Chris Gunderson (a longtime resident/ member of the Millworks) who is also concerned about the traffic in the area (letter is attached to the minutes).

Selectwoman Makuch said she feels that there are several things we can do, in addition to signage and requesting police presence. A few ideas may be to contact the state and request for them to paint triangles in the road in the pedestrian walk ways to interrupt traffic flow and bring attention to the area or to add flags near the crosswalks. She will draft some ideas and have them for the next meeting. Some of the items are things we, on a local level will be able to do; and others that we will have to request to the State.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that she will reach out to the Office of State Traffic Administration and the Board will look into this further and will bring to a future meeting.

B. Discussion – CIP Potential project change

First Selectwoman Wiecenski said during the CIP meetings this year, they have been discussing items that were approved and on the CIP plan for the 17-18 fiscal year that was approved by BOS, BOF and then voted on at town meeting. The project is for the Board of Education; pertaining to the exterior trim, doors and pillars at Hall School in the amount of \$18,740; but the school has found another project that has become more urgent.

The school would like to use the funding to cover the cost of a heating issue in lieu of the pillar project. First Selectwoman Wiczenski noted that these CIP projects fall under the Board of Selectmen; therefore is why she is bringing it up for discussion. She then clarified that it would be changing the plan, not the dollar amount and it is for something that recently came up that needs attention.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated that she wanted to check with the Selectmen to see if it is ok with them; noting that she is not comfortable without having backing from her board. She noted that this is an unusual circumstance and the BOE is saying although they still want to have the pillar project done, another issue has come up that needs to be funded first. Selectwoman Makuch asked if it is OK to change the plan, even though it was voted on by the residents. First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated that she believes yes, because it is in the Board of Selectmen's budget in the Capital projects fund (although the dollar amount was approved by the Board of Finance). She added that if the new item were to be approved in the 18-19 fiscal year, it would just get done then, but Dr. Jacobi is going to be talking to her board about this and did not want it to be a surprise to the Selectmen if and when the request comes in.

Selectman Blessington said he gets nervous because this has gone through a process and was needed at the time and all of a sudden something else has taken priority. First Selectwoman Wiczenski was in agreement, but clarified that we have a 100 year old school, and things can happen at any given moment unexpectedly; and in this instance, it has to do with heating the building; which is a necessity, in her opinion. She then stated it was presented to CIP knowing it needed to be done; thinking it could wait until next fiscal year; however it has become more urgent that it be done now. Selectman Blessington cautioned that we usually find money to cover something that is considered an emergency and would like it handled that way instead.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski's argument was that the BOE is trying to be more fiscally conservative by trading off the projects instead of asking for more funding.

Selectwoman Makuch said she would like to see if there are funds available to cover emergency situations. She added that her concern is changing something that was voted on by multiple streams. She then asked if we can legitimately say we are changing the plan – even if it is completely justified; which seems to be the case. She added that if we have an emergency fund, and that is what it is being used for, we should use it rather than potentially do something out of sorts.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski clarified that she just wanted the Board to be aware of the discussion; noting that the heating project was added to the CIP for fiscal 18-19; however the project has become more urgent and would like to put off the other project (even though it is important, too). She stated that she will keep the Board posted as things progress.

Selectman Blessington cautioned that the CIP Plan is a vehicle that should be used for planning projects up the pike, and this is how it was handled. He added that CIP is not to be used as an emergency fund. First Selectwoman Wiczenski noted that we do have an emergency fund, but Dr. Jacoby was trying not to use it and use funds that have already approved. The BOE meeting is next Tuesday, so they should have more information to be shared after that.

C. Tax Refunds

First Selectwoman Wiczenski moved to refund \$253.90 to Joyce Wilkins; 28 Cemetery Road on a certificate of correction.

Selectwoman Makuch seconded the motion

Vote: 3 Yes (Wiczenski, Makuch & Blessington) 0 No.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski moved to refund \$3,020.29 to Wells Fargo/(Struzynski & Fisher) for an overpayment.

Selectwoman Makuch seconded the motion

Vote: 3 Yes (Wiecenski, Makuch & Blessington) 0 No.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to refund \$4,215.01 to Corelogic/(Hurley) for an overpayment.

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion

Vote: 3 Yes (Wiecenski, Makuch & Blessington) 0 No.

Old Business

A. Crumbling Foundation Update

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she will be touring homes with a representative of the Department of Housing on February 14th. Details are forthcoming.

B. Budget Update

The Selectmen will be holding a budget workshop immediately following this meeting. So far the budget is showing an overall decrease, however the Town Clerks budget has now been incorporated into the Selectmen's budget, so it will show increase (but a decrease elsewhere) and will balance out. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she will explain it in detail to the Board of Finance when it is being presented in March.

C. Video taping of meetings

Selectwoman Makuch had sent a draft to the Selectmen regarding the videotaping of the meetings. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted some typos in the policy (housekeeping) and fixed them.

Selectman Blessington stated that he finally had a chance to review the draft and had a question regarding #7 "a witness has the right to refuse testifying during an interview" – he clarified that it is a public meeting; therefore anyone who wishes to speak at a meeting, needs to take into consideration they are speaking in a public meeting.

Selectwoman Makuch stated that there are two facets to the policy; one is where the official video is being taped by a person selected by the Town and the other is a set of rules for someone who would come in as a third party to a meeting and record on their own. Selectman Blessington noted that anyone can come into any meeting and record, as long as they are not disrupting.

Selectman Blessington then noted that he asked his constituent, Fred Schoen to research the videotaping and had submitted some suggestions that was forwarded to the Board. Selectman Blessington noted that we are moving forward on this.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that the Board will review Mr. Schoen's documentation and will review further at the next meeting. Selectman Blessington asked if we are looking at this to become a Town policy, or just for the Selectmen? First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she would like to see this be a town wide policy once it's adopted.

Good & Welfare

First Selectwoman Wiecenski expressed condolences to the family of Cliff Stoudt who lost his battle with cancer a few weeks ago. Cliff was a long time resident of Willington and his parents (who were both teachers) and sister still live here.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski also expressed condolences to our Recreation Director, Maureen Parsell, who's father recently passed away.

First Selectman Wiecenski stated that she has been reviewing the MS4 Stormwater Management Plan; and will be attending a meeting next week to update and implement an Ordinance, which will now be a requirement. The draft Plan/Ordinance will be discussed at a future meeting.

The Assessor position has still not been filled, however we have found someone who was willing to fill in and help file our Grand List. Helen Totz CCMAII started last week and will be here to help out for a few weeks. First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked Ms. Totz for her assistance to file the Grand List.

Willington Tree Warden, Andy Marco stated that he received a letter from Eversource notifying him that they will be tree-trimming around town in March of 2018. Mr. Marco stated that the map that was sent to him is hard to depict which roads will be done, as they are hard to decipher and there are no road names on the map that was sent. He will reach out to them to follow up and get a list of the roads. Once he receives notification, he will forward the information on to the Selectmen's office as well as Public Works.

Selectman Blessington asked what is happening with the trees along Hall School. Mr. Marco stated that it is in the hands of the Board of Education. He added that he did not receive any phone calls about them and they are slated to come down soon. In addition, Eversource has extended an offer to plant replacement trees in the spring, if the Board of Education desires.

Selectman Blessington expressed condolences to the family of Evelyn Wilson who recently passed away.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 P.M.

Selectwoman Makuch seconded the motion.

Vote: 3 Yes (Wiecenski, Makuch & Blessington)

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Campbell
Administrative Assistant

Good Evening:

I am a long-time resident of The Mill Works community, and wanted to voice my opinion on the speed limit discussion despite my absence.

I frequently travel south on Route 32 down the hill and turn into the north lot of The Mill Works facility by Hall's Pond. Despite slowing down on the corner to safely turn, travelers behind my vehicle often don't make the same effort. Most often it results in a tailgating situation, although when I have to stop the vehicle to wait for oncoming traffic before the turn, it has nearly caused an accident on a few occasions. There currently may not be ample time to slow down if a vehicle comes around this corner too fast, and increasing the speed limit will certainly make this situation worse.

Also worth noting, when directing traffic for some of our programming, I often observe drivers violating the crosswalk rule and not stopping for pedestrians, despite people clearly there waiting to cross. Over the last six years since I have maintained a studio at The Mill Works foot traffic has increased, and there is no excuse for not yielding to pedestrians. Failing to obey the speed limit and crosswalk setting is unacceptable and it puts residents and visitors to The Mill Works at risk.

The issue of road safety around The Mill Works is critical for its development, as our vision of becoming a successful arts and culture center begins and ends with a safe and welcoming environment. I am interested in hearing about tonight's discussion and possible solutions for this important issue.

Thank you!

Chris Gunderson/Resident Artist