

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

Board of Selectmen
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Meeting Minutes
Lower Level Conference Room

February 4, 2019
6:30 PM

**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 then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes:

Selectman Blessington moved to approve the minutes of the special budget meeting on January 22, 2019 as written.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski seconded the motion.

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

Selectman Blessington moved to approve the regular meeting minutes of January 22, 2019 as written. He then noted that he would like to speak about the concrete topic under present to speak.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski seconded the motion.

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

Present to Speak

Selectman Blessington stated after reading the minutes of the last regular meeting, he wanted to touch base with the other Selectmen. Page 4 references the library; and reads: *She then warned that the library is looking to expand by finishing a portion of the lower level (basement) and recommends that they do not proceed until a test has been done.*

Selectman Blessington said he has heard stories that they are already proceeding on this; but is not sure. He then suggested that First Selectwoman Wiecenski check with them to see what is going on. He also noted that he has not seen any reference of work being done, and it is not clearly stated in the Library Boards minutes, but wants to have someone check. First Selectwoman Wiecenski said she would reach out to Kristine. She had just been there with Emcor when they were looking at semi-annual maintenance quotes a few weeks ago and hadn't seen any activity but will check.

Correspondence

A list of Correspondence was available for the Selectmen.

First Selectman's Status Report

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that the Willington Hill Fire Department parking lot replacement project is still pending. Funding is from 17-18 LoCIP funds but is on hold because the Department needs to get PZC approvals before paving the lot and have not done so as of yet. Chief Snyder was still looking for clarification and First Selectwoman Wiecenski directed him to speak with our Zoning Agent (Mike D'Amato) to get the answers they need. She then stated that LoCIP funds do not expire, so if the project ends up not happening, the funding might be able to be moved elsewhere.

The front ramp project as you can see, has been completed, however upon final inspection from last week, we have issues with the steps as well as some minor issues with the rails. We have not received a C/O. The issue lies with the second step from the top – it is only 6” high and the others are 7” high; posing a tripping hazard. The Building Inspector explained that the contractor did not seek inspections as they went along, so it was not caught until the final inspection. The ramp has been inspected and is safe for us to use, so as of tomorrow morning, the steps will be blocked off until they can be repaired (people will just have to walk around and go up through the ramp). First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she hasn’t had a chance to speak with the contractor; and Robin Campbell will be reaching out to them tomorrow to get a plan of action going forward and First Selectwoman Wiecenski will share information as we get it.

Interviews were held last week for the Public Works Director position. Second interviews will be held later this week.

The Administrative Assistant for Public Works position has been filled internally. Eileen Smith’s last day will be Wednesday, February 6th. Jayson Righenzi, the Assistant Transfer Station Operator has taken the admin position and his official first day will be February 11th. With that being said, we now have an opening at the Transfer Station. We have posted the Assistant Transfer Station Operator position and the deadline is Monday, February 11th. The job is on the town’s website and on Indeed.com

Public Works

There was no report from Public Works. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated sadly, there hasn’t been much snow this winter; but that is not necessarily a bad thing.

New Business

A. Discussion – Tax Deferment for Federal Employees Affected by Shutdown (draft Resolution)

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that we received an email just prior to our last meeting so this was briefly mentioned under good and welfare. Since that time, the Town Attorney had drafted a Resolution that other towns have been looking into adopting and forwarded to us to see if there was any interest in adoption.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski asked Attorney Roberts if we should pass this, now that the shutdown is over? Because taxes were due on January 1st through February 1st; this would only be in affect during this shutdown. The Resolution had been revised and if adopted, would be retroactive; however no one has contacted the Revenue Collector asking for a deferment. The Town could adopt it retroactively and honor any taxes that were due during that time.

When speaking with the Attorney, First Selectwoman Wiecenski then asked if the Resolution would be applicable, in the event another shutdown happens; specifically February 15th. The Attorney said no, because the dates/ rules are specific to the taxes that were due during the first shutdown. If the Government shuts down again, the General Assembly could amend the special act to cover the period and any ensuing shutdowns as well.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski asked the Selectmen if this is something we want to enact. She clarified that the person would have to prove their eligibility with the required documents as put forth in the act. She reiterated that this Resolution would only be in effect for the taxes that were due in January, and for the shutdown that just ended. We do not have anyone to her knowledge who has a need.

Selectwoman Makuch stated it doesn’t seem like there is a need for us to implement it. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that it doesn’t mean that we couldn’t adopt this in the future.

Selectman Blessington said he finds this annoying – if someone cannot pay their taxes on time (no matter the reason); there will be no mercy – you have to pay your taxes – except if you are a furloughed Federal employee; who, by the way will still receive their paycheck when the shutdown is over anyway. He then suggested tabling it. If there is another shutdown and it is extended by the legislature, we will worry about it then.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski agreed, noting that no one has requested a deferment; she would hate to think someone was waiting to what the Selectmen were going to do or act on.

Old Business

A. Discussion: Assistant Revenue Collector Vacancy

The Selectmen has asked First Selectwoman Wiecenski to look into combining the tasks because we knew there isn't enough work to occupy someone for 22 hours per week in the Revenue department. The union had contacted First Selectwoman Wiecenski and told her that they were not in favor of changing the job description; but they were originally ok with the floater position.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that we still have a need for a position; for example, Parks and Recreation has a lot of work for someone to do. We have been trying to come up with creative ways to share the work that people have and an option that was discussed would be to fill the assistant revenue collector position at 22 hours but splitting the time between the Revenue Department and the Recreation Department. The position as it stands is (4 days) per week; but we would cut it back to 12 hours per week (2 days) in the Revenue Department then potentially fill the other hours to assist in parks and recreation for the remaining 10 hours per week; pending approval from the Board of Finance.

Both positions are in the union so no other changes would have to be made and we do not have to create another position.

In order for us to go forward, First Selectman Wiecenski suggested we can either fill the Assistant Revenue Collector position as is (at 22 hours per week) and then cut back the hours at the next budget cycle with the assumption the other position is created and share the hours with the recreation position – it would be part time with part time benefits. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated if she were to fill it now, the worst case scenario is that it stays the same as it has been and we just cut the hours back. She then reiterated that we tried to find creative solutions so we could employ someone in the same manner and still meet the needs of the town. Unfortunately we were fought between what we need and what the union was looking to do.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski warned that the uncertainty is the next budget cycle – we could hire someone now for just a few hours, but that doesn't fulfil the need. The change could be cut back in hours here and a change in hours somewhere else. It would not involve letting anybody go – but rather just change who the new person reports to.

Selectman Blessington said he is sure everyone would like to have extra help – but this is not where he was expecting the person to end up. First Selectwoman Wiecenski said she hadn't either, but there is a definite need there – the money would still be the same, shifting the savings to the Tax Collector's office moving to the Recreation Department. Selectman Blessington said he understands that, but doesn't agree with where the need is and not being allowed to do what the town needs by the union. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that some of the items on the job description for the floater position would have come off of the Recreation Director's plate and that is not happening, but there is still an incredible need. She added that she is not comfortable with just replacing someone in a 22 hour per week job when we have heard repeatedly that there is not enough work to keep someone busy during that time. –That is not meeting the needs of the town at all. Lastly, she asked if we cut the hours back, will we hurt ourselves as far as finding a quality of candidates willing to take the job.

Selectwoman Makuch stated that the discussions that came to the decision was because we need to have redundancy in the Revenue Collection office; so we cannot completely eliminate the position. We cannot rework the job description to add those other duties? First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she had reached out to the union to inform them that we would like to make changes to the job description, rather than creating the new position and she only received an email response telling her that they were not interested in changing job descriptions at this time. The only communication or willingness from the union was with creating the new position.

Selectwoman Makuch asked to look at the existing job description for the Assistant Revenue Collector so she can review again. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she will get that to her and added that the union now has new representation, so she will reach out to the new person to see if she can get anywhere.

Selectman Blessington said we can just go ahead and fill the position under the old job description and then attempt to negotiate with the union; but that gives them no reason to negotiate. First Selectwoman Wiecenski said maybe not, but if we have a change to the number of hours that are needed; it gives us some room. She reiterated that she sees a need in a department and a lack of need in another – if the split were to happen, then the fiscal responsibilities would shift a bit as well (The Recreation Department would offset some of the salary costs) and she would still like to entertain the possibility.

Selectman Blessington said we are going to have to fill it at some point. Selectwoman Makuch said our hands are tied. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she is still going to try to work with the union to make some changes to adjust the hours accordingly; and would like to meet the needs of the town, but in the meantime will post the job.

Good & Welfare

Our Revenue Collector stated as of today, the total tax to collect for this budget was \$13,136,188 (plus \$25,000 in prior tax and \$30,000 in interest and liens) has only \$96,218 to collect on the 2017 Grand List. This number might change as we are still expecting some tax payments to come in through the mail. As of tonight, there is not much left for the Tax Collector to collect. First Selectwoman Wiecenski commended Ms. Madden on a job well done.

Last Monday, January 28th our Assessor, Walter Topliff signed off on the Grand List which also included the Revaluation. The 2018 Grand List shows is an increase of 0.61% over the 2017 Grand List. The dollar change is \$2,697,139, primarily due to the increase in personal property assessments which went up 9.275%. The overall real estate assessments were relatively flat, but the average residential home decreased by 0.88% and 13 new properties had crumbling foundation issues; one reported a more severe issue. The PA490 values set by the state were increased as well.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski wishes Eileen Smith well in her retirement and thanked her for her service. Ms. Smith's last day with the Town is Wednesday, February 6th.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 P.M.

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Campbell
Administrative Assistant