

# TOWN OF WILLINGTON

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Board of Selectmen  
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## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Meeting Minutes  
Lower Level Conference Room

December 16, 2019  
6:30 PM

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

First Selectwoman Wiecenski called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM with the following in attendance: Selectmen Boritz & Blessington and residents. First Selectwoman Wiecenski then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Approval of Minutes:

Selectman Blessington moved to approve the minutes of November 18, 2019 moved to approve the minutes as submitted.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski seconded the motion.

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

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve the minutes of December 2, 2019 moved to approve the minutes as written.

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

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

### Present to Speak

No one was present to speak.

### Correspondence

A list of Correspondence was available for the Selectmen.

### Status Report

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that the Assistant Land Use Agent position was extended so we could post the job on a site aimed towards that field. Since then we received a few more applications. Interviews will be held next week.

### Public Works

Troy reported that the crew has been plowing and sanding the roads from the last few storms

- Roadside mowing is still going on mostly heavy brush areas
- Moved snow at Town green for the tree lighting ceremony
- Check ice dams over road and salted road
- Clean garage

- Fixed Mail boxes that were damaged by the PLOW not the heavy snow
- Trash at RRRC
- Installed a new motor for the furnace at the TOB done by a contractor
- Removed a couple of hazardous trees on Village Hill
- Installed a new Poly cast spreader on the F450
- Fixed many repairs on plow trucks
- Shoveled snow off of roof at TOB due to a leak

Troy then presented a draft of a memo that he will be sending to the Board of Finance this week. The memo pertains to a request to purchase a new plow truck. Mr. Sposato recapped that we were unsuccessful with finding a contractor when we sought bids back in September. He has since had 2 contractors contact him; one said that the hourly contractor rate was not high enough and the other did not have a truck.

Mr. Sposato added that we had an instance the other day where a truck broke down and if it weren't fixed in time; we wouldn't be able to plow all of the roads (because we would be down a truck). He then stated that we are in dire need of a truck. He has looked at used trucks; but they are still expensive –and not as reliable as a new truck; which would have a warranty.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski clarified that the letter that is going to Board of Finance is not only to replace the 19 year old truck that is still in service. It would allow a spare; which would be needed in the event of a breakdown. Troy clarified that right now, there is no spare truck. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that a new truck has been placed on last year's CIP for year 2; which is 2020-2021. Instead of putting it in the budget next year; it would go in now. She added that when she got the phone call earlier that one of the good functioning trucks was down; and bad weather is coming, made it quite stressful. This is a public safety issue and she is not sure we can adequately clear the roads in a timely fashion without the proper amount of functioning vehicles.

Selectman Blessington warned that we need to keep in mind that we have been pulling from the capital reserve fund more and more lately. We need to take a hard look at what we are spending.

Selectwoman Boritz asked Troy if it would make sense to increase the hourly rate for a contractor to at least get us through this winter versus purchasing a new truck? Troy said yes and no – right now the State is paying contractors \$180 per hour for a contractor, truck and plow; they are paying \$260 per hour for the contractor, truck/plow and to haul salt. We would have to bump it up to make it worthwhile. He then clarified if we raise the contractor rate for a new guy; we would then have to raise the rate for the contractor who is already signed on this year. Selectwoman Boritz then suggested running a cost analysis of the potential cost of hiring the contractors at a higher rate; versus spending \$160,000 on a new truck. She said it is not a long term solution; but it might buy us some time to get us to when the money is available in the CIP plan. Troy warned that at this time, most contractors have already been assigned at this point and we would have to do the bidding process again. Selectwoman Boritz said the fact of the matter is, we might be through the season before a lease is even signed anyway; so it might be a good idea to go that route.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that Troy will be submitting his request to the Board of Finance with the specifications. She said she sees the need for this and can see both sides. We cannot not do our due diligence. She then spoke to Selectwoman Boritz's suggestion which is to have Troy look into a new bidding process. She clarified that we also have a certain amount budgeted for contractors (which is based on a 5 year average) but also know it can fluctuate. First Selectwoman Wiecenski then noted with a new truck we would just have the lease payment. Selectwoman Boritz agreed; but said if we go ahead and

decide to do this; the chances of getting a new truck are not going to be immediate. First Selectwoman Wiczenski agreed noting that the lease process is not quick.

#### New Business

##### **A. Appointments**

First Selectwoman Wiczenski moved to re-appoint Jon Rup as a regular member of the Zoning Board of Appeals; effective 12/30/19; expiring 12/30/2024  
Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.  
Vote: 3 Yes (Wiczenski, Boritz & Blessington) 0 No

First Selectwoman Wiczenski moved to re-appoint Richard Maloney as a regular member of the Zoning Board of Appeals; effective 12/30/19; expiring 12/30/22  
Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion.  
Vote: 3 Yes (Wiczenski, Boritz & Blessington) 0 No

First Selectwoman Wiczenski moved to re-appoint Bill Bland as a regular member of the Zoning Board of Appeals; effective 12/30/19; expiring 12/30/21  
Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion.  
Vote: 3 Yes (Wiczenski, Boritz & Blessington) 0 No

First Selectwoman Wiczenski moved to re-appoint Joe Colangelo as a regular member of the Recreation Commission; effective 12/15/19- expiring 12/14/22  
Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.  
Vote: 3 Yes (Wiczenski, Boritz & Blessington) 0 No

First Selectwoman Wiczenski moved to re-appoint Mike Pinatti as a regular member of the Recreation Commission; effective 12/15/19- expiring 12/14/22  
Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion.  
Vote: 3 Yes (Wiczenski, Boritz & Blessington) 0 No

First Selectwoman Wiczenski moved to re-appoint Rocco Petrella as a regular member of the Recreation Commission; effective 12/15/19- expiring 12/14/22  
Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion.  
Vote: 3 Yes (Wiczenski, Boritz & Blessington) 0 No

First Selectwoman Wiczenski moved to re-appoint Tina Binheimer as Willington Animal Control Officer; effective January 1, 2020; expiring December 31, 2020.  
Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.  
First Selectwoman Wiczenski noted that Tina has done an excellent job for the Town. Selectman Blessington agreed.  
Vote: 3 Yes (Wiczenski, Boritz & Blessington) 0 No

First Selectwoman Wiczenski thanked the members who serve on these commissions.

##### **B. Tax Refund**

First Selectwoman Wiczenski moved to refund \$45.74 to VW Credit Leasing LTD on a certificate of correction.  
Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion.  
Vote: 3 Yes (Wiczenski, Boritz & Blessington) 0 No.

### **C. Discussion of Town Website**

Selectman Blessington noted that he asked for this topic to be added to the agenda. He stated that after the last Town Meeting and brouhaha a few weeks ago; a letter appeared on the Town website and facebook explaining why we were no longer having a town meeting about the School Building Committee. The letter was from the Board of Selectmen. He noted that he never saw that letter. In addition, the letter noted that the Board of Selectmen unanimously voted to have the School Building Committee. Selectman Blessington stated if he remembers correctly, he did not vote for that -- he voted to bring it to Town Meeting.

Selectman Blessington wanted to make it clear that the letter was not from the complete Board of Selectmen. He was not part of it.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski clarified that the letter came from her (not the entire board) but the Board did vote unanimously to establish a School Building Committee and can check the minutes. Selectman Blessington said the minutes should be reviewed. First Selectwoman Wiczenski said he is entitled to his opinion.

### **D. Status update: Emergency Services Efficiency Committee Meetings**

Peter Tanaka was present. He recapped that the Board of Selectmen established an Emergency Services Efficiency Committee last August and he was chosen from the Board of Finance to serve as Chairman on the Committee. When it was established it was asked for the Chairman to update the Selectmen periodically. Mr. Tanaka stated that the Committee has a 2 year plan. At the time, they decided to spend 14 months to determine the plan and the remaining 10 months to initiate the plan. He now sees that as a little aggressive. The last meeting he felt that it hit a stop, so he has been meeting individually with members and feels better on the direction and the next meeting, which will be held tomorrow night will be going in the right direction. The Committee will narrow choices and it is important on how they will achieve their goals. First Selectwoman Wiczenski then asked if she heard him correctly - that he has been meeting individually with the members and asked the legality of that. Mr. Tanaka clarified that he has met individually with them one on one; so they would be able to express their concerns. He clarified the reason he was meeting with them one on one was so there was no quorum. He wanted to understand where they were coming from individually.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated that she has been to the meetings and felt things were working and the conversations were going in the right direction. She added that she is disappointed that the public will not be privy to the entire conversations. Mr. Tanaka stated that he wanted to make sure their vision was consistent with what he thought they were saying. He got a lot of valuable information that he wasn't getting at the meeting so they could move forward and he thought it was necessary.

Selectwoman Boritz stated that the Selectmen can't meet individually to discuss issues because it is illegal. She stated that she would like to express her concern of legality. Mr. Tanaka noted that he would like to see something in writing that tells him whether it is right or not. He has not met with every member yet; but does plan on it. He noted that the committee is under an aggressive timeline and is unsure if they will be able to meet the goal, but would like to move forward.

Willington Fire Department Chief Alex Moore was present. He added meeting with Mr. Tanaka was beneficial; however until someone (such as the Board of Selectmen or Board of Finance; for example) gives them a charge (ie: "you will do this..."); the meetings will just keep going. First Selectwoman Wiczenski noted that we did talk about wanting to give the departments the opportunity. Mr. Tanaka stated he has spoken with other Fire Chiefs who told him that it is not going to be free and it is not going to be easy. He added that he thinks we are going to have to come to the Board of Selectmen and Finance

to seek professional help to apply pressure as he does not feel that it is going to come from the departments alone.

Selectwoman Boritz then asked if there is a general agreement of what needs to happen? Mr. Tanaka said no – there is a general agreement of what but the view of how to get there all differ. – For example everyone wants to move to “plan A” but their view of what “plan A” is are all different. He thinks there are things built up from several years – three studies and several changes of members, etc. that need to be broken down. He stated that he sees ways to move forward but would rather hold the discussions at the next meeting.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski encouraged residents to attend these meetings; which are the second and fourth Wednesday of the month. Mr. Tanaka noted that they have had several setbacks due to holidays, town meetings and even weather events. The next regularly scheduled meeting, which was supposed to be held next Wednesday (which is Christmas) needs to be rescheduled.

#### **E. Discussion: Submission of State EMS Plan**

Willington Fire Department #1 Chief Alex Moore presented the Selectmen with an updated Local Emergency Medical Services Plan. He noted that every town in the State of Connecticut must have a plan on file as state law. This is a boiler plate plan in accordance with many of our neighboring towns.

The plan will need to be adopted soon (the deadline was January 1, 2020; however we have been issued an extension). First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that the Selectmen were just given the plan today and will need some time to review. In addition there are several attachments that will be included with the plan that will be reviewed as well. They will add it to their next regular meeting agenda on January 6, 2020.

#### **Old Business**

##### **A. Recap of School Building Committee- Next Steps**

First Selectwoman Wiecenski recapped of where we are. The Board of Education came to this Board after holding several studies asking the Selectmen to form a School Building Committee. The Board of Selectmen unanimously voted to do so and put the items on the call of a Town Meeting. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that at the time, she believed it was necessary to be put to town meeting; but was given different information; which then led her to believe that the items did not have to be put on the meeting at which time the Selectmen voted differently. Since then, the Selectmen have done nothing further. She asked the Town Attorney to join the discussions moving forward. First Selectwoman Wiecenski then stated that she stands by her decision based on the knowledge and advice given to her at the time. We have an obligation to move this process forward the right way; not fast.

Since the last meeting, First Selectwoman Wiecenski has attended several workshops and met with DAS and State Officials to help her better understand the process; which is complicated. She added that she wants to be sure we are following the proper process so when the townspeople decide, it is done correctly.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she didn't pull the item from the Town Meeting so it couldn't be discussed – she was told that a town meeting wasn't necessary to form a committee. She said that she has learned that in order to apply for any school construction grants and get the reimbursement; need to be approved at Town Meeting first. The reimbursement is for all facets of building a new school; such as hiring an architect or spend any funds; must have town meeting approval.

There is no boiler plate process for this – it is complex and something we have not been through before. First Selectwoman Wiecenski warned at no time could we ever build a new school and spend townspeople

money without going to multiple town meetings; hold discussions and Referendums; and that was never the intent. It is important to know if it was ever decided that the town was to build a new school it would be what they wanted and we need to make sure we are going through the proper steps. That is why we have taken a step back and are taking no action now. First Selectwoman Wiecenski then clarified that she thinks the Selectmen should not appoint anyone to the committee until it is voted on at Town Meeting first.

Selectwoman Boritz then asked if we are talking about the same question that was posed at the first Town Meeting – there needs to be more conversation on what the actual language is. First Selectwoman Wiecenski said yes – we were originally asking three questions; allowing the Selectmen to appoint people to the committee; fill vacancies and present a charge. Selectwoman Boritz then asked how will we determine what that language needs to be? First Selectwoman Wiecenski said the first one is simple in forming the school building committee. We (Selectmen) would need to do some work to ensure we have the wording of the resolution to cover any grants be accurate before being adopted. She clarified that you work with DAS (Department of Administrative Services) and your Attorney to make sure it is in line.

Town Attorney, Ryan O'Donnell was present. He stated that the advice he had given at the time was to simply form a committee – he added that he should have looked further down the road thinking of where will the conversation take us. We could have a second Referendum down the road and there was nothing illegal about the way we set it up – it was just a more complicated than it needed to be. Attorney O'Donnell stated the most efficient way is to have a committee set up that is authorized to get the reimbursement as opposed to a committee that is not authorized and they need to be authorized down the road. First Selectwoman Wiecenski did the right thing by going to the State and getting as much information as possible. It might take a little longer up front but it is better to spend a little more time in the beginning than to have a more complicated process down the road and First Selectwoman Wiecenski did the right thing. Attorney O'Donnell then clarified that there was never any question on the legality of it. They just wanted to make sure the committee was fully authorized when it becomes time to get reimbursed.

Selectman Blessington said he knows the talk in the town prior to the town meeting was that people might be opposed to it. If it had gone to Town Meeting and been defeated, where would we stand? Attorney O'Donnell stated it would go back to the drawing board. First Selectwoman Wiecenski said we have never gone through this before – that is why we need to slow this down and do it correctly. Attorney O'Donnell clarified that there are significant hurdles that need to get cleared from the time the committee is seated to when the shovel goes in the ground. It is not guaranteed that anything can go either way. First Selectwoman Wiecenski added that the original question at hand was to form a committee; nothing to do with spending dollars on building a new school which is why nothing went from the Board of Education or to take to the Board of Finance.

Attorney O'Donnell then clarified that the original scope of the question was what we need to do to form a committee – then when it became broader; asking what if we actually get to the point where a new school would be built and seek reimbursement; then we would need to tweak the committee process. It was then to see what the most efficient way about doing this would be.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that one of the recent workshops she attended pertained to building new municipal buildings (school; town hall or public works' garage); if you are looking at grants; one of the first things they said you must go through a town meeting approval before you do anything. What she had originally heard from Ryan was that you can appoint anyone to a committee – but as soon as you spend money, then you need town meeting approval first. She wishes it was something that was spelled out very clear three months ago when they started the process. We would have probably gone down a different path and held a different process. First Selectwoman Wiecenski added that she stands by the votes she made as well as decisions, which were based on the advice given to her at the time.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated that she has heard a mix of opinions on the School Building Committee over the past few weeks. Selectman Blessington stated if had gone to Town Meeting, then we would have known. First Selectwoman Wiczenski clarified that she does not believe the questions that were going to be brought to Town Meeting were adequate- we would not be asking the proper questions to allow the committee to move forward with the reimbursements the way they were poised. She said she knows this now after having several conversations. We didn't necessarily do the wrong thing – we did what we believed but took a step we didn't need to take. Now she knows that we need to hold discussions at town meeting in order to spend funds.

Selectwoman Boritz then stated it is frustrating for her because each time we are making a decision we are making it under new assumptions of what we believe the policy to be. This is the third time we are having this conversation and each time she loses confidence that we are getting the facts for her to make the right decision. She then asked at what point would we know that the information we have is right. Now she is confused – if the Selectmen bring it to the town; they will be even more confused. She agrees that we must do this right and not fast. We need to figure out a way that we can be confident with the information we are given – because what if there is a fourth set of input that is different?

First Selectwoman Wiczenski said she agrees – and feels the same way which is why she isn't moving this forward because it is going to take a little bit more time. She isn't sure if the BOE thinks the Selectmen are going to move quickly on this; but that is not going to be the case. Selectman Blessington asked if we are going to now hold a town meeting before people are appointed. First Selectwoman Wiczenski said yes that is now her recommendation. She added that she has not told anyone that they would be appointed nor has she spoken with anyone about appointments. She then asked Attorney O'Donnell if we need to ask the same questions that were asked before. Attorney O'Donnell then said we do not. First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated that DAS has informed her that the context of the questions must be very specific when you get to the point of seeking reimbursements and they have offered to help us with that when the time comes.

Selectwoman Boritz then asked who is the person or organization that tells us the language to use. Attorney O'Donnell stated that he will work with the State on this. His perspective is to see if it is legal and can we do this. Once you get beyond the legality; then the state gets involved to inform us what they are looking for. Every town works differently so he can help facilitate the information and work on the process.

Selectwoman Boritz would like to have the Selectmen meet with the group to help us better understand – even if it is part of town meeting. First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated that part of the discussions held today was helping us understand the procedure. She said she can ask them if they will be able to come out and meet. Attorney O'Donnell clarified that worst case scenario is that we can go see them; as they are usually happier to host the meetings rather than coming out to a night meeting.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski clarified that she just wants to do the right thing. Taking those items off of the town meeting was never going to force a school building; it was never the intent. She never believed that we (Selectmen) had the authority to build a new school.

#### Good & Welfare

First Selectwoman Wiczenski reiterated that we have 2 openings on the CIP Committee. Please contact the Selectmen's office if anyone is interested. Meetings are slated to begin in January.

CIP requests are due to the Business Manager by January 3, 2020.

We received the November monthly report from Troop C:

Total calls for service: 467

Accidents:	11	Traffic Stops:	153
Criminal Investigations:	13	DUPs:	1
Burglaries:	0	Infractions:	113
Larcenies:	2	Written Warnings:	12
Non reportable matters:	221	Verbal Warnings:	20
Arrests:	6		

First Selectwoman Wiecenski reminded everyone to be vigilant with their personal items. Lock your cars and do not leave valuables inside. A car was stolen today in Mansfield. Troop C is still seeing instances of thefts in the area.

The annual tree lighting was another success. First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked Maureen Parsell and Jennie Arpin for their hard work; Public Works for clearing the snow, and Alex Moore/WFD#1 for assisting with lighting in the area which made it easier to see.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski wished everyone a happy holiday.

Selectman Blessington stated that he is disappointed in the new format of the meeting where the public is not allowed input. For several years, we have always allowed the public to participate in the discussions with the Board of Selectmen. He feels it makes a more informative meeting – to keep up with what people are thinking. Now all of a sudden it is a closed meeting – just like the Board of Education meetings have been. Selectman Blessington stated that he would like us to rethink that. Yes, sometimes it makes for a loud, uncomfortable and sometimes hostile meetings but they are informative. He wants to go back to the old policy. First Selectwoman Wiecenski clarified that we are meeting in public; not a public meeting. Selectwoman Boritz asked if we can add this conversation to the next agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Robin Campbell  
Administrative Assistant