

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

Board of Selectmen
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Special Meeting Minutes
Via web interaction (via Zoom platform)

January 19, 2021
5:30 PM

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

First Selectwoman Wiczenski called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM with the following in attendance; Selectwoman Boritz, Selectman Blessington, Business Manager Donna Latincsics, Richard Mueller on behalf of Rosa Chinchilla from the Historic District Commission in attendance. Animal Control Officer Tina Binheimer joined at 5:50 PM.

A. Present to Speak

B. Budget Workshop

- Historic District Commission

First Selectwoman Wiczenski started the discussion advising that Rosa Chinchilla was unable to attend, Richard Mueller was present to speak on her behalf. The Historic District Commission resides in the Selectmen's budget under Commissions 111.300. The line item was set to \$100.00 this past fiscal year, we have received a request from Rosa Chinchilla the Historic District Chair to increase to \$500.00 this year.

A discussion was held on the justification for the budget increase. Mr. Mueller clarified the \$200.00 is for Certificates of Appropriateness and \$300.00 will be used for Signage for Historic buildings in the Historic District. The fees for the Certificate of Appropriateness are \$100.00 apiece and two will be needed this year. The costs go towards public notice advertisement in a newspaper which is costly. The 2nd increase is for signage for historic buildings in the historic district. There are 12 houses on the green that would be included. The cost would go towards new plaques for each home which identifies when the building was built and by whom, similar to the model used in Salem Massachusetts. Mr. Mueller advised that some houses have removed signs and the Historic District wanted to replace all 12 for continuity. Selectmen Blessington mentioned that the white signs with black lettering on wood were hand crafted and donated many years ago by Harold Weigold, which was a generous donation to our community. The discussion continued that the last time this commission requested additional funds was in FY 14/15 where \$3,000.00 was requested and \$2,900.00 was utilized. Donna Latincsics clarified that the expenditure that was referenced was a 1 time payment for section 8 housing administrative fees to the Town of Mansfield and is not applicable in the Historic Districts budget.

- Animal Control

First Selectwoman Wiczenski started the discussion advising that the Selectmen's office received the Animal Controls Budget request. It was noted that it is a slight increase to the budget from last year which included a 2% wage increase. It was discussed that we are in a negotiation year so with that said we will

keep salaries the same, once negotiations are complete an adjustment would be made to each of the budgets. Ms. Binheimer advised that the other variance was for dog warden fees which has gone down over the last 2 years. This is due to less quarantines which lessens our revenue coming in for boarding fees. For example if an animal comes in and leaves same day its \$15.00 vs. the 2 week quarantine boarding fees of \$15.00 per day which equals \$210.00. We are losing revenue as there are less and less quarantine situations. Training increased by \$20.00 due to the cost of the online program.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski added that the \$20.00 training fee is minimal to the overall budget. She has been in contact with Tolland, we are in discussion about sharing an Animal Control Officer (ACO). Currently Ms. Binheimer is part time in both Willington and Tolland with the potential of taking on Ashford for ACO services. With the three towns in collaboration there is potential to create a smaller region with shared resources. This would increase a part time employee to a full time employee with benefits. There is potential for the three towns to share that cost or we could purchase a service similar to what we currently have with our Building Official. There are potential savings to be had if we combine resources. Tolland has a full time grant writer which will be a valuable resource in researching and facilitating applying for applicable grants as a region that would offset some of the combined costs. Tolland provides a wealth of training and safety gear, in collaboration if we merged the function as a region, we could utilize the Willington Animal Control facility as Tolland's facility is in disrepair. The building was built in the late 60's which has structural inadequacies with a faulty roof. Last year Ms. Binheimer approached the Board of Finance requesting an increase to link into TN with Tolland for Animal Control dispatching. This fee included a radio and dispatch services. This has been instrumental in facilitating the animal control function. This integral function has allowed for additional resources and assistance with calls and has allowed Ms. Binheimer to not be on call 24 hours per day.

The discussion continued, Selectman Blessington advised that he is skeptical of regionalization however that is a discussion for a later date. He expressed that he is satisfied with the Animal Control budget as presented. Selectwoman Boritz agreed she has no questions or concerns with Animal Control budget. First Selectwoman Wiecenski is in favor of combining resources and saving dollars regionally.

- EHHD

First Selectwoman Wiecenski started the discussion by saying the EHHD budget was not included in the Selectmen's package. During the pandemic our dollars have been put to good use. They have been able to utilize federal funding to increase staffing for the purpose of contract tracing. The total EHHD budget of \$34,540.00 is a 3.2% increase which is an increase of \$1,070.00. The driving factors of the increase is as such; salaries increased by 4.8%, benefits increased by 5.4%, Medical insurance increased by 2%. The total Town contribution is 3%. This was prefaced by saying the EHHD budget is not finalized as of yet, there is a public meeting/hearing scheduled for this Thursday January 21, 2021. EHHD would be underfunding this year if it was not for federal funding.

- Finance

Business Manager Donna Latincsics started the discussion by going over each increase reflected in her budget proposal. There is a 6.2% increase on the accounting software and support. The software maintenance is \$25,993.00 this is for the Tyler Tech database that is used for the Town of Willington and the Board of Education connection group, the Library and Ambulance. This includes the Core accounting package, web portal, HR module and fixed assets. Training and education increased as we are in need of additional training, one day, eight hour day remote training is \$840.00 with one consultant. Office supplies was left flat however that line covers tax forms, W2 forms, 1099 forms, check stock & envelopes.

The discussion was held, regarding the implementation of the new software during COVID was not an easy implementation and or facilitation in bringing the system online and staff training. The question was posed, is a 1 day training enough? The software change during an unforeseen pandemic was difficult in that there was a lot to learn and we did not get the onsite training we had anticipated. Ms. Latincsics responded by saying at this point we will absorb what we can, if additional training is required this can be revisited.

- Selectmen's Department

First Selectwoman Wiecenski starting the discussion noting that the Selectmen's budget includes the Historic Districts \$500.00. With Salaries there is a decrease of -4.4% that is reflective of a staffing change between our previous admin and our current admin. The cell phone line item was mentioned that currently the cell phone for the First Selectmen's Office is a stipend. The current cell phone that is used was purchased by the First Selectwoman, all of the resources and contacts will go with me if and when I go. This position requires a seven day a week twenty four hour contact availability. For example the State Police reaching out or weather issues to name a few. Currently the Town owns and covers the cell phone cost in its entirety for the Animal Control Officer and the Public Works Director. These phones would stay with the Town should one of those individuals vacate their positions. The cell phone line item was the only increase in the budget all other items have been left flat. It was mentioned that CCM and CRCOG did not increase their fees this year but wanted to note that through COVID they have extended printing services to the Town at no cost. That includes all the signage that is COVID related in all areas of the Town Office Building and the Public Works Department. Additionally CCM has reimbursed each Town 50% of their dues in light of all the struggles we have had to endure with the pandemic. There is still a line item for Memorial Day and the Car show with the hopes that we can facilitate that function this year.

A discussion was held on cell phone coverage options. Selectwoman Boritz suggested Spectrum Mobile for \$45.00 monthly flat fee that utilizes Verizon Towers. Selectwoman Boritz also agreed the Town should pay and own the cell phones for the First Selectman's position. Selectman Blessington agreed that the Town should own the cell phone and it would be a good move to investigate combining town owned cell phones in a bundled contract to capture savings.

Lastly, First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that once we hear all of the budgets and Ms. Latincsics has the opportunity to formulate all of the budgets providing a first run of the total budget then we can review and make cuts if necessary.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:11 PM

Selectwoman Blessington seconded the motion.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Sharpley
Administrative Assistant
Town of Willington