

# TOWN OF WILLINGTON

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Board of Selectmen  
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## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Special Minutes

Via web interaction (via Zoom platform)

April 12, 2021

6:30 PM

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

First Selectwoman Wiczenski called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM with the following in attendance; Selectwoman Boritz, Selectman Blessington and Residents.

1. Discuss and Take Action on the Annual Budget Process

**First Selectwoman Wiczenski moved pursuant to Governor Ned Lamont's Executive order No. 10E section 2(h), to adjust the previously planned budget events, Annual Town Meeting and subsequent budget referendum, from April 20, 2021 to a date no later than June 8, 2021.**  
**Selectwoman Boritz Seconded**

First Selectwoman Wiczenski started the discussion by prefacing that this was vetted with our Town Attorney. The Executive Order 10E came out on Tuesday April 6, 2021 which references absentee balloting and voting during the pandemic. Section 2H refers specifically to modifying of municipal and regional Board of Education budget adoption timeline. This information was shared with the BOF and this allows Towns and Regional Boards of Education to adjust their timelines that are set by Statue or Charter. We are governed by State Statue in the absence of a Charter. We are set to receive in total over \$1.7 million over a two year period of time. Absent the clear guidelines for the American Rescue Plan (ARP) the budget remains intact. With more clear guidance there may be a number of items within the current budget that can be removed. The BOF was in agreement that if we can put off the process to get clarification, this was the best course of action. It is her belief that we can have the guidance on the funds, budget approval from the BOF, the Town Meeting and the Referendum all completed no later than June 8<sup>th</sup>. She was able to speak with the Superintendent at Region 19 and they will not be delaying their budget adoption. That date is set by Statue and they would need to take action similar to ours in order to delay. This would mean that in Willington we will hold a Referendum on May 4<sup>th</sup> for just our Region 19 and another at a date to be determined but by June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021 just for our budget. Between the Statue and Willington's annual budget ordinance, we are not held to specific dates. This is not intended to change the Referendum process. There will still be a Referendum and our Annual Town Meeting that will not change. This adjustment allows for a little bit more time to get a solid budget to our tax payers where we may be able to remove items. This would require two budget Referendum's. One on May 4<sup>th</sup> just for Region 19 and one no later than June 8<sup>th</sup> just for Willington general government and BOE.

Selectmen Blessington wanted to know if June 8<sup>th</sup> was selected for any particular reason, we have until June 30<sup>th</sup>.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski responded to say that Tax bills need to go out by June 30<sup>th</sup>. This allows time for preparation. The longer we wait the more we risk having to do a supplemental tax bill which will incur additional cost. June 8<sup>th</sup> allots us time for the facilitation of that process. We can certainly look at alter or amend the motion to June 30<sup>th</sup>. I do believe however that we are far enough in the process to make June



8<sup>th</sup> work. We have been working diligently internally with the Registrars, Town Clerks office and the Tax Collector to map out the process to see if all of these things happen will we still be able to get all of our work done before June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Selectman Blessington commented that on May 11<sup>th</sup> we are going to have to start this process where we will have the guidelines from the Treasury.

First Selectwoman Wicinski responded to say that is correct, there is always the possibility that the Treasury will disseminate guidance before the May 11<sup>th</sup> deadline. May 11<sup>th</sup> is the last possible day for the guidance to be issued.

Selectman Blessington humorously stated that we are waiting on the government, we will anticipate no sooner than May 11<sup>th</sup>. It is Selectmen Blessington understanding that the BOS will have to meet, the BOE will have to meet on their portion. Then the budget will have to be presented to the BOF. The BOF will at minimum require at least 1 meeting to deliberate. At that point in time we will have to have another Budget Hearing. With the BOS meeting on May 17<sup>th</sup>, the BOE would have to have a special meeting.

First Selectwoman Wicinski responded to say the funds that are coming in are allocated as Town dollars not BOE dollars. The BOS cannot make any changes to the BOE budget that would be completely separate and is less likely to have to make a change. We do not believe that we need to hold a full budget hearing again however it can be done in a similar process as had been done previously. To summarize, a budget hearing, a BOF meeting immediately following to adopt a budget. If we receive the anticipated guidance by May 11<sup>th</sup> it shouldn't take that much time to go through it. I have put forth recommendations of what budgeted items could be removed as one time expenditures that may fall in line with the ARP funding preliminary guidelines. We do not want to remove regular operating costs as they wouldn't be COVID related nor do we want to put ourselves off a fiscal cliff down the road. We would call a Selectmen meeting to call a Town Meeting. Hold the Town Meeting then hold the Referendum. It is her belief that all of that can be done within the time frame suggested. It was referenced that the May 11<sup>th</sup> date is for the funds to be transferred over to the State for dissemination. The previous funds received the guidance was issued prior to the funds being released. It is our hope that the guidance be presented as soon as possible.

Selectwoman Boritz expressed that we already know some general guidelines for the use of the funding. Based on that, there has already been some thought into what items would be inclusive. Once we receive the final determination of what can and cannot be used, it is her belief that it should be a pretty quick turnaround. This additional delay in waiting for guidance will lesson our budget. It will not be larger than we initially set. This is with intent to alleviate some of our fiscal stress and pressure. With that said this should not be an arduous process, it may be more of a structured streamlined plan to work with.

First Selectwoman Wicinski reiterated that there would not be any additional line items added to the budget but a recommendation to the BOF to remove some line items if they fall within the acceptable use of ARP funding based on guidelines we receive. We would essentially remove items so residents are not taxed. This would be only a reduction in an already almost adopted budget. The only reason BOF did not move forward with the budget adoption was to determine how we can utilize the ARP funding to lessen the burden on taxpayers. There was a consensus with the BOF to hold off until more information could be gathered to not pass along items to residents.

Selectman Blessington wanted the timeline reiterated again.

First Selectwoman Wicinski responded to say worst case scenario we do not receive guidance until May 11<sup>th</sup>, no later than June 8<sup>th</sup> we could hold a Referendum, a budget adoption, at Town Meeting call, a Town Meeting and then a June Referendum. At our next BOS meeting you will hear me discuss my

recommendation of what we can cut out of our portion of the budget. With the intent to recommend to the BOF to remove certain line items from our portion of the budget again only removing items that were already budgeted for. It is her belief that another budget hearing will not be necessary as the budget was already presented. The BOF was at the point of adopting the budget when we held off on the process.

Some participants were in disagreement, it was the belief that another budget hearing would need to take place.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski responded to say if the consensus from the BOF to hold another Budget Hearing then there would be time for that to occur. It was suggested to amend the motion to be by June 30<sup>th</sup> if the other Selectmen feels more comfortable.

There was a consensus with the Selectmen to amend the motion to be by June 30<sup>th</sup> with the reservation that we put our best effort into remediate the budget process prior to June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline so that we prevent having to send supplemental bills that will incur additional cost to the Town.

**Motion Amendment:**

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved pursuant to Governor Ned Lamont's Executive order No. 10E section 2(h), to adjust the previously planned budget events, Annual Town Meeting and subsequent budget referendum, from April 20, 2021 to a date no later than June 30, 2021.

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

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

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:47 PM

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Heather Sharpley  
Administrative Assistant  
Town of Willington

RECEIVED  
WILLINGTON, CT.

2021 APR 13 P 12:22

  
TOWN CLERK