

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN Special Meeting Minutes

Board of Selectmen
40 Old Farms Road
Willington, CT 06279
(860) 487-3100
(860) 487-3103 Fax
www.willingtonct.org

**Town Office Building
Selectmen's Conference Room**

**January 22, 2019
5:30 PM**

First Selectwoman Wiecenski called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM with Selectman Blessington, Selectwoman Makuch, Business Manager Donna Latincsics, Jennie Arpin, Human Services Director; Tina Binheimer, Animal Control Officer and Don Berg, representing the Housing Authority.

Budget Workshop

First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked Ms. Arpin & Ms. Binheimer for being able to attend the meeting on such short notice as they were inadvertently left off of the schedule.

Ms. Arpin submitted the Human Services budget with a cover letter to the Selectmen for consideration. She went over the expenses first; noting that the salary increases submitted reflect a 2% increase for the assistant and a 4% increase for her position; noting that she has taken on additional responsibilities at the Senior Center.

She has included a line item for grants and noted that she has been successful in receiving grant funding as she recently received an additional \$6,062 that was not budgeted for this year. The April Camp and Summer Camp line items both show an increase because both programs are successful.

The transfer from the General Fund that is being requested is to cover the salaries only because she is trying to preserve as much from the fund balance as possible.

The only increase in the budget reflects the salaries. Ms. Arpin stated that everything else remains the same and although she earmarked \$3,000 in grants that she anticipates to receive, she is confident that she can get more as she has been very successful in getting them. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that this year shows no money in the grant line. Ms. Arpin stated that so far she has received \$6,062 and thinks that the \$3,000 earmarked for next fiscal is a safe number.

Selectman Blessington noted that everyone else is getting a 2% raise but everybody wants a 4% raise. Ms. Arpin argued that might be the case but not everyone else has additional responsibilities as she does. First Selectwoman Wiecenski said there was a time where the Senior Center did not have a President and you took that on in lieu of them not having a President. They have one now, and it would be the assumption that your responsibilities would go back to what they were. Ms. Arpin clarified that she gets the emails for the Senior Center and does a lot of the coordination of maintenance for the building and vehicles. These are Town owned things and they should be overseen by the Town; therefore she believes it falls on her. She also noted that it is not in her job description, however the work has fallen on her and she is doing it; she is happy to continue to do it but believes she should be compensated for it.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski clarified that senior services has always been part of the job description, but not the senior center. Ms. Arpin agreed; noting that she would offer guidance or medical transportation for the seniors if needed; but not so much the facility. She found that one of the vehicles had to be re-registered, in which she took

care of; it was a real situation that she needed to take over. Selectman Blessington asked if the President of the Senior Center is compensated. Ms. Arpin said no.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that the Selectmen should look over the Senior Center as a whole and perhaps look at the bylaws as well as the particular job description before any changes are made. Selectman Blessington warned that the Selectmen were not aware of any formal change in who was supposed to be doing what and it gets dicey if you get a job elsewhere, is your replacement going to want to run the Senior Center; especially if it is not in the job description. He added you've taken on more responsibilities that now take additional time, it makes more sense to pass it back on to the person who should be doing it; which is the President. Ms. Arpin clarified that this is a municipal building and municipal vehicles, therefore it needs municipal oversight.

Selectwoman Makuch stated that we need clarification of roles and responsibilities going forward and from that if there is a change in a job description, then that is something that we as Selectmen address at that point. This is a very important exercise. First Selectwoman Wiecenski added that it is something that we will have to look at as we are going through this budget before it goes forward. Ms. Binheimer asked if the Public Works Director oversees the municipal buildings and isn't that a municipal building? The Selectmen said yes.

Ms. Arpin stated that her budget is different than the others as she has a fund balance. Donna Latincsics clarified although her budget shows a 1% increase; it is actually an 8% increase to the Town's budget. First Selectwoman Wiecenski clarified that the increase falls under the Selectmen's budget. Although the Human Services budget is presented directly to the BOF; it still affects the Selectmen's budget.

Selectwoman Makuch asked who she is working with now that NECASSA is no longer in existence. Ms. Arpin stated that she has been working through SERAC (South East Region Action Council) who has provided \$2,865 in grant funding. The funding covers drug abuse, mental health cases and the like. Ms. Arpin noted that a significant amount of the funding will go towards the after school programs (regarding prevention) that she plans on running soon. These programs are something that people have wanted for some time.

Selectman Blessington asked if the funds can be used towards other things if it is not all used for the programs? Ms. Arpin stated yes, if things do not cost what she anticipates it can be used elsewhere. Selectwoman Makuch clarified that the funding is specifically aimed to be used to prevent substance abuse and has to connect back to that. Ms. Arpin stated that she has worked very closely with SERAC to ensure it met their qualifications as well as ours.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski then stated that last year's budget reflects expenses for summer camp such as staff wages and general expenses, but they are not factored into the new fiscal; however she is showing \$500 in revenue from summer camp. Ms. Arpin stated that it is collaboration between Human Services and Parks and Recreation; and they split the expenses. It must have been an oversight and will adjust that accordingly.

Next Tina Binheimer presented the Animal Control budget. Ms. Binheimer stated that she made some minor changes and the only real change is her salary increase of 2%. She stated that she moved some funding around such as \$200 from truck gas/repairs and put \$100 into the veterinarian account and added the remainder into the training account. Ms. Binheimer noted that the State mandates that she receives continuous training each year and while some of the classes are free, others come at a cost. Everything else in the budget remains the same.

Ms. Binheimer clarified that the only thing that can really fluctuate is the amount of donations she receives on any given year. She stated that she has sought grant funding, but has found it to be difficult due to the size of our Town.

Ms. Binheimer noted that the truck maintenance line item is about as low as she will be able to go, so next year she will have to come up with a different plan.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski told Ms. Binheimer that she is doing a great job and found a way to shift the money to make her budget work. Selectman Blessington stated that he likes the way she takes care of the animals.

Discussion was held with a merge request from the Town of Tolland. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that she met with John Littell, Director of Public Safety who had brought up discussions of potential merger of ACO services between Willington and Tolland. If the service was combined, it would be a substantial increase to the Town, as benefits would then be involved. The town of Tolland is looking to close their facility and would be interested in using the Willington pound. Selectman Blessington asked if there is enough room to house both towns? Ms. Binheimer stated that Willington's pound does have enough room, where although Tolland has more dogs, they move quicker than the ones found in Willington.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that these discussions have been held before. No one doubts Tina does a fantastic job; it is just a matter of what we can afford and the matter of working out the many details of who would cover the benefits. Do we contract out? All of these things will have to be looked into. First Selectwoman Wiecenski received an email from Mr. Littell today, but hasn't had a chance to reach out to get clarification on a few things.

The Housing Authority budget was discussed next. Don Berg was present to discuss his submission. Mr. Berg had reached out to the Selectmen about how the Housing Authority compensates their Recording Secretary. The way it has worked in the past is not at the Chairmen's discretion. The Housing Authority has been contemplating going to the Recording Secretary policy or at least raising the flat rate; however they want to make sure their budget will cover it. This budget falls under the Selectmen's budget and now is a good time to review and make changes.

Discussion was held on the policy where the flat rate is \$20 per hour and how long it would take to process the minutes based on the length of the meeting. First Selectwoman Wiecenski suggested the Housing Authority figure out an estimate of how long their meetings have been and what the rate would be to cover, depending on which way they decide to go and just make sure they have enough in their budget to cover it. Mr. Berg stated that the last few meetings they had have run about 3 hours long. Selectman Blessington stated that there were times in the past where certain Boards had meetings that lasted over 2 hours, to find that there was only one or two pages of minutes, with no detail, which was disappointing. Mr. Berg stated that their secretary provides great details so that will not be a problem. He just wants to make sure that she is being compensated properly. A copy of the policy was given to Mr. Berg so he could research to see which is the best way to proceed; but had reservations on because the policy will not pay the secretary for travel time. Mr. Berg stated their Secretary travels from Willimantic; if she shows up to record, to find that there is no quorum, she would only get a \$10 stipend, which to him seems like a slap in the face, not to mention that it would probably cost her more to travel here. First Selectwoman Wiecenski agreed; noting that the policy does not cover travel time and that is something that needs to be taken into consideration.

Mr. Berg stated that he will review the policy and make a decision as to what the best way to move forward will factor in the rate (either way) into an updated budget.

The Selectmen's budget was then touched on briefly.

2% increases were added for all of the employees (as determined by the union contract). The summer help line item was decreased, because it hasn't been used in the last few years. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that although it was reduced, she will not remove it; in the event we have a need to fill again in the future. The newsletter (events) was also decreased. We were spending \$3,500 on the newsletter; (with financial assistance from the library & Parks and Recreation) for the Events Magazine, however the newsprint was discontinued and we started to do it in house at no extra cost. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted she just found out that we might have a chance to revamp the newsletter once again, to have the Chronicle take over; where it would once again be mailed directly to residents. This is a good way to get the word out to everyone in town and is a version very

similar to what we are doing in house. Maureen Parsell is looking into it to see how much it will cost and get the numbers into an updated budget in the future.

With those minor changes, the current Selectmen budget comes in at a -0.9% decrease right now.

Donna Latincsics then reviewed department 130; Accounting Services. The first 3 line items are 3 full time salaried employees with 2% salary increases and she also increased the accounting software line (general accounting; a module for payroll and fixed assets) which has been increased by 4% over last years anticipated fixed cost. Training and Education and Office Supplies will remain flat. The Accounting Services section shows a 2.0% increase overall.

First Selectwoman Wicewski moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 PM

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

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

Respectfully Submitted:

Robin Campbell

Recording Secretary

TOWN OF WILLINGTON, CT
Received for record January 25, 2019
At 10:35am Maureen Gagliardi