

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

Board of Selectmen
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Special Meeting Minutes
Lower Level Conference Room

February 24, 2020
6:00PM

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

First Selectwoman Wiecenski called the meeting to order at 6:00PM with the following in attendance Selectwoman Boritz and residents. First Selectwoman Wiecenski led the Pledge of Allegiance. Selectman Blessington was absent.

Approval of Minutes:

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve the minutes of February 3, 2020 with the following correction: under tax refunds the dollar amount should read \$292.62 instead of 4202.62.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion.

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Boritz) 0 No.

Present to Speak:

Maureen Lowe-Choa-Lee of 41 Cosgrove Road was present. She stated she would like to speak in reference to the last town meeting and added that she already shared the following information with The Board of Education. She stated she spoke to Doug Rogers the Manager of Construction and Facilities at CREC who offered to speak as a liaison at no cost to the Town of Willington. She gave the board a packet of information on the work Doug Rogers has done. She stated Doug has worked with different facilities regarding efficiency, grant application, and construction. She added that Doug understands its tough decision to volunteer for the committee and everyone may not be knowledgeable on capital projects and if they miss any piece of the process it can negatively affect the tax payers. Doug also mentioned that any grants for this year need to be submitted by June 30th. Maureen stated new construction is not always the best option; they should also look at renovation. She added that Doug Rogers informed her grants from the State of Connecticut are based on student population and square footage.

Elena Testa, Library Board Vice Chair was present on behalf of The Library Board. She stated they would like to ask the board to respect their recommendations for appointing Sarah and Kathy to The Library Board in accordance with The Library by Laws which state, The Library Board may make recommendations to The Board of Selectmen for a candidate to serve until the next municipal election, the candidate must send a letter of intent to The Board of Selectmen and they will make the final determination. She stated the current board members made a sacrifice to step into a mess and they would be encouraged if The Board of Selectmen considers their recommendation. Elena stated The Library Board was able to meet with Sarah back in January and with Kathy just last week and have interviewed both confirming their desire to be on the board. Elena stated Sarah had the chance to submit a written letter of intent to The Board of Selectmen but Kathy had not.

Elaine Newcomb of 28 Fermier Road was present. She stated she wanted to offer some comments regarding their consideration of the school building committee. She stated she's not sure at this point what options are being considered and as any family would assess their financial resources and ability to take on credit before a major purchase such as a house, they would want to know what financial assessments have been done in concert with the Board of Finance to tailor

the scope of the exploration to our ability to pay. She stated it should be a deeply serious consideration of the resource that the Hall Foundation has afforded the town for 100 years in the Hall Memorial School property and athletic fields. She added in conversations in town she has found few people who understand the arrangement of the Foundation with the town and think dismissal of Hall School renovation should be accompanied by a thorough explanation to town residents. She concluded she believes estimating a 64% state support is unrealistic given the current status of the state's finances. She also gave the board a copy of an article which touches on bonding and money that has been withheld.

Correspondence:

A list of correspondence was available at the meeting and in the Selectman's office.

First Selectman Status Report:

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated they have discussed replacing the oil tank at The Public Works and reallocation of STEAP funds from the Turnpike Road project. She stated they were granted the reallocation back in August but have been struggling to get DOT to sign off on the project because it's out of the normal STEAP project time frame. They discovered at the time of reallocation the oil tank was going to be thirty years old and have to come out of the ground. She added that the state has notified that they will be red tagging our tank and anticipate it to happen tomorrow which means they cannot use it, however there is a means to appeal on Thursday which she will do at DEEP in Hartford. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated she spoke with someone at DEEP today and DOT to explain how their stand still is now affecting us. She added if things happen in the time frame they were given it will be at least two days without use of that fuel tank. She stated the buses have other means of getting fuel and though no one can get fuel at this tank they are still able to get fuel elsewhere offsite. They will keep everyone posted and hope to be granted use of the tank while completing the process with DOT.

Public Works:

Troy Sposato was present. He reported the following for Public Works:

- Roadside mowing is still going on around town
- Moved desks at TOB
- Trash at RRRC
- Repaired gravel roads around town
- Dug out waterways around town
- Install new tires on the backhoe
- The new radio system has been installed in our plow trucks
- Cleaned trucks/shop area
- Picked up trees that have been cut down by a contractor
- Patched holes around town
- A new heater has been installed at the Dog Pound by a contractor
- Tree trimming on Marsh Road

New Business:

A. Appointment – Library Board of Directors

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated there are now two vacancies, one just recently resigned from and the other resigned prior to the election but wasn't able to be on the ballot due to the time frame. She stated they are very happy to have received interest from three members, Sarah Parsell which came from the Library Board recommendation as well as Kathy Ryan-Gidman and Karenann Caldwell whom were recommended by the Willington Democratic Town Committee. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated two of the interested members are present tonight, Sarah and Kathy and asked if either would like to speak. Kathy Ryan-Gidman introduced herself and stated she has been a literacy advocate her whole life and has been teaching English at E.O. Smith High School for the past 25 years. She added that prior to teaching

she was in book publishing as an editor in New York and has a deep love for books and media. Kathy stated as a resident of Willington she has enjoyed the services and activities offered by the library and would like to give back to such an enjoyable place and help insure its growth and continued success. Kathy concluded by stating she hopes to honor her father who recently passed away and was a big advocate and participant in community service.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski read aloud the letter of intent submitted by Sarah Parsell, which will be attached to the minutes.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated they have three qualified candidates and she is happy to see people stepping forward.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to appoint Kathy Ryan-Gidman as a member of the Willington Library Board of Directors; filling a vacancy effective February 24, 2020; expiring November 2, 2021.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion.

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Boritz) 0 No.

Selectwoman Boritz moved to appoint Karenann Caldwell as a member of the Willington Library Board of Directors; filling a vacancy effective February 24, 2020; expiring November 2, 2021.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski seconded the motion.

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Boritz) 0 No.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated she wished they had three open seats, it is exciting to see people come forward and still thinks there is a way for everyone to participate in some way in the future.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to re-appoint Richard Mindek as a member of the Willington Economic Development Commission; effective retro-active January 2, 2020; expiring January 1, 2025.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Boritz) 0 No.

B. Tax Refunds

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to refund Anne Butler an overpayment in the amount of \$5.73.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Boritz) 0 No.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to refund Francis P Raiola Jr. an overpayment in the amount of \$131.67.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Boritz) 0 No.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to refund Bryan Desouza a Certificate of Correction in the amount of \$157.97.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Boritz) 0 No.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to refund Nancy Goodell (Goodell Living Trust) an overpayment in the amount of \$2,154.00.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Boritz) 0 No.

C. Selectman Budget

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated the board had a copy of the budget in front of them and added Troy had made some changes to the Public Works section of the budget. She stated currently our budget is coming in at \$3,895,009 which is an increase of \$405,988 or 11.6% over the last year. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated since they met last, CIP has meet and finalized year one which added an additional \$34,914. She stated the bulk of the increase was from Public Works and

Town Hall Operations so they can keep Novus IT services at 5 days a week. She added their service has been impeccable and they are able to resolve problems before we even know about them. First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated Donna outlined the changes in the budget.

D. Approve CIP Plan Year 1

First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated the board also has a copy of the CIP plan and added they are only looking at year one at this point.

CIP Chairman Stuart Cobb was present. He stated the CIP committee reviews requests from each of the town's departments, the requests include the project, dollar amount, priority level, etc. and we adjust them in and out, assigning each a funding source examples of some being: local funds, LoCIP funds, and revenue from the ambulance billing. He stated in the past 20 years or so it's been fairly flat funded only increasing or changing a small percentage here or there. Stuart stated that this year the BOF suggested possibly raising that dollar amount up to \$600,000 from \$554,000 and added they do try to keep money in the capital reserve for unexpected costs. Stuart stated there are big and small items on the CIP plan/requests and they try to fund as many projects throughout the town's departments as possible.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated some of the projects on CIP's year one plan include: chip sealing the main lower parking lot at Center School, exterior doors, trim and pillars at Hall School (repair and painting), replacing the boiler valves/pump at Hall School, painting the Hall School library, consultants for the school building committee, a septic for the Old Town Hall, a new boiler for the Town Office Building, concrete floor in the basement of the Town Office Building, three trucks for public works (dump truck, plow truck, and a new vehicle for the Public Works Director), engineering for replacing culverts on Liska Road, money for phase 1 of a Village Hill drainage project, replacing the handicap bus at the Senior Center, painting the interior of the Senior Center, a new CPR device and defibrillator for the ambulance at Willington #1, bunker gear for Willington FD #1, replacing the oil tank at Willington FD #1 which will be converted to propane, replacing a response vehicle at Willington Hill FD, and a new pickleball court which will replace the volleyball courts at River Road. She stated most of these projects have been on the plan for some time. First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated these are the projects that the CIP committee put in the plan for year one as well as some lease payments carried over from previous years and they put an extra \$34,000 into the capital reserve.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski asked Donna if she could name some of the things that utilized the capital reserve fund this past year. Donna Latinsics replied it purchased software and the boiler at Hall School. First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated this plan will go to the BOF as part of their presentation next Thursday.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski moved to approve the CIP plan year one as presented.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiczenski & Boritz) 0 No.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski thanked the CIP Committee for their hard work on year one.

E. Approve BOS budget for BOF submission

Selectwoman Boritz moved to accept the 2020-2021 BOS budget in the amount of \$3,895,009

First Selectwoman Wiczenski seconded the motion.

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiczenski & Boritz) 0 No.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated they have discussed the significant increase in the budget but they recognize they have been underfunded for a long time and in many areas specifically Public Works. She stated it is their responsibility to bring forth a budget that is not only financially responsible but also what is going to move the town in a forward direction.

Selectwoman Boritz agreed with First Selectwoman Wiczenski and added it is a challenging process to go through the budget and encourages people to attend a budget meeting and get a firsthand look into the process. She added while discussing the increase they noticed a history of underfunding in almost all of the towns physical resources and it is beginning to cost the town greatly which they can see in the deterioration of the town's properties, buildings, parking lots,

and roads. Selectwoman Boritz stated they did their best to be as fiscally responsible as possible while encouraging the town to think about investing in the future of the town and maintain a high quality of services as well as safe buildings and roads.

Old Business:

School Building Committee Discussions

A. Appointments

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated they have officially had a school building committee approved through town meeting which means they will need to appoint members and present a charge. She stated they anticipate Selectman Blessington being home this Wednesday but aren't sure if he will be back for their next meeting but if that's the case she thinks it might be best to hold off one week on discussing who we appoint to this committee. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated they received a smaller amount of responses then they had the first time around but they did vote unanimously on an 11 member board including the First Selectmen, a BOE member, a BOF member, a BOE staff member, the Superintendent (non-voting member), a person with construction industry experience, and five members at large. She stated this would include herself, Superintendent Stevens, and the BOF recommendation Mike Makuch. She added the only BOE staff member submission was from Niko Semerzakis and the BOE couldn't agree on one person so they made a motion to send two members if possible so they need to decide if they would consider a 12 member board.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski and Selectwoman Boritz agreed to table these discussions until next Mondays meeting and the possible return of Selectman Blessington.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to table the discussion until their next meeting

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Boritz) 0 No.

B. Charge

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated they have a draft (attached) of the School Building Committee Charge. She asked Selectwoman Boritz to take a look at it so she could offer any suggestions or changes she saw fit. First Selectwoman Wiecenski pointed out the first responsibility under D. is defining a prek-grade 8 school to meet Willington's educational needs in cooperation with the Board of Education. She stated this is one of the things Elaine was discussing earlier and though they don't have the answers yet this will be a responsibility of the committee. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated she would change line 5 (Finding and recommending a site to meet school construction and town needs) to finding and recommending a site if necessary. She added that item 10 is to identify potential future uses of the two current school buildings. Selectwoman Boritz suggested adding in "if necessary" to this line as well. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated a lot of these items came directly from the charge given to the 1990 committee which resulted in no new building and added the town's people will ultimately make that decision. She stated that committee also hired consultants to aid in making these decisions and pointed out hiring consultants doesn't mean the process has an identified outcome.

Present to Speak:

Elaine Newcomb of 28 Fermier Road was present. She asked, relative to number 10 on the charge draft, has the BOS and the BOE met with the directors of the Hall Foundation because her understanding was, if Hall School is not a school for Willington, the town will have no role in it. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated they could still discuss possible uses and perhaps the conversation will include having a discussion with the Hall Foundation. Elaine stated she strongly recommends that people sit down and discuss this and know the facts. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated they have been honest with everyone from the beginning in stating, they don't own this building and don't have a say in what happens to it if it is no longer used as a school.

Todd Bissonette of 41 Cosgrove Road was present. He stated he skimmed through the CIP plan and personally has a lot of experience with the equipment being replaced. He stated he understands the program and the fact that you need to

maintain equipment but is wondering if there is any type of repair program or maintenance program for this equipment and also training programs that ensure the operators are using it correctly. First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated she would encourage him to speak to the Public Works Director Troy Sposato after the meeting as he could better answer those questions. She added that Public Works is requesting an added position which would be a mechanic. Todd also stated he thinks the town's people should be made aware of the ways the Hall Foundation has supported our town. First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated any questions about the school buildings at this point, will go to the school building committee and she encourages people to attend those meetings. Todd asked if the town had any new money coming in that would increase the tax base and help pay for the new school or renovations. First Selectwoman Wiczenski replied she wasn't sure what new things were coming in and added that this can always change.

Good & Welfare:

First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated they are happy to hear Selectman Blessington is doing much better and has shared he will be returning home from rehab. She stated he has been greatly missed at the table and they are looking forward to his return.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:00PM.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion.

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiczenski & Boritz)

Respectfully Submitted,
Catharine Holcroft
Recording Secretary

Town of Willington
School Building Committee Charge ****DRAFT****
February 24, 2020

- A. The Willington School Building Committee shall be established by the Board of Selectmen. Any vacancies occurring shall be filled by the Board of Selectmen.
- B. The Committee is authorized to request the Board of Education and Superintendent of schools to file applications and other documents as may be required by the State Board of Education or the State Department of Education.
- C. Funding of the operational expenses of the committee shall be administered by the Board of Finance.
- D. The Committee shall be responsible for:
 - 1. Defining a prek-grade 8 school to meet Willington's educational needs in cooperation with the Board of Education.
 - 2. Recommending a competent architectural and engineering and other appropriate services for the preparation of plans and specifications for constructing, furnishing, and equipping the school.
 - 3. Developing a building proposal with associated financial commitments for Town approval and developing a strategy for obtaining approval of that proposal.
 - 4. Cooperating in the securing of state funding to support the building program.
 - 5. Finding and recommending a site to meet school construction and Town needs.
 - 6. Reviewing architectural plans, specifications and proposed construction contracts.
 - 7. Working with the Treasurer and Board of Finance and other officials to secure funding/bonding for the projects.
 - 8. Adhering to state statute at all stages of the project.
 - 9. Obtaining the approval of the town legislative body for all obligations incurred throughout the building process.
 - 10. Identify potential future uses of the two current school buildings.
 - 11. Overseeing construction and completion of the project.

Sarah Robinson Parsell
75 Timber Lane
Willington, CT 06279
860-372-0313

February 22, 2020

Dear Willington Board of Selectmen,

I am writing to express interest in serving on the Willington Library Board. It would be an honor to serve our community in this way and I understand that there are now two vacancies. Please consider me for one of those.

I can offer the following to our community while serving:

- A passion for education and reading:

I am a public school teacher of elementary students. My current position is Resource Teacher for Hartford Public Schools, with a focus on literacy. This is my calling and passion. In this position, I teach struggling readers and assist teachers in finding resources that would benefit their students, including managing our small resource library. I believe our community needs an active and strong library to support ALL members of our community, including people of all ages and walks of life.

- A commitment to community:

Since I have lived in Willington I have been involved with Willington Public Schools. I have attended Board of Education meetings through the years and expressed my opinions to promote excellent programming in the schools, honoring the outstanding work that our teachers are doing with our children.

Beyond that, I served as PTA secretary for two years in Willington and was an active parent in the school system, helping with our drama program and attending many performing arts and sports events, parades and other school / town functions.

I am currently on the SGC (School Governance Committee) for Hartford Public Schools. In this role, I understand the importance of team work and public outreach.

- A commitment to library programming with the motto of teamwork:

I believe that by working as a team (regardless of political affiliation etc.), we can come together to provide wonderful programs for our youth, our seniors and everyone in between. We must have respectful discourse and value each other's opinions, as I believe that collaboration is the

only way to succeed. I will absolutely work to ensure that a rewarding partnership is forged between the Willington Library Board, library staff, Friends of the Library, and the Willington community so that our library is the best it can possibly be.

I am ready to be a hands-on board member. This means that I would like to be actively involved in library endeavors such as volunteering at the library during the summer months when I am not teaching, along with helping to plan functions during the school year.

Thank you for considering me for this position. I believe that my experience and dedication would be beneficial to Willington. I look forward to serving our town in this way and hope to share my ideas for a bright future for our library and town!

Sincerely,

Sarah Robinson Parsell

TOWN OF WILLINGTON, CT

Received for record February 28, 2020

At 1:30pm Maura G. Gonsky