

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

Board of Selectmen
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Regular Meeting Minutes
Via web interaction (via Zoom platform)

December 21, 2020
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;
Selectman Blessington and residents.

Absent: Selectwoman Boritz

Approval of Minutes

Selectman moved to approve the minutes of December 7, 2020 as written.

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

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

Motion carries

Present To Speak

None to report.

Correspondence

No Correspondence to report

First Selectman's Status Report

First Selectwoman Wiecenski gave an update from the Emergency Task Force Communications Committee. The Committee has been working on the development of a survey to be sent out to residents. When the survey is complete the Committee will call a meeting to review prior to disseminating the questionnaire to residents.

The Parks and Recreation Director Positon closed on Wednesday December 16, 2020. We received 12 applications and 1 application was received on December 18th after the closing date. The hiring committee will start reviewing applicants to determine which candidates will be interviewed. Interviews will be conducted with in the next several weeks.

At the last BOS meeting, at boiler replacement project at the Town Office Building was awarded. The TOB boiler replacement will take place on Wednesday December 23rd and 24th. The Boiler heats the majority of the TOB, most staff will be working remotely as there will be no heat during this time. If there is a need to speak with someone on December 23rd please leave a voicemail on their department phone. Voicemails will be checked periodically during the day. December 24th Christmas Eve is a Holiday for staff, there will be no onsite appointments until Monday December 28th.

Selectman Blessington commented that he is disappointed that he was never contacted to be part of the hiring committee for the Parks & Recreation Directors position as he had expressed interest.

Selectwoman Wiczenski responded by saying there are currently 6 members on the hiring committee which include 3 members from the Parks and Recreation Commission who the Parks and Recreation Director answers to. Additionally on the Committee is another Parks and Recreation Director from a neighboring town. The hiring Committee is quite full at this time, we will keep you informed as we move through the process.

Public Works

- Prepared trucks to get ready for storm
- Trash pickup at the park
- Road side mowing is still taking place around town
- Shoveled roof off at TOB over kitchen area
- Checked section's cleaned off catch basin's
- Cleaned shop
- Cleaned up some site lines on a few roads in town
- Washed trucks after winter storm
- The new boiler will be installed this week at the TOB
- Assisted with traffic control at food share at the TOB

Moose Meadow road will be closed on DEC 28/29 at house #282 due to a few large trees that require a 100 foot bucket truck. Please expect delays and use alternate routes if possible. The hours will be from 7:30-3:30 that the road will be closed off.

New Business

A. Tax Refund

First Selectwoman Wiczenski Moved to refund \$352.68 to VCFS Auto Leasing Co. on a Certificate of Correction.

Selectman Blessington Seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried.

B. Appointment

First Selectwoman Wiczenski Moved to re-appoint Tina Binheimer as a Willington Animal Control Officer; effective January 1, 2021; expiring December 31, 2021.

Selectman Blessington enthusiastically Seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried.

Selectwoman Wiczenski and Selectman Blessington thanked Tina Binheimer for continuing to serve our community in that capacity.

C. TOB mold discussion

Selectwoman Wiczenski started the discussion by saying as you recall 2 years ago we found mold in the front section of the basement which housed some historic tax and assessing books that needed to be

mitigated and restored. The storage of these documents was moved to the vault in the upper level after mitigation. At that time we able to obtain a preservation grant to facilitate that project. It is believed that the mold has originated from the dirt portion of the basement. Earlier this month in organizing older documents from the Land Use department we discovered materials that were wet. The items were removed from the basement area to allow them to dry out and a staff member had an adverse reaction to what appeared to be mold. At that time I gave instruction to staff to not go into the basement area until further notice. We contacted Service Master to conduct an investigation to give us a quote of remediation of restoring documents that require a lifetime retention. We received a quote from Service Master for the document preservation \$28,050 and \$9,500.36 for the mitigation of the mold in that room. An air quality test was also facilitated throughout the building and we are currently waiting for the results. We filed an insurance claim with CIRMA and we are waiting to see what is covered though our policy. The biggest concern is whether the document preservation will be covered as they are required lifetime retention. Our Zoning Agent Mike D'Amato is currently working with the State Library to catalog all the impacted documents to determine which documents are past the remediation process from microbial damage. The State Library may or may not have funding for such a project however they expressed concerns that this issued occurred back in 2018 where historic documents were damaged due to mold. They are discouraged that this problem is continuing and has not been addressed. As you may recall in 2018 after the mold issue had been identified I asked through CIP a project that would concrete the basement area of the building additionally treating the walls to seal out moisture. That project is in CIP unapproved, this project will be submitted through CIP again. The Board of Finance was approached about this concern on Thursday December 17 asking for funding that would be readily available for remediation outside of a CIP submission. The answer I received recommended that we receive a quote from a State of Connecticut Department of Administrative Services approved contractor bid list. At that point the BOF would hold an emergency meeting and determine if funding would be available. Some members of the board thought we were circumventing the CIP process which was discouraging. I made it clear to the Board that we had a staff member who had an adverse reaction to what appears to be mold in this building. This is an important project that addresses health and safety of our employees and residents. We will share the air quality test results as that information becomes available.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski asked Mr. Sposato to speak about the recommendation from Service Master of the remediation process of the impacted storage room in the basement of the TOB.

Mr. Sposato commented that it was recommended that all of the boxes would need to be removed. A concrete floor would need to be poured. A mold mitigation process to ensure no further mold growth. The walls would need to be treated to prevent moisture. A humidifier with an alert mechanism would be ideal to alert a staff member if the temperature or humidity levels drops below a specific threshold. If the choice is to mitigate the documents without treating the room appropriately to prevent moisture you are wasting money and the problem will continue. The current environment is a breeding ground for mold, the temperature is ideal for growth.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski advised that she has notified staff that the basement area is off limits until further notice. There is currently no funding under the Selectmen's budget to cover these costs. Collaboration with the Board of Finance is integral in finding a solution to this growing problem. We cannot at this point move any of the documents because they do contain mold. We are currently waiting for CIRMA to advise what will be covered through this process.

Selectman Blessington asked several questions. He asked if the area was heated currently.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated no however the air handler for the building is housed in this location.

Selectman Blessington then stated he recalls that a concrete floor was poured in the Old Town Hall, is there any ability to utilize that space for storage?

First Selectwoman Wiecenski responded by saying we cannot move any of the documents until the mold is remediated and or removed. We do not want to transfer spores for potential growth in a new area.

Mr. Sposato commented that the floor in the Old Town Hall has been poured however the walls still leak water when we get heavy rain as the foundation is made of stone. The walls would need to be repointed to seal keeping moisture out.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski commented that the current storage or the Old Town Hall may not be ideal for permanent storage of documents that require a lifetime retention that has historic value. We have utilized all the available space in the attic of the TOB, we may find that we have to use offsite storage facility which will be a costly endeavor year after year. The main concern at this point is the health and safety of staff that currently work in the TOB.

Old Business

A. COVID-19 Update

First Selectwoman Wiecenski updated the group as of this afternoon Willington has 104 cumulative COVID cases with an additional 6 probable cases. That is an increase of 21 cases since our last meeting on December 7th 2020. During the Governors press conference it was communicated that Connecticut has administered, 7761 vaccines so far. There is a light at the end of a very long tunnel, the hope is that after 12 months 70% of the population will be vaccinated. We have been notified that municipal staff and volunteers which include Elected Officials and Poll Workers will be included in phase 1B of the vaccine rollout. The date and grouping is still in the planning stages. This is still a very fluid process, there has been discussion of splitting 1B groups into 1C groups. With that said in preparation we have designated an employee coordinator who will send a roster of names and e-mail addresses to the Center for Disease Control Prevention that will be uploaded into their Vaccine Administration and Management System (VAMS). Individuals will be contacted directly regarding their personal, health information and setting up their appointment. The Town will not have access to any health information, it will be up to the employee to provide that information to the CDC. Any appointment information will be set up directly with the employee. The vaccine will not be mandatory for our staff nor is it federally or State mandatory at this point.

Unemployment for November went up slightly in Willington to 5.7% which represents 211 persons.

On Wednesday December 16th we were notified that the Governor signed an Executive Order 9R tax deferment and low interest options which is a relief to eligible taxpayers, businesses, nonprofits and residents who have been economically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This applies to tax deadlines and collection efforts. As you recall this was rolled out in the spring that had deferred payments for tax payments in the beginning of the pandemic. We will continue with the program that was rolled out in the spring which was to defer payments for 3 months now due April 1, 2021 with no interest. Beginning April 2, 2021 any unpaid tax due will incur interest going back to January 1, 2021. It is unfortunate that we were notified of this decision after our supplemental bills and the 2nd installment tax bills were sent out. Therefore the notice was not included in the tax bills sent. Our Revenue Collector will be sending a notice to all tax payers making them aware of the change. Additionally a public notice was sent, it was shared on social media and has been updated to be reflected on our website as a public notice. As you can image this incurred additional postage costs. We are fortunate that we were able to utilize some of our COVID relief funds to cover the extra costs for postage.

There is some anticipated stimulus funds coming from the federal government, \$600 per individual making under \$75,000 with children. It is hopeful that these additional funds will be able to help residents who are struggling.

B. School Building Committee Members Discussion and Appointment of Chair

First Selectwoman Wicewski started the discussion by saying that the BOS has selected the committee members. In previous meetings the BOS had previously discussed appointing a chairperson for the (SBC). With that said I am recommending that we allow the (SBC) members have a discussion and appoint the Chair for that committee. It wouldn't be responsible to appoint a Chair person who may or may not be prepared to take on the leadership role with in that committee. It's important to let the Committee start their work by appointing their Chairperson.

Selectmen Blessington concurs that the (SBC) should discuss and choose their own chair.

Present to Speak

Mike Makuch from Clover Springs Drive wanted to bring to the forefront the conversations related to security concerns. There has been a lot of quality of life issues and car break-ins along with some unfortunate instances that occurred in Town. The Communications Task Force is making good progress and is moving in the right direction which will result in bringing valuable changes to the Town. However with that said, not soon enough with the incident that occurred this past week on Eldredge Rd. which caused concerns on social media with residents on how do we find out about these things should be the communication method etc. The Towns people are looking for these types of alerts so it is my belief that the Emergency Communications Task Force has a lot of work to do to come up with some viable solutions. I had also mentioned to First Selectwoman the possibility of installing traffic cameras in various locations throughout Town. I'd like people to be thinking about it, Capitol money is hard to come by and there are a lot of projects that need to be funded. I have worked on a draft proposal, I am working as a citizen with experience in this field. The previous year's submission will be revised and resubmitted based on what we've learned over the last year.

Good & Welfare

First Selectwoman Wicewski gave an update the group of the Troop C Police report. For the month of November 2020. There were 480 calls for service, 9 accidents, 11 criminal investigations, 2 larcenies, 412 non reportable matters, totaling 8 arrests, 41 total traffic stops, 2 onsite DUT's, 6 misdemeanor summons, 17 infractions, 4 written warnings & 14 verbal warnings.

A reminder to everyone to find COVID testing sites you can get information through 2-1-1 or <https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus>

Mobile food share will be at the TOB this Wednesday December 23rd from 11 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. You can contact Human Services with any questions. The move was made from the Senior Housing Complex to the TOB with a new drive through model due to the rise in infections in Willington.

Please, if you can support our small businesses and restaurants.

Our Parks & Recs Director Maureen Parsell's last day was Friday December 18th we are sad to see her go. I want to send a huge Thank you to Maureen Parsell for creating fun socially distant ways for residents to feel connected this winter. She held a Thanksgiving scavenger hunt and most recently a gingerbread house competition. The winners were Ellarie Stevens, Jocelyn Bolduc & Judy Marco. There was some great entries and we hope people had the opportunity to see and vote for their favorite gingerbread house. The Tour of Holiday Lights which is still ongoing the winners of Willington Pizza gift cards were; for the most traditional house- Kim Vera Laurel Drive, most animated- Rick LaBelle on Fernier Rd & the overall winner is Aubrey Fountain at 222 Willington Hill Rd. We want to thank Maureen and everyone that participated.

Selectman Blessington wanted to let everyone know that John Balazs a native of the Town of Willington has passed away last Thursday. Mr. Balazs worked for many years as the Public Works Director for Ashford. When he retired he moved to Atlanta. His thoughts and prayers go out to his family. He also wanted to wish everyone a Merry Christmas.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski extended her thoughts and prayers out to the Balazs Family. She also wanted to extend a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah and Happy New Year for all who celebrate.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:07 PM

Selectwoman Blessington seconded the motion.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Sharpley
Administrative Assistant
Town of Willington

TOWN OF WILLINGTON, CT
Received for record Dec 28, 2020
At 1:15pm BAW ATC