

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

Board of Selectmen
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www.willingtonct.org

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Regular Meeting Minutes
In person & Via web interaction (via Zoom platform)

July 19, 2021
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 in person; Selectmen Boritz & Blessington in person and Public Works Director Troy Sposato and residents.

Approval of Minutes

Selectman Boritz moved to approve the minutes of July 6, 2021 as written.

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

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

First Selectwoman Wiecenski indicated Cheryl Mitchell is filling in as recording secretary until the Administrative Assistant position is filled.

Present To Speak

None to Report

Correspondence

A list of Correspondence was available for the Selectmen to view; due to receipt late Friday Selectmen will take time to reviews and put on agenda for next meeting.

First Selectman's Status Report

No real changes; waiting on STEAP grant; School building committee voted to move to Board of Finance to allocate funds for CIP; Board of Finance voted No and for Board of Selectmen to call a public meeting.

There has been an uptick of COVID cases across the state; Eastern Highland District reports 3 new cases in Willington. First Selectwoman Wiecenski reminded everyone to remain cautious and get vaccinated if over the age of 12.

There are several vacancies in the Town of Willington; The Assistant Assessor will stay on for a bit longer on a per diem basis to train. The Parks & Recreation Director is leaving for another town position making \$18,000.00 more per year, last day is July 23rd; First Selectwoman Wiecenski once again indicated they need to take a look at the structure of employment at Town of Willington. Sophia Mailhos has been hired as an Assistant Rec Director to fill; in the gaps; will have hours in the office to answer phones & emails until Town can hire someone new.

Public Works

Mr. Sposato indicated they have been working hard to fill in the washouts from Tropical Storm Elsa and this past weekend's storms; currently we have 25 damaged roads in Willington due to recent storms, with major damage on Mason Road. Tropical Storm costs so far and material that has been used to fix some of the roads are as follows; 3 inch minus-534 tons, inch and quarter stone-131 ton, inch and quarter process - 21 tons, Rip Rap-20 tons; estimated cost around \$8,000.00 and does not include trucking. There is a lot more work that needs to be done with paving and regrading all dirt roads with process grade. This does not include the most recent storm. Mr. Sposato stated once again more man power is needed as all the work can't be done with employees they currently have (4 FT). He thanked the Fire Departments for their assistance with the checking roads and cleaning off catch basin tops around town. He also indicated Daleville School Rd is a priority.

Old Business

A. Assistant Business Manager/Treasurer Discussion

First Selectman Wiecenski moved to Table Discussion to next meeting.

Selectman Boritz seconded the motion.

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

B. ARPA Funds

At last meeting error was made and dollar amount was off. First Selectwoman Wiecenski spoke with Donna to prepare for Board of Finance meeting; correction was deemed okay for Board of Finance to go forward with their meeting.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski made a Motion to Correct Expenditure to \$123,500.00 for ARPA funds;

Selectman Boritz seconded the motion.

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

New Business

- A. Tropical Storm Elsa update – catch basins were cleaned up; Mr. Sposato had some concerns on Schofield, Fermier, Jared Sparks, Balazs, Turnpike, Old Town Road; Liska Rd had major damage as well and working to begin (at CIP) with engineer; One home had an inaccessible driveway; Fire Department assisted; EMS/Public Works rose to occasion with assistance. This was a bad storm in terms of rainfall and road damage. Mr. Sposato also took time to address the storms from Saturday 7/17/21: Schofield's stone (from previous washout) washed all the way down to Route 32. Mason Rd/Parker Rd. side roads took a beating. Selectman Blessington indicated 4 ¾" of rain. Dirt road from 75 Mason Rd to Parker Rd can still access road; 75 Mason to Daleville School Rd is currently closed. If residents see a road closed DO NOT pass through – extreme safety issue. Mr. Sposato met with an engineer this morning at Mason Road who recommended a box of culvert; could keep as is or put on an angle; area should be paved and curbing installed on certain roads; indicated that thousands are spent to maintain these roads every year; Mr. Sposato indicated this issue was talked about back in 1993; same issues then. Selectman Boritz indicated she lives on Village Hill and that road is bad. First Selectwoman Wiecenski indicates that Village Hill and Schofield residents deserve roads that are properly constructed and maintained and if the rain continues we will be in real trouble. As time goes on, First Selectwoman Wiecenski indicates she and Mr. Sposato will become more vocal about these needs. Selectman Blessington indicates it is not just raising taxes to get more funds to do this but also bonding will be needed; First Selectwoman Wiecenski indicates the problem is getting bigger and every year CIP pushes it out

but feels this should be put to a vote by the townspeople to hear from them. First Selectwoman Wiecenski declared a State of Emergency on Saturday 7/17 with the state and crews worked. Mr. Sposato is doing his best to get back to everyone that has left messages. During Elsa the EOC was open and the Eversource Public Safety individual was on hand to provide information and work with the Public Works director.

B. Tax Refund

Motion made by First Selectwoman to refund William E. Griffin \$11.28 on a Certificate of Correction; Selectman Blessington seconded the motion

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

C. Tax Waiver/Reduction Request

Peter Andersen was present to speak regarding the town's intent to purchase the Talmadge tract and he has been keeping the Talmadge Estate family up to date on the progress. The purchase has been pushed out to 2023 due to the State's delay in the grant. In return for the delay the Talmadge Estate has requested a tax waiver or abatement. Mr. Andersen indicated the mechanics would need to be worked out with the Tax Collector and Assessor's office; and worked into the Purchase and Sales Agreement. If the purchase does not happen the Seller would be responsible for the taxes. Mr. Andersen indicated that this is beyond the Commission's control. First Selectwoman Wiecenski spoke about options: 1) Waive the taxes altogether if grant not awarded – risk is the Town loses the tax dollars; 2) Made the tax abatement/waiver contingent on sale and be willing to waive interest accrued; 3) Seller pays taxes and refund due could be worked into the Purchase and Sales Agreement. Selectman Blessington indicated this issue came before the Board of Selectman previously and state indicated in a previous matter that interest can't be waived; Assessor indicated Town could not do it; According to Janice Tax Collector can't waive anything; Selectmen are able to waive a portion of the taxes due to certain circumstances. Further discussion with the members of the Conservation Commission and question asked if previously there was similar language for a previous abatement. Kathy Demers indicated there was not. Carol Jordan indicated there is an option to pay taxes as due meeting the tax obligation then put in agreement to be refunded. Kathy indicated the grant is due at the end of September; could close prior to state funding. Further discussion with Selectmen regarding setting a precedent; put language in Purchase and Sales Agreement; No formal action taken, suggested Conservation Committee work into the Purchase and Sales Agreement. Talking about \$1,404.22 worth of taxes

D. Call Town Meeting

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved:

**TOWN OF WILLINGTON
NOTICE AND WARNING
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING**

The electors of the Town of Willington and all persons who are entitled to vote in Town Meeting on the matters mentioned in the following warning are hereby warned and notified to meet in Town Meeting at the Old Town Hall; 11 Common Road, , Willington, at 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, August 3, 2021 for the following purpose:

ITEM I

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Finance, will authorize the appropriation \$60,000 from the Open Space fund for the costs associated with the purchase of the Talmadge Estate property on Mason Rd, including the survey and legal fees.

ITEM II

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Finance, will authorize the appropriation of \$101,000 from the Reserve Fund to be used for the purchase of the Talmadge Estate property on Mason Rd..

ITEM III

To see if the townspeople, on the recommendation of the Board of Finance, will authorize the appropriation of \$123,500 from the American Rescue Plan Fund for the purpose of Air Conditioning replacement at the Senior Center (\$35,000), Remote and hybrid meeting room electronic equipment (\$28,500), TOB basement cleaning and concrete (57,500) and TOB purifiers (2,500).

Dated at Willington,
This 19th day of March, 2021.

Discussion

This will be the first in person town meeting since COVID began. There will be no hybrid option.

Selectman Boritz seconded the motion.

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

Present to Speak

Kathy Demers, 48 Mason Road discussed the issue on Mason Road and indicated paving was a concern because the road is narrow and may result in speeding on the road and there is also scenic value in the road. She requested engagement of the residents of Mason Road prior to paving to hear their concerns. She also thanked Public Works for all their hard work.

Good & Welfare

Food Share will be at the Town Hall this Wednesday from 11:00 – 11:30 AM.
COVID-19 information can be found on www.portal.ct.gov/coronavirus

Tax Bills are due without interest by 8/2/2021.

Wednesday in the Park series continues at River Road Complex from 6:30 – 8:30 PM every Wednesday until 8/18/2021.

Support small businesses/restaurants in our area

A resident came in to the Selectwoman's office to express her happiness of transfer station employees and cleanliness of the transfer station.

First Selectwoman Wiccenski again thanked Public Works for working the last two weekends; and EMS workers for their work when called.

First Selectwoman Wiccenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 PM

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

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

Motion carries

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Mitchell
Acting Recording Secretary
Town of Willington

RECEIVED
WILLINGTON, CT.

2021 JUL 26 P 1:03


TOWN CLERK