

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

Board of Selectmen
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Special Meeting Minutes
Via web interaction (GOTOMEETING)

April 6, 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: Selectmen Boritz, Selectman Blessington, Public Works' Director Troy Sposato, Emergency Management Director, Stuart Cobb and Zoning Agent Mike D'Amato. Residents logged in via web.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski reminded the Selectmen to identify themselves before speaking with their name and title. All comments should be directed through the chair. This will keep us in line with the new Executive Order that is in place. She then noted that public comment will only be during the Present to speak portion of our meeting and the Selectmen will invite relevant presenters to speak on Topics on the agenda

Approval of Minutes

First Selectman Wiecenski moved to approve the minutes of February 24, 2020.

Selectman Boritz seconded the motion

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Boritz) 0 No. 1 Abstain (Blessington)

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve the minutes of March 2, 2020 with the following edit: meeting began at 6:30 PM (it states that it started at 6PM)

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Blessington) 0 No. 1 Abstain (Boritz)

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve the minutes of March 9, 2020.

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion

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

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve the minutes of March 26, 2020.

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

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

Present To Speak

Elaine Newcomb stated that she is deeply concerned about the wish list encompassed in the town budget; the CIP Plan as well as a new school. We are in tougher times than the country has ever known. The repercussion of this current pandemic will reverberate far into the future. The financial health of the state was already facing serious fate for decades due to poor fiscal management. We will be more than fortunate if we don't lose more than a substantial amount of our small commercial taxes. Our families are in dire straits with mortgages to pay, children to raise and now may be unemployed.

Ms. Newcomb went on to say the efficiency of a full time employee at a \$52,000 salary (which most likely does not include benefits) is a new tax burden and wishes for a new upgrade to fire facilities and school property are shaking ground and our rights to referendum has apparently been taken away from us. Whatever is finalized for a proposed budget should be submitted to all voters by a mail-in ballot. If there is no moderation in the two budgets; an 11.6% and 3.25 % increases those we know of; and we don't know about Region 19. Might be the last straw for some of our Willington families.

*Peter Latincics said he has 3 questions for the Selectmen. 1) Have we contacted residents and businesses to determine the extent of the economic impact on them by the virus? 2) Have we contacted our bargaining units to see if they understand that it may be necessary to suspend raises and 3) Are we taking steps to take advantage of the June 30th extension of the budget process that the state is allowing?

*Peter Tanaka stated he is glad we are using some type of meeting process; but only saw the agenda; and did not get an email with a link to the meeting; and had the wrong code on the original agenda. He is wondering how this is affecting our Human Services department during this time.

*Laurie Semprebon stated that she followed the BOS agenda link and code - she did not have any trouble getting in by phone.

*Jim Bulick stated that he, too had trouble getting into the meeting with the agenda that was originally posted. He stated he would like to reiterate what Peter Latincics said – he thinks we should take advantage of deadline afforded to us by the governor and delay our budget process. Mr. Bulik also pointed out latest executive order allows for a delay in property taxes of up to 90 days – that will certainly put a challenge on our cash flow. Mr. Bulick then added that Mr. Latincics had a very good point; suggesting a budget freeze as there are numerous residents who are unemployed while others are considered non-essential; staying home. We should be reacting to that and be very responsible, prudent budget during this time of distress.

*See note after New Business Item A

Correspondence

A list of correspondence was distributed to the Selectmen.

First Selectman's Status Report

First Selectwoman Wicewski noted that the Finance Department held training last week with Tyler Technology for the new software which will be implemented in July. Formal training will begin in May 11 in a virtual setting.

CHA (formerly known as CME) will be moderating our virtual meetings. First Selectwoman Wicewski thanked Mike D'Amato for moderating the BOF, PZC and BOS meetings.

Public Works

Troy reported that the crew is busy with the following:

- Road sweeping
- Roadside mowing is still happening around town
- Grading dirt roads around town

- Dug out waterways around town
- Received price to fix guardrail on the intersection of Daleville Rd and Daleville School Rd – either a tractor trailer or large truck seems to have backed into it.
- Patched holes around town
- Trash at RRRC

First Selectwoman Wicewski noted that we have made some changes at the Transfer Station due to the new Executive Orders that are in place. We are trying to limit hand to hand contact between staff and residents. She asked Troy if we have seen any dumping due to the new changes; since we have encouraged people to hold onto items until the Transfer Station has been fully re-opened

Troy noted that today, someone had dumped some trash on Latham Road and there are a few areas, but they have not received any calls of tires around town. He asked everyone to bear with us during these times.

First Selectwoman Wicewski noted that we are still accepting bulky waste, household trash, and recyclables.

New Business

A. Award Contract for Fuel Tank Removal and Replacement at Public Works

First Selectwoman Wicewski recapped that we have to remove our outdated fuel tank; as summoned by DEEP. We were under a deadline by DEEP to have a contract in place to have the tank removed. Since then the COVID-19 Pandemic, she contacted DEEP and they have since extended the deadline to August 20th. This is still an item that needs to be done and we have received all of the information to move forward.

The original plan was to use STEAP funds to complete this project and begin the new salt shed project. First Selectwoman Wicewski said she fears that there will be a delay in activity from the state in order to use the remaining STEAP funds. We were able to hold the Town Meeting to appropriate \$100,000 for the project; but we still need more to finish the project. First Selectwoman Wicewski met with the Business Manager to come up with the remaining funds so we will be able to use the STEAP funds solely for the salt shed project.

Troy sought quotes for the tank removal. Two quotes are from KROPP Environmental and the other is from Service Station Equipment.

The quote from Service Station Equipment is a little more than KROPP. Troy explained that we would be getting a better of a deal with the KROPP quote. Troy explained that Service Station Equipment added a removal of the DEF (Diesel Exhaust Fuel) tank and it has been removed out of there; we will only be getting a steel diesel tank. Service Station is quoting \$229,125 for an 8,000 gallon fuel tank and \$225,770 for a 6,000 tank. We currently have an 8,000 gallon tank there now and Troy would not recommend going with anything smaller than what we currently have.

KROPP Environmental furnished us with two quotes. The first quote is for removal of the tank only; which came in at \$13,225.00. The second quote is for the entire project; removal and installation of a new tank; quoted at \$179,214.00 over all.

First Selectwoman Wicewski asked if there was any difference between the two quotes that made such a difference. Troy noted that Service Station Equipment quoted us for two tanks, but we only need one.

They also did not add a price option for new software; as they were hopeful we would be able to use the exiting software from the old system. Since it is unknown if the software will work on the new system, the pricing could go up. KROPP offered \$900 rental fee for a temporary tank until the new system is up and running. Both companies have estimated the project to take between 6-8 weeks for new tank to come in and 4-6 weeks for installation.

Troy is recommending to go with the quote for the removal and installation project from KROPP Environmental for the removal and installation.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to award KROPP Environmental Services contract to remove and replace the diesel tank at the Public Works Garage in the amount of \$179,214. Selectwoman Boritz second the motion.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted the first step is to get a signed contract to get the tank out; but this contract encompasses the entire project which will get us out of bad graces with DEEP.

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

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that we have found money within our budget to cover the remainder of the funding for this project. We will be looking for a transfer through BOF to secure the entire funding.

Selectman Blessington noted that some people had logged into the meeting late (because they had the wrong access code) and are looking to speak under present to speak. He then asked if the Selectmen would be able to back up to Present to Speak. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that there will be another opportunity to have them speak at the end of the meeting – it is important that we keep this meeting moving forward in this format.

Selectman Blessington warned having present to speak at the end of the meeting after everything has been done is done. First Selectwoman Wiecenski cautioned that keeping a meeting in this format would be the same as if we had someone come to the meeting late – and they missed an opportunity to speak – they would have to wait until the second “present to speak” at the end of the meeting. Selectman Blessington argued that they were unable to log in because they had the wrong access code. Selectwoman Boritz said she would be in favor of giving the people 2 minutes each to say what they have to say.

*the comments were added under “Present to Speak” denoted with a *.

B. Award Haying Contract – Fenton Ruby Park

We sought 5 bids for the haying contract and received one back on March 30th. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that the bid was still sealed and opened it on camera.

The bid received was from Brenda Wilde in the amount of \$411 per year to hay the fields. Ms. Wilde noted in her remarks that she will fertilize one to two times during the course of the year. Will cut brush one time per year. She plans on soil sampling each of the fields to see what the ground soil is lacking. The contract will run from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2023.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to award the 2020-2023 Fenton Ruby Haying Contract to Brenda Wilde as per her bid of \$ 411.00 per year.

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

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

C. Discussion – Executive Order 7S – Property Tax Deferral options

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that this Executive Order requires municipalities to participate in one or both of the programs; notifying OPM which program in which we elect to participate. She noted that we do not have to make a decision today. We received information from OPM just before the meeting. The Revenue Collector will be meeting with other Collectors to discuss further.

We were given two options: A deferment program and low interest rate program. We have to choose one or both. Revenue Collector, Janice Clauson was in attendance. She clarified that the deferral program will defer payments for 90 days; (from July 1); making the deadline October 1st with deferred interest. She does not have the guidelines yet. Residents choosing this option will be required to fill out an application and prove that they have financial hardship.

The Low interest rate will allow taxes that are due July 1 and interest of 3% per year which is a 1/4 % per month instead of 1 1/2 % now. That will be for a period of 90 days. If people are already delinquent, their 90 day of reduced interest will begin on April 1st through the end of June. If no payments are made by that time, they will be charged the full interest. Once they hit July 1, those people who are in delinquent status now will revert to the 18%.

Ms. Clauson said she will be meeting to see how towns are going to qualify everyone to be granted deferral status and get further information.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she attended a conference call late this afternoon with the Governor regarding the application process. Residents will be attesting on the application that they have either been furloughed without pay, had hours significantly reduced or are now unemployed since March 10, 2020. The information will be attested under penalty of perjury. She then added that town leaders have asked what documentation we should be asking for – such as an unemployment notice. There was no guidance; noting that it as of right now would be an honors program. It was also noted that we could extend the program beyond the guidelines but cannot go any less.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski then added that she has a concern regarding cash flow - even if we decide to go with the deferral, there is a chance that people will not pay on time. She then clarified that the deferment will defer the interest, but the tax will still be due. She does not expect the Selectmen to make a decision on this tonight – we have until April 25th to respond to OPM. She added that we will add this topic to the next regular meeting; which is scheduled for April 20th and more information will be sent to the Selectmen before then.

Selectman Blessington asked if this Executive Order gives us the option of holding a vote on the budget this year. First Selectwoman Wiecenski clarified that it does not. It would be more in line with emergency spending – such as a repair to a leaking roof. Instead of holding a town meeting to appropriate the funds, the Selectmen are allowed to move forward without. She added that Parks & Recreation has a project coming up which was approved on the CIP. The project would be slated to go before Board of Finance and then Town Meeting. Because it is not urgent; it would not qualify. We are not allowed to do all business as usual.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski then clarified that it does not at all impact the budget process. That was defined in a previous Executive Order and that process is to go through the Board of Finance. She then

warned that there is no Executive Order that allows for a vote. – The Board of Finance will be charged with approving the budget.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that this will be discussed again. The Revenue collector should also have additional information once she has had a chance to discuss with other Collectors.

D. Appointment – Willington Historic District Commission

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to appoint Tyler Hall as an alternate member of the Willington Historic District Commission; effective April 6, 2020; expiring January 1, 2023 Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked Mr. Hall for his willingness to serve on this Commission.

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

Old Business

A. COVID-19 Update

Emergency Management Director Stuart Cobb was present. He presented a graph that was posted by the Governor last week. It showed the estimated peak status by county for the COVID-19 virus. Mr. Cobb noted that it appears to extend out into late June - early July. The cases in Tolland County are fairly low. Willington has 2 confirmed cases; and one appears to be in the hospital. Mr. Cobb then warned, although the numbers are low, we still have a long ways to go.

The emergency services are holding on by the skin of their teeth to supplies and have begun seeing shortages of personal protection equipment such as gloves and masks and they are hard to come by; which has become a challenge. So far call counts have been fairly low for the ambulance. Some calls go out as a suspected case and they have to treat as such. The Ambulance personnel are re-using their N95 masks at this time.

Lastly, the Department has also experienced shortages in staff due to various issues; one member was sent to New York as part of the AMR Ambulance agreement; one also works at a hospital; and has been quarantined in fear of having been in contact with the virus; another volunteer is staffed full time at another department and has requested him to reserve for them. They are trying to schedule as best as they can.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski then noted as of today, we have 2 positive cases in town. One is hospitalized and we are working with the health district although not a lot of information has been shared at this time. There is certain information that is shared on an as needed basis with first responders for safety reasons. Mr. Cobb added that the dispatch center has a list of addresses for positive COVID-19 (no names). The information is shared with them prior to responding to a call.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski recapped that there are currently 22 executive orders issued from the Governor. There is a link to them on our website under the COVID 19 tab.

River Road Athletic Complex remains open. We have blocked certain items off. The public works director and Rec Director are monitoring the park regularly to make sure people are socializing in a proper manner. The CDC is now recommending for people to wear masks when out in public. First Selectwoman Wiecenski added that people should only be out with their immediate family and no one should be in groups larger than 5 people.

Mr. Cobb Stuart said we are tracking expenses related to the pandemic at the direction of FEMA. There is a process that begins with tracking extraordinary expenses. In order to be eligible for reimbursement; will need to keep track of spending. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted so far, our expenses have been minimal; but we might see an increase in human services as this continues and so far, we also have incurred some IT expenses.

B. Budget Discussion

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that she and Selectwoman Boritz spent a considerable amount of time discussing the budget in January & February. They approved a budget with a large increase and felt it had the increases we needed to properly service the Town. We have mentioned many times that we know we are underfunded in many areas and the budget put forth we believed addressed those deficiencies.

The board of Finance was at the point of making their appropriations when the State made an Emergency Declaration. Meetings had to be put on hold while we grasped the seriousness and length of the situation. There are still many unknowns as we continue with the budget process under a modified format determined by the Governors Executive Orders. First Selectwoman Wiecenski added because of this new format and the uncertainty of our economic situation now and in the immediate future, she began to look the Selectmen's budget again. She then asked Troy to adjust the Public Works' budget with the uncertainties we are facing in mind.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski added while she still believes the items in our original budget are much needed in Willington, she also believes at this time, we need to adjust and defer to at least 1 more budget cycle for some of these items. She then presented a revised budget that reflects the cuts that were made. She then suggested having the Selectmen look at it as a whole and determine if we want to leave our original request in place, or move to accept a revised budget to be sent to the BOF. She added she has the utmost faith in our BOF that they will be taking a good hard look at all budgets and weigh the requests against the uncertainties we are facing as a Town, a State and Country.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski then presented a revised budget that has a bottom line that is significantly less than the original that was sent to BOF earlier. Troy was able to reduce the Public Works' budget by \$248,948; so now his total increase is only \$157,040 over the current fiscal year or 4.5%.

Troy elaborated on some of the things he took out of the original request; such as the mechanic position; vehicle maintenance was decreased from \$75,000 to \$60,000 (because there is still a need); equipment rentals was removed. The supplies budget was reduced from \$10,000 to \$8,000. Asphalt was reduced by \$5,000 and Aggregate was also decreased. Traffic Control was reduced by \$10,000 because we purchased the equipment last year. Equipment purchases has been reduced from \$25,000 to \$15,000.

Troy noted that he increased the salt budget to \$100,000. This is due to the MS4 provisions that are in place; noting they changed the mix and are now just using salt alone; which worked very well this winter. Asphalt and chip seal were lowered to their original requests; noting that Troy feels the roads are in serious need of attention.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that we had talked about the traffic control; and not having a plan this year we felt it would be better to cut because we did not have a solid plans for the funding. She then noted that although the mechanic position was removed, the additional hours for the Public Works assistant were still included in the budget – there will only be salary implications as the employee does not require benefits. Troy noted that the Assistant does a lot more than administrative things. He plows snow and he does a lot of things to assist the crew – and his assistance frees up the crew.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski said if we approve this budget and send to Board of Finance, they will look at it and let us know what they think. She clarified that we went from an 11.6% increase to a 4.5% increase. She also noted that the Region 19 budget is set to be voted on tomorrow and is looking at a decrease of approximately \$171,000. If we put it with the BOE & Region 19, the whole picture would bring the overall budget to a 2% increase.

Selectwoman Boritz said we should revise our original submission with the reduced increases.

Selectman Blessington said we are facing a big recession coming up – by the time this is over – the people who have lost their jobs may not recover. We will be lucky if we do not end up in a depression after this. He then reiterated at the very least, we will be in a recession. We had an 11.5% increase and now we are saying we cut it down to 4.5%. The public works budget was cut from a \$300,000 increase to an \$85,000 increase - that is still an increase and added that no other organization has cut a penny out of their budget. Selectman Blessington then suggested having a budget freeze. We should re-do last year's budget – and even that might be a little hard on a lot of people. We have been talking about deferring payments or making low interest loans rather than high interest loans if they can't pay. A lot of people might not have that money – we need to look out for the taxpayer.

Selectman Blessington then reiterated his proposal to go back to last year's budget and also suggested sending a letter to the Governor asking him to defer negotiations and mandated increases for the next year.

Selectwoman Boritz said she understands Selectman Blessington's perspective and believes we should do everything we can to keep costs at a minimum; but has concerns about freezing everything. She stated that we have had multiple conversations over the past several months with departments who have brought their budget up to what they are actually spending. The reason they looked at Public Works budget is because they had a much more significant increase than other budgets. At the time, we did not know the reality of what is happening now – it made sense to entertain it at the time. She stated she also has concerns about freezing salaries. If we are looking at a recession and look at freezing salaries of our staff; we are adding to the recession. She said we should go with this and put forth to the BOF- if the BOF has further recommendations, they will let us know.

Selectman Blessington said he would love to see everyone get a raise; but through the years of the “Obama recession”, every year we had people who lost their jobs; had hours cut or found jobs with less pay in the private sector; but everyone in the government sector received a raise because they were important – we would just raise taxes to pay them. He is hopeful we won't go through that again. He doesn't want to go to a resident who just lost his job asking him to pay more because our government workers need a raise. He then asked as far as everything else goes; can we make cuts? Can we do with less? We increased the Recreation Commission – the Rec Commission is a wonderful thing, but can we ask them to do less? When we get to the education side will be interesting, because we have people who probably don't have a whole lot to do at the moment. Selectwoman Boritz then said we don't know yet if we are in any different of a financial situation today, than we were yesterday – we suspect that we will be; but we don't have that information today.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated she has asked for numbers from the department of labor as far as unemployment – they do not have the numbers because they are so backlogged at the moment. Once she gets those numbers she will forward to the Board of Finance. Selectman Blessington said we can pretty much guess – say let's not worry about it – maybe it won't happen; but he suspects it will happen. First Selectwoman Wiecenski said we are worried about it – that's why we took a different look at the budget. As a board of Selectmen –we do not have a say to determine the education side of things and the parks and rec is not under the Selectmen's budget. That is not saying that the BOF is not going to take a hard look at this. She then added that there are some increases in the budget; aside from salaries that need to

be cleared and shored up – that are increasing because they were deficient going into the. It would not benefit us to slash at this point.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that she has reached out to the union to see if we can begin negotiations on the contract and see if we can open a dialog in an interim process. We will see where the union stands on that. She added that we knew that the large line came from Public Works. We can look at some smaller items in the Selectmen's budget. For example, we added \$500 for adding a moderator; but can take that out. She asked the Selectmen if they want to go line by line if they want or we can put forth what we cut and meet with the BOF to hear what they have to say. She noted that the BOF will go through their budget line by line when they meet.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve and amended budget of \$3,646,061 representing an increase of \$157,040 – a 4.5% increase

Selectwoman Boritz seconded the motion.

Selectman Blessington said he does not have much to say on this other than it is a big mistake.

Selectwoman Boritz said this isn't the final piece of the process. There are still more layers to go through. She then asked isn't the BOF the ones to freeze the budget? First Selectwoman Wiecenski clarified Selectman Blessington suggested freezing the budget; he meant using the same exact dollar amount as we did last year. Assuming the union will agree to no increases and that is a risky move to make and not plan for that. We also have an unknown insurance marker in this budget.

Selectwoman Boritz cautioned that we are facing many increases; such as gas, propane, electricity and mail increases to name a few. The only optional increases we were looking at were minimal – like .03%. The majority of this conversation may be in vain. First Selectwoman Wiecenski added that we may need increases in human services or elections in the registrars or town clerk's budget. If they choose a different method of voting services and depending on when a primary is actually held – and what that could mean for the November election. There are so many unknowns. To say we are going to use last year's budget number could be very challenging to us. First Selectwoman Wiecenski reiterated that she has the utmost confidence in the BOF - they will go through this process and have a very serious conversation about it.

Selectman Blessington agreed with Selectwoman Boritz that there is one more process to go through but also pointed out that the final judgement has been taken away from us as there will be no referendum. So the people really don't get to say much about this. We will have to trust the Board of Finance. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that they will still have to hold a public hearing and the one thing she wants people to understand is the decision on how the budget could be handled was taken into account the safety of our residents as well as the people who work in the polls. This wasn't just to take our rights away – there were a lot of layers that made this decision and we can't discount that.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski went on to say that there are so many unknowns with this particular emergency – there is no safe way to vote – whether it be in person or by mail – to adequately ensure the safety of everyone.

Selectman Blessington said he doesn't see why sending absentee ballots to registered voters is not a good way to do it but apparently we are not going to be given that option. Selectwoman Boritz said she does not like the fact that we are not going to go to referendum either– that is not something she would choose but we are not the ones who can make those decisions.

Suzanne Chapman, Republican Registrar of Voters said there is more to it than just sending an absentee ballot to a registered voter because people who own property on the grand list are also eligible to vote. It will also come at a significant cost as well as overwhelming to the Town Clerk and Registrar's.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski then recapped that there is a motion on the floor to accept the amended budget; adding that she is not sure if there are other departments who are looking at their budget doing the same. She noted that she felt it important to revisit. This current fiscal year is not the time to make big changes.

Selectman Blessington said he understands the grand list problem but so what we are saying is rather than having the vast majority of voters vote on the issue; it is better to not vote at all. First Selectwoman Wiecenski warned that is not what Suzanne was saying. She added that there are people who are afraid to touch their mail – and we are asking town employees to touch the mail as well. These are the cards that have been dealt and the process has been laid out. She then said in the event things were to change, we will go back to look at the process that we normally have.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski then recapped the motion.

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Boritz) 1 No. (Blessington)

First Selectwoman Wiecenski said she will send the revision over to the Board of Finance. She anticipates they will meet later this week.

C. School Building Committee Discussion on how to proceed under Emergency Declaration

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that we began this process with the intention of moving forward in a timely manner with all Selectmen at the table. We now have a full board present but with the current Emergency declaration at the State and local level she does not believe this is the time to hold these discussions. She added that she wants this process to be open and transparent; recognizing that this meeting forum is unusual and although we are making the ability to view our meetings available we may not reach all of those who choose to weigh in on the process. It is my advice that once we are not under an emergency declaration we pick up the process ASAP.

Selectman Blessington stated he was in agreement with this.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that she wanted to address this now in the event it gets dropped from the agenda, people will understand why. She then noted that the Superintendent and Board of Education are in a challenging time. Right now our priorities have to be in different places.

This item will not be on future agendas until we resume normal practice.

Superintendent Stevens noted that it is important to reach out to those who have applied to inform them of this. He then asked the Selectmen if there will be another search or will they use the current pool? First Selectwoman Wiecenski said she would like to use the pool that we currently have; noting that we have hit pause for the moment. We will reach out to them to let them know.

Present to Speak

Peter Latincsics stated that he is at a loss for words. He is struck by Selectwoman Boritz's comment that there is no reason to believe we are in a different financial situation – in which he begs to differ. We are truly in an economic hardship for both residents and businesses. He would like to think we wouldn't treat the budget as "business as usual" This is not a normal year and this is not business as usual. For this board to propose passing a 4.5% increase is very difficult for him to understand. To defer to the Board of Finance seems to be abdicating the Board of Selectmen's leadership and responsibilities. He is truly disappointed.

Elaine Newcomb asked (in reference to the Revenue Collection discussion) how many people are delinquent in paying taxes. She then asked if the lunches that are being provided to the kids affecting this year's budget beyond what was expected. She asked how they plan to offer widespread participation during the public hearing and asked if any thought has gone into how it will be handled to receive a wide range of comments.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski deferred any comments made towards the Board of Education budget to the BOE and they are meeting next Tuesday. The Superintendent shook his head no; the lunches do not have an additional impact to the budget. As far as the public hearing question – the Board of Finance will have to send out specific language to the public once the agenda is posted. An email address will be supplied and will also need to allow regular mail to be sent to them within a certain time frame. The meeting will be held in a virtual format. She then stated that the Revenue Collector will be able to get the information regarding the delinquents when she returns to the office (she did not have information at home).

Selectwoman Boritz clarified that at no point did she minimize the financial challenge that we are experiencing. She said we cannot currently quantify what it is and we don't have any concrete information at this point about the impact to our budget. She wanted to make sure her point was clear; noting that there were 2 comments suggesting she assumed there was no financial impact to the town. This is something she never indicated.

Peter Tanaka said he indicated that he had a hard time logging into the meeting at the beginning. He said he understands that there was an amended agenda that was put out later today and he was the using the agenda with the wrong information. He asked if we are doing online meetings we make the log in information correct going forward. First Selectwoman Wiczenski apologized – there was an issue with the code. She added that she had concerns whether it would still be a legal meeting since the log in information was not correctly added to the first agenda. Robin reached out to the Freedom of Information Act and the attorney who worked on the Executive Order to make sure we were in compliance. Robin Campbell stated that she did reach out to them and was told as long as she made the necessary changes as soon as possible, it would be acceptable because everything on the agenda was still the same; noting that if someone had trouble they would look it up to see it was different. Robin Campbell apologized and took full responsibility for posting last week's code (unknowing it was last week's code). First Selectwoman Wiczenski said this is our second virtual meeting we will be more vigilant about it and will try to make sure we give more notice as well.

Maureen Parsell, Willington Recreation Director noted everything has been great down at the park. People have been social distancing and she hasn't see any issues when going down to check on things. Ms. Parsell said she has spoken with residents to make sure they understand what is going on. The people have been grateful to be able to walk and use the fields. First Selectwoman Wiczenski believes people have heard our warnings.

Good & Welfare

*Reminder the TOB is still closed to the public but all offices are staffed. You may call or email and if in person service is required it will be handled by the department.

*The Donate life flag was raised on Wednesday, April 1st at the Town Office Building. April is Donate Life Month. The flag will remain up through the entire month

* It is expected that the BOF will be meeting this Thursday April 9th at 7PM. Be on the lookout for an agenda.

* The Board of Assessment Appeals is expected to hold a meeting on April 22, 2020.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski announced that we made the unfortunate decision to cancel Willington Day this year. With the uncertainty surrounding public gatherings and the amount of work/time needed the difficult decision to cancel was made. Anyone who already signed up to participate can receive a refund or we will carry your payment over for next year.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski wished a Happy Passover and Happy Easter to all who celebrate.

Please check the Town's website for all meeting information and links to COVID 19 information.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski reminded everyone they must be vigilant at home. Remember to lock your vehicles and do not leave personal property items in your cars. We have seen an increase of break-ins of late.

The next regular Selectmen's meeting will be on Monday April 20th at 6:30.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski thanked all of the emergency responders, first line health care workers and all other essential workers; such as those who work in the post office and grocery stores. They are on the front lines of this event, making sure to take care of us. She then told everyone to Stay Safe and Stay home.

**First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 PM
Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.**

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Campbell
Office Manager
Town of Willington