

Town of Willington

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BOARD OF FINANCE

Special Meeting Minutes
Virtual Meeting via ZOOM

February 3, 2022
7:00 PM

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

Members Present (a quorum of 4 members is required to conduct business):

Mike Makuch – Chairman
Peter Tanaka– Secretary
Christina Mailhos
Stephanie Summers
Joseph Sherrell
Jim Gilligan – Alternate

Members Absent:

Geoff Prusak – Vice Chairman
Lisa Woolf – Alternate

Also Present:

First Selectwoman Erika Wiecenski
Business Manager Donna Latincsics
Animal Control Officer Tina Binheimer
Parks & Recreation Director Alan Humphrey
Library Board Chairman Karen Ann Caldwell
Library Co-Director Hope Gove
Parks & Recreation Chairman Joe Colangelo
Revenue Collector Janice Clauson
Willington Fire Company #1 Chief Alexander Moore
Members of the Public

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Makuch called the meeting to order at 7:06pm.

SEATING OF ALTERNATES

S. Summers moved to seat Jim Gilligan in place of Geoff Prusak.

C. Mailhos seconded the motion.

5 Yes (C. Mailhos, M. Makuch, J. Sherrell, S. Summers, P. Tanaka), 0 No. Motion carried.

PRESENT TO SPEAK

First Selectwoman Wiecenski provided an update for the collection of taxes as February 1st was the due day for January 2022 taxes; as of today, Thursday, February 3rd, 96.48% of taxes have been collected.

NEW BUSINESS

1) *Budget Request Presentations: SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS*

a) 0511 Animal Control

Animal Control Officer Tina Binheimer presented the Animal Control budget; currently requesting a 0% increase. The salary line item may change if there is an increase to be determined with the contract ratification. Samantha Fegan has been added as the weekend animal control officer and the department needed to purchase a cell phone for her to utilize on the weekends. The State of Connecticut fees includes the license fees that the Town Clerk sells, the license surcharges and any pound vouchers for the animals that are adopted through the pound. S. Summers inquired about donations expenses and how vet fees are paid for. Animal Control Officer Binheimer stated that donation expenses (balanced with the amount of donations throughout the year) are spent on veterinary bills; this does not include euthanizing an aggressive animal but does include veterinary bills that are for injured pets that are without a responsible owner. In turn, this has caused a decrease in the veterinarian fees line item because it is not typically utilized.

b) 0512 Parks and Recreation

Alan Humphrey, the Parks and Recreation Director presented the Parks & Recreation budget; many of the items will remain the same as in previous years. The landscaping budget has increased. Last year, the previous landscaping contract was utilized for budget purposes but the bid for the current year's landscaping contract was for more money (mowing the field at the TOB, mowing the fields at the Schools, mowing at the River Road Athletic Complex). A spreadsheet has been provided for who is responsible for mowing which section and how much money it costs to maintain each field. The previous year's budget request was for \$3,540.00, whereas the current budget request is \$5,380.00. The BOE column represents school fields which totals \$8,740.00 but is an increase from last year's budget item of \$7,260.00. The River Road Athletic Complex is budgeted for \$5,460.00 which is an increase of \$280.00 from the previous year.

Line 149 on the Parks & Rec budget represents the electricity bills at RRAC which is also showing an increase. The current electric bill covers the lighting of the fields (the lights over the courts are on timers) but there is still an increase per month due to the utility company rate increases. The lights over the courts were turned off for the Winter in late November and now just the parking lot lights are on, but there is still a \$70.00 bill each month. In a few months, the lights over the court will be turned back on and there will be a large electric bill each month again.

Discussion was held on the upcoming Summer Camp program in regards to the number of children that may participate and the number of camp counselors that would be needed, as well as the type of program to be offered. The Youth Program would be a youth sport camp program (one week of soccer, volleyball, baseball, etc). The independent contractor would make a percentage of the money from the camp. There is no cost to Parks & Rec except for the equipment that will need to be purchased for the various sports each week.

Halls Pond will be open again this Summer; it is currently unknown how often lifeguards will be at the Pond. The Commission is in the process of determining if the Pond can be opened without lifeguards there. There is a huge cost associated with having the Pond open; many towns are making the transition to not having a lifeguard on duty at the Pond. The Town would need to obtain permission to not have lifeguards on duty as the Town doesn't own the Pond.

The bottom section of the Parks & Rec budget includes a line item for the undesignated fund balance. This amount currently shows an increase; the source of the revenue will need to be looked at to understand the balance that is shown.

S. Summers inquired if Parks & Rec had any submissions for ARPA. C. Mailhos answered that Parks & Rec had submitted a CIP request for funding for a pavilion over the workout equipment, but this will be forwarded to ARPA as a request instead of CIP Year 1.

c) 0513 Human Services

Jennie Arpin, the Director of Human Services, presented the budget; there is currently an increase of 37.2% in the budget request this year. The Assistant for Human Services currently works eight hours a week. The longtime volunteer for the Senior Center is retiring after many, many years of running the Senior Center, so there is a request for the Assistant to work up to thirty hours to be split in Human Services, as well as to help in the Senior Center with answering the phone, interacting with the Seniors, etc.

P. Tanaka asked what the difference of hours is between a part time position and a full time position. First Selectwoman Wicenski responded that 35 hours is considered a full time position and 20 hours is considered a part time position, both with benefits. This Assistant position would now become part time with benefits if the hours were to increase.

Discussion continued on the position being in the Human Services budget instead of within the Senior Center budget. This position would have oversight from the Human Services Director. Willington Seniors, Inc. would not submit reimbursement for this position at this time, as their budget would not be able to sustain this position. Discussion continued on the additional hours that the Assistant would be working in the Senior Center and the responsibilities of the Assistant.

S. Summers asked if the Director of Human Services position is being discussed with the Union contract and the answer was no. Human Services Director Arpin stated that there has been a significant increase of work to be done since Covid began. The phone is always ringing, there are always residents looking for assistance, etc.. Currently there is an increase of 32% in clients and most clients have more than one issue that needs to be handled. First Selectwoman Wicenski stated that salary studies with various neighboring/similar communities have been reviewed and this requested increase is not out of the range of like towns. The increase in work for the Human Services Department has been met with the Director doing additional work.

d) 0517 Library

Karen Ann Caldwell, Chair of the Willington Library board presented the Library budget; there is currently an 8.71% increase. Chairman Caldwell thanked the Board for how much the library was considered last year and thanked the Board for understanding the Library needs. The administrative section is reflective of an increase because of salaries; the library has the lowest paid staff in the Town. The increase includes \$1.00 more for mandatory minimum wage and \$1.00 more an hour to stabilize pay with the rest of the town; only a 3% increase for the directors is included. Through Covid, the library worked with a skeleton crew, but now the library is back open full hours and has hired another part time person. The current amount of people employed now are still less than pre-Covid. The library is also not up to code technologically. There is no fire wall at the library, and FCC requires an E-Rate program to be instituted. This is a security program to make sure young kids are not accessing what they should not be. There is also an increase with software and the memberships of the library. There is a decrease shown for trash removal as the Directors are now handling this. There is also an inhouse custodian now instead of utilizing a contracted service. There is an increase in electricity with the current utility company, but the Library is hoping to maintain this bill with energy conservation.

The library is almost sixteen years old now and maintenance issues are starting to occur. There are not many major items, but there are cracks in the coating over the foundations, etc. and the gutter in the front of the library is not large enough to control the water coming off of the roof. The Library is hoping to submit these repairs to the ARPA Commission, but did not submit anything for CIP approval at this time.

P. Tanaka asked about the money that was included last year to update the wifi system and Chairman Caldwell responded that the Library found there is not a firewall, but the wifi can be used in the parking lot.

J. Sherrell asked if there was a need for two directors on the premises? Chairman Caldwell answered that there is a need because there is a major problem with turnover at the library and because of the pay, most employees

use this position as a stepping stone to start and then go elsewhere. The library would either need co-directors or a director and program coordinator as there is plenty of work for two people.

C. Mailhos inquired about the health insurance line item and Chairman Caldwell responded that both co-directors are eligible but neither had taken the town insurance until now. Discussion continued in regards to insurance and the cost for one or both employees.

Chairman Caldwell explained that the library would like to use additional funds to finish the basement for a teen space area, as well as additional conference room areas because there have been inquiries from teens for an area to use.

CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence has been forwarded. Will continue to send budget information as it is received.

Next week, Emergency Services will present their budgets.

PRESENT TO SPEAK

None.

GOOD & WELFARE

Chairman Makuch thanked everyone who presented tonight.

P. Tanaka made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:19pm.

S. Summers seconded the motion.

All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Kelsey Allard
Interim Recording Secretary

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WILLINGTON, CT.
2022 JUL 12 P 3:14

TOWN CLERK