

**BOARD OF FINANCE
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING
40 OLD FARMS ROAD
WILLINGTON, CT 06279**

SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 9, 2019

7:00 PM

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

Members Present:

Jim Bulick - Chairman
Mike Makuch, Vice Chairman
Bill Rankin - Alternate
Peter Tanaka
Barry Wallett
Fred Schoen - Alternate
Laurie Semprebon
Randy Belair

Members Absent:

Also Present:

Erika Wiecenski, First Selectwoman
Donna Latincsics, Business Manager
Phil Stevens, Superintendent
Board of Selectmen Members
Willington Board of Education Members
Willington Fire Department Members
Willington Hill Fire Department Members
Members of the Public

Chairman Jim Bulick called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

SEATING OF ALTERNATES:

All members present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Peter Tanaka moved to accept the BOF Meeting Minutes of March 14 as amended (add *Barry Wallet said “talking about the school, look at population and then divide it by the number of teachers and staff including the contractual staff, they would run a procedure that is way too high.”* to the original minutes). Mike Makuch seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka, B. Wallett, R. Belair, L. Semprebon, F. Schoen, M. Makuch).

Peter Tanaka moved to accept the BOF Meeting Minutes of March 28 as amended (page 6 change the compromise from option “C” to option “D”). Mike Makuch seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka, B. Wallett, L. Semprebon, F. Schoen, M. Makuch) R. Belair abstained.

PRESENT TO SPEAK:

No one present to speak.

NEW BUSINESS:

Budget Discussion

Barry Wallett wanted to know if the latest Education Cost Sharing (ECS) reduction projections are in our budget. Business Manager Donna Latincsics reported that yes they were.

Selectwoman Wiczenski gave the latest update on the Teacher Retirement Systems (TRS) payment. The assessment for Willington looks like it has been removed from the State Budget, but still may come back. The Board decided to keep the payment in the Board of Finance contingency reserve.

Peter Tanaka felt since the Town did not have a plan for traffic control, he felt they should keep it in the budget but move it to the Board of Finance contingency reserve until one becomes available. He felt they would not be good stewards of the town if they were budgeting money without a detailed plan. Chairman Jim Bulick agreed. Mike Makuch said he doesn't believe that the decision should be up to the Board about what they do with the money, he said that the Board shouldn't be micro managing. Peter Tanaka responded that he doesn't see it as a micro management. He said that he just thinks that should at least see a plan, he doesn't care what the

plan is so much as them actually having one before they decided to fund it. **Peter Tanaka moved to move the \$10,000 from department 0311 Traffic Control to department 061 Board of Finance Contingency fund until a plan is presented. Jim Bulick seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka) No (B. Wallett, M. Makuch, L. Semprebon, R. Belair). Motion Failed.**

The previous Tax Collector was requesting a change in hours from 30-35 hours per week as well as a 4% increase in salary. Her requests were declined and then she accepted an offer from a nearby town. She was recognized as a top performing candidate. After the Tax Collector left, the Town has been advertising the position at 30 hrs/wk and not finding suitable candidates. The thought now is that they may have to advertise the position at 35 hrs/wk to attract suitable candidates, and to recognize that they may not be able to hire a top performing candidate. They would need extra time to do the job as efficiently. The previous Tax Collector is still helping the town out until she can be replaced.

Barry Wallett said that this town doesn't have many resources coming it's way. Instead of trying to just make it until next year, they are going to have to start making changes in the system. He said that they are going to have to start looking into regionalization.

Bill Rankin said that they need to look at what they can and can't do. There are some things that they can't change though they may change the attractiveness of Willington. He said that they need to be creative about making the town attractive. They need to find a better way to do things rather than trying to maintain the same things. He agrees that they need to start seriously looking into regionalization.

Bill Rankin explained that not many people are reporting crumbling foundations and that not many people want to do anything about them because they don't know what to do. He said that it puts people in situations where they have to be kicked out of their house for a duration of time. It could be really scary for a lot of people.

Laurie Semprebon moved to accept the budget with no changes. Peter Tanaka seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka, R. Belair, B. Wallett, L. Semprebon, F. Schoen, M. Makuch, B. Rankin) 0 No.

Willington Hill Fire Department Land Purchase

Mike Makuch said that his involvement with the fire department could bring up a conflict of interest so he wishes to have someone seated as an alternate for this discussion. **Randy Belair moved to seat Bill Rankin in place of Mike Makuch. Peter Tanaka seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka, R. Belair, B. Wallett, L. Semprebon, F. Schoen, M. Makuch, B. Rankin) 0 No.**

Fire Chief Tom Snyder presented the fire department's interest in purchasing a the St. Jude's property at 25 Old Farms Road for the future construction of a Fire Safety Complex across from the current fire house. His reasoning is that the land itself is going for a bargain and the Willington Hill Fire Department is need of more space. They're requesting Town Financial Assistance of \$50,000 and property maintenance. They are hoping to rent the house to cover costs and the church as a function hall. Barry Wallet doesn't think the town can afford anything like that right now. Peter Tanaka said that they would have to do a lot of thinking before they made any decisions. Several board members were wondering about the liability to the Town, and if the Town should share a financial interest in the property. The board also wondered if the Town land use agent had a chance to review the property and comment if the WHFD plans are even feasible. Further study is needed. Randy Belair and Bill Rankin will represent the Board of Finance in these discussion between the WHFD, Willington Hill Fire Association, and the Town.

OLD BUSINESS:

Contract negotiations

Contract negotiations for the Willington school classified staff has started, next meeting 11 April

Annual Report

Annual Report draft is being reviewed. It will be finished in about one week and available at the Annual Town Meeting on April 23, 2019.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Letter received from Kim Kowalyshyn:

Subject: Tax Collector Position

Good Evening,

I attended a BOS meeting back in December of 2018 on the 17th. At that meeting Lisa Madden, the Tax Collector at the time, came to the BOS and asked them to increase her hours from 30 to 35 per week after telling them that she did not need an assistant for 22 hours a week, that 10 to 12 hours would be enough. I quote what it says in the minutes "First Selectwoman Wiecewski then cautioned that she is having a hard time with the salary implications, noting that although she values what Ms. Madden does, the Town is not able to sustain this type of increase". You can read the minutes for yourself at this link:

https://www.willingtonct.org/sites/willingtonct/files/minutes/bos_12-17-18.pdf.

I'm writing you because of what I read in the April 5, 2019 Board of Selectman Special Meeting minutes. At their April 5th Special Meeting the BOS unanimously approved changing the Revenue Collector position hours from 30 hours a week to 35 hours a week. You can read the

minutes for yourself at this link:

https://www.willingtonct.org/sites/willingtonct/files/minutes/bos_4-5-19_minutes.pdf.

So what changed from December 17, 2018 to April 5, 2019?

I also read the minutes from the April 1, 2019 meeting and I quote the minutes where First Selectwoman Wiecewski is saying "we also need to consider if 30 hours will be enough for a new employee who does not have the experience, especially since dropping the assistant's hours down from 27 to 12 hours per week". You can read those minutes at the following link:

<https://www.willingtonct.org/sites/willingtonct/files/minutes/bos.pdf>.

A Ms. Stebbins was offered the job but sent in a letter turning the job down because the cost of the insurance was too high. This is also in the April 1, 2019 minutes.

As a taxpayer in the Town of Willington something just isn't adding up. We had a really good, qualified, certified tax collector and we wouldn't increase the hours for her, but we have this not so qualified, NOT certified candidate for tax collector and we are willing to increase the hours. Does that make sense to you? It doesn't to me.

I can not make tomorrow night's Public Hearing but I would like this letter read into the minutes please.

It is my hope that your Board will be able to look into this matter.

Thank you,

Kim Kowalyshyn

29 Lindsey Lane

Correspondence received from Chief Alex Moore regarding upcoming conversations on the potential merger of the WFD and the WHFD. The Board appointed Peter Tanaka to represent the BOF in these discussions.

GOOD AND WELFARE:

The Board thanked Donna Latincsics for her long hours and for making the complicated budget process run smoothly.

Peter Tanaka moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. Mike Makuch seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka, R. Belair, B. Wallett, L. Semprebbon, F. Schoen, M. Makuch, B. Rankin) 0 No.

Respectfully submitted,

Guinnevere Almquist, Recording Secretary