

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

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, June 6, 2019  
7:02 PM

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

**Members Present:**

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

**Members Absent:**

Randy Belair

**Also Present:**

Erika Wiecewski, First Selectwoman  
Willington Hill Fire Department Members  
Members of the Public

Chairman Jim Bulick called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**SEATING OF ALTERNATES:**

**Peter Tanaka moved to seat Fred Schoen in place of Randy Belair. Mike Makuch seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, M. Makuch, L. Semprebon, P. Tanaka, B. Wallett) 0 No.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Chairman Bulick noted that this was the main purpose of this evening's meeting. There were errors and omissions on the May 16, 2019 minutes that require correcting:

1. Year-end transfer amounts were noted incorrectly (motion was correct).

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES (continued):**

2. Fund balance amount was noted incorrectly (motion was correct).
3. Treasurer's update did not include the separation of duties problem discussed.
4. Many discussion points raised concerning the Willington Hill Fire Department Land Purchase were not captured.

A corrected copy of the minutes was distributed to the Board for review. Vice-Chairman Makuch also noted the correct spelling of Dick Claus' last name.

**Peter Tanaka moved to accept the BOF Meeting Minutes of May 16, 2019, as corrected (they are attached below for public reference). Mike Makuch seconded the motion.**

**Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, M. Makuch, F. Schoen, P. Tanaka,) Abstain (L. Semprebon, B. Wallett) 0 No.**

**PRESENT TO SPEAK:**

No one present to speak.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

***Budget News***

Business Manager Donna Latincsics submitted a written budget update to the Board before the meeting. Selectwoman Wiecenski summarized.

- 1) Willington PTC received a \$25,000 grant for after school programs courtesy of Pat Wilson Pheanious.
- 2) Willington schools will receive \$100,607 more in ECS grant money than we budgeted for 2019-2020.
  - a) We budgeted \$3,394,666.
  - b) The State approved \$3,495,273 earlier this week.
- 3) The State made no changes to the ECS formula.
- 4) The State noted that no municipal contribution is required to the Teacher's Retirement Benefit.
- 5) The maximum amount we can contribute to the non-lapsing account for unspent education funds increased from 1% to 2% of the education budget.
- 6) The excess costs grant is capped again at \$140.6 million.
- 7) The State approved \$58,163 in LoCIP funding. This is the same number we used in our CIP plan.

Fred Schoen asked if Superintendent Stevens can clarify how item #6 above affects Willington as this was not readily evident. Chairman Bulick offered to follow-up on the issue.

**NEW BUSINESS (continued):**

There was a brief discussion about the \$32,000 contingency the Board set aside in case we had to make a payment into the Teacher Retirement Benefit (TRB). The Board can now use this money for other unexpected purposes, or leave the money in reserve for future TRB considerations.

We now have approximately a \$132,000 favorable variance in our 2019 – 2020 budget at this point in time, some positive news to report to Willington taxpayers for a change!

**OLD BUSINESS (briefly reviewed):**

- 1) Willington Hill Fire Department Land Purchase
  - a) Chairman Bulick met with the Town Lawyers at the invitation of Selectwoman Wiecenski on May 29, 2019 to discuss the land purchase.
  - b) Chairman Bulick attended Selectmen's meeting of June 3, 2019 to determine how to handle the defective motion the Board of Finance made on May 16, 2019 to call a Town meeting (The motion was defective because the board did not say where the funds will be sourced from. There was no discussion of any costs to the Town side of this transaction either.). At this time the Selectmen requested that the Board of Finance wait until they could complete their due diligence review of the situation before the Board of Finance motions them to call a Town Meeting. There was a brief discussion between Chief Snyder and Selectwoman Wiecenski regarding the details how the money requested was to be spent, any additional costs to the Town, and contact information for the Willington Hill Fire Association lawyers. Chairman Bulick promised to raise the motion again once the Selectmen have finished their review.

Bill Rankin also noted that there was some risk that was not addressed. We are only talking about the land purchase risk. There is still the \$3-\$5 million dollars needed for firehouse construction that may not be available. And this risk was not addressed in our discussions. Selectwoman Wiecenski said that is why she asked the Fire Association if they were prepared to go ahead with the purchase without the aid of the Town. The town would still need to work through these details. Then even if the Selectmen eventually approve the purchase, and the Board of Finance approves the funding, it would then still need to go to Town Meeting where it would be up to the voters to approve the land purchase. And it is possible they may not approve the Town's involvement.

Bill Rankin also asked Chief Snyder for an update on the inspections. Here reported that there are no issues to date.

- 2) Tax Collector: Update, Revenue and Suspense List –No changes, closed.
- 3) Year End Transfers –Amounts now correctly documented in the corrected minutes.
- 4) Setting 2019-2020 MIL Rate –Application of fund balance amount correctly documented in the corrected minutes.

**OLD BUSINESS (Continued):**

- 5) Auditors Request for Proposal –No changes, closed.
- 6) Treasurer: Roles, Responsibilities, Duties – Now correctly documented in the corrected minutes. The auditors requested to meet with Selectwoman Wiecenski, our Business Manager Donna Latincsics, Treasurer Diane Bulick, and Board of Finance Chairman Jim Bulick next week on 13 June 2019 before meeting with the Board of Finance on 20 June 2019. Vice Chairman Makuch observed that this is probably one of our more important tasks in the near term. Chairman Bulick agreed.
- 7) Contract negotiations for the Willington school classified staff –Closed, minutes reflect this is settled as of May first.

**Correspondence**

From Chief Snyder 6 June 2019 regarding the land purchase update.

From Business Manager Donna Latincsics 6 June 2019 regarding the CT State budget details.

From Mike VanDeventer 6 June 2019 regarding a 13 June 2019 meeting with town management.

**Good and Welfare**

**The Board of Finance is currently looking for a new recording secretary. Please contact it Chair Jim Bulick for more information at [jbulick@willingtonct.org](mailto:jbulick@willingtonct.org).**

**Peter Tanaka moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. Mike Makuch seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, M. Makuch, F. Schoen, L. Semprebon, P. Tanaka, B. Wallett)  
0 No**

Respectfully submitted,  
Jim Bulick  
Chair Willington Board of Finance

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

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES (corrected)**

Thursday, May 16, 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  
Fred Schoen - Alternate  
Randy Belair

**Members Absent:**

Laurie Semprebbon  
Barry Wallett

**Also Present:**

Erika Wiecewski, First Selectwoman  
Donna Latincsics, Business Manager  
Diane Bulick, Treasurer  
Board of Selectmen Members  
Willington Hill Fire Department Members  
Members of the Public

Chairman Jim Bulick called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**SEATING OF ALTERNATES:**

**Mike Makuch moved to seat Bill Rankin in place of Barry Wallett. Peter Tanaka seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka, M. Makuch, B. Rankin, R. Belair, F, Schoen) 0 No.**

**SEATING OF ALTERNATES (Continued):**

**Peter Tanaka moved to seat Fred Schoen in place of Laurie Semprebon. Mike Makuch seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka, M. Makuch, B. Rankin, R. Belair, F, Schoen) 0 No.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**Peter Tanaka moved to accept the BOF Budget Hearing Minutes of April 9, 2019. Mike Makuch seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka, M. Makuch, B. Rankin, R. Belair, F, Schoen) 0 No.**

**Peter Tanaka moved to accept the BOF Special Budget Meeting Minutes of April 9, 2019 as amended (Amendment: Concerning adjournment, Mike Makuch did not second the motion to adjourn nor vote for adjournment of the April 9 meeting. Bill Rankin was seated for Mike Makuch and therefore voted for adjournment.). Mike Makuch seconded the motion as amended. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka, M. Makuch, B. Rankin, R. Belair, F, Schoen) 0 No.**

**PRESENT TO SPEAK:**

No one present to speak.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

***Budget News***

Bill Rankin shared a report with the Board by J.P. Morgan reviewing the risks associated with municipal bonds given the financial conditions of 4 or 5 financially troubled states and territories. One of the examples J.P. Morgan used was Puerto Rico. It would be very hard pressed to stay out of bankruptcy. If territory like Puerto Rico can't get out its financial troubles, it would go bankrupt and drive up bonding costs. It's a pretty scary situation. As for Connecticut, it would have to dedicate about 35% of its operating budget over the next 30 years to meet its financial liabilities associated with pensions, which is about \$100 billion. This isn't likely going to happen. The bond market right now is starting to get concerned about how States are going to live up to paying off their liabilities. Borrowing (bonding) will get more expensive, and we need to consider these costs as we look forward in our capital planning.

***Tax Collector Update***

Selectwoman Wiczenski said there are two tax collectors (one from Franklin and one from

***Tax Collector Update (Continued)***

Manchester) working part time until Willington hires someone full time to fill the position. Right now, they presented a Suspense List for \$12,003.73 to the Board for review and consideration. Transferring uncollectible taxes to the Suspense List is the first step in starting the collection process.

**Mike Makuch moved to accept the suspense list dated May 15, 2019. Bill Rankin Seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka, M. Makuch, B. Rankin, R. Belair, F. Schoen) 0 No.**

***Year End Transfers***

Donna Latinsics said that there are five departments that are running a shortfall, so she is asking the Board of Finance to transfer funds to address forecasted shortfalls in the Selectmen's Budget.

**Motion #1**

**Mike Makuch moved to transfer \$45,263 from #0831 Employee Insurances (there is some savings here due to employee turnover) to the following accounts to address shortfalls in the 2018-2019 fiscal year budget:**

**\$31,000 to #0181: Town Office Building, Computer Expense, IT service contract (\$20K), Maintenance, EMCOR Condenser, and AC (\$11K).**

**\$1,800 to #0182: Old Town Hall's Maintenance - Banner Water submersible pump.**

**\$294 to #0235: Fire Main and Hydrant - Rate increase monthly charge for fire protection.**

**\$10,713 to #0821: Unemployment - Unanticipated claim.**

**\$1,456 to #0851: Insurance - Liability & Workman's Compensation premiums shortfall.**

**Bill Rankin seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka, M. Makuch, B. Rankin, R. Belair, F. Schoen) 0 No.**

Donna Latinsics said that this is a transfer request to move two capital expenditures from 930 to capital projects 0503 so that the balances carry forward to the new fiscal year and the project can continue on as outlined in the CIP Plan.

**Motion #2**

**Mike Makuch moved to transfer \$95,404 from #0930 Capital Expenditures to**

**\$23,500 to #0503 Security Monitoring system.**

**\$71,904 to #0503 CES Upper Wing Heating Project.**

**Bill Rankin seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka, M. Makuch, B. Rankin, R. Belair, F. Schoen) 0 No.**

***MIL Rate***

There have been no changes since the Public Hearing. The Rate is still at 30.09.

**Chairman Bulick moved to set the MIL rate at 30.09, and then apply \$410,000 from the fund balance towards the budget. Mike Makuch seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka, M. Makuch, B. Rankin, R. Belair, F. Schoen) 0 No.**

***Auditors Request for Proposal***

**Peter Tanaka moved that the BOF appoints the firm of Mahoney and Sabol & Company, LLP for professional auditing services for the Town of Willington for fiscal years ending 2019, 2020, and 2021 for the total maximum fees per year of \$34,750, \$35,500, and \$36,300 respectively. Randy Belair seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka, M. Makuch, B. Rankin, R. Belair, F. Schoen) 0 No.**

***Treasurer: Roles, Responsibilities, and Duties***

Treasurer Diane Bulick reported some very concerning issues with the current treasurer position and submitted a detailed report to the board.

- 1) There are inadequate internal controls and no segregation of duties. One person makes the deposits, records the transactions, and then reconciles the bank transactions.
- 2) There is no back-up for the cash operations function.
- 3) The current position includes many non-treasury “accounting” functions.
- 4) There should be a comprehensive training manual developed for the Treasurer.

Diane summarized her plan to address these issues. She is now working with First Selectwoman Erika Wicewski and Business Manager Donna Latinsics to help correct these issues and re-assign the job duties to allow for proper financial control. She also plans to review her proposal with our auditors to confirm the plan is sound from their perspective. She says that she is also updating the job description and creating a manual to make it easier for anyone who assumes the job in the future.

**OLD BUSINESS:*****Willington Hill Fire Department Land Purchase***

The Willington Hill Fire Association (Fire Association) is looking for \$50,000 from the Town of Willington to offset their purchase of land (the old Saint Jude Roman Catholic Church and rectory) for a future fire house construction, along with \$10,000 additional funds annually for property maintenance and insurance.

The Town of Willington contracts with the Willington Hill Fire Association to purchase fire protection services which are delivered through the Willington Hill Fire Department.

Fire Chief Tom Snyder said he is coming before the Board to address recent concerns they had



***Willington Hill Fire Department Land Purchase (Continued)***

about Town liability and land use. Fire Association lawyers and Insurance people believe there is no liability to the Town of Willington as the Town is buying fire protection services through a contract and the contract would protect the Town from incurring any liability associated with the activity on that parcel of land.

Peter Tanaka asked questions regarding land ownership. Chief Snyder clarified that the town would not own any of the land; the Fire Association would own the land.

Chief Snyder said they also met with the Willington Land Use Agent and Board of Finance member Randy Belair to discuss their property use plans with the Willington Land Use Agent. They would like to rent out the rectory to offset some of the Fire Association costs associated with the land purchase. They would need variances from the Land Use Department and a subdivision of the property in order to rent out the rectory.

Bill Rankin asked clarifying questions regarding parcel subdivision. Anyone buying the parcel and developing the parcel as a whole would need to obtain variances and subdivide the property.

Chief Snyder said there are separate septic and well water systems for the rectory and the church, so in that regard there should be no issues regarding subdivision. However, Selectwoman Wiczenski noted that should they choose to use the rectory as a bunk house or other purposes, a sprinkler system may have to be installed. Chief Snyder said that the rectory was inspected and the rectory septic system was inspected and passed with flying colors. At the time of this meeting, the church septic system was not yet inspected due to weather and difficulty locating the septic tank.

Chief Snyder reiterated his request for \$50,000 to handle these kinds of costs plus an additional \$10,000 annually for maintenance and insurance. The Fire Association intends to submit a Special Use permit application to the Land Use Department right away in preparation for subdivision. The Chief shared a map with the Board showing locations of department fire and ambulance calls throughout town to justify the parcel location is indeed central to many of these calls. He also noted that there are five larger apartment complexes in the area as well, and they have been called out to fight fires at 3 of the 5 complexes in recent years. They had looked for other parcel locations on routes 74 and 320 in the past, but feel this current location meets with good response times. This parcel has access to route 74.

The Chief noted that additional space is needed for offices, storage of their gear, and the proper cleaning and drying of their gear of the hazardous residue from firefighting. He reiterated his request to the Town to cover purchase and annual maintenance and insurance costs. The \$50,000 will go back to the Town if a firehouse is not constructed on the parcel.

Immediately using the Church as a function hall would allow the Fire Department to use their current space for the washing and drying of their gear. They wouldn't have to drive down to their substation in South Willington to wash and dry their gear. The parcel is much bigger and could

***Willington Hill Fire Department Land Purchase (Continued)***

be used immediately. He also believes that the new firehouse would attract new volunteers because there is more space and it won't look as crowded as their current building. Chief Snyder said the church can be used as a function hall and the rental options can be considered after discussion with our Land Use Agent.

Randy Belair asked clarifying questions how the Chief developed fire house construction cost estimates submitted before the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Committee. Chief Snyder said he looked at recent comparable builds in the area with 4 or 5 pass through truck bays some years ago and tried to adjust for inflation. Randy also asked of the parcel size and shape was adequate for what he wanted to do if they subdivided the land and sold off the rectory. Chief Snyder said he couldn't be exactly sure without engineering drawings of a proposed fire house and the parcel of land, but thought the entire parcel as a whole should be adequate.

Mike Makuch offered some history on the cost estimates. About 10-15 years ago Scotland built a basic fire house, a shell only plus land, for just under \$1,000,000. With donations they furnished the fire house with equipment. Columbia acquired everything they needed for about \$2,000,000. So estimates started with these numbers and were adjusted for time and inflation. The current number in the CIP plan (\$5.5 million) assumes property purchase, engineering, building construction, furnishing the fire house with equipment.

Randy Belair again asked if we could build a fire house on the parcel if we split off and sold the rectory and Chief Snyder said that he didn't believe the firehouse would fit on the remaining church parcel. Randy also asked a clarify question regarding the map of calls presented if it also included all fire and ambulance calls in Willington, including the calls to Willington Fire Department Number #1. Chief Snyder confirmed that it did. There was also some clarification about the highway calls around Exits #71 and #70.

Bob Shabot of Jared Sparks Rd said if the town is going to dive into a project like this with the crumbling foundations going on, there are people who are going to need a place to live while their houses are being disturbed. Why can't the town put in some money into getting these people a place to live while these residents are getting their homes repairs?" Selectwoman Wiczenski responded that currently the rectory is classified as an accessory of the church. A subdivision of the parcel is required, per current zoning regulations, to rent out the rectory. Mike Makuch also added that the Fire Association could also go to the Zoning Board of Appeals and request a waiver of the current zoning regulations.

Tom Snyder said that another option is to use the property (and then the new firehouse) as a community shelter. Selectwoman Wiczenski cautioned that additional modifications (like the additional of sprinklers for example) would be required to use the current property as a shelter and there would be other costs to the Town that need to be understood.

***(Mike Makuch asked respectfully to be excused from the meeting at about 8:13PM)***

***Willington Hill Fire Department Land Purchase (Continued)***

Dick Claus of Daleville Rd commented that our present station serves as the geographic center of town. If you ever drive down route 89 to the Ashford fire department, you'll notice that it's a pretty nice facility. That's the kind of facility we are looking to build here in Willington (3-drive through bays, separate training facility). It didn't always look like that. When I was a kid covering Ashford on stand-by, "the building was considered a pit". Now our building is becoming the pit.

Bill Rankin asked what the estimated square footage of a new fire house will be for Willington. Chief Snyder wasn't sure off the top of his head and needed to get back to Board on this. Bill said that when he and Randy met with the Department of Agriculture earlier they said a fire house would cost roughly \$300-\$400 per square foot to construct. Randy clarified that this figure did not include the real estate cost.

Selectwoman Wiecenski spoke more on the Department of Agriculture grants or loans available to us. To consider this funding source, the biggest caveat is that the Town would have to own the property. There are other factors that would cap the loan that those are median income and population.

Chairman Bulick briefly discussed the CIP plan and how the fire house was considered. It was considered in year 5, but when the analysis was performed, a fire house would consume all of the interest payments allocated in our CIP plan and leave little for equipment lease payments and the Library bond payment. That is why the fire house is not in our current CIP plan until we could figure out funding without disrupting current obligations. Selectwoman Wiecenski agreed.

Selectwoman Wiecenski suggested that appropriate foundation inspections be performed and then inquired about what inspections were planned for the building foundations. Chief Snyder said that they performed several visual inspections and that they are currently shopping for someone to inspect the foundation. Chief Snyder said his primary concern is to secure the property, but they are planning to have everything inspected.

The discussion turned to the current Willington Hill Fire Department addition and how that was built in the foundation time window. The addition is still too new to know if it has any pyrrhotite problems.

Bill Rankin asked what the next step will be. Chief Snyder said the first step should be the purchase of the property. Then set-up a fundraising committee and fine tune the CIP plan. He is looking for \$50,000 to offset the purchase and then \$10,000 annually to defray maintenance costs.

Randy Belair said that they need to balance the risks with opportunity. The property is well located. It would cost much more to purchase a comparable parcel on the other main routes in town. The risk is mainly borne by the Fire Association.

***Willington Hill Fire Department Land Purchase (Continued)***

Selectwoman Wiecenski thought there were risks to the Town. She wanted to be sure they were reviewed first by following the appropriate review process. Again Chief Snyder said that if a fire house was not constructed, the \$50,000 would be returned back to the town.

Peter Tanaka said we spent about \$70,000 to fight a gun range and the town got nothing for it. In this case we would be spending about the same amount and actually be getting something for our money.

Bob Shabot of Jared Sparks road said he lived in the town for 26 years and expressed his concern with the animosity between the two fire departments. As a town, this needs to be addressed now, this is his tax money at stake. It has gotten better lately, but he wants assurances that this has been addressed.

Chief Tom Snyder explained that they have been working much more closely together in recent years, training together, responding together. Selectwoman Wiecenski said discussions have only just recently started concerning the consolidation of the Fire Departments. She said the residents will have to decide if they want to see consolidation of the fire departments first or the land purchase first. Chairman Bulick inquired if the Willington Fire Department was asked if they would want to go in on the purchase of the land parcel. Chief Snyder said they were not asked.

**Peter Tanaka moved to recommend to the Board of Selectmen to call a town meeting to allocate the \$60,000 to the Willington Hill Fire Department. Randy Belair seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (P. Tanaka, B. Rankin, R. Belair, F. Schoen) 1 No (J. Bulick).**

**Contract Negotiations School Classified Staff**

Negotiations were finalized May 1, 2019.

**Correspondence**

A brief discussion regarding the foundation impact on revenue at Tolland was held and the possible impact to Willington.

**Good and Welfare**

There is no need to rush the process. It's not like the land will be quickly sold. Selectwoman Wiecenski reiterated the need to do due diligence and follow process with the townspeople and this will not be quick.

**Peter Tanaka moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m. Bill Rankin seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka, B. Rankin, R. Belair, F. Schoen)**

Respectfully submitted,  
Guinnevere Almquist  
Recording Secretary