

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

Board of Selectmen
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Regular Meeting Minutes
Via web interaction (via Zoom platform)

November 2, 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 & Blessington and residents.

Approval of Minutes

First Selectman Wiecenski moved to accept the minutes of October 19, 2020 as written. Selectman Boritz seconded the motion.
Vote: 3 Yes (Wiecenski, Boritz & Blessington) 0 No.

First Selectman Wiecenski made a motion to approve the executive Session minutes of October 23, 2020 as written.
Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.
Vote: 2 Yes (Wiecenski & Blessington) 0 No, 1 Abstain (Boritz).

Present to Speak

Michelle Doucette Cunningham commented that she supports Joanne Taraskiewicz on behalf of the Democratic Party. She has always been impressed with her sharp mind and her passion for education. She is a retired teacher who has worked in Putnam and Hartford. She has been involved with the community in multiple facets and would be a tremendous addition to the Library Board for the Town of Willington.

Karenann Caldwell the Treasurer of the Library Board concurred with Michelle Doucette Cunningham's comments. She has known Joanne for 2 years and is impressed with her and believes she would be a great addition to the Library Board.

Correspondence

None to report

First Selectman's Status Report

2020 Presidential Election- The Registrars have moved the Polling location for Willington to Hall Memorial School instead of the TOB. As of 4pm 1110 absentee ballots have been issued and 981 of those have been returned. That's 88.3% of the absentee ballots issued that have been returned. We currently have 3683 registered voters, so thus far 30% of them requested Absentee Ballots. Absentee Ballots can be returned to the Town Clerk's office or the ballot box outside our front door by 8pm on election night. Absentee ballots will be opened and counted here at the TOB tomorrow. Tomorrow the Town Clerk will

be open to issue emergency absentee ballots only. We have been working with Troop C to be sure there is a police presence at both locations on Election Day. We do not anticipate any issues and hope that our residents respect each other and allow for voting without issue here in Willington.

Assistant Assessor position- The Hiring Committee has selected Joan Oros. Joan will begin 11/16/20, we once again interviewed a wonderful selection of candidates.

The Emergency Communications task force will meet again on Wednesday 11/18 at 6:30 pm. Last meeting we had a demonstration from the Onsolve/Code Red Product. We discussed a survey that will be pushed out to residents hopefully shortly after our next meeting.

STEAP Grant: Still waiting to hear what projects were awarded.

Public Works

Troy reported the following that has been done by Public Works:

- Trash pickup at the park
- Roadside mowing is still continuing
- Servicing the fleet
- Put out voting signs
- Cleaned up shop and got ready for the snow storm
- Crew has been working on installing the new lights at the RRAC
- Moved voting machines to Hall School
- Went to get blocks for the new buildings that will be installed at Center school and Hall School
- Chipped brush from storm, still need to finish
- Catch Basin cleaning is still going on around town
- Trimmed brush around baseball field at TOB
- Fixed curb around town

New Business

A. Discussion of Public Works Fleet – Truck Repairs

First Selectman Wiczenski noted that there has been tremendous funds going into truck repairs. We had made some changes to our CIP in early May due to COVID.

Public Works Director Troy Sposato noted his concerns that going into budget season if something were to happen to one of the trucks it shouldn't be a surprise. With COVID this year we pushed off the purchasing of new trucks through CIP. We are spending a lot of money on trucks that should have been replaced. For example Truck #1 2011 Ford F350 we spent \$6,371.09 in repairs, Truck # 3 2007 Ford F450 we spent \$9,003.66 in repairs & Truck # 5 2012 International we have spent \$14,717.95 in repairs since July 2019. This particular truck has gone to several repair shops that has continuous problems. The truck is due to come back tomorrow where there will be another bill that we have not yet received. It should be noted that this truck was in 2 separate repair shops for a little over 1 month waiting for parts. Truck # 3 the 2007 Ford F450 is used to plow the parking lot, there is no back up for this. These trucks are used daily and are getting older and we rely on these trucks especially going into the winter months. We have a 2001 maroon Silverado that has 210,000 miles and the body is rusting off and is barely holding together.

First Selectman Wiczenski noted that truck # 3 2007 Ford F450 we spent \$9,003.66 in repairs this fiscal year. That was supposed to be on year 1 through CIP for the cost of a new truck being

\$38,000. In addition Truck #1 2011 Ford F350 we spend \$6,371.09 in repairs which was set to be replaced in our original plan for CIP along with an additional plow truck. It was noted that we will continue to have this problem and we need to support those CIP projects and funds to replace these vehicles due to the costly repairs.

Selectman Boritz noted that without a specific plan or proposal it's hard to have a discussion. It doesn't appear that a decision needs to be made today other than us being made aware of the situation that will be on the horizon. It makes sense at some point everyone has to make the decision to replace a vehicle.

First Selectman Wiczenski noted that she concurs, there may be a point in time where we have to go to the Board of Finance and ask for the full amount of a truck to purchase. Past practice has been to lease plow trucks which has a significant time issue with the requirements of a Town Meeting, a Board of Finance meeting and submitting a request for proposal (RFP). We are in the position that if something were to happen to one of our plow trucks during the winter season we may have to purchase a truck outright vs. a lease. That option may take some strain off of CIP if we go that route. She will push for a plan through CIP for our vehicles based on Public Works Director Troy Sposato's recommendation. To be clear, the budget for vehicle maintenance is \$60,000 and since July 2020 Truck #5 has cost \$14,717.95 with an additional invoice of repairs expected this week.

B. Appointments – Library Board Appointment

First Selectwoman Wiczenski shared a letter sent in from Library Board Cari Donaldson; that was received in the Selectman's office, the library director and the Library Board on 9/28 indicating her resignation. Resignation was finally received 10/23 by the Town Clerk's office

- Joanne Taraskiewicz - Sent a letter of interest and also endorsed by DTC
- Rebecca Cartabiano- Sent a letter of interest
- Letter received to consider Melissa Almquist from Margaret Gankofskie (We have not heard from Melissa)

Selectman Blessington requested to table this appointment until the next meeting. The Republican Town Committee is searching and talking to people in the effort to make a decision of who we would like to endorse. The departing committee member was on the Republican ticket. We would request an additional 2 weeks to find a candidate to endorse.

Selectman Boritz commented that the meeting was noticed and warned and we haven't heard back from anyone. She agreed that the outgoing member is Republican however she noted there had been a Republican Town Committee meeting since the resignation occurred. There are some great candidates and there has been sufficient time for other candidates and nominations to come forward.

First Selectman Wiczenski concurred and advised that on October 23rd the Town Clerk indicated that several people were in contact with her on a regular basis waiting for the formal resignation to be received. We did receive one endorsement from one town committee, we have heard nothing from the head of the RTC either to indicate that they are still looking and the need for additional time or endorsing a candidate. The Library Board has been without a member since September 28th and we all understand that there are some big concerns happening at the Library. She noted that Selectman Blessington thought it was important to keep on top of the issues at the Library. Additionally First Selectman Wiczenski said it's just as important to give them a full board to do the work.

First Selectman Wiczenski gave the candidates the opportunity to speak, it was noted that Rebecca Cartabiano was no longer on the call but wanted to give Joanne Taraskiewicz the opportunity to speak.

Joanne Taraskiewicz thanked everyone for the opportunity to speak. She believes the Library really needs to become more of an instrumental part of the community. She is very interested in becoming part of the Library Board to assist in the integration of programs for example CO-OP programs with the Library and the Recreation Department. She feels it is important to come together for the community to provide more services. The Library is a vital part of the community and is a wonderful facility. Ms. Taraskiewicz also believes there are opportunities to straighten out a few things that have not been managed well in the past. It's important to move forward in a positive direction. We need to take full advantage of the Library and the people that it serves.

First Selectman Wiczenski wanted to apologize that Rebecca Cartabiano was no longer on the call, she did submit a very comprehensive letter expressing interest in the Library Board. She also wanted to note that this election is a 1 year term until the next Municipal Election. At that point anyone who is appointed into that seat if they chose to move forward would then have to be on the ballot and be elected at the next Municipal Election.

**Selectman Boritz moved to appoint Joanne Taraskiewicz to fill a vacancy to the Library Board of Directors; effective November 2, 2020 expiring November 16, 2021 (next Municipal Election)
First Selectman Wiczenski seconded the motion.**

Discussion was held. Selectman Blessington requested to ask Joanne Taraskiewicz a couple of questions. The assumption is that she is aware of the problems that we have had in the past with the Directors at the Library. Do you have any ideas on replacing the Director?

Joanne Taraskiewicz responded by saying that we may not agree on everything as it relates to the Library Board. It is her belief that to get a sufficient person in the Director's seat you have to offer them a package that cannot be easily turned down. The vetting process is very important, the correct fit is a must. There must be discussion of salary and the type of background you want in your ideal candidate that will fulfill the mission statement of the Library. Turnover is not good for the Town therefore the right fit for the Library's need is instrumental.

Selectman Blessington commented when the previous Chair of the Library Board stepped down she wrote a letter which he read that stated, "it is my deeply held belief that the current state of the Library cannot be fixed by the Board of way people, no matter how good their intentions are. I believe that our finances, building maintenance and legal issues and policies are in such a state that we need to hire outside consultants to fix them. It is simply unfair and unreasonable to ask unpaid volunteers to resolve years of mismanagement via once a month ZOOM meetings. Based on what I know about our town it is unlikely that the Library will ever get the funding to hire such consultants." Selectman Blessington asked Joanne Taraskiewicz what she thought about that letter.

Joanne Taraskiewicz responded by saying; if you're going to hire people to do a good job you will have to pay them for the service. If you're going to hire a Director who has good experience you have to pay them. She advised that we may not agree on this topic where we have had discussions in the past over various issues. It's important to have a plan and a mission to hire an individual based on their background. The person hired should fit the job and the needs of the Library. The job should not be altered to fit the person. She expressed that she understands that a lot of cleanup will need to be done however it's important to move forward in a positive direction. She prefaced by saying that she currently is on the outside looking in, the magnitude of the cleanup is still unknown from this view.

Selectman Blessington agreed partly to what Ms. Taraskiewicz stated. He expressed that we need to hire someone who can fulfill the duties of the Library Board Director. The reason he read the letter from the Board member who stepped down is there are funds to hire someone however instead we have been fooling around with co interim Directors.

First Selectman Wiczenski reminded Selectman Blessington that the motion is whether or not to appoint Joanne Taraskiewicz to the Library Board. A discussion of the issues that the Library Board has and has not done at this point is not relevant to the motion.

Selectman Blessington stated that he believes it would be relevant because he wants to find out what we might expect to happen in the future with a new member on the Board.

Joanne Taraskiewicz responded by saying that she believes that is reasonable.

First Selectman Wiczenski reminded Selectman Blessington that the Library Board is a 6 member Board. A potential candidate is not going to be able to respond to what an entire board may decide. We have heard from Ms. Taraskiewicz on where she stands on this issue. As she indicated there is information that she may or may not be privy to from public meetings. There were some executive meetings held and the motion is whether or not to appoint Ms. Taraskiewicz.

Selectman Blessington stated that the Library Board is a 6 member Board 3 members are Democratic and 2 members are Republican which makes it a 4 to 2 ratio. The Republican Party would not like to lose that. The Republican's would like to get someone who will agree with me. Ms. Taraskiewicz agree on some things but disagree on other things.

First Selectman Wiczenski commented that she would like to see someone on the Library Board who will benefit our Town and to have that Board run adequately. That is what's important of a Library Board member. It's not important if they agree with certain political parties but what is the best decision for the Library and our residents of Willington.

Vote: 2 Yes (Wiczenski & Boritz) 1 No (Blessington)

First Selectman Wiczenski wanted to thank all that asked to be considered for this position and your willingness to serve not just the Library but the Town of Willington as a whole.

First Selectman Wiczenski thanked Ms. Taraskiewicz and advised that information of next steps would be forthcoming. The appointment is a 1 year appointment.

C. Tax Refunds

First Selectman Wiczenski moved to refund \$66.43 to Nissan Infinity LT on a Certificate of Correction.

Selectman Boritz seconded the motion.

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

First Selectman Wiczenski moved to refund \$101.21 to Melanie Tran on a Certificate of Correction. Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

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

D. Approve the 2021 Holiday Schedule

The Town Office Building will be closed in observance of the following holidays for the year 2021

<u>Holiday</u>	<u>Day Closed</u>
New Year's Day	Friday, January 1, 2021
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Monday, January 18, 2021
President's Day	Monday, February 15, 2021
Good Friday	Friday, April 2, 2021
Memorial Day	Monday, May 31, 2021
Independence Day	Monday, July 5, 2021
Labor Day	Monday, September 6, 2
Columbus Day	Monday, October 11, 2021
Selectmen's Day	Tuesday, October 12, 2021
Veteran's Day	Thursday, November 11, 2021
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 25, 2021
Day after Thanksgiving	Friday, November 26, 2021
Christmas Day	Friday, December 24, 2021
New Year's Day 2022	Friday, December 31, 2021

Approved by the Board of Selectmen on November 2, 2020

First Selectman Wiecenski moved to approve the Holiday Schedule as written.

Selectman Boritz seconded the motion.

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

E. Approve the Board of Selectmen 2021 Regular Meeting Schedule

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING SCHEDULE - 2021
1ST & 3RD MONDAY (EXCEPT HOLIDAYS) @ 6:30 P.M.
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING

Jan. 04, 2021
Jan. 19, 2021 (Tuesday)

Jul 06, 2021 (Tuesday)
Jul 19, 2021

Feb. 01, 2021
Feb. 16, 2021 (Tuesday)

Aug. 02, 2021
Aug. 16, 2021

Mar. 01, 2021
Mar. 15, 2021

Sept. 07, 2021 (Tuesday)
Sept. 20, 2021

Apr. 05, 2021
Apr. 19, 2021

Oct. 04, 2021
Oct. 18, 2021

May 03, 2021
May 17, 2021

Nov. 01, 2021
Nov. 15, 2021

Jun. 07, 2021
Jun. 21, 2021

Dec. 06, 2021
Dec. 20, 2021

Jan. 03, 2022
Jan. 18, 2022 (Tuesday)

Approved by Board of Selectmen: November 2, 2020

First Selectman Wiecenski moved to accept the Board of Selectmen 2021 Regular Meeting Schedule as written.

Selectman Blessington seconded the motion.

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

First Selectmen Wiecenski noted at our next Board of Selectmen's meeting she will share the proposed Budget calendar.

F. Old Business

COVID-19 Update: Willington has 32 COVID cases cumulative + with 2 probable cases.

First Selectmen Wiecenski noted that she has received questions from residents about hosting COVID testing here in town. We worked with Eastern Highland Health Department (EHHD) to determine if this would be necessary or viable. The current guidance is that testing is set up based on community

need and population. Currently the numbers in Willington do not warrant setting up a testing facility here now. If our status were to change we will work with EHHD and DPH to move in a different direction. There are many options for testing in our area. We will continue to direct people to the 2-1-1 site to find a testing site. Again if we see a sudden spike she will absolutely open this discussion again.

Travel Ban is currently up to 42 States/territories. We are encouraging residents to be mindful of non-essential travel and be aware of the Executive Order for Mandatory Self Quarantine.

Election Day changes- Our building will be used for absentee ballot counting and EDR- Election Day Registration. This means we will have an influx of Poll workers and residents coming here to register and vote. Because of spacing (social distancing) we have multiple locations on the first floor being used for this purpose, therefore we will not be taking appointments for business other than Election related services with the Town Clerk & Registrars' offices. The staff will be in the office and working. We will be available by phone or email but we will not be doing in person business that is not related to the election process. I hope our residents understand.

Today at The Governor's press conference he announced a bit of a rollback to phase 2.1 effective 11/6 This Friday this includes 50% capacity for indoor dining, a 9:30 curfew for restaurants serving liquor inside. This won't apply to take out or delivery. Religious service will be at 50% capacity with a cap of 100 people. Personal services such as hair salons, nail salons and barbershops can remain at 75% capacity. Governor Lamont is also recommending Connecticut residents stay home from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. to limit social gathering. He said at this point, he is not considering making this curfew a requirement, just a strong recommendation.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski encouraged residents to visit our local small businesses during this time.

Present to Speak

No one was present to speak.

Good & Welfare

First Selectmen Wiczenski again mentioned the Polling location change for the 11/3 Election will be at the HMS Gym Absentee ballots will be counted here at the TOB.

EHHD/DPH is hosting a Free Drive in Flu Clinic Sat 11/7 at Mansfield Middle School. This will be ONLY Adult vaccine doses (no High Dose or pediatric).

Flu Clinic - Human Services hosted two drive through flu clinics with CVS for residents one for seniors and one for all. We were able to deliver 66 flu vaccines during the two clinics.

CIP will have three possible openings, if any interest contact the Selectmen's office.

Pumpkin Compost – Sponsored by Willington Parks and Recreation.

Compost your pumpkins and Jack-O-Lanterns and let's squash food waste. All pumpkins will be donated to Ghost Fawn Homestead where they will be composted. That compost will then be used to grow food that is sold locally. By not adding these pumpkins to our landfill, we can cut down on waste and help our local farms.

Place your pumpkin in the bin located outside of the Recreation Department at the Town Office Building.

** Please note clean out candles prior to dropping off. Pumpkins that have been painted or decorated with glitter etc. will not be accepted as this will contaminate the composted. Donations will be accepted until November 20th.

Fall o Ween Contest Winners

- First Place: Lindsay LaCosse
- Second Place: KarenAnn Caldwell
- Third Place: Sean McHugh

Winners received a gift card to Willington Pizza House! Thank you to all who entered!

First Selectmen Wiecenski wanted to take a minute to thank our Registrars of Voters Christine Psathas & Suzanne Chapman (along with their deputies) and the Town Clerk; Staff Robin Campbell, Rachel Pierce Maureen Gantick and Sue Littwin, for the tremendous work and effort they have done to ensure a SAFE and FAIR election here in Willington. She expressed the countless hours these folks have put in during these unprecedented times. These type of events don't just happen and I for one appreciate the work they do every day so we can all exercise our right to vote. If you are planning to vote in person, please wear a mask, be patient, and most of all be respectful of your fellow residents at the polls.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 PM

Selectwoman Blessington seconded the motion.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Sharpley