

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

Board of Selectmen
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Regular Meeting Minutes
Via web interaction (via Zoom platform)

January 4, 2021
6:30 PM

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

First Selectwoman Wiczenski called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM with the following in attendance; Selectmen Boritz & Blessington and residents.

Approval of Minutes

Selectman Blessington moved to approve the minutes of December 21, 2020 as written.

Selectman Boritz seconded the motion.

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

Motion Carried.

Present To Speak

Correspondence

A list of Correspondence was available for the Selectmen to view.

First Selectman's Status Report

First Selectwoman Wiczenski provided an update on the Parks & Rec Director's position. The hiring committee will be conducting interviews this week on Tuesday January 5th and Thursday January 7th.

The Emergency Task Force Committee has not reconvened since the holiday therefore there is no update to provide.

Mold in the basement of the TOB: We received the air quality test back which caused some concerns. After consultation with our insurance CIRMA they recommended a 2nd air quality test with Mystic Air, their approved vendor. A 2nd air quality test was performed on December 23rd, the results are anticipated either this week or next. The Public Works Director Troy Sposato has begun soliciting quotes for the basement project of pouring a concrete floor. He has been successful in scheduling 1 company to come out and quote the job. No State approved vendors have responded as of yet.

The Boiler in the Finance Department is also in need of replacement. On December 28th and additionally on January 4th staff came into the office to discover no heat with 50 degree temperatures, this includes Finance, Human Services and WPRC. Maintenance for this boiler is proving to be difficult as obtaining parts is becoming difficult to source. The recommendation from 2 vendors is to replace this boiler. I would like to replace it with funds from our budget. We are working on getting appropriate quotes and will seek transfer approval from the BOF to spend funds. The CIP Committee begins their work this Wednesday January 6th.

Public Works

- Continuation of Trash pickup at park.
- Roadside mowing is still continuing
- Assisted with food share at TOB.
- Installed Plexiglas in the land us office and fixed gutter inside the crawl space.
- Installed chimney cap and installed a new clean out door in chimney.
- Worked on truck repairs.
- Patched holes around town.
- Washed trucks.

New Business

A. New State Representative introduction – Tammy Nuccio

First Selectwoman Wiczenski welcomed Willington's New State Representative Tammy Nuccio. She will be sworn in at the State Capitol in Hartford on Wednesday January 6, 2021.

Ms. Nuccio thanked the Board for their time and wanted to introduce herself as the new State Representative for the 53rd District. She expressed that she has been in contact with various Committees from all 3 towns to discuss issues and concerns that need to be presented at the Legislative Session. She expressed that there is a 2 billion dollar budget deficit with a lot of initiatives that need discussion this year including public option health, legalization of marijuana to name a few. There is a program called desegregate Connecticut that is pushing pretty hard. It's easy to get lost in the detail so she wanted to take the time to see what the needs are specifically for Willington to essentially prioritize issues that need to be addressed this year.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski started the conversation by saying there has been a lot of work done in the last several years that has effected Willington and Tolland. The biggest topic for Willington is funding for crumbling foundations. While there has been money allocated and money allocated in the \$12 fee with insurance, it's not enough. We know to mitigate this we need an additional \$100 million in funding. As homes begin to be fixed there is concern that this problem will get pushed to the side and it will not be viewed as large of a problem that it actually is. This topic needs to remain at the top of priority lists. Your predecessor Pat Wilson Pheanious sat on that committee however it is her understanding that the seat that she leaves vacant is a partisan seat so she is unsure if Ms. Nuccio will be on that committee. It was expressed that the Board would be appreciative for anything she can do to fight for Willington Tolland & Ashford as far as continuing funding for crumbling foundations. The remediation is integral to our grand list and in maintaining home values.

Ms. Nuccio gave a quick update, she will be on the crumbling foundation caucus. She requested participation on that committee from day 1. They have not met yet for this legislative session. She has met with Steve Werbner to talk about initiatives that they have. They are proposing the \$12 homestead fee stay on for an additional 10 years to assist in funding. That money will be used to obtain a \$200 million revenue bond which would be funded by the \$12 fund. With that said it wouldn't be a tax increase but a continuation of the \$12 homestead tax beyond what was originally set. The Legislation is currently looking

at abatements for towns that are set to go away. There has been some push back, it has been discussed that residents that have already applied to have their foundations fixed to have an extension of the abatement. It is understood that the abatement hurts the town's grand list if a resident chooses to not fix their foundation it is detrimental to the grand list. It is understood that the crumbling foundation will be the top priority for all three towns.

Selectman Blessington took a moment to welcome Ms. Tammy Nuccio to her new role.

Ms., Nuccio expressed that she will take an open door approach and encourages folks to reach out to her with concerns. Her contact information is Tammy.Nuccio@CGA.CT.gov her cell phone # is 860-729-7122.

Selectwoman Boritz concurred that the crumbling foundation is at the top of our list as it has a detrimental cascading effect to our town residents and businesses. This also impacts house value even to the houses that are not impacted with a faulty foundation. Funding and light on this topic is so important even in the light of the new stimulus package that does not provide any funding for municipalities.

Ms. Nuccio asked if there is a comprehensive listing of the value of homes in the abatement process.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski responded to say our Assessors office should be able to provide that listing. Additionally a topic of State Aid ECS funding is vital to our community. Any cuts to that would be significantly detrimental. It's important to receive the same level of State funding, although COVID has made things difficult towns and cities still rely on these funds. Any assistance in unfunded state mandates would be appreciated.

Ms. Nuccio responded to say it is her understanding the Town of Willington is on schedule to receive \$110,000.00 for ECS funding for the next 7 years. She will be proposing that the legislature review the formula that they have put in place. In accordance to the Connecticut Constitution, it's the States obligation to provide a free public education for all State of Connecticut students. The funding mechanism that is in place utilizes a formula that takes a base number then utilizes data that has nothing to do with education for example the Towns net grand list and AMI among other data. At minimum what is the States compliance for the unfunded mandates. What should they be providing at a basic level then build upon that foundation? It was agreed that all 3 towns are being penalized based on the current formula used. Ideally Ms. Nuccio would like to look at the top 10 mandates that are hurting small towns specifically Willington and Ashford because of the fact that both towns are K through 8. Work will be done to try to quantify what are the costs for the towns in a K through 8 atmosphere.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski asked Ms. Nuccio if she will be holding regular open forum /open office hours. Do you have plans to meet with residents so they can ask questions?

Ms. Nuccio responded to say absolutely, once she is sworn in she will designate office hours and post contact information. She will also be available on social media where she will share information as well. For minute purposes her contact information will be Tammy.Nuccio@CGA.CT.gov her cell phone is 860-729-7122. Once she is sworn in on Wednesday January 6th 2021 she will be able to access this e-mail address.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski thanked Ms. Nuccio and advised the Boards and Commissions can give you a broader view perspective which can be a different view of residents. It's important to give residents the opportunity to be heard. We have been fortunate for the last two years to have great representation and we look forward to the continuation of that.

B. Tax Refund

First Selectwoman Wiecenski Moved to refund \$236.51 to Sarah E. Murray on a Certificate of Correction.

Selectman Blessington Seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski Moved to refund \$235.91 to Sarah E. Murray. on a Certificate of Correction.

Selectwoman Boritz Seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried.

Old Business

A. COVID-19 Update

First Selectwoman Wiecenski provided an update Willington has had cumulative 125 COVID cases with 8 probable cases that is an increase of 21 cases since our last meeting on December 21st 2020. Vaccines are still in phase 1A. We are still anticipating Town staff being the 1B phase in February however this information is very fluid and changes frequently. The State of Connecticut has administered just over 75,000 vaccines to more than 2% of the population and has 167,000 vaccines left to administer. The 2nd doses have begun today per Governor Lamont. In the current phase assisting living facilities and all nursing homes are on track to have 100% vaccinations administered by Friday January 8th 2021. There are currently over 85 sites administering vaccinations.

Present to Speak

No one was present to speak

Good & Welfare

First Selectwoman Wiecenski provided some updates and reminders. You can find COVID testing information from 2-1-1 or <https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus>

Mobile Food Share will be here at the TOB this Wednesday January 6th 2021 from 11AM to 11:30 AM and then again on Wednesday January 20th from 11AM to 11:30 AM. Contact Human Services with any questions.

Please if you can support our small businesses and restaurants.

Food distribution will now be the 4th Friday of the month the next being January 22nd 2021 from 10AM to 12PM at the TOB.

Lastly budget season is here, there will be many meetings happening over the course of the next few months. Please visit the Town website for all dates and virtual links, participation from all is welcome.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski wanted to Thank Pat Wilson Pheanious for her dedicated service as State representative for Willington, Ashford & Tolland.

Selectman Blessington wanted to let everyone know that Hazel Alfred the Town Post Master passed away last week and wanted to express his condolences to her family. She has been a staple in the Willington Post Office for many years and will be missed.

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
Administrative Assistant
Town of Willington