

Town of Willington

Board of Selectmen
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Regular Meeting Minutes
Hybrid; TOB, Common Room & Virtual Meeting

March 18, 2024
6:00 PM

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

First Selectman Peter Tanaka called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM with the following in attendance:
Selectman Matt Clark, Selectman Andy Marco.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes

Selectman Clark moved to approve the minutes of the March 4, 2024, regular meeting, with amendments to the Emergency Services Facilities Building Committee section- making the number of members 10 instead of 8. First Selectman Tanaka seconded. Selectman Clark mentioned Willington Day Committee and the Spaghetti dinner and encourages residents to participate.
2 Yes (Tanaka & Clark) Selectman Marco Abstained 0 No. Motion carried.

Present To Speak

Public participation is encouraged. Speakers are limited by appropriateness, staying on topic, and maintaining decorum. Time may be limited to maintain progress. Please request to reserve time during the meeting if you wish to speak to a specific agenda item.

Dave Krivanec expressed concerns on Emergency Services Building committee and would like to make sure that everyone on the committee is a resident and a taxpayer.

Ralph Tulis would like to reserve time for items 8c and 9a on the agenda.

Jim Marshall would like to reserve time to speak on CIP and Emergency Services Building Committee when appropriate.

Bruce Lawlor read a letter he submitted to the BOS regarding the Emergency Services Building Committee stating that an Emergency Services Committee should be formed in order to determine the use for new buildings. Bruce also stated that he strongly believes that anyone sitting on the committee be citizens especially the first responders.

First Selectman Tanaka explained that there is an Emergency Services Efficiency Committee (ESEC) and that the minutes from those meetings are available online. Mike Makuch also spoke to the ESEC and how they work together for training and to avoid duplication of services.

Correspondence

Letter from Jim Marshall
Letter from Steve Troyer
Letter from Richard Maloney

First Selectman's Status Report

Water Contract- Willington Woods Contract needs to be renewed, can't charge any more than \$30,000, but the bill is over 40,000 therefore, the town is losing \$10,000 a year. The septic pumps are going as well, one has been replaced, but the other one needs replacement. First Selectman signed the contract for that \$8,000.00 for septic pump.

Bolton Assessor Contract- Found a couple different issues with draft contract, they want us to renew a year early and raise the rate 31% rather than the 3%. Also dealing with training costs with the business office and the town of Bolton. Staying with the higher number for budget purposes until we investigate further. Stef Summers asked if Selectmen could push back on the contract, First Selectman Tanaka stated that yes, we can, we just need time to consult with legal.

Water Testing- required by state law to show copper & lead levels. White Water is an authorized testing company, and the contract with them has been renewed.

Public Works

First Selectman Tanaka read report from DPW Director Troy Sposato

- Roadside mowing, worked on new sweeper: washing, and getting it ready.
- Picked up logs around town from tree contract work.
- Patched potholes
- Washed trucks
- Fixed the gate at the transfer station.
- Tree clean-up at Hall School from tree that fell in baseball field.
- Currently working on 20-ton trailer: sanded, painted, and working on wiring, lights and new decking.
- Shop clean-up and maintenance
- Dug out some clogged waterways/culverts.
- Garage catch basin cleaned by contractor.

New Business

Registrar Emergency Plan Approval- Christine Psathas, Registrar of Voters, spoke on the Emergency Contingency Plan to prepare for issues that may come up. Plan submitted and approved to BOS, the Secretary of the State said we need to update now that we have early voting.

Selectman Clark made a motion to accept the Registrars Emergency Contingency Plan, Selectman Marco seconded 3 yes (Tanaka, Clark, Marco) 0 no Motion Carried.

Assessment contract with the lawyer now- once it's back from attorney it will be signed. Kara Fishman asked if it would be done by end of the month, First Selectman Tanaka is hoping by the end of the week.

Tax Stabilization Ordinance- Mike D'Amato discussed Key Capture Energy approaching the town regarding an energy storage project that they are pursuing. Presented to Planning & Zoning and Town Hall. Shipping containers full of batteries, when demand exceeds supply, the batteries store the power and backfill into the grid. Key Capture would like to enter into an agreement with the town paying a little less up front and spreading the rest over time so it would be more stable. Attorney suggested we enter into the agreement. The town can choose to enter into the agreement if the Board of Selectmen agree to it. The purpose of this right now is to roll it out to BOS to determine if this is something the town of Willington would like to pursue with Key Capture Energy. The company is currently leasing the property. Other towns have adopted this with Solar (East Hampton & Windsor Locks), could look into these for more information. Ralph Tulis has a concern that seeing something on the Grand List that has declining revenue, if batteries need to be replaced, they will attempt to keep the service at a certain capacity, the facilities value will stay the same despite the revenue declining. This would be less revenue for the town. First Selectman Tanaka asks if we want to explore it or kill it in the cradle. Stephanie Summers said we have a lot of indebtedness coming up and having a streamlined revenue may not be the best idea. Linda Minor asked what if they went bankrupt. Selectman Marco stated that for tonight's purposes creating

an ordinance that would allow this to happen, does not mean we have to adopt it. Ordinance would go to Town Meeting.

First Selectman discussed options, tabling or considering ordinance. Selectman Clark made a motion to table for future discussion.

First Selectman Tanaka Seconded 3 yes (Tanaka, Clark, Marco) 0 no. Motion Carried

CIP Plan- Christina Mailhos shared screen to discuss CIP Plan, discussion ensued. Selectman Clark stated he would like to see \$75,000.00 cut from the budget. Board of Education has special meetings coming up. Selectman Clark suggested a bonding approach, Christina stated that what is being discussed is the bonding approach. Jim Marshall explained that the work can't be done until funding is settled, some projects take time and can only be done in the summer to avoid disruption to students in school. Jim Marshall supports the plan but believes that shortchanging year one will cause issues going down the road.

Public Works 10-hour days- Public works would like to start their 10-hour day schedule a few weeks early.

Old Business

Emergency Services Facilities Building Committee- BOS has received many letters and feedback concerning the committee. First Selectman moved to form the committee as written in the charge previously submitted. Jim Marshall, Mike Makuch, Ralph Tulis, Stephanie Summers, and John Blessington all discussed the makeup of the committee, making sure that the committee has the trust of the community. Pete Latincsics wants to hear conversation between the BOS regarding the thoughts on the makeup of the committee. Discussion within the BOS, take one voting member from each department and bring the total to 8. Members report back to BOS, any decisions go to Referendum rather than Town Meeting. After discussion, it was decided to add the Fire Department Members back and add 2 public members of the public for a total of 12 members.

Motion to withdraw initial motion.

Motion to amend committee member to add 2 at large members of the public and add to the charge that the committee report back to the Board of Selectmen. We will be advertising for the committee and look at the submissions in the next two weeks. Selectman Marco stated that if we do not get 4 members of the public, we don't delay moving forward with the forming of the committee.

Seconded by Selectman Marco

3 yes (Tanaka, Marco, Clark)

Stage removal in common room- 3 studies for asbestos- none found. April 3rd we will be removing the stage.

Budget Discussion- First Selectman Tanaka stated he is not speaking to education budget as the BOS has no say over the BOE budget. Public works budget is increased, and this was discussed. Selectman Clark would like to cut the paving budget, bringing up that residents in town are struggling and saving money on that budget would help. CIP budget increased as well, discussion on that as well.

Assessor Contract- First Selectman Tanaka working on the Bolton Assessor contract to determine where the training is going, and where the 31% increase is coming from.

Senior Center Coordinator position- hoping to get some ARPA funding to cover some of the cost of the position and the Seniors made a good case for the position.

First Selectman Tanaka made a motion at the last BOS meeting, and it was seconded, and discussed- but was never voted on. First Selectman repeated the motion, Stephanie Summers asked what the percentage was, First Selectman Tanaka answered explaining that even though the percentage was higher, the dollar amount was lower. Selectman Clark seconded 2 yes (Tanaka, Clark) Marco abstained 0 no motion carried.

Present to Speak

Jen Goodale wanted to express her concern in how board meetings are conducted. BOS is doing business in public, but not with the public. She doesn't understand how they are being done, not discussing with members in the audience. Leaking into other committees. First Selectman Tanaka states he asks for back and forth to gather as much information and gather from the community as much as possible.

Peter Latincsics commented on CIP plan, town meeting process, and how who you are is irrelevant to what they say when they speak.

John Blessington spoke letting the BOS know that he likes the discussion with the public.

Stephanie Summers discussed the way the town meetings go, and appreciates what Jen Goodale said about making the meetings longer.

Good & Welfare

Human services looking for items from easter baskets. Please do not donate open or expired food items.

Hot cocoa

Pasta sauce- plastic jars preferred.

Mashed or au gratin potatoes.

Meal starters

Peanut butter

Jelly

Coffee

Juice

Canned carrots

Canned fruits

Crackers

Monetary donations can be made to the Willington Food Pantry or Fuel Bank

Not accepting clothing, furniture, household utensils/cookware, adult incontinence items or appliances

Selectman Clark moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 PM.

Selectman Tanaka seconded the motion.

3 Yes (Tanaka, Marco & Clark) 0 No. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon Rittner

Recording Secretary

Town of Willington

RECEIVED
WILLINGTON, CT

2024 MAR 25 A 11:32


TOWN CLERK