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The February 8, 2023, Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen was convened at 5:00 p.m. by First Selectman Beth Heller in the Town Hall Central Meeting Room.

Present: First Selectman Beth Heller; Deputy First Selectman Sheila McCreven; Joseph Crisco; Paul Kuriakose; Dr. David Lober; and David Vogel

Present for staff: Administrative Officer/Director of Finance Anthony Genovese; Assistant Administrative Officer Karen Crosby; Town Counsel Gerald Weiner (5:50 p.m.); Media Specialist Pua Ford; Clerk Geraldine Shaw.

**JACOB KLEE, 33 North Racebrook Road – BAR MITZVAH PROJECT**

Jacob's Bar Mitzvah project is to raise Woodbridge residents' awareness to the water table and the danger of water pollution. This includes cleaning up plastics, trash, and bottles from the water shed. He created a website on GOOGLE to report wells that have gone dry so that neighbors can practice water conservation. The site also offers tips on water conservation and restoring the water level in wells. He asks for permission to link his website to the Town's and for it to be shared in Town bulletins and emails.

The Board thanked Jacob for his presentation and wished him well.

**FIRST SELECTMAN'S REMARKS**

*"Good evening, and welcome to the February 8<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. I am so glad to see everyone in person this evening! February 17 is National Random Acts of Kindness Day – Maya Angelou once said, "People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel." Let us all try to share some kindness with one another – not just on the 17<sup>th</sup> but every day.*

*Last weekend I was invited to be part of a panel of women hosted by Girl Scout Troup 60865, where the girls asked all of us questions related to how we, as women leaders and professionals in our Town, have broken stereotypes. It was a wonderful experience for me, and hopefully for the future leaders.*

*I have been asked by the Woodbridge Board of Education Chair Lynn Piascyk to appoint a member of the Board of Selectmen, and a member of the Board of Finance to the newly created Beecher Road School "Enrollment, Instructional Needs, and Space Planning Ad Hoc Committee" to review and address the implications of increasing enrollment at the school. I have asked BOF member Susan Jacobs and BOS member Joe Crisco to take this on, and they have agreed. This committee's membership will also consist of a cross section of district officials, school personnel, and a community member. They will review enrollment projections, programmatic and instructional needs, and staffing configurations which pose challenges in the current setting and will make a report to the Woodbridge Board of Education at its September meeting.*

*Just as an FYI, as the Town has no standing in this, I am letting you know that notice was provided to my office of a special permit application to the New Haven City Plan Commission for a Hybrid Cannabis retail facility at 130 Amity Road in New Haven. This location is within 500 feet of the Woodbridge line. The business name is Affinity Health & Wellness.*

*After hearing from several concerned residents about wire cuttings and other remnants littered on neighborhood lawns during Optimum's upgrade installations in Town, and after speaking with the police department who tried to ask the Optimum sub-contractors to clean up after themselves, I asked our Blight Officer Mike Marganski to speak with the company to arrange better handling of the cable debris. Optimum will now take responsibility for*

*proper cleanup at each work site. Residents who experience any further unsatisfactory clean-up should call my office at 203-389-3401 and we can continue to address this with Optimum.*

*The Ad Hoc Dispatch Committee for our Police and Fire Departments continues to work with our consultant Michael Boucher. As a reminder, this small committee is comprised of Fire Commissioner Karen Baldwin Kravitz, Police Commissioner Andy Esposito, Selectman Paul Kuriakose, and Tony Genovese. As you know, our District Animal Control has regional services (Woodbridge, Bethany, and Seymour), there is momentum to regionalize the Town's emergency dispatch services.*

*I have asked Selectman Kuriakose to ask this group to explore the options and come up with a plan for Woodbridge to become a regional dispatch center. Our federal legislators have indicated that there may be federal funding available to municipalities for Emergency Operations Center renovations, so I am hoping to take advantage of that. I will keep you informed.*

*I am also putting together a small committee to interview potential consultants to assist the Board of Selectmen with a review of the plan for a proposed RFP for the former CCW property. This small group will be made up of Selectmen David Vogel and Paul Kuriakose, Tony Genovese, and me. This draft RFP for the former CCW will occur before we bring it to the full Board of Selectmen.*

*You have in your packets under Correspondence, a memo from Dwight Rowland and the Center Building Renovation Committee. This contains a request for funding phase I of the design for the renovation project. I have spoken with Dwight and let him know that Tony and I are keeping an eye on contingency, as this is money we do not have in this current year's budget, and we will revisit this in March or April, as we hopefully can find funding at that time.*

*Residents are again encouraged to participate in the FY24 budget preparation – now, while it is in process – with questions, comments, and suggestions. Budget meetings can be watched live on Channel 79, and the WGATV YouTube page – please see the homepage of the Town's website for a link. The most effective way for residents to share their opinion and/or ask questions is at the Monday, April 24 Preliminary Budget Hearing when the Board of Finance presents its proposed budget. This meeting will take place at 7:30 p.m. at the Amity High School Auditorium. Following this hearing the Board of Finance may make changes to its proposed budget which will then be presented at the Annual Town Meeting on May 15 at Amity High School Auditorium at 7:30 p.m.*

*Thank you."*

**WOODBIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION – Superintendent Vonda Tencza**

Ms. Tencza reported that:

- Enrollment stands at 863
- February 1<sup>st</sup> tour – Selectman Lober attended  
Education Board member Jeff Hughes highlighted both building and grounds areas of concern
- Received one of the State's 2023-2025 ARPA School Mental Health Workers Grant  
Funding will extend the fulltime social worker position and free up ESSER ARPA funds
- Members of the Board submitted testimony in support of HB5003 re funding for education and the inequality brought about by the current reliance on local property taxes

**COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL CENTER BUILDING COMMITTEE UPDATE – Sandra Stein**

Ms. Stein reviewed the timeline of presentations, funding sources, and the importance of flexible space for Town use – vs. what is now available.

The consultants presented the scope of the project including plans for both the interior of the building and the outdoor spaces. They noted that the State Office for Historic Preservation wants a distinction between the original building/architecture and planned additions.

Mr. Stein of Silver Petrucelli identified the four phases of the project that exceed the grant by 28%. 1) parking area; 2) remainder of outdoor amenities; 3) landscaping; 4) traffic calming for Meeting house Lane.

Ms. Stein said that this evening the Committee is seeking approval of the scope of the project in order to seek bids for the project; and commitment to utilize \$2M of ARPA funds for Phase 1 and Phase 2.

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to authorize the Community and Cultural Center Building Committee to proceed with construction documents with final approval of design and construction costs after bids are received; to send plans to SHPO for approval; and to report back to the Board of Selectmen at the June 2023 meeting.

**UTILIZE ARPA FUNDS FOR LANDSCAPE/OUTSIDE WORK**

Ms. Heller stated that, “regarding the second motion to utilize \$2Million of the ARPA (Build Back Better) funds, for outdoor area transformation for phases one and two of the proposed plan – this will be discussed at the February 21, 2023, meeting of the Board of Selectmen where we make budget recommendations to the Board of Finance”.

**2030 TASK FORCE PRESENTATION -CONNECTIVITY PLAN-SLR Consulting, Jason Williams**

Ms. Jacobs, Chair explained the Task Force’s work to include the businesses and community outreach efforts. Mr. Williams presented slides of proposed plans to calm the traffic, install sidewalks, landscaping, and bike lanes in the business district using Federal infrastructure funds and grants that can be applied for through The South Central Council of Governments.

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Vogel – Lober) to accept the Woodbridge Business District Connectivity Plan as presented and authorize the Director of Finance to seek grants for its implementation.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mary Evelyn Tucker, 29 Spoke Drive – asked the status of the proposal to hire a consultant to shift through the many ideas put forth for the former country club property. Though responses are not usually given, Ms. Heller said that the Town is addressing the issue.

Mary Gorham, 21 Old Mill Road – she is interested in learning about the varies ideas for the former country club property. She is a strong advocate for a solar park, for both financial and environmental reasons. She recommended that the future of the property be included in the upcoming 10-year update of the Town’s Plan of Conservation and Development. She suggested the Town hire an impartial planning expert to consult in the overall process.

As there were no further comments, and none had been received by the Clerk, Ms. Heller closed public comments.

**MASSARO FARM – GRANT PROJECTS – Farm Director Steve Munno**

Mr. Munno was present to ask the Board to approve two grant projects. 1) creating a farm store within the barn; and 2) eliminating invasives and planting native species under a Climate Smart Grant.

- 1) The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – McCreven) to refer the Massaro Farm project to create a store in the barn to Town Plan and Zoning for an 8-24 Review.
- 2) The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to approve Massaro Farm’s project identified in the application for a Climate Smart Grant.

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/DIRECTOR OF FINANCE’S REPORT**

Monthly Report – Mr. Genovese reported that as of January 31<sup>st</sup>, he is estimating a year-end budget surplus of \$651,049. He noted that because the current budget includes an allocation from fund balance of \$400,000, increase to fund balance at year end is projected to be \$251,049. The Fund balance at 6/30/2023 is estimated to be \$7.83M or 14.59% of annual expenses.

Amity Regional School District - Mr. Genovese reported that due to two failed referenda, the Town will contribute \$134,046 less to Amity in fiscal year 2023 than budgeted by the Town. Second, the Amity Board voted to not return the June 30, 2022 budget surplus to the Town’s instead reducing the March payment for Woodbridge additional \$229,471.

**FUNDING REQUESTS**

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED** to recommend the following funding request to the Board of Finance:

#2223-19 - Interdepartmental/Intradepartmental Transfer Amount: \$ 61,365

To:	CNR-Pool & Gym – Machinery-pool filter (302-5150/57410/FILTR)	
From:	Recreation-PT Seasonal (1510-00/50320)	\$17,000
	Pool & Gym-PT Maintenance (1510-00/50330)	\$21,365
	Pool & Gym-Maintenance supplies (1510-00/55130)	\$ 8,000
	CNR Pool & Gym- Improvements (302-5150/57500/POOL)	\$ 15,000

For: Replace filter and associated equipment at Beecher Road School Pool

(Heller – Crisco) Unanimously approved

Ms. Heller made the following statement: *“I believe that the Beecher Road School Pool is an asset to our community. It provides a vast range of programs for the development of community swimmers including learn to swim programming through Beecher Road School and lessons through the Recreation Department, which is a vital life skill for our children to learn. It also acts as a feeder system to the Amity High School Swim Team and to the Woodbridge Aquatic Club. The pool provides a recreational outlet and opportunity for the continued health and well-being for all community members, from the youngest to the oldest of our residents.”*

**REQUEST FOR BID WAIVER**

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to approve the request for a bid waiver and award the Beecher Road School Pool filter replacement to CT Custom Aquatics, 8 Massimo Drive, North Haven CT as this firm has been the leading contractor on the pool for many years and timeline to bid the project will extend a six-month project to seven months.

**ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER’S REPORT – Karen Crosby**

Ms. Crosby reported on her current activities:

- Preparing the 2023-2024 budget for the Board of Selectmen's consideration on February 21, 2023
- Gathering information on a grant funded, optional, pilot program for recycling of food scraps
- Collaborating with CivicPlus on a refresh and redesign of the Town's website
- Meeting with the Community Council to discuss plans for Earth Day and a community bike ride

**SPERRY PARK COMMITTEE REPORT – Ms. McCreven**

Sophia McDermott's survey re use of Sperry Park - Ms. McCreven reported that the Sperry Park Committee approved the survey in the Board's packet this evening and it is on the Google website. Ms. McCreven recommended that the survey be linked to the Town's website.

**STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE**

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to accept the Strategic Plan as presented in this evening's meeting packets, with a condition that the plan is subject at any time to modifications, revisions, and additions as deemed appropriate by the First Selectman. The First Selectman appointed a committee to interview potential land use consultant candidates to assist the Board with a review of the RFP for the former country club of Woodbridge, which will then go to the full Board of Selectmen for approval.

A copy of the "WBOS Strategic Plan" update as discussed at the strategic Planning Committee January 19, 2023 meeting is attached to these minutes as part of the permanent record.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Crisco – McCreven) to approve the items listed under the Consent Agenda: Town Clerk's Reports; Town Clerk's application for Document Preservation Grant; Regional Water Authority HazWaste Resolution effective July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2026; Resignation of Debbie Brander Barbieri from the Economic Development Commission and the Community Council; Resignation of Robert Reed from the Town Plan & Zoning Commission.

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Board **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller -Crisco) pursuant to the recommendation of the Personnel Committee to offer the Accountant I position to James Franco at Step "A" per the AFSCME Union Contract, at the rate of \$27.36 per hour with a start date of February 13, 2023.

**APPOINTMENT**

**Fire Commission** – Mr. Kuriakose nominated Scott Hunter to fill the vacancy on the Fire Commission for a term ending December 31, 2025. Ms. McCreven seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYE – Heller, McCreven, Kuriakose, Crisco

NAY – Lober, Vogel

Ms. Heller declared Mr. Hunter appointed to the Fire Commission

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 7:20 p.m. the Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** to move into executive session pursuant to section 1-200 (6)(C) – Security Devices related to Dispatch – Selectman Kuriakose. Invited to attend: Mr. Weiner and Mr. Genovese.

At 7:40 p.m. the Board returned to the regular meeting. Ms. Heller noted that no motions were made, or votes taken, in executive session. No action was taken on the matter discussed in executive session.

At 7:42 p.m. the Board of Selectmen **VOTED** (Heller – McCreven) to move into executive session pursuant to Section 1-200(6)(B) – Discussion (Strategy and Negotiations) of the pending claim/litigation Re: FOI complaint (FIC #2022-0539) filed by David Lober, complainant, v. Town of Woodbridge, Town of Woodbridge First Selectman and Town Attorney, as respondents. Invited to attend: Mr. Genovese and Mr. Weiner. Dr. Lober was asked to recuse himself from the executive session and left the room.

At 8:05 p.m. the Board of Selectmen moved out of executive session and returned to regular session. Ms. Heller stated that no motions were made, or votes taken, in executive session.

**ACTION AS APPROPRIATE ON ITEMS DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Ms. McCreven moved, and Mr. Kuriakose seconded, that the Board of Selectmen authorize the First Selectman to engage the legal services of Nicolas Bamonte with Berchem Moses to defend the respondents in the FOI matter listed on the Board of Selectmen’s February 8, 2023, agenda.

**VOTE:** Aye – Heller, McCreven, Crisco, Kuriakose, Vogel  
Dr. Lober did not vote on the matter.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a non-debatable motion by Ms. McCreven, seconded by Mr. Vogel, the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Geraldine S. Shaw, Clerk