

The April 14, 2021, Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen was convened at 5:00 p.m. by First Selectman Beth Heller via teleconference. Ms. Heller declared the following members present via roll call: First Selectman Beth Heller; Deputy First Selectman Mica Cardozo, Joseph J. Crisco, Jr.; Joseph S. Dey, III; Dwight C. Rowland; and Sandra T. Stein.

Present for staff: Administrative Officer/Director of Finance Anthony Genovese; Town Counsel Gerald Weiner; Assistant Administrative Officer Betsy Yagla; and Board Clerk Geraldine Shaw.

Ms. Heller made the following statement: *“In accordance with Governor Ned Lamont’s Executive Order 7b Section 1, which suspends the open meeting requirements of in-person participation, audio and video of this Regular Meeting is being simultaneously televised live on WGATV Channel 79 and youtube@wgatv79, in order to allow the public to view and listen to our meeting.”*

The April 14, 2021, meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen may be viewed on YouTube here: <https://youtu.be/e6rZm0zsSP4>

### **FIRST SELECTMAN’S REMARKS**

*“Good evening and welcome to the April 14, 2021 Board of Selectmen regular meeting.*

*I am pleased to announce that I have now finalized the list names of residents who have agreed to serve on the Ad Hoc Housing Study Committee. There was a lot of interest in this committee. Fortunately we had many responses, but unfortunately not as many openings as applicants. We have a diverse group of thirteen citizens, and Attorneys DuBuque and Weiner, and Zoning Enforcement Officer Kris Sullivan as legal advisors and staff to the committee. These folks will be doing very important work and I am grateful to everyone who offered to serve. As a reminder, the committee will evaluate the data, engage the community, assess housing needs and submit a report to the Board of Selectmen, per our charge to the Committee.*

*The following residents have agreed to serve: Debbie Brander, Mica Cardozo, Harriet Cooper, Mary Dean, Buddy Degennaro, Nicole Donzello, Elaine Feldman, James Graham, Kathleen Hunter, Donovan Lofters, Dwight Rowland, Lewis Shaffer and Dominic Thomas.*

*I will ask the full group to hold its first meeting with the goal of creating the State-mandated Affordable Housing Plan. The Town Plan and Zoning Commission continues to work through the application to amend the Zoning Regulations and the Town’s Plan of Conservation and Development to permit multi-family housing in most of the Town’s residential districts, with affordable housing. The Public Hearing has been closed and now the Commission has 65 days to make their decision. You may view the application, other documents, and videos of their Public Hearings on the Town Plan & Zoning Commission page on the Town website. As a reminder, all the hearings are streamed live on local access cable Channel 79, on the WGATV YouTube channel, and on Webex.*

*The meeting agenda on the Town website includes the link to view as well as participate in the meetings. I am confident that the Zoning Commission will review the application in a fair, thorough, and thoughtful way, and provide an opportunity for all sides to be heard. I am equally confident that Woodbridge will remain the wonderful community that we have all come to love.*

*I have also added Teri Schatz to the Ad Hoc 2030 Task Force. TP&Z Chair Rob Klee had been a member of this task force but he resigned in order to prevent any possible conflicts of interest. You will remember that this group of town leaders and business owners is tasked with working on ways to grow our Grand List and make sure our Town continues into the future remaining fiscally stable.*

*As many of you are aware, Verizon/Cellco has privately contracted with a Woodbridge landowner to erect a 140-foot cell tower in the area of Newton Road. **Unfortunately, as we have discussed in the past, cell towers are not approved or denied at the local level.** Neither TPZ nor the Board of Selectmen has the authority to approve or deny these structures. These decisions are the exclusive jurisdiction of the State of Connecticut Siting Council.*

*The Board of Selectmen, in our desire to prevent this project from being built in a residential neighborhood, has however, hired a land use attorney to work with the Town to try to find an alternate site for the tower. The Board does not believe that a cell tower should be erected in any residential neighborhood in our Town. The Board of Selectmen will continue to do all we can to oppose this project, and we welcome your support. Should Verizon/Cellco eventually submit an application to the Siting Council regarding their current proposed location at 118 Newton Road, it will be incumbent upon all who oppose this project to submit testimony against it. It is my hope that the Board of Selectmen will vote to do so as well. We hope to get a further update from our consultant, and I will send out correspondence as soon as I do. They continue to review data and if there is a viable alternative, we will share it with Verizon and the public.*

*This evening we will be hearing from Alexia Belperron, President of the Amity Woodbridge Historical Society, who will be giving the Board an update on the Darling House etc. Just to let the Board know, this past week a member of the Society asked that Head of Maintenance Brad Parsons discard some of the items that had been removed from the yellow barn as part of the preparation for the next steps toward renovation. Unfortunately, no one from the Historical Society was present when Brad went down to remove what he thought were the items to be discarded, and some items that were not to be discarded, were. We have since clarified with Brad and with the Historical Society that a Society member should be present when Brad or other Town staff are asked to do work on site to prevent further miss-communication.*

*Earlier this month Town buildings opened to the public. The Library and the Senior Center have limited hours, and, at all buildings, we are asking people to sanitize and sign in when they enter the building for contact tracing purposes. Masks are obviously required, and are required on all Town property, including outdoor facilities.*

*I am pleased to let you know that I received notice that this week is dedicated to recognizing Animal Control Officers throughout the country for the work they do daily. I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy National Animal Control Officer Appreciation Week. I thank our Animal Control Officers for your hard work and effort each and every day, twenty-four seven, three sixty-five, that every one of you put into this profession.*

*Secondly, I am also pleased to announce that May 2 through May 8 is the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Professional Municipal Clerks week. This office is a time honored and vital part of local government and is the oldest*

*among public servants. The list of what they do is way too long to list here! I know they are ever mindful of their neutrality and impartiality, rendering equal service to everyone. I thank them all for their accomplishments and service to our residents and all others who have needed their help.*

*I will take this opportunity to remind everyone, both the Board and the public, of next week's **Preliminary Budget Hearing**. Last fall, in preparation for budget season, we directed all Town departments and Board and Commissions, as always, to be extra mindful of taxpayer dollars as they prepared their proposed budgets. Over the past few years, we have consolidated staff positions and reduced programs. To put it in perspective, between Fiscal Year 2015-2016 and Fiscal Year 2020-2021, the Town portion of the budget (not including the boards of education) decreased by 0.12%. As a reminder to all residents, the Preliminary Budget Hearing will be held VIRTUALLY next Monday, April 19, at 7:30 pm, at which time residents will be able to ask questions or make comments on every Town department's budget requests. The Preliminary Budget Summary will be mailed to every home in town prior to the hearing, and the Full Preliminary Budget is posted on the Town website as is the link to participate in the hearing. It will also be broadcast on Channel 79 and YouTube. I ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO PARTICIPATE.*

*Lastly, the Town of Woodbridge Municipal Elections will be held on Monday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> and the Amity Regional District 5 Budget Referendum is scheduled for Wednesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>. Unlike in the fall election, absentee ballot applications will NOT be automatically mailed to all registered voters from the Secretary of the State. "No Excuses" absentee ballot applications are available online or by request at the Town Clerk's office (203-389-3424). The applications may be dropped in the Ballot Box in front of Town Hall and the Town Clerk will then mail you a ballot with two envelopes. Complete the ballot, put it in the inner envelope, sign the envelope, and put that in the outer envelope and simply drop the completed ballot in the Ballot Box. All ballots MUST be received by 8:00 pm on May 3<sup>rd</sup> for the Town Election and 8:00 pm on May 5<sup>th</sup> for the Amity Referendum. Applications are required for both the election, and the referendum.*

*Thank you."*

#### **WOODBIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION – Superintendent Dr. Jonathan Budd**

- Dr. Budd began his report by announcing that May 3 – 8 is Teacher Appreciation week
- June 2<sup>nd</sup> is "Read Across America Day" – Board members and others are invited to participate by reading a book to the students, either outside or virtually
- June 18<sup>th</sup> – in-person graduation for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- Due to new practices and controls the current fiscal year deficit has turned into a tiny surplus

#### **REQUEST TO SELL COFFEE AND PASTRIES**

Ms. Yagla introduced Carissa Vega, owner of Café Rebelde. Ms. Vega approached the Town with an idea to sell coffee and pastries from a cart which is to be located in/near the "Old Firehouse Grove" and/or the Pease Place playground. All permits have been applied for. Ms. Vega plans to begin the service the middle of May. The Board members agreed that the proposal was an opportunity to promote the Town Center, community, and answered a desire of many residents. Members noted that the service was not in response to an RFP. Mr. Weiner said that if other vendors wanted to offer similar services, their requests would be handled on a case-by-case basis. All agreed that the Café Rebelde idea was a good way to see if the public is responsive to such a service.

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Stein – Heller) that the Town enter into a MOU agreement with Café Rebelde for the sale of coffee and pastries in the Town Center and Pease Place.

**LIAISON REPORTS**

**Ms. Stein:** Library Commission – The Friends of the Library are collecting used books on Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup> from 9 – 11 a.m. The Commission is grateful for the funds restored to the budget and plan to open the library 15 hours a week during April, May, and June and then 30 hours a week beginning on July 1<sup>st</sup>. A self-checkout machine is being installed.

**Mr. Rowland:** Human Services Commission – he was not available to attend the meeting.  
Inland Wetlands Agency – The Agency reviewed applications involving wetlands restoration work; new construction; and release of a construction bond.

**Mr. Dey:** No report

**Mr. Crisco:** Police Commission – The Traffic Authority approved two charity events. The Commission met in executive session to discuss the position of Deputy Chief.

Town Plan & Zoning Commission – closed the Public Hearing re 2 Orchard Road multiple housing application – they now have 65 days to issue a decision. The “Stop Work Order” on the Amity Athletic Field was lifted as the Commission is satisfied with the warrantee information filed by the vendor.

Fire Commission – The Commission held one successful drive-through pick-up dinner event. Another is planned for the end of April. All firefighter personnel have been vaccinated against COVID-19.

**Mr. Cardozo:** Recreation Commission – acknowledged condolences to the Gedansky family on the passing of Rita Gedansky, wife of Stanley Gedansky, long-time Commission Chair. The scavenger hunt has been very successful and is still going on. People are reserving the tennis courts and fields. Beecher Road School pool is heavily used on the weekends – and all COVID protocols are adhered to. The Commission expressed its gratefulness for the restoration of funds to the budget.

Agriculture Commission – The Commission wants to work with the Town to allow multi-year leases of Town owned farmland and to change the Town Plan and Zoning Regulation to allow farm stands to offer produce other than that produced on the farm with the stand.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Mr. Cardozo and Mr. Weiner said that the Ordinance Committee reviewed the two proposed ordinances prohibiting the installation of artificial turf in Woodbridge. One addresses only synthetic infill and the other addresses synthetic and organic infill materials. It was the unanimous decision of the Committee to recommend that the Board of Selectmen hold a Special Meeting to receive presentations regarding the proposed ordinances. Mr. Weiner noted that it has also been suggested by some residents that the Town declare a moratorium on the installation of any artificial turf until the State finishes its study of the use of PFSA's. He said that such a moratorium would be within the purview of the Town Plan and Zoning Commission.

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to schedule a Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen to receive and discuss information regarding the proposed ordinances prohibiting the use of artificial turf in Woodbridge. The Clerk will find a suitable date for the meeting.

**AMITY-WOODBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY – UPDATE – Alexia Belperron, President**

Ms. Belperron reminded the Board that the Society received a “Plan and Survey Grant”. A highly recommended engineering firm, GNCB, has been retained and the first of the assessments of the barns

and accessory buildings is completed. The second round will be done the week of April 19<sup>th</sup>. Drone footage of the buildings was also done. The report should be ready by the end of May/beginning of June and the Society would work with the Town to raise funds and write grants for the restoration work. The Society has submitted an application for a 1772 grant to paint the front façade of the building. They hope to work with the Town to seek other grants to fund the historic restoration and schedule of work determined by the surveys.

In preparation for the surveys, the buildings were cleaned out and unfortunately some items were disposed of by mistake. There will be better communication in the future with the Town crew and any work will be scheduled when a member of the society can be present. The other items for spring include:

Clean-up of property and generating a priority list; salvaged old post and beams to be used elsewhere on the property; continue to work to preserve historic plants; planted 6 heritage apple trees; plan to plant a plot of “three sisters” (heirloom varieties of corn, pole beans, and squash).

Emergency Plan – the Society is writing an emergency plan regarding the collection and the buildings in the event of a fire or natural catastrophe.

The Society would also like to work with the Town to submit grant applications to update the National Historic Registry listing of the property and to seek designation of the section of Litchfield Turnpike incorporating the Darling house the cow barn, fields, and the house at 1932 Litchfield Turnpike an historic district. The house at 1932 Litchfield, owned by Nancy Polk, is now on the National Registry as the John Darling homestead.

Ms. Belperron also mentioned that the Society is working with SHPO and the Clark family to get the historic Greek revival home and barn located on Racebrook Road, listed on the National Registry.

Ms. Heller requested that the Selectmen be kept informed of grant applications and how the Town can help in achieving receipt of the grants. She also asked that the Board of Selectmen be notified of any grants awarded to the Society.

Ms. Stein asked about the “Good to Great Grant” and the status is of the work and implementation of that project. Ms. Belperron said that acceptance of the grant was on hold. She said it will remain on hold until SHPO and the Society are comfortable that the Society has agency at the site. She noted that the revised Agreement with the Town provides a ten-year extension, but the Advisory Committee presents a problem because the Committee’s Charge is in conflict with the long-term agreement; it is a breach of the agreement, according to the Society’s attorney. Ms. Belperron said that the project cannot be started until the problem is solved. She also said that the project is not a preservation project – but one that would increase the ability to host programs and event. She said the Society has to prove to the State, after the project is complete, that they had the authority to utilize the grant for the project. She went on to say that as of now, both the SHPO and the Society are not confident about that long-term ability to realize the benefits of that grant.

Ms. Stein said the explanation was very concerning. She said that the role of the Advisory Committee is to make suggestions to the Board of Selectmen about what other things could be done on the property.

Ms. Belperron said that the Committee comes up with suggestions that do not make sense to the Society and do not fit in the priority list. Then the Society must take an inordinate amount of time to determine a priority list for the suggestions and where the projects fit in the overall scope. She said that

it doesn't work to have two heads at the same site. Ms. Belperron said she believes it is in the best interests of the Board of Selectmen, the Historical Society, and the site, for the Board to choose if they want the Society or the Committee managing the site. She gave the analogy of having two first selectmen, or two presidents, in effect – two managers with overlapping duties – it does not work.

Ms. Stein and Ms. Heller said that the Committee does not manage anything – their charge is to make suggestions to the Board of Selectmen, who oversee the property as owners of the property.

Ms. Belperron said that is part of the problem – that the Committee's suggestions are often acted on without input from the Society. Ms. Heller said that no member of the Society has attended the Committee meetings - though such attendance has been requested. Ms. Belperron said it is not her job to make the Committee work. She must concentrate on the Society's mission.

Other members of the Board remarked that the Committee had not reported in several months.

Ms. Stein said that the suggestions presented in the fall had been acted on. The Committee was waiting for the survey reports to be completed.

Ms. Heller said that these matters will have to be taken up at another time. Ms. Belperron said that she will provide the Board when any information it wants as to why the arrangement is not working and why the Board must choose who is to manage the property.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The Clerk stated that no public comments were received via e-mail by 4:30 p.m. this date.

#### **STATE AFFIRMATIONS**

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to adopt and authorize the First Selectman to sign the following State Affirmations for the year 2021:

- ADA Municipal Grievance Procedure
- ADA Notice
- Affirmative Action Policy Statement
- Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Fair Housing Policy Statement
- Fair Housing Resolution

#### **CALL OF THE MUNICIPAL ELECTION – May 3, 2021**

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to call the Town of Woodbridge Biennial Election to be held on May 3, 2021. The polling hours for said election are from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. to be held in The Center Gym located at 4 Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge, Connecticut.

#### **MOTION TO CALL THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) that the Town of Woodbridge Annual Meeting, pursuant to Charter Article III, Section 3-2, which is scheduled for May 17, 2021, shall be held with complete remote participation in accordance with Governor Lamont's Executive Orders 9H and 7B.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/DIRECTOR OF FINANCE REPORT**

Monthly Report – Mr. Genovese reported that as of March 31, 2021, he is projecting a year end surplus of \$180,000. He reminded the Board that because the current Town budget includes an allocation from

fund balance of \$400,000, projected decrease to fund balance at year end is \$219,920 resulting in a fund balance at June 30, 2021 of \$6.28M or 12.58% of annual projected expenses. Mr. Genovese noted that the Town received \$163,320 in Corona Virus Relief and FEMA funds to offset COVID-19 related costs from FY20. He also noted that the Tow is in the process of applying for reimbursement for all eligible expenses related to storm Isaias.

**TAX REFUNDS**

Pursuant to Section 12-124 – 129 of the Connecticut General Statutes and the recommendation of the Tax Collector, the Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Cardozo) to refund tax in the amount of \$6,360.95.

**FUNDING REQUESTS**

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

2021-22 – Interdepartmental Transfer Amount: \$ 10,560.00  
To: Fire Dept. Cleaning/custodial Svc. (1230-00/53100)  
From: Revenue – Miscellaneous Grants (1-2-1100/42600)  
For: Additional funding for additional cleaning and sanitizing of the fire house due to COVID19  
(Heller – Crisco) Unanimously approved

2021-23 – Intradepartmental Transfer Amount: \$ 10,000.00  
To: Public Works Contracted Services (Rentals) (1310-00/53610)  
From: Public Works Road Maintenance (1310-00/55170)  
For: To address additional tree work  
(Crisco – Stein) Unanimously approved

**BID WAIVER – CATCH BASIN CLEANING**

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Rowland) to approve the Public Works Department request for a bid waiver to use the CRCOG bid list and award Woodbridge’s catch basin cleaning contract to Janet’s Sweeping & Property Care, LLC for a bid of \$23.00 per basin, contract total of \$37,697.00.

**BID AWARD #2021-04 – PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM FOR THE CENTER GYM**

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to award Bid #2021-04 – Public Address System to Valley Communications in the amount of \$20,569.65.

**LEASE PURCHASE AGREEMENT**

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Stein – Heller) to accept the Chase Bank quote of 1.89% for five (5) annual payments, in arrears, for the financing of the replacement of Police Department IT infrastructure with a purchase of \$226,202.08.

**ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER’S REPORT**

Ms. Yagla reported that she applied for an AARP grant to purchase items, recommended by a survey, to improve the “Grove”. These include a bench and café style tables and chairs. She reported that the Bike Crowd Funding Campaign was successful, ending a month earlier than planned.

**REQUESTS TO HOLD EVENTS ON TOWN PROPERTY**

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED** to approve the following applications to hold an event on Town property:

- June 3 – 8<sup>th</sup> grade celebration – (Heller – Stein) Unanimously Approved

Town sponsored “Second Saturdays”

- May 8 – Decorating Flower-Pots – (Heller – Stein) Unanimously Approved
- May 15 – Chalk Art Event – (Heller – Rowland) Unanimously Approved
- June 12 – Community Tag Sale (Heller – Cardozo) Unanimously Approved
- August 14 – Arts Event – (Cardozo – Stein) Unanimously Approved
- September 11 – Craft/maker Fair – (Heller – Stein) Unanimously Approved

#### **ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE TOWN CLERK’S REPORTS**

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Cardozo) to acknowledge receipt of the Town Clerk’s reports for the month ending March 31, 2021 and cumulative from July 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021.

#### **MINUTES**

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED** to approve the following minutes:

March 10, 2021 – Regular Meeting – Unanimously Approved (Heller – Stein)

March 30, 2021 – Special Meeting – Unanimously Approved (Heller – Rowland)

December 1, 2020 – Capital Budget Review – Unanimously Approved (Heller – Crisco)

December 3, 2020 – Capital Budget Review – Unanimously Approved (Heller – Crisco)

January 26, 2021 – Operating Budget Review – Unanimously Approved (Heller – Crisco)

January 28, 2021 – Operating Budget Review – Unanimously Approved (Heller – Crisco)

February 2, 2021 – Operating Budget Review – Unanimously Approved (Heller – Crisco)

#### **TOWN COUNSEL’S REPORT**

Mr. Weiner said that his report is the item for executive session.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 7:01 p.m. the Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Rowland) to move into executive session pursuant to Connecticut General Statute(s) 1-200(6)(B); 1-210(b)(4) Litigation re tax appeal Settlement - Willow CT PROPCO LLC, 225 Amity Road, Woodbridge and to invite Mr. Genovese and Mr. Weiner to attend.

At 7:15 p.m. the Board of Selectmen moved out of executive session and returned to the regular meeting. Ms. Heller stated that no motions were made or votes taken in executive session.

Action as appropriate on matter heard in executive session – The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Stein – Cardozo) to approve the Tax Stipulation discussed in executive session – Willow Ct PROPCO, LLC vs the Town of Woodbridge and the properties located at 225 Amity Road, Woodbridge. The parties have agreed to stipulate that the value of that real estate going forward shall be in the amount of \$4,250,000. All the terms of the stipulation is fully set forth in the documented dated March \_\_\_\_, 2021, contained in the packet of materials distributed to the Board of Selectmen for this evening’s meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

On a non-debatable motion by Ms. Heller, seconded by Ms. Stein, the meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.



Respectfully submitted,  
Geraldine S. Shaw, Clerk