

The April 22, 2020, Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen met via remote WebEx conferencing. First Selectman Beth Heller convened the meeting at 5:06 p.m.

Ms. Heller called the roll of members who affirmed they were at the meeting:

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 Geraldine S. Shaw, Clerk.

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REMARKS

"Good evening and welcome to this Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen, on Wednesday April 22, 2020 at 5 pm. In accordance with Governor Ned Lamont's Executive Order 7 B Section 1, which suspends the open meeting requirements of in-person participation, audio and video of this Special 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.

I will now call the list of all members of the Board of Selectmen and others who are participating in this meeting. I would remind participants to please mute your phones when you are not speaking to eliminate any background noise, and also to please state your name for our listening audience, prior to speaking.

Please confirm your presence verbally as your name is called:

Mica Cardozo

Joe Crisco

Joe Dey

Beth Heller

Dwight Rowland

Sandy Stein

Administrative Officer/Director of Finance Tony Genovese

Assistant Administrative Officer Betsy Yagla

Town Counsel Jerry Weiner

Executive Assistance Gerri Shaw

Thank you.

Item one on the Agenda is the First Selectman's Remarks. I will begin tonight by thanking the Board of Selectmen and staff for being flexible and meeting for the third time this month. Additionally, thank you to all our Department Heads who joined us on Monday evening for our first ever virtual live Preliminary Budget Hearing.

We are continuing to react and modify our daily work as a town, based upon Governor Lamont's Executive Orders. We are making every effort to help our residents through this pandemic. We

*have two items on the agenda which are a direct response to COVID 19, one being a **tax relief program** and secondly, a potential **Declaration of Emergency** for the Town of Woodbridge.*

According to the latest information I received from Police Chief Cappiello this afternoon, "there are now 13 COVID-19 associated deaths. All but one are confirmed. We have 90 confirmed COVID-19 positive cases in Town. Approximately 75% of those are associated with the extended care nursing facilities located in town. The remaining 25% are at private residences in town." In addition to the terrifying toll this is taking on our community, it is also having a devastating impact on many of our local businesses and residents.

Finally, I recently spoke with Board of Finance Chairman Matt Giglietti, regarding the Board of Selectmen's request for a joint Board of Selectmen/Board of Finance meeting, prior to the meeting where the Board of Finance sets the mill rate, and he is prepared to have that meeting. There is a provision in the Town Charter that allows us to meet."

At this point in the meeting Town Counsel Gerald Weiner explained that though he had previously stated there was no requirement under the budget process for the Board of Finance to meet with the Board of Selectmen prior to adopting the budget and establishing a mill rate, according to Section 4-(b) of the Charter "*the Board of Selectmen may require such information from, or joint meetings with, any Town officers, boards, commissions or agencies as it may find necessary to carry out the duties and responsibilities placed upon it.*"

Ms. Heller said that: "*Board of Finance Matt Giglietti has agreed to the meeting and would however, like parameters for that meeting, and asked that each of you, should you chose to do so, email him with what you would like to have discussed at a joint meeting.*"

Thank you everyone for doing your part to keep us safe."

DISCUSSION OF GOVERNOR LAMONT'S EXECUTIVE ORDER 7S SECTION 6

Ms. Heller introduced the second item on the agenda, Discussion of Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7 S - Section 6 which requires the Board of Selectmen to adopt a tax relief option for Woodbridge taxpayers. She noted that the Board began this discussion last week at a Board of Selectmen Special meeting, and tonight the Board will hopefully be able to take action, as the decision is required to be given to the State Office of Policy and Management by April 25th.

Mr. Genovese detailed the two options both of which benefit taxpayers whose financial status has been adversely affected by COVID-19. **Option 1** – Deferral Program offers eligible taxpayers, businesses, nonprofits, and residents a deferral by ninety days (October 1, 2020) to pay any taxes on real property, personal property or motor vehicles. Eligible taxpayers are those that attest to and/or document significant economic impact by COVID-19 by filling out and signing a form. **Option 2** – Low Interest Rate Program where the delinquent portion of the principal of any taxes on real property, personal property or motor vehicles shall be subject to

an interest of three (3) percent per annum for ninety days from the time it became due and payable. Following the ninety days the portion of the principal that remains delinquent shall be subject to interest as previously established (2.5% per month or 18% per annum).

Mr. Genovese explained that the options do not apply to bank escrow accounts. Those must be paid by the banks July 1 through August 3rd. The options apply only to tax payers who pay taxes directly to the Town. He said that in the first three months of a fiscal year the Town expends approximately \$13M and if there is a shortfall in income the Town can consider tax anticipation notes – but there is a cost to the Town. He also noted that some towns/cities have adopted both options.

ACTION BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

The Board of Selectmen, pursuant to Governor Lamont’s Executive order 7S, Section 6a hereby elects to participate in the Deferment Program for all Eligible Taxpayers, businesses, nonprofits, and residents whereby a deferment of 90 days to pay any taxes on Real Property, Personal Property, or Motor Vehicles from the day said tax became due is hereby approved.

Moved by Selectman Sandra T. Stein, seconded by First Selectman Beth Heller and unanimously approved by roll call vote of the Board of Selectmen:

Mica Cardozo – Aye
Joseph J. Crisco, Jr. – Aye
Joseph S. Dey, III – Aye
Beth Heller - Aye
Dwight C. Rowland – Aye
Sandra T. Stein – Aye

DISCUSSION OF ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION RE LOCAL DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Ms. Heller said that the Town will apply to FEMA for reimbursement of expenditures related to COVID-19. Though the Town is covered under the umbrella of the Governor’s declaration of emergency, FEMA recommends and both Police Chief Cappiello and Fire Chief Rowland concur that the Town should issue its own declaration.

Mr. Weiner explained that as First Selectman, Ms. Heller has the authority to issue the declaration, but she wanted the Board to be aware of, and their support for, the action.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOARD

By roll call vote the Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Crisco – Rowland) to adopt the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

Whereas, on March 10, 2020, Governor Ned Lamont issued a Declarations of Public Health and Civil Preparedness Emergencies, proclaiming state of emergencies throughout the State of Connecticut as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreaks in the United States and confirmed spread in Connecticut

Whereas, Governor Lamont has issued various Executive Orders designed to protect public health and safety,

Now, Therefore, I, Beth Heller, First Selectman of the Town of Woodbridge by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of the State of Connecticut and in order to mitigate the major disaster and emergency caused by COVID-19 which affect the health and wellbeing of residents of the Town of Woodbridge do hereby ORDER AND DIRECT the following:

- 1- In accordance with CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES Sections 28-8a (a), 28-1 (8), 28-22 and Section 5.2 of the Woodbridge Charter and as a result of COVID-19, I hereby declare that a Civil Preparedness Emergency exists in the Town of Woodbridge. This Declaration shall remain in effect until terminated.

ADJOURNMENT

By roll call **VOTE** on a non-debatable motion by Ms. Heller, seconded by Mr. Crisco, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Geraldine S. Shaw, Clerk