

The May 12, 2021, Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen was convened at 5:02 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.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMAN

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REMARKS

Good evening and welcome to the May 12, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. I will now call this meeting to order. As permitted by Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7B, extended by Executive Order 9A, related to the COVID 19 Pandemic, this meeting is being held remotely with no in-person attendance.

Congratulations and thank you to everyone who sought elected office in the recent municipal elections. Several folks are resigning, and we will have new and returning elected members on some of our Boards. Additionally, both nominating committees for each political party will be meeting to nominate new members to many of our appointed Boards and Commissions. Please join me in thanking the Registrars of Voters and our Town Clerks who have taken on the wonderful task of running primaries and our Town elections during the pandemic. During the first week in May, they ran the municipal election, the Amity Budget Referendum and a recount. All proceeded flawlessly.

Our Annual Town Meeting will be held virtually next **Monday**, May 17 at 7:30 pm. The link to join the WEBEX meeting is on the Town website. The meeting will also be broadcast live on Channel 79 and YouTube.

I want to publicly thank the Brownie Troop 60865 for painting and placing decorative rocks with affirming, happy messages around the walking path at the Fitzgerald Tract. If you recall they received our permission over the winter and just recently placed the rocks. They will spread a little joy and share positive messages with residents and I know we all thank them for it.

Last week Attorney Weiner and Attorney Bloom received the following email from Verizon/Cellco Attorney Kenneth Baldwin which he forwarded to me. It states:

"Gentlemen - I wanted to get back to you and let you know that Verizon has decided to proceed with its application to the Siting Council for a 100' tower at 118 Newton Road. The alternative "plan" described by Dave Maxson on our call last week doesn't address Verizon's objective, which is to improve coverage on CT-67 and CT-63 near the intersection of the two. A taller tower down near Town Hall won't satisfy that objective and simply delays the inevitable need for a new tower up north. As evidenced by the extensive site search conducted, there are very few options up in this part of town and all of them are in "residential areas". That said, I hope that Verizon's commitment to lower the tower height by 40' will make the 118 Newton Road site more acceptable to the Town and the neighbors. We're happy to work with you on some additional ground level landscaping that might also help screen some of the views of the closest neighbors, if your interested in discussing that. Our plan is to file the application next Thursday May 13, 2021. Notice to the abutters will go out on Tuesday and will be published in the New Haven Register on Tuesday and Wednesday. Thank you."

Needless to say, this is extremely disappointing news, and we as a Board should think about how we want to further proceed. I will add this item to the agenda of our next meeting.

Due to significant ongoing illegal dumping at the former Country Club property, the Department of Public Works has now installed Jersey barriers and a large gate blocking off the main parking lot. The property is still open to the public and residents are welcome to use the walking paths, but the lot is now closed to cars to stop this problem. Parking is still available at the small lot across the street from the property.

Since the clubhouse at the former Country Club of Woodbridge has been vacant, it has attracted constant vandalism and the building has continued to deteriorate. It is, in my opinion, a danger, a hazard and opens the Town up to liability by being there unattended. As part of our conversation tonight about capital projects I think it is important to consider including the demolition of the clubhouse and other smaller outbuildings on the property, as part of the bonding project. No matter how the property is used in the future the removal of these buildings will be necessary.

Later this evening we will learn more details from Tony about the potential bonding project to convert the Old Firehouse into a beautiful new Community Center, create a storage facility for the Fire Department, renovate and update the Senior Center, refurbish three roofs at Beecher Road School, remove the hazardous buildings at the country club, and add a sidewalk to connect Amity Regional High School with the Library and Old Firehouse, and the Town Center.

We cannot create a Community Center for all our residents without creating a storage facility to house the Fire Department materials that have been stored in two bays in the Old Firehouse, following a devastating fire in 2006. I also believe that our seniors of all ages deserve to be in a modern, updated, fresh, clean, welcoming air-conditioned space. Due to the expense and time involved in bonding, it makes the best sense to create the sidewalk, remove the old unused buildings at the country club, and refurbish the school roofs while we are already bonding for other projects.

Together these projects will transform the center of our Town into a more dynamic, active and attractive place that will help us create and sustain the sense of community that is sometimes hard to come by due to our geography. Coming out of a pandemic I believe that community building is even more important than ever. Borrowing rates are at all-time lows and construction material costs are beginning to rise so now is the time to take on a project of this magnitude.

Since our last meeting Tony and I met with Dr. Durga Prasad and Andy and Thera Stack from the Community Gardens. Dr. Prasad requested adding meditation and yoga platforms near the rose garden. The Stacks had several concerns about adding any new structures to the space. It was agreed that would not happen at this time. Dr. Prasad also repaired the rose garden fence and cleaned the area south of the garden. There is an update in your packet under Correspondence from Dr. Prasad with additional information.

On April 17th, the Town held the Preliminary Budget Hearing **virtually**. Betsy and Tony and I met with staff from SCRCOG to discuss the Regional Affordable Housing Plan and how to make sure that the Town's plan will align with the regional plan. I also met with the new Church Moderator Richard Prescott of the Congregational Church to discuss the potential for resuming the Strawberry Festival this year, perhaps at a date when the Town has an event as well. I hope they do! Additionally, we held our monthly department head meeting. I also virtually delivered a proclamation to the Woodbridge National Day of Prayer event.

We have been through so much over the past year and a half. Thank you everyone for your continued support and I look forward to being literally together again in the very near future.

WOODBIDGE GARDENS FOR WILDLIFE

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to designate four (4) garden plots at the Community Gardens as Woodbridge Gardens for Wildlife Group projects and outdoor classrooms for Beecher Road School as outlined in the presentation by Ms. Prud'homme and Ms. van Tonder.

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANT ACT 2021 APPLICATIONS

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Stein) to accept the applications received for the 2021 Neighborhood Assistant Act program and to schedule a Public Hearing for June 9, 2021 @ 6:30 p.m.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION RE CAPITAL PROJECTS

First Selectman Beth Heller **MOVED** and Mr. Joseph J. Crisco, Jr. **SECONDED** the following motion:

"I hereby move pursuant to Section 6-4 of the Charter of the Town of Woodbridge that the Board of Finance consider the following projects for presentation to a Special Town Meeting:

1 – WHEREAS, the old Firehouse is in need of renovations in order to be used as a Town Community Center and other related uses in the approximate amount of \$1,821,617 Dollars; and

2 – WHEREAS, upon written request from the Woodbridge Board of Education, certain sections of the Beecher Road School roof is in need of repairs in the approximate amount of \$573,500 Dollars; and

3 – WHEREAS, The Senior Center is in need of repairs and renovations in the approximate amount of \$455,339 Dollars; and

4 – WHEREAS, a Storage Facility is needed to be placed in the rear of the Town Firehouse in the approximate amount of \$628,950 Dollars; and

5 – WHEREAS, the clubhouse and several outbuildings at the former Country Club of Woodbridge are in of demolition in the approximate amount of \$766,43 Dollars; and

6 – WHEREAS, there is a need to install sidewalks and streetscapes improvements for safety from Amity High School to the Town Center in the amount of \$390,000 Dollars."

VOTE: Aye – Ms. Heller, Mr. Cardozo, Mr. Crisco, Mr. Rowland, Ms. Stein
Nay – Mr. Dey

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 taxes in the amount of \$9,908.95.

FUNDING REQUESTS

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

2021-24 – Intradepartmental transfer Amount: \$8,000

To: Parks – Groundskeeping Services (1520-00/53400)

From: Parks – Regular All Other (Wages) (1520-00/50240)

For: To pay contractor to assist with mowing due to a severe manpower shortage in the department.

(Heller – Stein) Unanimously approved

2021-25 – Interdepartmental transfer Amount: \$15,198.78

To: CNR – Non-Building Improvements (302-1100/57300/BIKE)

From: Revenue – Miscellaneous Grants (1-2-1100/42600)

For: Transfer Grant and Donation funds to Bike Route Capital Project.

(Cardozo – Stein) Unanimously approved

REGIONAL COMMUNICATION SERVICE CREDIT – ASSIGN TO C-MED DESIGNATION

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to designation American Medical Response-MedCom as the recipient of the Town of Woodbridge telecommunications service credit for Coordinated Medical Emergency Director.

APPLICATIONS TO HOLD EVENTS ON TOWN PROPERTY

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED** to approve applications to hold events on Town property:

May 16/22 (rain date) – Decorating Flower Pots – Town Green (Rowland – Cardozo) Approved

June 21, 2021 - Make Music Day – Pease Place Playground (Heller – Stein) Approved

June 21, 2021 – Make Music Day – Fitzgerald Field (Heller – Stein) Approved

June 25, 2021 – Woodbridge Child Center Graduation – Gazebo on Town Green (Heller – Cardozo) Approved

TOWN CLERK’S REPORTS

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Rowland) to acknowledge receipt of the Town Clerk’s Reports for the month ending April 30, 2021 and cumulative from July 1, 2020 through April 30, 2021.

MINUTES

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

April 14, 2021 – Regular Meeting – (Heller – Crisco) Approved

April 28, 2021 – Special Meeting – (Heller – Crisco) Approved

TOWN COUNSEL’S REPORT – Report on proposed ordinance

CONSENSUS – It was the Consensus of the Board of Selectmen to refer the matter of a proposed Ordinance re the installation of artificial turf in Woodbridge to the new elected Board of Selectmen after July 1, 2021.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 6:50 p.m. the Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to move into executive session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 1-200(6)(E); 1-210(b)(1) to receive information regarding health care renewal. Invited to attend: Consultant Brian Luciani; Administrative Officer/Director of Finance Anthony Genovese; and Town Counsel Gerald Weiner.

At 7:00 p.m. the Board of Selectmen moved out of executive session and returned to the regular meeting. No motions were made or votes taken in executive session.

Action as appropriate – The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to approve Health Care Renewals with Connecticut for medical, Anthem for retiree medical over age 65, Dental and Vision and Hartford Life.

ADJOURNMENT

On a non-debatable motion by Ms. Heller, seconded by Mr. Crisco, the meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Geraldine S. Shaw, Clerk