

The meeting may be reviewed on YouTube here: <https://youtu.be/qwZJm7afJZA>

The July 12, 2023, Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen was convened at 5:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Central Meeting Room by First Selectman Beth Heller.

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

Present for Staff: Administrative Officer/Director of Finance Anthony Genovese, Assistant Administrative Officer Karen Crosby, Town Counsel Gerald Weiner (6:00 p.m.), Media Staff, and Clerk Geraldine Shaw.

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REMARKS

"Welcome to the July 2023 regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen. I hope you all had a festive, if perhaps a little wet 4th of July holiday.

It is such a pleasure to open the meeting tonight and share with you just how lovely the new Woodbridge Center is. That space has been completely transformed into such a modern and inviting community resource. If you missed the Grand Opening in late June, I hope you will take a few minutes to go over and see for yourselves. We are so very grateful for all the work that has gone into transforming the old senior center into a new, welcoming center for our residents 55 and older.

As I mentioned last month, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the withdrawal of the last U.S. troops from Vietnam. Woodbridge will be holding an event to honor our residents who served in the military during the Vietnam era. The ceremony is scheduled for July 17, 2023, at 5:00 pm at The Woodbridge Center. The event is co-hosted by Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz and the Town of Woodbridge. Woodbridge residents who are Vietnam veterans have received invitations and should RSVP to Mrs. Shaw.

*As you know, we are moving ahead with a Request for Proposals (RFP) regarding the former Country Club of Woodbridge. The purpose of this RFP is to **receive competitive proposals from qualified consultants to create a master plan for use, not for developers**. Following the return deadline in August, I will be able to bring further information to the Board, hopefully at the September meeting. Once chosen by the Board, the new consultant will take input from all stakeholders including residents and businesses. This effort will hopefully build a consensus while providing positive proposals for the town.*

The Board was recently asked about considering charging for the electricity used by folks at the EV Chargers. Both the chargers at the public works garage and the library have been upgraded. Software and related equipment to allow the chargers to accept credit card payments is on order for both chargers. We have spoken with Brian West at CCM to find out what other towns charge and they are actually in the process of gathering data (such as how much to charge per hour, maximum charging time per vehicle, etc). Our vendor will then program each charger to the specifications we choose, once we gather this data. I will keep you informed on this.

I also have a brief update on matters that will be heard by our Ordinance Committee. In addition to Selectman Lober's request regarding a possible update for our Elderly Tax Stabilization Ordinance.

The Committee will also receive information and recommendations regarding the operation of WGATV which is currently overseen by the Government Access Television Commission (GATVOC). You may recall that a Town Hall staffing change has taken effect, and our current operations are in flux. In our Strategic Plan, under Strategy 3, Tactics A and D, we have noted the importance that we place on the continuation and enhancement of video recordings of meetings, to help achieve the transparency necessary for residents of Woodbridge to understand how their local government works on their behalf. I want to assure everyone that our intention is to strengthen this transparency and the Ordinance Committee will

therefore look at any updates that may be beneficial in this regard and send back to the Board of Selectmen any recommendations for the GATVOC Commission. The Ordinance Committee will be meeting in August.

Five years ago, the Town received a memorial gift of \$110,000 from the charitable organization One Big Dog Animal Respite Fund, named in memory of long-time animal lover and supporter Bridget Albert. The gift originated from the estate of Janice Wright and was donated with the hope that the One Big Dog Respite Fund would help as many dogs and cats as possible. One Big Dog Respite Fund is co-coordinated by Chief Animal Officer Karen Lombardi and Woodbridge resident Laura Torrence. The \$110,000, and funds from a STEAP grant, facilitated a much-needed renovation of the Woodbridge Regional Animal Control facility which is located at 135 Bradley Road. It is an honor and a pleasure to work with Karen, who facilitated the donation to the Town and helped coordinate the renovation. In 2014, the then Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to approve naming the new Public Works Garage in memory of former First Selectman Edward Maum Sheehy. With this history in mind, I am proposing we name the facility THE KAREN LOMBARDI ANIMAL SHELTER. The One Big Dog Respite Fund will be creating and dedicating a memorial garden at the shelter this fall, with benches for families to meet prospective pets prior to adoption, as well as a space for quiet contemplation. Once the Board hopefully approves this tonight, we will have a ribbon-cutting ceremony, and formally name the building at that time.

And finally, for the first time in the history of Woodbridge, our Municipal Election will be held on Tuesday, November 7th. I hope everyone will remember that in Woodbridge, we always try to be kind to each other. This Board has accomplished so much, and I hope we will continue to work together through the end of the calendar year. “

LIBRARY STAFFING UPDATE – Library Director Eric Werthmann

Mr. Werthmann presented an update of Library staffing in response to questions raised at the Annual Meeting.

He explained that the library is open 54 hours a week – and this summer it is open on Saturdays until 5:00 p.m. There are seven full-time and 11 part-time employees. He noted that each employee has multiple duties and responsibilities. Mr. Werthmann described some of the many programs that are available at the library, the circulation volume, the work involved in cataloging the 3,958 new items that were added to the various collections in 2022/23 fiscal year. He invited those interested to visit the CT State Library website to find statistics regarding each town library.

WOODBIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION – Superintendent Vonda Tencza

Ms. Tencza reported Beecher Road School is very busy this time of year finishing up the previous academic year and preparing for the 2023/24 year; summer programs; Recreation Department summer camp; and cleaning and maintenance of the building.

Ms. Tencza also reported that the Woodbridge Board of Education voted unanimously to designate \$150,000 toward capital improvements, specifically the work to be done by Silver Petrucelli and Associates in preparation of the roof project.

AD HOC ENROLLMENT, INSTRUCTIONAL NEEDS, AND SPACE PLANNING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Maria Madonik, Vice-Chair Woodbridge Board of Education, listed the members of the Committee. She said that the Woodbridge Board of Education created the Committee to:

“The Committee will review and address the physical, administrative, and instructional implications of increasing enrollment and student needs on the current physical space of Beecher Road School.”

The list of Committee members and the presentation is attached to these minutes as a permanent record.

ANIMAL SHELTER – NAME

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to name the Woodbridge Animal Shelter facility at 135 Bradley Road: “The Karen Lombardi Animal Shelter” in honor of her many years of service as Chief Animal Control Officer, as well as her role in directing donations toward the building renovations and overseeing the complete construction project. A new building sign will be attached to the outside of the building signifying the new name. Additionally, a plaque will be placed within the building identifying the original donor of the funds given through One Big Dog to help facilitate the renovations of the building.

EV CHARGING STATION – MASSARO FARM; TOWN PLAN & ZONING REPORT – CGS 8-24 REVIEW

The Town Plan and Zoning Commission returned a positive review to the Board of Selectmen’s request under CGS 8-24 regarding the proposed installation of an EV Charging Station on the Massaro Community Farm. Mr. Vogel said he had questions as to the need and reason for the installation. He said the proposal should have been brought to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Genovese responded that the installation is through a grant in conjunction with a United Illuminating program.

The Selectmen **VOTED** (Heller – Crisco) to approve the agreement with ENERGY5 for the installation of an EV Charging Station at the Massaro Community Farm, 41 Ford Road.

VOTE: Aye – Heller, McCreven, Crisco, Kuriakose, Lober
Nay – Vogel

Authorization to sign agreement: The Board of Selectmen **VOTED** (McCreven – Crisco) to authorize the First Selectmen to execute the ENERGY5 document entitled - “Owner’s Authorization for CT EV Charging Rebate Program Application”.

VOTE: Aye – Heller, McCreven, Crisco, Kuriakose, Lober
Nay – Vogel

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/DIRECTOR OF FINANCE’S REPORT – Anthony Genovese

Monthly Report: Mr. Genovese reported that as of June 30, 2023, he estimates a year-end budget surplus of \$1,130,743. Because the current Town budget includes and allocation from fund balance of \$400,000, increase to fund balance at year end is projected to be \$730,743. The fund balance at June 30, 2023, is estimated to be \$8.3M or 15.48% of annual expenses.

FUNDING REQUESTS

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

#2223-36 – Interdepartmental Transfer Amount: \$ 28,000
To: Waste Management Waste Disposal Tipping Fees (1350-00/53201)
From: Library-Regular Assistants (11550-00/50210) \$14,000
Building Dept-Bldg. Ofc., (1270-00/50112) \$10,000
Human Svc. Part Time All Other (1410-00/50350) \$ 4,000
For: To cover the increase in waste disposal costs.
(Heller – Kuriakose) Unanimously approved

#2223-37 – Interdepartmental Transfer Amount: \$110,000
To: Employee Fringe Benefits
FICA (1710-00/51100) \$20,000
Medicare (1710-00/51110) \$10,000
Retirement – Police (1710-00/51210) \$75,000

Workers Compensation (1710-00/51600) \$ 5,000
From: Revenue – Private Duty (1—8-9520/48209)
For: To cover payroll taxes related to Police Private Duty
(Heller – Crisco) Unanimously approved

#2324-02 – Interdepartmental Transfer Amount: \$ 6,300
To: Board of Selectmen Gen'l. Prof. Serv. (1110-00/52100)
From: Employee Fringe Benefits (1710-00/52100)
For: Update Town's On-Line Town Code to include Zoning, Subdivision, and Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Regulations.
(Heller – Crisco) Unanimously approved

REQUEST FOR BID WAIVER

Public Works – Asphalt Pavement and Application Vendor: The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to approve the request to contract with Tilcon Connecticut, Inc. for paving material and application under State of Connecticut contract #22PSX0196.

Public Works – Pavement Milling Services: The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller McCreven) to approve the request to contract with Garrity Asphalt Reclaiming under State of Connecticut contract #22PSX0197.

Police Department: The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to approve the request to purchase a replacement vehicle from Bob Thomas Ford, Hamden CT in the amount of \$44,235.00 for the Police Chief's vehicle that was totaled in an accident.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bettina Thiel, Reporter – asked the Selectmen to remember to speak distinctly and into the microphones. She said it was difficult to hear and understand the speakers not only within the meeting room but often on the T.V. and YouTube.

ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE'S REPORT

Ms. Crosby reported that she supports both the Selectman's office and the Finance office – following are some highlights of the last month:

- Fire extinguisher training session was held on Monday for public works employees.
- Quarterly safety committee will meet Thursday, July 13th and tour the library for any safety concerns.
- Continuing with KNOWBE4 regarding cyber security training for staff.
- The copiers that were part of a recent bid have all been installed and staff was trained on all features.
- Was able to reduce water cooler and bottled water prices with current vendor to the State of Connecticut contract prices.
- Working on the on-line adopted budget with Tony which will be submitted to the Government Financial Officer's Association for the Annual Distinguished Budget Presentation award.
- Working with the finance office on the implementation of the new 457B Plan with empower. Employee funds will be transferred to the new company in early August.
- Working with the finance office on fiscal year end tasks.

CONSENT AGENDA – Action taken

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Lober) to approve the Consent Agenda with the

exception of the minutes of the June 14, 2023, meeting and the Yale University to hold an event on Town property.

Town Clerk's Reports: Acknowledged receipt of Town Clerk's Reports for month ending June 30, 2023, and Cumulative from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

Resignation: Acknowledged receipt of the Leslie Lyon's resignation from the Commission on the Use of Publicly Owned Properties.

Recreation request: Approved request to hang a banner on the Center Road Field fence announcing the September 30, 2023, Annual Road Race.

Woodbridge Like Me: Approved the Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion request to hold the September 30, 2023, Woodbridge Like Me event on the Town green.

Minutes of June 14, 2023: The minutes of the June 14, 2023, Regular Meeting were approved with the following technical corrections: 1) Motion re elderly tax relief was moved and seconded by (Heller – McCreven). 2) Motion to go into executive session should include: "and invited Mr. Weiner and Mr. Genovese to attend.

Yale University: request to hold the September 9, 2023, Men's and Women's Cross-Country Race on the former Country Club of Woodbridge property. The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Crisco – Kuriakose) to approve the request with the following conditions: A private duty police officer is to be hired to monitor traffic and the event; parking in the parking lot only – no parking is allowed on roads bordering the property; and clean-up of any debris left on the grounds is the responsibility of Yale University. The Police Department is to be contacted for further information.

TOWN COUNSEL REPORT

Municipal Election 2023: Mr. Weiner reported that there are different opinions as to when newly elected and incumbent officials can take office after the November 7 municipal election. The opinions concern the few towns that changed from May elections to November elections in accordance with the new state law. Attorney Weiner had several conversations with Vincent Marino, Town Attorney for Bethany. After discussing the issues with Attorney Marino, representatives of the Secretary of State's office and staff in the legislature it is concluded that each town has 70 days from the date of the election, November 7, to swear in the newly elected officials. The Woodbridge Board of Selectmen, on October 12, 2022, voted that elected officials whose terms currently end on June 30th of any given year will extend to December 31st. We can go forward with that decision. Accordingly, the swearing in will occur December 31 and the new terms begin on Jan 1. Mr. Weiner believes Bethany officials are scheduled to begin their terms during the second week of December.

ADJOURNMENT

On a non-debatable motion by Ms. McCreven, seconded by Dr. Lober, the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Geraldine S. Shaw, Clerk

