

Board of Selectmen
July 13, 2022 Regular Meeting
Minutes

Video of this meeting can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buKZbTpJRw8>

In attendance: First Selectman Beth Heller, Deputy First Selectman Sheila McCreven, Joe Crisco, Paul Kuriakose, David Lober, David Vogel, Administrative Officer/Director of Finance Anthony Genovese, Town Counsel Gerald Weiner and Assistant Administrative Officer Betsy Yagla

The meeting was called to order at 6 pm.

1. The First Selectman delivered her report:

Welcome to the July 13th, 2022 Regular meeting. I will begin with some sad news. Last week our labor consultant, Dave Ryan, passed away. Dave was an important source of knowledge, guidance and advice for many of us, and he worked with the Town for more than 40 years. He will be deeply missed. His funeral was held last week, and the church was full – quite a testament to a life well lived.

Beginning this evening, I am going to try to streamline our board meetings so we might spend less time on routine monthly items that we always automatically approve, and thus allow us to spend more time on substantive matters. This meeting will be our last with individual liaison reports. Board members are no longer expected to attend regular meetings of the boards and commissions they are assigned to. The liaisons will still be available and can attend the meetings. We will communicate this to board and commission chairs, and they will be asked to submit regular updates or reports and should be in touch with you or with me if there are any major issues that arise. We will have a separate folder in our packets with these reports, which will be posted online with the minutes.

Another way we will be streamlining meetings is through the creation of a Consent Agenda. Several town boards and commissions do this, and it really saves precious board time. You will notice that instead of voting individually for certain items such as meeting minutes, tax refunds, monthly town clerk reports, and other routine items that require no discussion, we will vote for them all at once, unless someone has an important change or question about one of the items.

Next, I have a few updates for you:

The State Department of Public Health has updated its drinking water Action Levels for PFAS. Because of these new recommendations, some residents have asked that Amity Regional High School have its groundwater tested for PFAS levels. You may recall that when the new synthetic turf field at the High School was approved, there was some cause for concern among residents who were worried that the field would leach

PFAS into the groundwater at surrounding homes in Woodbridge. As a reminder, the land and improvements at Amity High School are owned by the Amity Regional District, and not the Town. We cannot perform any work at the property. However, concerned neighbors can individually test their drinking water. I understand that the State DEEP and the Amity Administration are both looking into the issues.

Some of you may have heard from our friends at the Amity Woodbridge Historical Society about several break-ins and vandalism at the Johnson Road school house. This IS a town-owned property. Unfortunately, a door to the historic structure was damaged twice, and there was some vandalism inside. Luckily, it was discovered early, and the Town's Maintenance crew was able to fix the door and resecure the building. Going forward, Brad will be working with Alexia Belperron, president of the Historical Society to install motion sensor cameras and lighting as a deterrent. I have asked Brad Parsons to work with the Society in order to avoid damage to historical areas when we install equipment.

On another note, there is an update with the proposed cell tower on 118 Newton Road. The neighbors and the Town filed an appeal to the decision that would have allowed the cell tower to go forward. Attorney Weiner will update you further on that in his report.

I am appointing Human services chair Susan Davidson as an additional member to the ad hoc Center Building Renovation Committee. I am discontinuing the following ad hoc committees which are no longer active and their charges have been completed: the Animal Shelter Building Committee, the Old Firehouse STEAP Grant Committee, the Oversight Simulcast System Upgrade Committee, and the Sustainability Committee.

The Ad Hoc Housing Committee members requested to continue working on Housing issues and policies, and I am reaching out to individual members to determine who wants to remain on the committee. I agree that the Committee should continue with their important work. We all recognize that the Town's housing policies and regulations should be subject to review and modifications in order to make certain we comply with State Law and provide affordable and diverse housing opportunities to our residents. Once the Committee is reconstituted I will work on revising and updating the Committee's charge.

Unless there is objection from the Board this evening, I will convey to our Board of Finance Chair/Amity Finance Committee representative, that it is our request that the Town of Woodbridge's full surplus amount be returned to the Town when the Amity Board of Education votes for the disposition of the surplus. I believe that takes place this month.

Last week I joined the Strategic Plan Subcommittee meeting and I am quite excited to hear their report to you tonight. We discussed the plan and taking the next steps to enact the plan, including David Vogel's suggestion to hire a consultant to help determine the former Country Club of Woodbridge's future. I'm very proud of the work

this committee has done, and I think it will be very useful to this Board and to the Town. David and Sheila have worked so well together, and I thank you both!

As part of the Recreation Commission's annual triathlon event, the Beecher PTO finally was able to dedicate their climbing wall to Logan Testa. It was postponed due to the pandemic. Logan was a Beecher Road School student who passed away in 2018. At that private event, the PTO presented a plaque to the family that will accompany the school's climbing wall, which was installed in Logan's memory. The plaque reads "*This climbing wall is dedicated to the memory of Logan "Wolverine" Testa. May his example of strength continue to inspire our Beecher Road School and Recreation Communities.*"

Later in June I attended the Beecher Road School graduation ceremony. I also attended the Board of Finance regular meeting, the Woodbridge Board of Education monthly meeting and the South Central Regional Council of Governments monthly meeting. I visited Dr. Durga Prasad's home for the annual Shanti Rose Garden celebration, and tasted many wonderful foods made from his vegetable garden at the Community Gardens.

I led our monthly department head meeting and Tony and I met with the new interim Woodbridge School District Superintendent and the district's new Business Manager. As you know, there are several capital projects at Beecher Road School that require attention such as the leaking roofs, the asphalt walkways, the north school parking lot, overgrown trees, the Kucinkas Loop, and several areas of water incursion into the building. To accomplish this and be eligible for any state grant reimbursement funds, we must appoint a Beecher Road school building committee to examine these projects and make recommendations to us with the best way to proceed. I will appoint from the Board of Finance and Beecher parent Donovan Lofters, from the Board of Selectman Sheila McCreven and Jeff Hughes who is the Woodbridge Board of Education Facilities Chair.

2. Woodbridge School District Interim Superintendent Christine Syriac provided the Board with an update.
3. 2030 Task Force co-chairs Chris Dickerson and Susan Jacobs provided the Board with an update on the task force's activities and work.
4. Liaison Reports: Board members shared updates from the various boards and commissions they liaise with.
5. Mr. Genovese, Administrative Officer/Director of Finance, provided his monthly report.

Funding Requests:

First Selectmen Heller made a motion to approve Line Item Transfer 2122-22 in the amount of \$20,000 for a consultant for the former Country Club of Woodbridge property. Mr. Crisco

seconded the motion. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

First Selectman Heller made a motion to approve Line Item Transfer 2122-23 in the amount of \$38,000 to cover a shortfall in benefit costs related to Police Private Duty. Mr. Crisco seconded. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

First Selectman Heller made a motion to approve Line Item Transfer 2122-24 in the amount of \$26,100 to fund a design consultant to design a sidewalk connection from Amity Regional High School to the Town's library and to improve the sidewalk around the library among other safety and placemaking improvements in the area. Mr. Crisco seconded. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

Bid award: First Selectman Heller made a motion to award the bid to Cardinal Engineering for design of the sidewalk. Mr. Vogel seconded. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

First Selectman Heller made a motion to approve Line Item Transfer 2122-25 in the amount of \$40,000 to address a shortfall in the senior center renovation project. Mr. Vogel seconded. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

Bid award: First Selectman Heller made a motion to award the bid for Woodbridge Senior Center Renovations for the base bid in the amount of \$744,700 to Olympus Construction. Mr. Crisco seconded. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

Tax Refund: Mr. Genovese explained that the Tax Collector recently learned that a resident, John Harold Torgerson, applied for veteran's benefit many years ago but the information never made it to the Assessor's office so the reduction was not reflected on the tax bill. The Tax Collector, by statute, can only request a refund for up to 6 years. First Selectman Heller made a motion to provide the resident with the full refund of six years in the amount of \$742.32 as requested by the Tax Collector. Mr. Vogel seconded. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

6. Public Comments: There were no public comments.
7. Strategic Plan: Ms. McCreven and Mr. Vogel shared an update on the Strategic Plan and discussed how to move forward enacting the plan, including hiring a consultant to help determine the use of the former Country Club of Woodbridge.

Mr. Vogel made a motion to engage the services of a planning consultant with experience in repurposing golf courses and with experience similar to Woodbridge. Ms. McCreven seconded. Dr. Lober made a friendly amendment to modify the motion to release an RFQ to find a consultant. Ms. McCreven seconded the amendment. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

8. Assistant Administrative Officer's Report:
Ms. Yagla reported that the Town has earned a grant from the State Department of Energy and

Environmental Protection for a pilot program to participate in a Pay As You Throw program designed to reduce trash and also provide food waste collection for pilot program participants.

First Selectman Heller made a motion to waive the reading of the resolution. Mr. Crisco seconded. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

In order to accept the grant, the Board needs to adopt a resolution. First Selectman Heller made a motion to approve the resolution to accept the grant and participate in the program. Mr. Crisco seconded the motion. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

9. Consent Agenda:

Ms. McCreven made a motion to approve the items on the consent agenda. First Selectman Heller seconded the motion. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

10. Appointments:

Ms. McCreven made a motion to nominate Alison Valsamis to the Commission on the Use of Publicly Owned Property for a term ending June 30, 2023. Mr. Crisco seconded the motion. Aye: First Selectman Heller, Mr. Crisco, Mr. Kuriakose, Ms. McCreven, and Mr. Vogel. Dr. Lober abstained. The motion passed.

Ms. McCreven made a motion to nominate Robert Reed to Town Plan and Zoning for a term ending June 30, 2025. Mr. Crisco seconded.

David Vogel made a motion to nominate Joe Dey to Town Plan and Zoning for a term ending June 30, 2025. Dr. Lober seconded.

First Selectman Heller called the vote on the first nomination. Voting in favor: First Selectman Heller, Mr. Crisco, Mr. Kuriakose and Ms. McCreven. Voting against: Dr. Lober, Mr. Vogel. The motion passed.

11. Town Counsel's Report: Mr. Weiner updated the Board on the cell tower issue.

12. First Selectman Heller made a motion to Section 1-200 (6)(C) of the Connecticut General Statutes to discuss security issues as it relates to dispatch and to invite in Mr. Genovese and Attorney Weiner. Mr. Crisco seconded the motion. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

At 6:30 pm, the board entered executive session. They exited executive session at 6:50 pm. No motions were made and no votes were taken.

By unanimous vote of the Board, the meeting adjourned at 6:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Yagla, Clerk Pro Temp