

The November 8, 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, Dr. David Lober, and David Vogel

Present for Staff: Administrative Officer/Director of Finance Anthony Genovese, Town Counsel Gerald Weiner, Assistant Administrative Officer Karen Crosby, Media Specialist Matthew Dibudo, and Mrs. Shaw, Clerk.

**FIRST SELECTMAN'S REMARKS**

*"Good evening and welcome to the regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Board of Selectmen.*

*On Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, the Town of Woodbridge participated in a very important, and consequential election. Congratulations to those who were successful candidates this past Tuesday. Thank you to all who put their names forward to run for election. It is not an easy path- as I know.*

*Voting is one important way we can participate in our democracy. There are many to thank, as it takes a great effort on the part of many to hold an election. I first thank all the voters who were patient in line, respectful of the process and courteous to the election officials and other voters. Thanks also go out to the wonderful election officials: our Town Clerks, Registrars of Voters, poll workers, absentee ballot counters, police officers, and fire department volunteers. All these folks worked very hard to make sure our election was conducted efficiently, smoothly, and most importantly, according to the law. I look forward to transitioning our town government into new hands.*

*Our annual Veteran's Day ceremony will be held this Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup> at 11 am in the Center Gym. Everyone in our Town is invited to attend this wonderful ceremony coordinated by Dr. Barry Josephs.*

*As President John F. Kennedy once said, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." The Town of Woodbridge offers veterans and their families who have questions or need help accessing veteran services assistance through the Human Services Department.*

*I thank all those who made the renaming ceremony at the **Karen A. Lombardi Woodbridge Regional Animal Control** a lovely event. Thank you as well to our dedicated Building Maintenance staff, Animal Control Staff, Gerry Shaw, elected officials, and others who made the event memorable.*

*Just a reminder as we approach cooling temperatures and the winter months, that Woodbridge Human Services manages applications for fuel assistance and that residents should stay connected to current information by signing up at the website for weather, closings, and other alerts. During extreme weather events, the Town is prepared with an emergency shelter, and our Police and Fire Department are ready to help anyone in need. THANK YOU!"*

**WOODBRIIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION – Superintendent Vonda Tencza**

Ms. Tencza congratulated all the candidates who ran for elected office and thanked First Selectman Beth Heller and the Board of Selectmen for their support and leadership.

She then reported:

- Enrollment is at 877 as a few families have moved out of state
- She noted the importance of separating the current roof replacement and grounds/water incursion project, which should be categorized as repairs, and the Space Utilization study which addresses future capacity.
- The ad hoc committee on Space Utilization is still interviewing respondents to the RFP/Q.

- Work has begun on the budget for FY2025 and a multi-year capital improvement plan
- 19 people attended the open community conversation
- Woodbridge Board of Education has been selected as a Level I CABA Recognition recipient
- Working with the BOWA district regarding change in dates for eligibility for kindergarten
- Beecher Road School has been selected as one of 400 schools in 34 countries as an Apple Distinguished School. An event is planned for November 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Veterans Day – school will be in session. Veterans will visit, share stories, etc.

**TOWN BUILDING COMMITTEE FOR BEECHER SCHOOL CAPITAL PROJECTS – Sheila McCreven**

Ms. McCreven explained that there are two phases to the project, the first is the partial replacement of the roof and referred to the plan and cost estimate as prepared and presented by David Stein of Silver Petrucelli & Associates. She also noted that it was important to move the request forward to submit to the State for consideration of reimbursement. Ms. McCreven said that at the November 3, 2023 meeting the Committee took the following action: “On a motion by Mr. Hughes, seconded by Mr. Lofters, the committee voted unanimously to recommend to the Board of Selectmen, for its consideration, the plan and cost estimate materials as presented (Attachment A).”

Action: Ms. Heller moved, and Mr. Crisco seconded to approve the plan and cost estimate as presented in Attachment “A” to be submitted to the State for consideration of reimbursement.

Discussion: Mr. Vogel asked why only one section was being replaced. Ms. McCreven explained that this is the section that is no longer under warrantee.

**VOTE:** The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** to authorize David Stein of Silver Petrucelli & Associates to submit the plan and cost estimate in Attachment A to the State to begin the process for consideration of reimbursement.

Second part of project – Ms. McCreven reported that the drainage and sidewalk issues are still in the planning and engineering stages and are submitted to the state for reimbursement under a different process.

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

Monthly Report – Mr. Genovese reported that as of October 31, 2023, he is projecting an estimated year-end budget surplus of \$551,163. He noted that because the current Town budget includes an allocation from fund balance of \$800.00, decrease to fund balance at year end is projected to be \$248,837. The fund balance at June 30, 2024 is estimated to be \$8.6M or 15.5% of annual expenses.

Mr. Genovese said that the State’s restructuring of the Municipal Employees Retirement System pension plan lowered the Town’s contribution rate, and the change is estimated to save the Town approximately \$100,000 in retirement costs.

**FUNDING REQUESTS**

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED** to recommend the following funding request to the Board of Finance:  
#2324-09 – Intradepartmental Transfer Amount: \$ 6,500.00

To: Recreation Programs & Publicity (1510-00/54710)

From: Recreation Part Time Seasonal (1510-00/50320)

For: Funds to cover bussing to Woodbridge Pool Club due to the closure of the Beecher Road School pool and increased bussing costs for other programs.

(Heller – Crisco) Unanimously approved

**BID WAIVER REQUEST**

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Kuriakose) to approve the request for a bid waiver to purchase Bulk Blizzard Wizard by Morton Salt – 600 tons at \$91.31/ton for an initial total of \$54,786.00.

**ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S – Karen Crosby**

Ms. Crosby reported that since her last report she has been working on:

- Submitted Renewal Application for HeartSafe Community and have received notification that this designation has been renewed
- Continue to assist the Finance Department with the Audit
- Working with Mr. Genovese on the submission of the Adopted Budget to GFOA for the Distinguished
- Budget award
- Worked with Adam Parsons and completed the purchase and planting of the two (2) final trees in the Tree Planting Program. Plaques for the trees are now being submitted for quotes.
- Continue to work with the Safety Committee and will be setting up training in AED locations on how to use the AED in emergency situation. Also will be handling the training schedule for use of Stop the Bleed Bags
- Assisted Mr. Genovese in the on-line Capital Budget training session
- Meeting with Human Services, Library and Recreation to review Policies and Fees for rental of Town meeting rooms
- Scheduled for CHRO (Commission on Human Rights & Opportunities) training for the recently awarded STEAP Grant procedures

**CONSENT AGENDA**

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to approve the items listed under the Consent Agenda.

- 1) Tax Refunds – Pursuant to CGS 12-124 to 129 and the recommendation of the Tax Collector, the Board of Selectmen approved tax refunds in the amount of \$23,046.15
- 2) Town Clerk's Report – The Board of Selectmen acknowledge receipt of the Town Clerk's report for the month ending October 31, 2023 and cumulative from July 1, 2023.
- 3) The Board of Selectmen approved the minutes of the October 11, 2023, meeting
- 4) The Board of Selectmen approved the following request to hold an event on Town property Mohini Ranganathan, Center Gym, December 9, 2023, for A community gathering for Woodbridge residents of south Asian descent.

**APPOINTMENT**

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED** (McCreven – Crisco) to appoint Dr. Benjamin Cherry to fill a vacancy on the Town Plan and Zoning Commission for a term ending December 31, 2025.

Discussion – Mr. Vogel said that any vacancies should be filled by the new Board of Selectmen-Elect Mr. Kuriakose stated that the current Board of Selectmen has an obligation to complete the work before it, and the vacancy was presented to the current Board.

**VOTE:** Aye – Heller, McCreven, Crisco, Kuriakose

Nay – Vogel

Abstained – Lober

Dr. Cherry was appointed to fill the vacancy.

**TOWN COUSEL'S REPORT**

Mr. Weiner reported that on October 11, 2023, full Freedom of Information Commission upheld the

decision by the Hearing Officer and dismissed the case of Dr. David Lober vs The Town of Woodbridge, First Selectman Beth Heller, and Town Counsel Gerald Weiner.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 5:42 p.m. the Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – McCreven) to move into executive session pursuant to C.G.S. 1-200(6)(B) – Negotiations of Pending Claim regarding First Church of Christ & Woodbridge (Tax Assessment). Invited to attend – members of the Board of Selectmen, Administrative Officer/Director of Finance Anthony Genovese, and Town Counsel Gerald Weiner.

At 6:03 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.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no members of the public present. The clerk did not receive any written comments to be included this evening.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a non-debatable motion by Ms. McCreven, seconded by Mr. Crisco, the meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Geraldine S. Shaw