

Link to the video of the meeting: <https://youtu.be/D1CmeerXhq8>

The November 10, 2021, Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen was convened at 5:00 p.m. by First Selectman Beth Heller, via WebEx in accordance with SB2012.

Present via rollcall: First Selectman Beth Heller; Deputy First Selectman Sheila McCreven, Joseph J. Crisco, Jr.; Paul Kuriakose; Dr. David Lober; and David Vogel.

Present for staff: Mr. Genovese, Administrative Officer/Director of Finance; Ms. Ford, Media Specialist; Mr. Weiner, Town Counsel; Ms. Yagla, Assistant Administrative Officer; and Mrs. Shaw, Clerk.

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REMARKS

Good evening, and welcome to the November 10th Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. As of last Thursday's update, from the State, Woodbridge's COVID-19 positivity rate was low enough, that we are now allowing boards and commissions to meet in person if they so choose. I know that some boards and commissions will continue to meet virtually either because of convenience or comfort levels. Others feel strongly that they prefer to meet in person. We will have a discussion this evening about whether or not the Board of Selectmen will resume meeting in person, perhaps next month. I will ask this board, and all board and commission members, to respect each other's opinions and feelings on the matter when decisions are made. Just as a reminder, the legislature passed a bill last session that allows us to hold meetings virtually through April 2022.

Woodbridge's COVID-19 positivity rate was in the "yellow" category for 3 weeks in a row. The State Department of Public Health maintains a color-coded map updated weekly showing each town's color. Gray is best; red is the worst. When or if we are in the red again for three weeks in a row, I will require all meetings to once again be held virtually. I am hopeful that does NOT happen.

Later-on this evening we will talk about an "unsafe order" that I received from Building Inspector Andy Rizzo regarding the former CCW clubhouse. Building Maintenance Foreman Brad Parsons was concerned about vandals getting into the building, so he invited Betsy Yagla and Andy Rizzo to tour the building and talk about how to make it safer. That tour led to this letter that you have in your packets. Following Andy's guidance Brad has been working to secure the building. I want to be clear that the building is not in danger of collapsing – the danger is an unsafe situation caused by vandals breaking the doors and windows to repeatedly enter the building and cause damage.

Tonight, I am appointing a new member to the Ad Hoc Diversity & Inclusion Committee. Steven Lawrence comes highly recommended to me by the committee's chair, Ellen Scalettar. Mr. Lawrence is an independent consultant who provides research and analysis to funders, philanthropy organizations and NGOs across the world. I'm sure he will be a wonderful addition to this committee.

I would like to offer congratulations to Woodbridge resident Claire Coleman who just today was appointed to the position of Consumer Counsel by Governor Lamont. In the position, she will lead the Office of Consumer Counsel in its mission of advocating on behalf of Connecticut consumers on issues relating to electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, and water.

Since our last meeting I've been to two ribbon cuttings for new businesses and met with the new EDC Chair, Robert Sharrer. I'm excited for EDC under Robert's new leadership – he has lots of energy and many new ideas. Robert and the EDC just hosted a business happy hour at the brewery and tour of the newly renovated showroom at Crest.

I'm sure you've all heard the news that the New England Brewing Company is potentially signing a land lease deal with the City of West Haven. It was a sad day for Woodbridge, but I wish them all the best. They've been looking for years for a space to expand their successful business here in Town. They tried to expand in their

current location, they also considered the former Country Club of Woodbridge, and they were also interested in the parcel at the corner of Bradley and Litchfield. There wasn't anywhere else in town that would have been appropriately zoned for them. Unfortunately, all the options we had were not sufficient. We spoke often, and we all continued to search for a suitable place here in Town.

The brewery is a landmark business whose customers support other Woodbridge businesses, and if they decide not to keep their Woodbridge location. We will work with EDC to find something exciting to replace them.

Our 2030 task force continue their work of looking at growing our grand list by 2030. Without new commercial buildings, more homes or both, our grand list will stay stagnant. That is why I think the Arbor Haven proposal for the former CCW is an important project for three housing-related reasons. It will increase our grand list by adding housing, begin to provide the state-mandated affordable housing here in Town, and creating much-desired senior housing. Of course, that's in addition to the \$9 million purchase price.

As we move into budget season next month, I think it remains important to remind everyone, including all residents, that education takes up approximately two-thirds of our annual operating budget. As the school district's budgets continue to increase without a corresponding increase in the Town's grand list, the Town will be forced to cut services, cut education and/or raise taxes. I anticipate this will be a season of hard decisions.

The work of the Housing Opportunity Study Group is also important to the grand list. They are holding a public information session on Dec. 6 for residents to learn about affordable housing and the affordable housing plan that the committee is working on.

Once again, I'd like to remind residents that they have a voice in the budget process. Boards and commission are beginning to discuss their budgets NOW. Capital budget presentations and discussions will begin with joint meetings of the Boards of Selectmen and Finance on December 2nd and 7th, followed by operating budget presentations and discussions in late January and February. PLEASE - residents are urged to attend these meetings and share their thoughts with boards and commission members, or department heads.

Lastly, Due to COVID-19, we are NOT gathering for our annual Veteran's Day ceremony this year. This somber ceremony, organized by local veteran Dr. Barry Josephs, is an important reminder of the sacrifices veterans have made for our country. I am hopeful that we will be back together in person and outdoors for Memorial Day. On behalf of the Town, I extend our deepest thanks and gratitude to all our veterans and their families. Take a moment to thank a veteran for their service.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TAX REFUNDS

Pursuant to Section 12-124 thru 129 of the Connecticut General Statutes and the recommendation of the Tax Collector the Board of Selectman **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Kuriakose) to approve tax refunds in the amount of \$3,529.00

FUNDING REQUESTS

#2122-03 – Intradepartmental Transfer Amount: \$ 10,000.00

To: CNR-Pool & Gym – pool improvement reserve (302-5150/57500/POOL)

From: CNR-Fire Dept. Machinery/Air Packs (203-2300/57410/AIRPK)

For: Replace the primary pool pump #1 which is deteriorated to the point that it is no longer operational.

(Crisco - McCreven) Unanimously approved

#2122-04 – Interdepartmental Transfer Amount: \$ 15,000.00
To: General Adm. Insurance Liability (1140-00/54110)
From: Employee Benefits – Workers Comp (1710-00/51600)
For: Cover increase costs in insurance for cyber security as well as the insurance umbrella.
Funds coming from Workers Comp where there are savings this year
(Heller – Kuriakose) Unanimously approved

BID AWARD – ROAD SALT

As there was no response to the Town’s bid request for road salt, the Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Crisco – Kuriakose) to authorize the First Selectman and Mr. Genovese to lock in the best price for road salt.

BID WAIVER – TREATED ROAD SALT

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to approve the request for a bid waiver to purchase 600 tons at \$87.03/ton an initial cost of \$52,218.

FUEL OIL BID

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (McCreven – Crisco) to authorize the First Selectman and Mr. Genovese to lock in the fuel oil price most advantageous to the Town.

BULK WASTE USER FEES

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (McCreven – Heller) that effective February 1, 2022, to institute a fee of the disposal of bulk waste of \$0.10 per lb. and \$50.00 per visit for pick-up at the residence.

POLICE DEPARTMENT – CORONAVIRUS RELIEF ACT FUNDING

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED** to authorize Chief Cappiello to accept the Coronavirus Relief Act Funding and to use matching fringe benefits funding of 36.73% to augment staffing levels to deploy additional patrols as needed as set forth in Chief Cappiello’s memo dated October 27, 2021, and approved by the Police Commission.

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

TOWN CLERK’S REPORT

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to acknowledge receipt of the Town Clerk’s report for the month ending October 31, 2021, and the cumulative report from July 1, 2021 through October 31, 2021.

MINUTES

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** to approve the following minutes:
October 13, 2021, Regular Meeting (Lober – Vogel)
October 25, 2021, Joint Meeting – Presentation by David Fink (Heller – Kuriakose)
October 27, 2021, Special Meeting (Crisco – Kuriakose)

RESIGNATION

The Board acknowledged Dr. Barry Josephs’ resignation from the Inland Wetlands Agency.

APPOINTMENT

The Board **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Vogel – Lober) to appoint Paul D. Harrigan II to fill the vacancy on the Conservation Commission for a term ending June 30, 2023.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:30 p.m. the Board **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to move into executive session pursuant to CGS 1-200(6)(C) Security/devices to receive a report from Selectman Paul Kuriakose re dispatch issues.

At 8:15 the Board of Selectmen moved out of executive session and returned to the regular meeting.

Ms. Heller declared that no motions were made or votes taken in executive session.

ADJOURNMENT

On a non-debatable motion by Ms. Heller, seconded by Ms. McCreven, the meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Geraldine S. Shaw, Clerk