The January 8, 2020, Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen was convened at 5:02 p.m. in the Town Hall Central Meeting Room by First Selectman Beth Heller.  
Present: First Selectman Beth Heller; Deputy First Selectman Mica Cardozo; Joseph Crisco, Joseph Dey, Dwight Rowland, and Sandra 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE
Ms. Heller opened the meeting leading all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

WOODBRIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION – Superintendent Robert Gilbert
Mr. Gilbert reported that:
- Current enrollment is 855, still below the projected of 868
- FY20 projected surplus of $59,000 is reduced due to the hire of long-term substitute teachers
- Mr. Gilbert said that the FY21 budget he presented to the Board of Education in December reflects an increase of .76% over the FY20 budget
- Mr. Gilbert thanked the Town for including Beecher Road School in the LED lighting upgrade
- Repairs to the HVAC system were accomplished over the winter break
- Applications to fill the principal’s position are being accepted until January 24th

FIRST SELECTMAN’S REPORT
Ms. Heller: “Since our last meeting I have thought a lot about public comment. It is each board or commission chair’s prerogative to set parameters for public comment. Going forward I plan to, and invite you all also, to feel free to respond briefly to any comments that you feel are either factually incorrect or of a personal attack to any of us. Public comment should be an outlet for residents to share their ideas or concerns, yet not a place for extended dialogue. It is not an opportunity to misrepresent facts, intentionally or not, and it is not a platform for accusations. I have and will continue to remind everyone that we are all Woodbridge residents and that we must endeavor to listen and be respectful of each other at all times. My door is always open to residents and anyone with questions is welcome to visit, phone or email me.

I had hoped to ask your approval to schedule the dates for Special Town Meeting and Referendum for the sale of a portion of the former Country Club of Woodbridge tonight. However, we are awaiting the finalized contract. Back in October the Board agreed to put off the meeting and vote until the contract was finalized so that the public could view it before making any final decisions. I am proud of that decision, as voters will be able to make a more informed decision. However, as we’ll hear later from Attorney Weiner in executive session, I believe that we are close to finalizing the contract.

As a reminder, the current proposal is for the Town to sell approximately 60 of the 155 acres for $5.4 million for construction by Insite/Wernert of no more than 120 units of free standing active adult (55+) housing. After completion of all units, the Town will realize approximately $1.2 million in tax revenue every year from the residents who purchase these homes, plus additional tax revenue for personal property.

The Town will retain approximately 95 acres and we have set aside funding for a landscape architect/land use analyst to advise us on the best passive recreational uses for the undeveloped land that the Town will retain. After the referendum on the property I plan to establish an ad hoc committee of residents who will work with the consultant on the design to optimize the property as an important Town asset.
I think we all agree that we must reduce our mill rate and bring relief to taxpayers. I also think we all know that the Town has few opportunities to grow much-needed revenue. Our debt on the property is not due to be paid off for another 12 years. With the sale we will pay off the debt on this property (saving $500k annually in principal and interest payments) and also retain $1.4 million dollars for other needed projects.

As I have stated so many times before I am voting in favor of scheduling the referendum because I believe this an important matter for the voters to decide.

This month we are saying goodbye to Human Services Director Mary Ellen LaRocca who is retiring after 31 years of service to the Town. In that time she has helped countless numbers of Woodbridge residents through some of their darkest times. She is the back-up system to our most vulnerable (young and old) residents. Tony and I are working together with the Human Services Commission to fill the Human Services Director position. I plan to be at her retirement dinner (and will make remarks on behalf of the Board of Selectmen). Her last day is January 17th.

Also, I would like to remind you of an upcoming event: TEAM Inc. is holding a housing forum in Seymour on Jan. 16. You should have received an email invitation from Betsy Yagla. Soon we will hear from Betsy Quist about revaluation and how our property values are changing. Woodbridge is uniquely reliant on residential real estate and the majority of our homes are large single family homes. In order to ensure our economic future as a Town I believe we need to understand the housing market and its needs. This event is an excellent opportunity to understand housing issues and how some towns are responding.

Since our last Board meeting:

- I attended the Town’s annual employee holiday luncheon.
- I put on my Mrs. Claus costume and delivered Christmas toys along with Santa and members of the Woodbridge Volunteer Fire Association. In addition to meetings with several individual residents, I had a meeting with a larger group regarding their wish to have the fitness center remain in town, and relocated at the Old Firehouse. Their petition is in your packet.
- Lastly, I was proud to attend another Eagle Scout Court of Honor on Sunday December 29th. Felix Liu and Jason Luciani both were given this honor for wonderful projects that benefitted our town. I presented them both with citations on behalf of the Board and our residents."

DISCUSSION AND UPDATE RE DARLING HOUSE/KOAN FARMS

Chris Sorensen, 410 Amity Road — stated that he has been leasing 1910 Litchfield Turnpike for 15 years. He said that he has been a good steward of the land, enhancing it over the years. He has recently been informed that it has been recommended that Koan Farms move its operation from 1907 Litchfield Turnpike across the street to 1910 Litchfield Turnpike. Chris said that he had no reason to believe he would not be afforded the opportunity to lease the property for the 2020 growing season and has already committed the crops and spent money purchasing seed and other materials.

Chris recommended that Mr. Schneider be allowed to continue the farming operation at 1907 Litchfield Turnpike for the 2020 growing season, and that the date for awarding the leases be moved to early fall so lessees will be able to plan for the coming season. He also recommended that the Town consider a longer term for the leases as most of the farmers incur considerable expense for what could be a single growing season.
Koan Farms – Richard Blackwell, 15 Park Lane - said that he is a former hydroponic sprout farmer and understands farming operations. He offered to restore the barn at 1910 Litchfield Turnpike as part of the Darling House Museum. He also offered to assist in securing other living arrangements for Ethan Schneider, current resident of the Darling House caretaker cottage and requested that the Amity Woodbridge Historical Society allow Ethan to continue his current farming operation.

Ethan Schneider, 1907 Litchfield – owner of Koan Farms – said that several people have been working on a solution for his farming operation and caretaker residency. He explained that his farming operation requires an onsite electric and water source; that it would be impossible to move the farm across the street for this growing season without adequate infrastructure in place and requested that his operation remain in place for the 2020 growing season.

Mary Dean, 8 Mulberry Road and Paul Decoster, 464 Amity Road – members of the Amity Woodbridge Historical Society Board of Directors - spoke to a new agreement being drawn by the Town and the Society outlining the use and management of the Darling House site. Ms. Dean urged the Board to act on and approve the signing of the agreement when it is presented. She said that farming could continue as long as it does not impact the museum, and the historic character of the site.

Ms. Dean’s comments were submitted in writing and are attached to these minutes as part of the permanent record.

Mr. Decoster distributed a document entitled “Proposal Concerning Continued Farming Operations at the Darling House”. The proposal put forth a plan of action to move Mr. Schneider’s farming operation across the street to 1910 Litchfield Turnpike and outlined proposed financial support by Mr. Blackwell and Mr. Decoster.

Mr. Decoster’s comments were submitted in writing and are attached to these minutes as part of the permanent record.

The presentation of the proposal appeared to raise conflicting comments from others in the audience who are also on the AWHS Board of Directors.

Sandra Stein, Selectman – said that she and Mica Cardozo have been working with the parties on a solution to the Koan Farms problem and how the Town can help continue the organic farming operation in which a lot of money has been invested. She agreed that moving the farm across the street for this growing season is not practicable. Other issues involved are the occupancy of the caretaker’s apartment and the role of the occupant in the day-to-day oversight of the Darling House museum; the Society’s desire to separate the Darling House and itself from farming; and other land suitable to move the farm to. She said that she believes there is great value in Koan Farms and great value in the Historical Society being able to get back to their work at the museum.

Ms. Stein said that there is a need for increased collaboration between the Historical Society and the Town and having an agricultural commission that would address some of the farming issues that have arisen. Whatever agreements are decided on – it must be made sure that the Board of Selectmen are partners with whatever groups are moving forward. She said the result would be better solutions and support.

Ms. Heller asked if Ethan could stay on the property for another year with access to the Darling House resources he needs to continue his farming operation until the matter is further resolved. She clarified that the arrangement would include his not living in the caretaker’s cottage.
Ms. Dean said that Ethan has had conversations with some members of the AWHS re his resource needs, but she has not been party to the discussions.

Ethan Schneider – Ethan explained the short comings of the utilities in the Darling House caretaker apartment and how they are affected by the farming operation: low water pressure, inadequate electric amperage, and storage.

Mr. Dey inquired how and why Ms. Stein and Mr. Cardoza were involved in the dispute between Mr. Schneider and the AWHS. Ms. Stein explain that they were gathering information to help both groups.

Recommendation: The Board was in agreement that the parties should meet independently of the Board of Selectmen and report back with an agreement at the February 12, 2020 Selectmen’s meeting.

LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Rowland: Human Services Commission – the retirement dinner for Director Mary Ellen LaRocca was well attended. At the last meeting the Commission finalized its 2021 Operating Budget. Ms. LaRocca’s position has been posted. Forty-two baskets were distributed for the Christmas/Hanukkah Holiday. The Senior Center emergency ramp is completed. 127 attended the Senior Center Holiday Luncheon. Youth Services will hold an 8th grade Mardi Gras.

Ms. Stein: Library Commission meets next week.

Woodbridge Board of Education – report given by Superintendent Robert Gilbert

Mr. Crisco: Fire Department – Chief Rowland is evaluating new contract services for a heating and cooling issue. The Commission discussed the aging fleet and the frequency of repairs. The Commission also discussed the department’s need for the use of Bay One in the Old Fire House. The Fire Marshal expressed concern regarding the placement of concrete planters at Amity High School.

Mr. Cardozo: Recreation Commission – concerned as to the impact of the new minimum wage on part time hires. The Commission discussed ways to increase publication of programs. There is an increase in enrollment for Thursday Youth Basketball.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Adrienne Micci Smith, 15 Ansonia Road – asked when the special town meeting would be held regarding the country club property. Ms. Heller told her the Board is waiting to receive the completed sales contract before choosing the date.

Michael Broderick, 5 Old Still Road – regarding the maintenance of former country club house. Ms. Heller assured him that the building was winterized in addition to the disconnecting of all utilities. Mr. Broderick informed the Board that the developer of Oxford Greens, a 51 single unit senior housing in Oxford proposed adding an assisted living facility to the site. Oxford Planning and Zoning turned down the proposal. The developer is now considering a 190 unit age and income restricted development. He said that if the development being proposed for the CCW property fails due to the down-turn in the market the same can occur here due to the State mandated low income housing.

Mary Dean, 8 Mulberry Road – questioned Ms. Heller’s statement that several residents had written to her in support of Ethan Schneider’s Koan Farms. She said that she reviewed the letter/e-mails in the
Selectman’s packet of the meeting and found that a large percentage were not residents and this should be taken into account when making decisions for the Town.

*Cathy Wick, 181 Rimmon Road* – thanked Ms. Heller for the new format for public comments. She inquired if Mr. Genovese would prepare a report outlining the cost to the Town if the development was approved and when it would be given to the public. Mr. Genovese said such a report would be ready for the Special Town Meeting. She suggested that there should be a longer period between the special town meeting and the referendum. Mr. Weiner explained that the schedule is set by State Statute.

Ms. Wick noted that in a Board of Finance meeting and a Board of Selectmen meeting members had stated that the Town was not obligated to pay off the debt from the purchase of the country club by the sale of the property. She recommended that the Board make a decision one way or the other and inform the residents and suggested that the Board’s Fact Sheet for the referendum inform the residents that the Boards are not obligated to pay off the debt. She also explained that in her comparison of the growth of the budgets of Town of Orange and Town of Woodbridge she used the per capita tax burden, not the mill rate.

*Leland Torrence, Jr., 135 Rimmon Road* – read a statement critical of the Amity Woodbridge Historical Society’s (AWHS) stewardship of the Darling House and its handling of the issues with the caretaker and the owner of Koan Farms. His full statement is attached to these minutes as part of the record.

*David Lober, 35 Wepawaug Road* – re the fitness move to the Old Fire House: he said he wanted to clarify that the original language on the petition stated that those signing did not want to move from The Center building and alluded that it was changed after Ms. McVeety and others met with the First Selectman. Ms. Heller said that though she met with Ms. McVeety, creator of the petition, she did not suggest any specific language and that the petition distributed in the packets is the only petition received by the Selectman’s Office. Dr. Lober said that the participants feared that the current fitness center would be closed due to an insurance risk audit and the remedy was to move it to the Old Fire House.

*Darling House* – Dr. Lober reiterated the guidelines for the AWHS to accept the “Good to Great Grant” and said that AWHS cannot accept the grant until an agreement is reached between the Town and the AWHS re the management of the house (museum), caretaker, and property. He urged the Board to finalize the agreement. He also questioned why the Board of Selectmen was involved in Mr. Schneider’s tenancy problems, when they weren’t involved in other evictions.

*Laura Torrence, 17 Vernon Court* – stated that the Darling House Museum is not sustainable as currently managed by the AWHS and urged that a business plan be established to sustain the house. She said that the Board of Selectmen is responsible to devise a plan for the Darling House to survive into the next century.

Gerald Weiner, Town Attorney said that to clarify the terms of the tenant’s lease for the Board: Ethan Schneider currently has a month to month lease on the caretaker’s apartment which can be cancelled by the Board of Selectmen at any time. In that lease it says, in addition to his rights to live on the property, “Notwithstanding the aforementioned, Tenant shall be permitted to plant, grow and harvest vegetable products on the portion of the premises designated by the Landlord in writing as suitable and available…” He further stated that that language was included at the request of both the Historical Society and Ethan in December 2018 — it was a mutual understanding it would be used for — partially — farming as well as Ethan being allowed to be the caretaker.
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/DIRECTOR OF FINANCE’S REPORT
Monthly Report – Mr. Genovese reported that as of December 30, 2019, he is projecting a year-end budgetary surplus of $145,000 with a projected fund balance of $6.1M or 12.23% of the annual projected expenses.

TAX REFUNDS
Pursuant to Section 12-124 to 129 of the Connecticut General Statutes and the recommendation of the Woodbridge Tax Collector, the Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Heller – Rowland) to refund Real Estate taxes in the amount of $5,324.76 and Motor Vehicle taxes in the amount of $1,827.65 for a total of $7,152.41.

FUNDING REQUESTS
The Board of Selectmen acted on the following funding requests to be forwarded to the Board of Finance:

#1920-11 - Intradepartmental Transfer
   To:   Human Services General Professional Svc. (1410-00/52100)
   From: Human Services Part time all Other (1410-00/50350)
   For:   Cover the cost of senior luncheon meals & St. Patrick’s Day Luncheon from January 1, 2020 thru June 30, 2020
   (Dey – Cardozo) Unanimously Approved

#1920-12 – Allocation
   To:   Fire Department Repair Maint. & Machinery (1230-00/53519)
   From: Board of Finance Contingency (1170-00/56800)
   For:   To cover possible shortfall in Repair and Machinery Account
   (Heller – Crisco) VOTE: Aye – Heller, Crisco, Dey, Rowland
          Nay – Stein, Cardozo

At this point in the meeting Ms. Heller suspended consideration of the funding requests to conduct the Public Hearing as legally noticed.

PUBLIC HEARING
Ms. Heller called the public hearing to order in accordance with Section 4-5(b)(1) of The Charter of the Town of Woodbridge to receive comments regarding proposed revisions to the Town of Woodbridge Ordinances.

She noted that the legal notice was published in the New Haven Register on Thursday, December 26, 2019. The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Cardozo – Stein) to waive the reading of the legal notice. However, the notice is included as part of the record.

TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE LEGAL NOTICE

The Woodbridge Board of Selectmen will hold a Public Hearing at 7:00 P.M. on Wednesday, January 8, 2020, in the Town Hall Central Meeting Room, 11 Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge, CT to receive comments on the proposed revisions to the Town of Woodbridge Ordinances:

1) Chapter 175-2 – Blighted Premises, is amended by adding Article D (11) in order to address maintenance of grounds and yards as to grass, weeds, unstacked wood, rubbish, and deteriorated equipment.
2) Chapter 370 – Stormwater Management - The existing Ordinance is amended bring it into compliance with the State of Connecticut Requirements.

3) Agricultural Commission – The proposed new ordinance establishes an Agricultural Commission to help identify issues of concern to farmers, to raise public awareness of the benefits of local farms and working lands, and to identify ways in which the Town can support the business and land use needs of local farms.

Copies of the proposed changes and/or additions to the Woodbridge Ordinances are available on the Town’s website and on file in the Town Clerk’s Office available for review between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Written comments will be received in the First Selectman’s Office until 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 8, 2020. Thereafter comments should be presented at the Public Hearing.

Dated at Woodbridge, CT this 26th day of December

Ms. Heller introduced each of the proposed amendments:

**Chapter 175-2 – Blighted Premises:** Ms. Heller asked Mr. Cardozo, Ordinance Committee Chair, to describe the purpose of the proposed amendment. Mr. Cardozo said that under Chapter 175-D the Board recommends the addition of article 11) to address “grounds and yards that fail to meet the level of maintenance of surrounding premises and properties, and/or is an element leading to the progressive deterioration of the neighborhood (examples shall include: planted lawn grass in excess of fourteen (14) inches in height that remains uncultivated for a period of thirty (30) days or longer, severely overgrown weeds, bushes, dead fallen trees, uncut grass, rubbish, and deteriorated equipment or materials). Property maintained in its natural or wooded state, garden, and ornamental plantings shall be exempt from this provision.”

Comments: There were no comments from the public and the Clerk did not receive any written comments.

**Chapter 370 – Stormwater Management:** Ms. Heller asked Mr. Cardozo, Ordinance Committee Chair, to describe the purpose of the proposed amendments. Mr. Cardozo said that the proposed amendments updates the Town’s existing ordinance to State requirements.

Comments: There were no comments from the public and the Clerk did not receive any written comments.

Ms. Heller introduced the proposed new ordinance.

**Agricultural Commission:** Ms. Heller asked Mr. Cardozo, Ordinance Committee Chair, to describe the purpose of the proposed new Ordinance. Mr. Cardozo explained that this proposed ordinance has been requested and considered for a few years. The ordinance establishes an Agricultural Commission to help identify issues of concern to farmers, to raise public awareness of the benefits of local farms and working lands, and to identify ways in which the Town can support the business and land use needs of local farmers.

Comments: Andrea Urbano, 115 Sperry Road; Alex Blyth, 49 Rimmon Road; Jerry Savino, 128 Ford Road; Nick Zito, 115 Sperry Road; and Leland Torrence, 17 Vernon Court all spoke in support of and expressed
the need for an Agricultural Commission. The Clerk did not receive any written comments regarding the proposed ordinance.

Public Hearing Closed - As there were no further comments, Ms. Heller closed the public at 7:35 p.m.

ACTION AS APPROPRIATE ON COMMENTS RECEIVED IN PUBLIC HEARING

Chapter 175-2, D, (11) Blighted Premises – The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Rowland – Dey) to adopt the amendments as presented.

Chapter 370 – Stormwater Management – The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Rowland – Stein) to adopt the amendments as presented.

Agricultural Commission – The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Heller – Cardozo) to adopt the proposed new ordinance establishing an Agricultural Commission.

Ms. Heller stated that the adopted amendments and the new Agricultural Commission Ordinance become effective February 22, 2020

FUNDING REQUESTS – CONTINUED

1920-13 – Allocation
To: Board of Selectmen Gen’l. Professional Svc. (1110-00/52100)
From: Board of Finance Contingency (1170-00/56800)
For: Fund Phase II of security review of Beecher Road School

Decision: This item is postponed until receipt of Phase I report and February meeting

1920-14 – Allocation
To: Board of Selectmen Gen’l. Professional Svc. (1110-00/52100)
From: Board of Finance Contingency (1170-00/56800)
For: General Consulting for Environmental Services related to the Country Club of Woodbridge (Heller – Dey) Amended: Mr. Genovese is to find another funding source. With the amendment, the transfer was unanimously approved.

1920-15 – Allocation
To: Public Works Rentals – Equipment (1310-00/53610)
From: Board of Finance Contingency (1170-00/5680)
For: Fund removal of diseased and storm damaged trees

Consensus: Postponed to February Selectmen’s meeting. Mr. Connors, Director of Public Works is to attend the meeting and present a report.

BID AWARD – OLD FIRE HOUSE BAY 2 ROOF REPLACEMENT
The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Heller – Stein) to award the bid for the Old Fire House Bay 2 roof replacement to J. Antonelli Roofing, 25 Crescent Street, Stamford CT in the amount of $38,411.

FY 2019 AUDIT
Mr. Genovese mentioned that the FY2019 audit, at each members chair this evening, would be addressed by a member of the auditing firm at the January 22, 2020, Budget Review Meeting.
ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT
Event application: Ms. Yagla requested approval for her application to hold an outside event entitled Sustainable Woodbridge Day on the Library Lawn May 2, 2020. It is an Earth Day style event building on rid litter days held in previous years. Some of the activities planned include information about how to reuse, reduce and recycle; a tag sale; shredding truck; fabric recycling truck; electronic recycling; craft supply swap; and electric vehicle demo.

Mr. Dey recommended that language be added to the form to clarify Certificate of Insurance submission requirements.

The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Heller – Dey) to approve Ms. Yagla’s application for a May 2, 2020 event entitled Sustainable Woodbridge Day.

Complete Streets Team – The Team was formed by a group of residents and has prepared a map of the Town identifying where people tend to bike and walk. Ms. Yagla has highlighted the map in pink where wider road shoulders would be advantageous and green where sidewalks would be helpful.

Survey – Ms. Yagla has created a “Walk Bike Woodbridge Survey” to get additional feedback from Residents. The survey will be gathered through February and is available online, with paper copies available in Town buildings. Ms. Yagla will generate a report with the results of the survey.

Health and Wellness Poster – Ms. Yagla displayed a poster that is being displayed in various businesses in Town. She is also creating a cross promotion flyer listing town businesses. The flyer will be available in businesses during February.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USE OF THE OLD FIRE HOUSE
The Board reviewed recommendations from the Community Council, e-mails from residents, and the petition signed by fitness center participants. These documents are attached to the minutes as a part of the permanent record.

Motion to amend the agenda: The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Heller – Cardozo) to add “action as appropriate” under “Recommendations for Use of the Old Fire House”.

The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Stein – Rowland) to approve the use of the second floor of the Old Fire House for a place of public assembly; and to continue to negotiate the day time use for the Amity Regional School District Transition Program.

Other thoughts – Ms. Heller said that seventy-six people signed the petition to move the fitness center to Bay 3 of the Old Fire House – one person added to keep it in The Center building. She noted that the majority of those who wrote asked that the building provide a community center, gathering space and a coffee house (which would require a zoning change) however the Amity Transition Program may be able to provide such service as part of its program.

Ms. Heller polled the members as to their thoughts/recommendations for uses of the Old Fire House: Ms. Heller – move the fitness center as suggested, and create a community space Ms. Stein – meeting space, exhibition space, museum for the antique fire truck other artifacts, create a community gathering space in one of the bays, rental space for resident events Mr. Crisco – Fire Department’s needs for storage space Mr. Cardozo – Meeting space; event space for residents
Mr. Rowland and Fire Chief Rowland – The Fire Department needs Bay 1 to store materials and equipment that cannot be stored in the new fire house due to either constraints or emergency accessibility.

Mr. Dey – Need to balance Fire Department use vs community use

The Board did not vote on the recommended uses. It was agreed that the suggestions would be forwarded to the architect and a vote would be taken on a completed plan.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Heller – Dey) to accept the Personnel Committee’s recommendation and hire David Newkirk to fill the vacant position of Maintainer III in the Public Works Department: Compensation: $27.06/hour; contingent on: a successful background check, pre-employment physical, drug and alcohol test, and completion of 120 days probation period.

TOWN COUNSEL’S REPORT
American Medical Response (“AMR”) - Mr. Weiner reported that the Town and AMR have agreed to a 60 day extension of the current contract. The Town may consider releasing an RFP seeking less expensive and better alternative service.

TOWN CLERK’S REPORT
The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Heller – Stein) to acknowledge receipt of the Town Clerk’s reports for the month ending December 31, 2019 and cumulative from July 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019.

MINUTES
The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Heller – Crisco) to approve the minutes of December 11, 2019.

RESIGNATIONS
The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Heller – Rowland) to acknowledge receipt of the following resignations: Chester Sharp – Recreation Commission; and Julie Parr – Conservation Commission.

APPOINTMENTS
Cable Advisory Council Area 2 – The Board of Selectmen VOTED to appoint George Grotheer to fill the vacancy of the Board of Selectmen representative to the Cable Advisory Council Area 2 for a term ending June 30, 2021.

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

Library Commission – The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Cardozo – Stein) to appoint Bettina Scott Brogadir to fill the vacancy on the Library Commission for a term ending June 30, 2023.

Recreation Commission – The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Cardozo – Stein) to appoint Kimberly Hynes to fill the vacancy on the Recreation Commission for a term ending June 30, 2021.
Zoning Board of Appeals Alternate – The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Cardozo – Stein) to appoint Celia Waters to fill the vacancy of Alternate on the Zoning Board of Appeals for a term ending June 30, 2021.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
At 8:37 p.m. the Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Heller – Rowland) to move into executive session pursuant to Section 1-200(6)(C) of the Connecticut General Statutes to discuss public safety. Invited to attend: Robert Berke, Chair of the Police Commission, Police Chief Frank Cappiello, Town Counsel Gerald Weiner, and Administrative Officer/Director of Finance Anthony Genovese.

At 9:10 p.m. Mr. Berke and Chief Cappiello left the executive session and Chief Animal Control Officer Karen Lombardi was invited to attend.

At 9:14 p.m. Ms. Heller closed the executive session and resumed the regular Board of Selectmen meeting.

CANCELLED SECOND EXECUTIVE SESSION
The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Heller – Stein) to cancel #19 on the agenda, executive session pursuant to Section 1-200(6)(D) re contract negotiations to sell a portion of the CCW property.

BLIGHT ORDINANCE REVISITED
Mr. Jerry Braffman, 55 Brookwood Dr. – misread the time of the public hearing and asked that his remarks regarding the Blighted Premises ordinance be considered. He supports the proposed amendments to the current ordinance. He stressed the need for enforcement citing the lack of enforcement for two properties on his road even though he made many complaints to the Town. Ms. Heller assured him that the Town is taking this new opportunity to address the problem of enforcement.

ADJOURNMENT
On a non-debatable motion by Ms. Stein, seconded by Mr. Cardozo, the meeting adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Geraldine S. Shaw, Clerk
PROPOSAL CONCERNING CONTINUED FARMING OPERATIONS
AT DARLING HOUSE

To the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen

For the past several months, there have been continuing discussions between town officials and the Amity and Woodbridge Historical Society concerning future farming operations at the Darling House museum ("DH") and the use of its caretaker’s cottage. In an effort to resolve this controversy, the undersigned, members of the Society, offer the following suggested compromise to increase farming on the site while allowing the Society to house the museum’s caretaker in the cottage (the “Project”).

GOALS OF THE PROJECT

a) Move the farming operations at DH across Litchfield Turnpike to land north of the DH barn owned by the town which is being leased on a year-to-year basis to Chris Sorensen (the “New Farm Site”). We have been advised by Ethan Schneider that he believes this land, originally farmed by Thomas Darling and his descendants will be suitable for the farming operations now being conducted by him at DH, provided that certain improvements he wants (the “Needed Site Improvements”) are installed on the site.

b) Move Mr. Schneider from the caretaker cottage to a suitable apartment or house as close as possible to the New Farm Site. This move need not wait for completion of the necessary improvements to the New Farm Site so long as the parties commit to Mr. Schneider that (i) the New Farm Site will contain the Needed Site Improvements, and (ii) he is given the right to farm on the New Farm Site for a period sufficient to make it worth his while to invest the time, effort and funds needed to make the New Farm Site fully agriculturally productive.

c) Amend and extend the present agreement between the town and Society to provide that (i) the Society has a 20-year right to control and the manage DH as a museum, (ii) the Society’s chosen caretaker will have the right to live in
the DH caretaker’s cottage, (iii) the Society may not be dismissed as manager of the DH museum during the life of its management agreement with the town without good cause, and (iv) the Society will have no further responsibilities with respect to farming activities at DH or on the New Farm Site.

We propose the following steps to bring about these goals:

ACTION PLAN FOR THE PROJECT

1. Mr. Schneider will move from the caretaker cottage to another suitable location reasonably satisfactory to him as soon as one can be found. The search for such a location has already commenced under the direction of Richard Blackwell, a Society member who has volunteered his services and funding to the Project; Mr. Schneider is actively working with Mr. Blackwell on this search.


2. The town and Mr. Schneider will enter into agreement giving him the right for 10 years to farm the New Farm Site, subject to such reasonable conditions as the parties agree, including rental to be paid for use of the property, restrictions on facilities that may be erected on the site, etc. It is our understanding that provisions of this agreement have already been discussed by Mr. Schneider and Mr. Blackwell with town officials.


3. Needed Site Improvements will be made by contractors under direction by the town with the assistance of James Urbano, another Society volunteer. These Improvements, requested by Mr. Schneider in a recent email to Mr. Blackwell (see Exhibit A), include a driveway and parking area, a storage place for his farming tools and the cooler he uses for the crops he produces, a 200amp electrical power supply, and a potable water supply of at least 7 gpm, as well as all necessary permits for the Needed Site Improvements and operation of the farm at the New Farm Site. Certain other requests in that letter, including construction of a farmer’s house and office/tool shed on the property, have now been obviated by Mr. Schneider’s move to other quarters and by his assuming the erection of the office-tool shed. Work on the design and costs of the Needed Site Improvements has already commenced under
the direction of Mr. Urbano (see Exhibit B). Issuance of the needed permits and variances will be the responsibility of the town. Deadline for completion: April 30, 2020 or as soon thereafter as weather conditions and availability of contractors’ time permits.

4. Costs and other requirements for the completion of the Project are to be shared on the following basis:

a) Mr. Schneider will contribute to the Project by paying the rent for his new quarters, which will be supported by a contribution of $500 per month by Mr. Blackwell. He will also be responsible, at his expense, for the installation of any cooling facilities, fencing, irrigation systems, a building for his on-site office and for storage of tools and other materials (other than those needed for Needed Site Improvements), and the furnishing of all tools and equipment required for farming on the New Farm site.

b) Mr. Backwell and Paul DeCoste have agreed to contribute to the Project, in honor of the Society, $13,500 to complete the Needed Site Improvements; this is in addition to Mr. Blackwell’s contribution to Mr. Schneider’s rent. These contributions will be delivered to the town for disbursement as provided in paragraph 4(c). While these funds should be sufficient to complete the Needed Site Improvements, any additional funds needed will have to be contributed by other private donations which have yet to be solicited. The town will support the solicitation of such funding.

c) The town will arrange for the issuance of any permits or variances required to complete the Project and to allow farming on the New Farm Site. The town’s finance director will be charged with collecting contributions of the parties to the Project, paying all bills for services and materials issued by the contractors as well as other costs of the Project, and accounting for such costs and collections.

5. We have been advised by the Society that Mr. Schneider’s move from the Caretaker’s cottage is essential to its continued operations and that if this proposal is accepted by the town and acted upon and the associated new managerial agreement with the Society is signed, the Society will be able to move forthwith to complete the arrangements to obtain the funding under its pending “Good-to-Great Grant” from the state for the much needed im-
provements to DH it has previously discussed with the town. The total amount available under this grant, including $16,000 to be contributed by the Society out of its own funds, is approximately $60,000.

Dated: January 8, 2020

Paul H. DeCoste  Mary Dean

Donald Menzies
Mary Dean  
Comments given at the January 8, 2020  
Board of Selectman Meeting

The Society was asked to come this evening to report and take any questions from the Board of Selectmen, and we’re happy to do that. Unfortunately, some of those who should be here to provide real expertise are not able to attend, including President Alexia Belperron, who is the driver behind so much of our grant writing and program execution, and former President Don Menzies, whose historical knowledge is so great. Both are out of town. But we’ll do our best to answer any questions you have, and we can promise to provide responses later to anything about which we ourselves need more information.

I myself want to report specifically about work on the production of a new Agreement between the Town and the Amity and Woodbridge Historical Society for the use, management and preservation of the Darling House site. As you may remember, the BOS voted in November to direct the Town Attorney to work with the Society’s attorney to craft this document. There have been some predictable and some unpredicted delays in the project but our draft should be ready for submission and discussion shortly and I’m happy to give you a quick précis of what to expect when it comes to you for approval.

First, why is a new Agreement needed? If you read the current one it seems to cover all the bases and with minor updates it has served us for 45 years. However, we can and must improve it in some specific ways. We must make sure going forward that it is clear, with the responsibilities and authority of both the town and the Society better and more consistently articulated. When we do this, future users will have the guidance needed for a smooth working partnership ensuring the highest and best use of the Darling House property.

This doesn’t require a major rewrite, and in the interests of time we’re keeping as close to the current document’s presentation and text as we can. But it does involve more than cleaning up the syntax and we are taking the time and care to present the best draft we can for your discussion and approval.

Let me mention one other thing you will see in the new draft: the spheres of historic preservation, museum operations, and other relevant interests have become much more professional since 1974, and we’re suggesting some of their up-to-date recommendations for the new document, particularly guidance from our partner the State Historic Preservation Office. So look for that.

A working, long-term agreement with the Town for use, management and preservation of the Darling House is essential for any work or presentations by the Society there. If the new Agreement can be signed quickly, we will be again eligible for and can accept the Good to Great grant and that would be the first thing we can and will do. But there are other plans put on hold since last summer, such as restoration grant applications for the historic barns. So please expedite the signing of the new agreement. We need to get back to work at the Darling House and for the Darling House and the town of Woodbridge.
What we are dealing with in regards to the AWHS is a problem of ethics and morals. As a moral person I wouldn’t want to call anyone out publicly and embarrass them but the actions of the AWHS are affecting peoples lives and careers. The public statements that have been made on there behalf have been misleading and untruthful. Statements claiming to have 15 members, that include 2 archivists and historians. If there are two archivists where is there online archive database for the public and marketing purposes. No fundraising efforts have been put in place. The fact that a person who has been president of the AWHS for a few years who is not a Woodbridge resident is willing to threaten to remove their collection from the property seems immature. After the last board of selectman meeting when an agreement was not met to there liking they went to the darling house and removed the AWHS sign and all Christmas decorations, if this is how a town organization conducts itself we should all be ashamed. The comments on behalf of the AWHS during these ongoing discussions at the BOS meetings should be seen by an ethical audience as fact enough that ungrounded bullying by the historic society of farmer Ethan has caused this disagreement to arise from the beginning. Leland Torrence senior generated a report on the caretaker apartment and property management of the darling house per the request of the historical society last march. This report clearly outlined all of the existing issues we are still debating. The historic society never utilized this extremely thorough report and proceeded to remove Mr. Torrence from their executive committee. If the town is incapable of seeing through the misconceptions and unclear accusations of the AWHS against Ethan and others than we have a larger issue than one corrupted historic society. I hold everyone in this room accountable for the outcome of this situation.

I am a restoration carpenter and have specialized in period reproduction. The stonewalling of town residents attempting to contribute to the betterment of the property has resulted in little progress in developing the Darling House as a destination historic home. And as a final statement the museum does not carry regular open to public hours. Koon farms is the only Avenue for the public to access this town treasure at this point, and it should not be, it should be a joint relation to integrate town history and farming.
Hi Beth,

As members of the Community Council, we have had many conversations about what constitutes building community. While events are one way to bring people together with a common interest, there is also having “spaces” that makes it easier for residents to get together. Woodbridge does have outdoor spaces, such as walking trails, tennis courts, ball fields, playgrounds, etc., however there is no identified indoor space except for meeting rooms (which need to be reserved) and the community room at the Library (which also needs to be reserved).

The members of the Community Council are passing along some recommendations for potential uses of the old firehouse (see attached) that we think the Board of Selectmen should consider. These ideas revolve around providing a location in the center of Town for a “Community Center” which might have co-working spaces, offices, places to host events for family & friends, an opportunity for residents to meet for coffee & light fare, where perhaps the Transition Students at Amity could get some hands on experience in the service industry.

Please review the attached recommendations and if appropriate, pass these along to the Selectmen for their consideration.

Regards,

Sandy Stein
Debbie Brander
Tahera Parvez
Denise Rock
Tobe Nwangwu
(Members of the Community Council)
Usage of the Old Firehouse

The Ad Hoc Community Council would like to submit our recommendations regarding the future use of the Old Firehouse.

- We support the creation of a Community Services Department (integration of Recreation/Human Services) and “relocation” of their offices to the Old Firehouse. We feel that this location would best serve Woodbridge residents by becoming a one-stop shop for the many services they will provide.
  - It would create a Welcome Center feel, and help residents connect with each other as well as learn about the many programs offered throughout the community.
  - Beecher Road School would surely welcome back the space that Recreation is currently using. And it would align more Town departments close to the green and Town Hall.
- By having town personnel in the Old Firehouse during business hours, the large bay could become a community room with tables and free WiFi, that can serve as a drop-in and co-working space. There could also be some smaller work spaces/conference rooms created for smaller groups. This is a very low-cost but high-impact use of the space.
  - The Old Firehouse can become a community center of sorts, and a safe space for teens afterschool. The Library often doesn’t have enough space for teens and adults to work, so the Firehouse can accommodate those users.
  - Many Recreation/Human Services programs can take place in the Old Firehouse as well.
  - There may also be an opportunity to generate revenue through meeting and event space rentals. Residents are always looking for venues to host a birthday party or a meeting, and it would also allow the Town and the Library additional space to host larger events.
- The Community Council strongly recommends that the current Fitness Center NOT be relocated to the Old Firehouse.
  - The Police Department and Fire Department can each take a few pieces of equipment for their health and wellness needs, and perhaps a bike or treadmill can move to the Senior Center for those participants to use. Remaining equipment can be sold or moved to Beecher or Amity.
  - With more than seven large gyms within 10-12 minutes drive, and many additional small exercise studios, it isn’t prudent or in the best interest of the Town to maintain and supervise a Fitness Center.
- The Community Council supports the use of a bay to house the Antique Fire Truck, and would recommend that other historical items be on display to create a museum-like atmosphere.
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Kathleen Regan <ktmregan@gmail.com>
Date: December 3, 2019 at 7:37:47 PM EST
To: Beth Heller <bheller@woodbridgect.org>
Subject: Ideas for Old Firehouse

USE CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Woodbridge Town email system. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Greetings First Selectman Heller,

First, we want to thank you for giving us this opportunity to offer our suggestion for the Old Firehouse. My husband Mike and I have lived in town for 12 years, moving here from Wilton, Ct. We love being here, though we do miss the small town downtown atmosphere you would find in Wilton, or even Weston, which is closer in population to Woodbridge. Sure we have New Haven and Amity Road close by, yet it would be beneficial if in OUR center, the heart of our community, we had a cafe, coffee shop, ice cream parlor or some small food establishment.

Why would a food establishment be beneficial? It would offer ALL ages of people a place to come together, keep informed about our town and even use some locally grown goods from Massaro Community Farm. A cafe would serve various ages in the community, from pre school to seniors, who doesn’t like a cafe, especially if it serves delicious pastries. What better way to end a morning walk in the Cornfield’s! Where else in town can different age groups come to together and converse? I know for us being able to do this has been difficult since we moved here after our kids were grown and we don’t belong to any religious or social organizations.

Here too locals can catch up on the happenings in town with a community board, or even what is becoming rare these days, a face to face conversation. I recently closed down a small retail business and was surprised how many of my customers were regulars looking for a familiar face and place to go where they felt at “home”. Isn’t that what community is about? And what better way than with food, whether it be coffee, baked goods, or even a seasonally food truck. Which also ties in with the local Community Farm, giving them a chance to highlight their offerings.

Please let us know if we can be of any help. Look forward to hearing back from you. Along with
this idea is a call to action. As stated earlier, I, Katie, am currently not working and am available to do whatever to make this happen.

Kind regards,
Katie and Mike Regan
93 Newton Road
Woodbridge, CT 06525
203-298-0925
Begin forwarded message:

From: Susan Dieterlen <sldieterlen@gmail.com>
Subject: old firehouse idea
Date: November 30, 2019 at 3:57:56 PM EST
To: Beth <eheller999@aol.com>

Hi, Beth,

Since you asked for any ideas people have about what to do with the old firehouse near the town green: every time I go by there I think what a great spot for a cafe or coffeehouse it is, with tables outside on the corner. Maybe even as a combined venture with the cafe in the senior center. Seems like a busy spot that would be promising for this type of business, with all the school-related traffic and commuters and people going to places around the green, as well as all the walkers at the Fitzgerald Tract.

Happy Thanksgiving!
Susan
Betsy Yagla

From: Karen Bodine <kbodine60@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, December 13, 2019 6:35 PM
To: Info
Subject: Old firehouse

USE CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Woodbridge Town email system. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Why not use it for police and fire dispatch. Perfect location between both services.
Betsy Yagla

From: Peter Robbin <prob275@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, December 13, 2019 4:36 PM
To: Info
Subject: Re the old firehouse

USE CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Woodbridge Town email system. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

We really need a great little food shop
5:00 shop
Prepared foods
That serves one cream cones
Get a newspaper
Coffee shop
Outdoor seating fall spring summer light restaurant It's kinda Woodbridge's center Fruit vegg Where people would run into neighbors Bring dogs Benches Have ice cream it'd be a great plus for Woodbridge!!!!

Sent from my iPhone
USE CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Woodbridge Town email system. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Something the entire town can enjoy - a gathering place is needed

Sent from my iPhone. Susan
Betsy Yagla

From: ROSLYN CHOSAK <momduck1123@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, December 14, 2019 8:51 AM
To: Info
Subject: Hi Beth,

USE CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Woodbridge Town email system. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I wonder if the lower level of the old fire house can be re-purposed for use as a coffee house for the town folks to use...maybe a seasonal one depending on the interior of the building. Maybe townsfolk would like to have music "jams" there...blue grass, folk, sing alongs, Guilbert and Sullivan, open mike...
Whatever the interest.
Is this a very far-fetched idea/
The venue could even include sale of light snacks and beverages and maybe even child-friendly times.
Because there is so much parking next door at the library and school, the draw of crowds to the area should not present a problem. This type of activity would supplement the terrific summer concert series which is so limited by the weather in our area.
It seems like too nice a facility to be limited to storage.
Thanks for your consideration.
Roslyn Chosak
For years after the new firehouse was built, people were consistently suggesting that the old firehouse would make a wonderful setting for a coffee shop. A community-gathering place with a casual, LOCAL, welcoming feeling, & centrally located would be a great addition to the center of town. Especially since it has a good-size floor plan, it could accommodate a lot of seating which would make it a nice gathering place of our own. Very “New-Englandy”. Maybe it could even be used some evenings as a small performance space. Something I hope you’ll consider.

Roger Hess
rogerhess@optonline.net
(203) 982-4377
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: David Schneider <legalschneider@gmail.com>
Date: December 17, 2019 at 1:51:23 PM EST
To: Beth Heller <bheller@woodbridgetect.org>
Subject: Use of old Fire House

USE CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Woodbridge Town email system. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Beth:

I thought it had long been the plan to use some of the space in the old firehouse for the fitness center, which would also free up space in the Center Building for the police. I strongly urge you to reserve space in the old firehouse for the fitness center.

Dave
December 23, 2019

We, the undersigned, formally request that the Woodbridge Fitness Center be relocated to Bay 3 of the old Woodbridge Fire House.

The Fitness Center has been an important resource for residents of Woodbridge of all ages, fostering a sense of community for more than thirty years.

The Center is used not only by Woodbridge residents but is used by town employees, police officers, and paying guests, as well. Furthermore, there are residents with special needs who use the facility for rehabilitation and therapeutic exercise purposes.

The use of the facilities is monitored by experienced staff and the safety record of the facility is excellent. In its more than thirty years of use, there has been not a single claim or complaint due to injury.

We strongly encourage the Recreation Commission and the Board of Selectman to continue to support the existence of the Woodbridge Fitness Center.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael Blain</td>
<td>Police Dept</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ray Arroyo</td>
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<td>Kathy Mongio</td>
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<td>Catlyn Arroyo</td>
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<td>John Calli</td>
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<td>Brian Pedalmo</td>
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<td>Ray Sheehan</td>
<td>Police Dept</td>
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<td>Kari Rodriguez-Perez</td>
<td>PD</td>
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<td>Joe Arroyo</td>
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<td>John Calabrese</td>
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**NAME**
- Dakota Kelly
- Stangedansky
- James Mcelvy
- Jane Baljevic
- Linda Grace-Celebella
- Keith Celebella
- Philip Latifeh
- Andrea L Celebella
- Andrea Neustein
- Tina Coury-Young
- Judie Hersh
- Beth Collins
- Halyna Nasario

**ADDRESS**
- 16 Sturbridge Ln, Woodbridge, CT
- 16 Sturbridge Ln, Woodbridge, CT
- 60 Dogwood Ln, Woodbridge, CT
- 28 Gunbrook, Woodbridge, CT
- 895 Baldwin Rd, Woodbridge, CT
- 895 Baldwin Rd, Woodbridge, CT
- 50 N. Racebrook Rd, Woodbridge
- 895 Baldwin Rd, Woodbridge, CT 06525
- 11 Cross Hollow Rd, Woodbridge, CT 06525
- 4 Carriage Hill Rd, Woodbridge
- 12 Deerfield Ln, Woodbridge
- 126 Newton Rd, Woodbridge, CT
- 126 Newton Rd, Woodbridge, CT 06525
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robert Williams</td>
<td>137 Beechwood Rd, Woodbridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine Turner</td>
<td>742 State St, North Haven</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Cooke</td>
<td>453 Main St, Woodbridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bill Dalk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laura Grotheen</td>
<td>1097 Johnson Rd, Woodbridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phil Rothfield</td>
<td>50 North Beach Rd, Woodbridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Max Di Ven</td>
<td>18 Indian Trail, Woodbridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Fiani</td>
<td>20 Dillon Rd, Woodbridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marie Schrier</td>
<td>25 Cassoway Rd, Woodbridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ed Schrier</td>
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