The meeting may be view at: https://youtu.be/avuZR1Vl6Mk

The October 12, 2022, Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen was convened at 5:06 p.m. in the Central Meeting Room of the Town Hall by First Selectman Beth Heller. This meeting was in-person and via electronic transmission.

Present in-person: First Selectman Beth Heller, Deputy First Selectman Sheila McCreven, Paul Kuriakose, Dr. David Lober

Present at 5:12 p.m. via remote transmission: David Vogel

Absent: Joseph Crisco

Present for Staff: Administrative Officer/Director of Finance Anthony Genovese; Town Counsel Gerald Weiner; Media Specialist Pua Ford; and Clerk Geraldine Shaw

FIRST SELECTMAN’S REMARKS

“Good evening. It is wonderful to be here in person. Our last in-person Board of Selectmen meeting was in March of 2020. Thank you for wearing masks tonight, as we endeavor to continue to respect each other, and try to keep one another healthy, especially those who are immunocompromised or recovering from an illness. If I have learned anything during my tenure as I enter my sixth year as First Selectman, we in Woodbridge do take care of each other ... and I thank everyone for their kindness.

First, I will give an update on all our projects:

The Community & Cultural Center Building Committee met on 9/21 with two architects from Silver Petrucelli to review their proposal to create design and construction drawings for the interior of the Old Firehouse and to engage ARIS Land Studio to develop a conceptual master plan for the outdoor space. It is important for the outdoor and indoor space to work together from a design perspective. The committee approved the architect’s proposal and a waiver to use their services will be submitted to the State. More specific schematics will be prepared for their October meeting and review and input from the Town Department Heads is planned for November. A presentation will be made to the Board of Selectmen at our December meeting with review and input from Town residents planned for January.

The Center Renovation Building Committee has been meeting on a periodic basis. They have revised the initial Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Architectural / Engineering services for this project in mid-September, due to a poor initial response in early September, which was re-issued out for bid on September 22nd. On October 6th, a Pre-Bid meeting together with a walk-through with those A/E firms interested in the project occurred. Any and all questions and clarifications pertaining to the RFQ are to be submitted to the committee no later than October 20th and they expect to receive formal Proposals including proposed fees from those firms will be presented on Thursday, October 27th. The Building Committee will then carefully evaluate these Proposals and are targeting to begin holding interviews with some of these firms by early to mid – November, with the goal to make a formal recommendation to the Board of Selectmen to retain the services of a specific firm and have this firm under Contract by mid – December.

The renovation and upgrade project at the Senior Center is well underway with Olympus Construction and Silver Petrucelli & Associates working with staff to adjust issues as they arise. Regular meetings are scheduled every two weeks for discussion of the on-going construction. The demolition and initial
construction have begun and are already transformative. Silver Petrucelli submitted the project for review with United Illuminating to access available incentives for improving energy solutions. The good news is that the project incentive grant included $8,000 for the HVAC VRF units at $250/Ton and $1,864 for Lighting Design for a total of $9,864. As the budget is very tight, these funds are a welcome addition. Most of the materials have been ordered and work will continue while awaiting delivery.

I attended the first meeting of the newly created ad hoc Beecher School Building Committee. The Committee voted (with my approval) to change the title of their committee to “The Town Building Committee for Beecher School Capital Projects.” They also agreed to an amendment to their charge to include “necessary pool and security upgrades.” You will note that we will have a report from Kyle Elmy of the firm of Weston & Sampson, giving us a detailed evaluation of, and recommendations from, an engineer’s report to improve the pool’s existing conditions and bring the Beecher Road School pool into code compliance. As you may know, the pool was built in 1972. Also, the Woodbridge BOE has a confidential report regarding a security study that was done recently, and the Committee will also review that and make recommendations regarding necessary security school upgrades.

We recently received the contract documents from the state regarding the recently awarded $500,000 STEAP grant for the new HVAC system and gymnasium and restroom upgrades. I will let you know once we review them, the next steps to proceed with the project.

Lastly, we are working with Cardinal Engineering on the preliminary design and survey regarding the Town Center Sidewalk Project. This project most likely will be done in the summer 2023 once school is out of session and our town center is less busy with traffic. That is an update on our many projects.

In a recent edition of the Woodbridge Town News, there was commentary stating that I as First Selectman did not intend to support the upcoming year’s Amity Regional District 5 budget. I did support passage of the current year’s budget I take this opportunity, as I will take other opportunities, to state unequivocally that I never made such a statement regarding next year’s budget. I cannot imagine a situation where I would decide my vote on a budget I had not yet seen, and in this case, a budget that as far as I know, has not yet been prepared.

This inaccurate statement was misinformation about the Amity District 5 budget process. I have included in this evening’s Board packet an explanation written by Paul Davis, newly appointed Chair of Amity Regional District 5 Board of Education, with his statements regarding the District’s budget. I remain committed that our Board, as well as the Board of Finance, are fully briefed on the actual facts.

Our annual Veteran’s Day ceremony will be held this year (after a two-year COVID hiatus) at 11 am on Friday, November 11th in the Center Gym. More information will be forthcoming in our newsletter and Town website. Masks will be required.

I have recently been informed that there might be an RWA grant available for up to $5000 to add a water line for use by the Community Gardens folks. I spoke with Thera Stack, Community Gardens volunteer coordinator, and plan to meet with her and a representative from the Regional Water Authority at the end of this month to begin to explore this. This would follow the same procedures we used for water at the Dog park, where the Community Garden members pay the water bills directly and are responsible for the water spigot etc. I will keep you informed on the status of this.
Several months ago, Tony and I met with a clinical-stage nonprofit biotechnology company, Cure Rare Disease, letting us know they were interested in moving to Woodbridge. We encouraged them to come. Cure Rare Disease develops therapeutics for rare and ultra-rare neuromuscular diseases, such as two rare types of muscular dystrophy, known as Duchenne and Becker. I am so pleased that they have announced that they have acquired their first laboratory space in Woodbridge and will relocate their Boston headquarters to the 30,000-square-foot facility at 4 Research Drive and expand research and development operations. The company also plans to lease 15,000 square feet to other life science and healthcare firms. This is great news indeed.

The weather this past weekend was glorious. We had several events in town, including the 40th Annual Recreation Road Race, which was postponed a week due to inclement weather.

I hope you all had a chance to join in the “Woodbridge Like Me” Day on Sunday, sponsored by our wonderful Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. I thank all the committee members for all their hard work, and our Town staff who made this happen. Over 300 people took advantage of the spectacular weather to see so many exhibits and cultures representing our Town. What a fabulous way to celebrate the diversity in Woodbridge!

Ms. Heller read the following note from Ellen Scalettar and Tahera Parvez, DEI Chair and Co-Chair:

“Dear First Selectwoman Heller and Members of the Board of Selectmen:

On behalf of the Woodbridge Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, we are writing to express our gratitude to Mark Dutka and Carlos Torres for their exceptional work at the Woodbridge Like Me Day event this past Sunday.

Mark and Carlos were efficient and available in all the set-up and other assistance they provided as needed. As important, their positive attitudes and cheery dispositions added to the celebratory nature of the event, which was enjoyed by hundreds of Woodbridge residents.

Please extend our gratitude to them.

Sincerely,
Ellen Scalettar, DEI Committee Chair
Tahera Parvez, DEI Committee Vice Chair”

Later on Sunday afternoon, I briefly spoke at the dedication of “Allie’s Dream” at the JCC, which is a program founded by my dear friend, Lili Vasileff, mother of a special needs young adult. It was an honor to be there, as this will now be a wonderful place, to paraphrase Lili “focusing on ability rather than disability by encouraging the pursuit of personal interests, which provides greater opportunities for success and creative expression.”

Lastly, I remind everyone to vote on Tuesday, November 8th. In-person voting will be held in the Center Gymnasium from 6 am to 8 pm. The ballot includes candidates for Federal Offices (United States Senate & United States House of Representatives), and other State Offices. There will also be a ballot question to authorize a change in the State Constitution authorizing early voting in Connecticut.
Elections. Absentee ballots are also available. Please contact either the Woodbridge Town Clerk’s Office or the Registrars of Voters Office for further information. Thank you.”

WOODBRIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION – Interim Superintendent Christine Syriac
Ms. Syriac was not available for the meeting and she did not send a report to be read.

AMITY WOODBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY– DARLING HOUSE TENANT LEASE RENEWAL
Mr. Weiner said that lease is the same as the previous year, with the exception of a change of duration (12 months) and the Board of Directors’ permission for the tenants to have two cats.

The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Heller – McCreven) to approve the 2022-2023 Darling House Tenant lease for Kevin Redline and Kyla DeRisi.

BEECHER ROAD SCHOOL POOL – WESTON & SAMPSON - Kyle Elmy (Virtual presentation)
Mr. Elmy, engineer with Weston & Sampson, presented the firm’s “Professional Engineering and Compliance Evaluation of the Beecher Road School Pool”. The evaluation included a complete review of several code standards including safety acts and USA and FINA Swimming Rules. The pool, built in 1972, is in need of some structural repair, however the immediate need is replacement of the pool filters. Delivery on new filters is approximately two to three months at an estimated cost of $80,000 and would extend the life of the pool for another two years.

The Board agreed to add a study of the pool to the Charge for the Town Building Committee for Beecher School Capital Projects.

The report may be viewed by watching the meeting on YouTube here:  https://youtu.be/avuZR1Vl6Mk

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/DIRECTOR OF FINANCE’S REPORT – Anthony Genovese
Monthly Report – Mr. Genovese reported that the September monthly report consists of actual revenues and expenditures through September 2022 and an estimated year-end budget surplus of $284,046. He noted that because the current Town budget includes an allocation from fund balance of $400,000, decrease to fund balance at year end is projected to be $115,954, fund balance at June 30, 2022, is estimated to be $7.5M or 13.90% of annual expenses. Of particular interest: due to increased interest rates a surplus of $150,000 is project for Interest Income; and due to two failed referenda, Woodbridge will contribute $134,046 less to Amity in fiscal year 2023.

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

#2223-08 – Intra-departmental Transfer
To: Town Plan & Zoning Gen’l. Prof. Svc. (1180-00/52100)
From: Revenue – TPZ Zoning Hearings & Regs. (1-5-1850/45420)
For: Traffic Peer Review Study for Woodbridge Residential Village. Fees paid by the applicant will fund the study.

(Heller – Kuriakose) Unanimously approved
#2223-09 – Allocation
  To: Fire Communications-Radio (1230-00/54240)
  From: Board of Finance Contingency (1170-00/56800)
  For: Repair of generator located at 1990 Litchfield Tpk. that services the radio system.
  (Heller – McCreven) Unanimously approved

#2223-10 – discussed later in the meeting

#2223-11 – Intradepartmental Transfer
  To: CNR-Police PD Body * Dash Cams (302-2100/57410/PDCAM)
  From: CNR-WBOE Construction (302-9100/57500) $15,553
  CNR-Cancellation of PO’S (302-46500) $ 7,000
  (Heller – McCreven) Unanimously Approved

**LOCK-IN NATURAL GAS PRICE**
The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Heller – McCreven) to authorize the First Selectman and the Administrative Officer/Director of Finance to lock-in the 30-month fixed rate for natural gas that is most advantageous for the Town.

**BID WAIVER**
The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Heller – Kuriakose) to approve the Police Department request to purchase police body cameras/dashboard cameras through the “Sourcewell Co-Op” Purchasing Contract.

**CONSENT AGENDA**
The Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Heller – McCreven) to approve the items listed under the Consent Agenda:

1) **Requests to hold events on Town property**: a) Girls Scouts of Connecticut – Election Day cookie sale  
   b) Amity members of Junior State of America – Election Day bake sale.

2) **Award of Farm Leases for the 2023 growing season**:
   Note: Unless otherwise noted – the “hay” harvested is existing growth
   Tim Kriz – 13 Bear Hill Road, Bethany
   a. 1936 Litchfield Turnpike
   b. 1966 Litchfield Turnpike - Eicher Property
   c. 1907 Litchfield Turnpike - Field north of stonewall
      Lower field adjacent to West River
   d. Zwick Property – 282 Seymour Road
      Note: Access is very difficult. He has an agreement with owners of the adjacent property to access the field through their driveway

   Chris Sorensen – 420 Amity Road
   a. 1910 Litchfield Turnpike – Field behind yellow barn
   b. As a courtesy to the Town, Chris mows the Town Owned “Meiss Property” on
Rimmon Road to keep the scrub down
Keith Arnold – 127 Beecher Road
a. Fitzgerald Property – Two front fields and lower field. Keith seeds the three fields and harvests the resulting hay.
b. Peck Hill Road - Elderslie – hays three fields

Kristyna & Oliver Hulland – 48 Center Road
a. Alegi Property, 160 Pease Road and portion of 52 Center Road
   Note: Last year there was an agreement with the Recreation Dept. allowing cars to be parked on a portion of the property during soccer season.

3) Tax Refunds – Pursuant to Section 12-124 to 129 of the Connecticut General Statutes and the recommendation of the Tax Collector to refund Motor Vehicle taxes in the amount of $7,826.22.


5) Minutes – Regular Meeting of September 14, 2022 and Special Meeting of September 20, 2022

6) Resignation – Acknowledge receipt of Frank DeLeo’s resignation from the Inland Wetlands Agency (Alt.)

7) Quarterly Reports – Acknowledge receipt of quarterly reports from the Human Services and the Conservation Commissions.

APPOINTMENTS
There was no nomination for the vacant position on the Government Access Television Commission.

TOWN COUNSEL’S REPORT
Terms of Office: The Board of Selectmen VOTED (McCreven – Kuriakose) to approve the following:
Terms of Office - Elected Officials whose terms currently end on June 30th of a given year will extended to December 31st of said given year commencing with the election of elected officials in November 2023.

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

Former Country Club of Woodbridge – RFP: Mr. Weiner said RFP is not ready for distribution.

Cell Tower – Mr. Weiner said that the Town joined with the neighborhood in the appeal from the Siting Council’s decision. The appeal has been heard but no decision has been rendered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
At 6:05 p.m., the Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Heller – McCreven) to move into executive session and to invite Mr. Genovese and Mr. Weiner to attend. Following are the items considered during executive session:
   a. Pursuant to Section1-200(6)(B) of the Connecticut General Statutes – Discussion of
pending litigation, Open Communities Trust, LLC et. al. Vs Town Plan and Zoning Commission of the Town of Woodbridge et. al. - Atty. Gerald Weiner
b. Pursuant to Section 1-200 6 (B) (D) of the CGS, 60 Woodfield Dr.
c. Pursuant to section 1-200(6)C) of the CGS – Security Devices related to Dispatch

Selectmen Paul Kuriakose

At 6:40 p.m. the Board of Selectmen moved out of executive session and returned to the regular meeting.
At 6:40 p.m. David Vogel and Attorney Weiner left the meeting.

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

2030 COMMITTEE – PRESENTATION – Laura Pirie of Pirie Associates
Susan Jacobs, Co-Chair of the 2030 Committee and Laurie Pirie, Consultant, gave a brief overview of the results of the public workshop held on September 15th at the New England Brewery. Those attending were a mix of approximately 50% residents and 50% business/commercial property owners. Ms. Pirie and Ms. Jacobs said those in attendance were very enthusiastic and put forth several visions for the district. The Committee requests funding for another workshop to continue the momentum of ideas.

FUNDING REQUEST – Pirie Associates
The Board of Selectmen VOTED to recommend the following funding request to the Board of Finance
#2223-10 – Allocation
To: Board of Selectmen Gen’l. Prof. Svs. (1110—00/52100)
From: Board of Finance Contingency (1170-00/56800)
For: Additional scope of work for Woodbridge 2030 Study by Pirie Associates.

(Heller – Kuriakose) Unanimously approved

ADJOURNMENT
On a non-debatable motion by Ms. McCreven, seconded by Mr. Kuriakose, the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Geraldine S. Shaw