

The November 10, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen was convened at 5:01 p.m. by First Selectman Beth Heller via teleconference. Ms. Heller declared the following members present via roll-call: First Selectman Beth Heller; Deputy First Selectman Mica Cardozo; Joseph J. Crisco, Jr.; Dwight C. Rowland; and Sandra T. Stein; Joseph S. Dey, III join later in the meeting
Present for staff: Administrative Officer/Director of Finance Anthony Genovese; Town Counsel Gerald Weiner; Assistant Administrative Officer Betsy Yagla; Media Specialist Pua Ford; and Mrs. Shaw, Clerk.

The November 10, 2020 meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen may be viewed on YouTube here: <https://youtu.be/lafNuqllV8s>

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REMARKS

"In accordance with Governor Ned Lamont's Executive Order 7 B Section 1, which suspends the open meeting requirements of in-person participation, audio and video of this Regular Meeting is being simultaneously televised live on WGATV Channel 79 and youtube@WGATV79, in order to allow the public to view and listen to our meeting.

We are meeting today, on a Tuesday, because tomorrow is Veteran's Day. This year, due to COVID-19, we are NOT gathering for our annual Veteran's Day ceremony. This somber ceremony, organized by local veteran Dr. Barry Josephs, is an important reminder of the sacrifices veterans have made for our country. My father and my grandfather were both veterans. On behalf of the Town, I extend our deepest thanks and gratitude to all our veterans, and their families. I will virtually attend a ceremony tomorrow at Beecher Road School. I urge you all take a moment to thank a veteran for their service.

*As I reported in my ENEWS blast to residents last Friday, the State Department of Public Health (as of November 5th) has designated the Town of Woodbridge as a "red-alert" municipality, due to the increasing number of positive COVID cases recorded in our Town during the last two weeks of October. Our current numbers are rising almost daily. The State has also reverted to phase 2.1 due to a significant increase in cases and hospitalizations throughout Connecticut. AGAIN, I cannot say it enough or stress it enough - **WEAR A MASK – IT'S EASY AND IT WILL SAVE LIVES! LET'S SHOW RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER ... I CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY IS THIS SO HARD!***

I have been working with Quinnipiack Valley Health District and the State of Connecticut to create a local testing site in here in Town. As soon as I have details to share, we will get that information out. In the interim, Griffin Hospital has expanded their hours to offer weekend testing times. If you call to make an appointment and use the word "community" you will not need a doctor's note for a test. All residents in orange-alert and red-alert towns are encouraged to get tested regularly even if you are asymptomatic.

At our last meeting, we heard from Tim and Patti Vale who shared with us their proposal for Nexus Golf to lease 100 or so acres at the former Country Club of Woodbridge site to create a hybrid virtual and in-person golf course, with a clubhouse that would include lite food and a wine bar. I'd like to ask members of the Board at the end of my remarks to share any thoughts you have on this proposal which Tony and I will pass along to them. This to me is an example of how we might use our yet to be hired part time Town Planner/Land Use Analyst, which I brought up last month – in addition to how we might have already sought help for two other items– one being the proposed cell tower on Newton Road, and the other being the zoning application for a multi-use home at Orchard Road and a town-wide zoning regulation change.

Our Town Clerk's Office and Registrars of Voters have successfully done a wonderful job on running the primaries this summer and the presidential election last week. The turnout was just shy of 90%. The

Town Clerks have also been dealing with the significant increase in home sales, and the Building Department has reported that there are several new homes being built, and have received inquiries about a few more that may or may not start this winter. Despite the pandemic we continue to do the business of the Town for our residents. Our town buildings remain open to residents by appointment. I also send special thanks to our Library staff for all they have done to make our library open for residents – I have had several calls from residents thanking them for this service!

Last Friday I visited the Darling House property and watched “Little Lucy” being removed from the yellow cow barn. It was quite an impressive site. The Woodbridge resident who took the pieces plans to reconstruct the barn if possible as a project with his children, and perhaps repurpose some of the wood as well. I plan to take another look at the cleaned-out barn soon. I thank the members of Public Works, especially Brad Parsons and Bob Hauser for all their help with this project.

Getting this completed, will now help with the State Historic Preservation Office grant that we hope to receive soon, to survey the cow barn, the ice- house, and the horse barn attached to the home. Occupancy for the home and caretaker’s apartment have now been approved by the Fire Marshal and Building Official, following several safety upgrades and repairs. Historical Society President Alexia Belperron told me yesterday that the new tenants have moved in and are doing twice-daily walk-throughs of the home. That’s great news.

We’ll hear more about the Thomas Darling House Advisory Committee efforts and successes from Chairman Dick Blackwell later this evening. Before his update, I am just letting you know that I have decided that after a conversation I had with both Todd Levine, Alexia Belperron, and Dick Blackwell, that in order to continue to promote an effective working relationship between the Advisory Committee and the Historical Society, Chairman Blackwell has agreed that he will ensure that all proposals by the Advisory Committee will be reviewed in conjunction with the AWHs, and their perspectives will be conveyed to the Board of Selectmen. As always, the final approval for any work done at the Darling House is the decision of the Board of Selectmen.

Yesterday, November 9, 2020, we received a congratulatory letter from the Office of Policy and Management stating that the Town has been awarded a \$128,205.00 STEAP grant for renovations and improvements to the Senior Center. That is certainly wonderful news. Many thanks to Human Services Director Jeanette Glicksman and Administrative Officer Tony Genovese and our Human Services and Finance Departments for submitting this grant application. Additionally, I also happy to report that the Town has just received notice of an award of \$70,098 from the CVRF (the Corona Virus Relief Fund) and \$36,519 from FEMA, both confirmed reimbursement through June 30th. A special Thank You to Kelly Hammill for all her efforts getting all the data entered for this grant application.

I will remind the Board that in the correspondence section of your packets are several letters from Amity Superintendent Dr. Jennifer Byars, updating us all on how the school administration is monitoring their response to the virus, and a letter from Beecher Superintendent Syriac regarding their efforts as well. Also, in your packets is a copy of my testimony (due by November 6th for an upcoming Public Hearing), which I submitted to the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, as promised, following two storms this past summer. My letter discussed what I viewed to be an abysmal lack of response for our residents to those storms by both Optimum/Cablevision and the United Illuminating Company. All correspondence in your packets is available to the public by simply making a request to Mrs. Shaw.

NEXUS Golf – Next Steps - Ms. Heller asked the Board for their thoughts re the presentation from Mr. & Mrs. Valle’s proposal for the former country club. The Board agreed that Mr. & Mrs. Valle should be

notified that it is intrigued with the concept however, they want to consider a larger “Plan of Use” for all the property including the proposal.

Cell Tower – 118 Newton Road – Ms. Heller informed the audience that she has forwarded all site suggestions to Attorney Baldwin for Verizon’s consideration. The plans have also been forwarded to the owners of a large site in Bethany. Verizon is also investigating other properties. She also noted that she continues to update the residents via e-mails and requests that the recipients distribute the information to others interested in the issue. She also continues to provide updates in the weekly e-news and the monthly newsletter.

Mr. Weiner reminded the audience that the Board has retained Attorney Ira Bloom who is experienced with cell tower applications in other municipalities. Both he and Mr. Weiner have been in contact with Verizon. Verizon is in no rush to file an application, are willing to consider any suggestions and are taking their time to evaluate sites suggest by the Town and a couple that they have discovered.

He referred to a proposal from David Maxon of Isotrope Wireless for consulting services. Attorney Bloom has worked with Mr. Maxon on other projects and it appears that he has done work in Woodbridge in the past. The Board agreed to not act on the proposal until Verizon has narrowed its choices.

WOODBIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION – Interim Superintendent Christine Syriac

Ms. Syriac reported that:

Lunches are provided and all students are eligible

The Veterans Day Program will be virtual and live streaming

Departments are in the process of preparing their 2021-22 budgets

The proposed new position will not be considered in the 2021-22 budget

WOBE holding a Special Meeting on the 11th re COVID status and to decide on the new Superintendent

November 30th - December 4th – students will all participate in remote learning due to travel concerns

December 7th – it is planned to return to full in-person learning

Due to savings in staffing the deficit of \$136K has been reduced to \$104K

The Board thanked Ms. Syriac for her report and for her work as Interim Superintendent

LIAISON REPORTS

Ms. Stein: Library Commission – did not hold a meeting
Woodbridge Board of Education – was cover in the Superintendent’s report

Mr. Rowland: Human Services Commission – no available to attend meeting
Inland Wetlands Agency – 24 Center Road – construction of new home
21 Wolf Tree Drive – to be considered at next meeting

Mr. Crisco: Mr. Crisco reported that he has received several complaints of ATVs and motor bikes on the trails of the former country club property. Staff will ask that signs be installed citing the Ordinance prohibiting such activity.
Town Plan Zoning Commission – The Commission sent the application for an Active Adult Community on the north side of Bradley to the Regional Planning Commission for review.
Approved “stacked parking” for multi and single-family houses.

Mr. Cardozo: Recreation Commission – The Commission reviewed staff pay schedules and staffing resources.
Economic Development Commission – sending a survey resident as to what types of businesses they would like in town.

THOMAS DARLING HOUSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE – Richard Blackwell, Chair

Mr. Blackwell reported that he is very pleased with the progress at the Darling House Property. He narrated several photographs depicting the clean-up of the grounds, removal of dead trees and pruning of others and clearing of brush along the fence. The privy and pig house have been painted and the fence will be repaired and painted in the spring

Chris Sorensen and his crew have cleared the vegetation from the back of the cow barn and uncovered the circular stone foundation of the old grain silo. Chris Sorensen and public works personnel removed the old Lucy Street (“Little Lucy”) school that has been stored in the cow barn for several years. A Woodbridge resident plans to erect it on his property.

Several members of the Society were present to inventory the items in the barn. Mr. Blackwell noted that there are two deary 19th century sleighs and hoped the Society would consider displaying one for the holidays. He said that removing the schoolhouse has allowed the Society to conduct a structural engineering study on the cow barn and the recently awarded grant will also fund structural engineering studies on the ice house and the horse barn. The studies are expected to be conducted in the spring of 2021.

The Society and the Committee plan to work together and hope to utilize Town media to encourage volunteers. All plans/ideas presented to the Selectmen by the committee will be reviewed by the Society. Mr. Blackwell noted that Rick Weiss acting as pro bono consultant will provide valuable expertise in finding funding sources to complete many projects, as the restoration of the 1773 cow barn, icehouse, and horse barn.

Ms. Heller and Mr. Cardozo thanked Mr. Blackwell for the report and expressed their appreciation for the cooperation to accomplish the work.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Clerk stated that she received no e-mails for public comments by close of business today.

FARMLAND LEASES

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Stein) to award the farm leases for 2021 as presented with removal of the request for fields at 1907 Litchfield Turnpike as noted:

- Tim Kriz – 13 Bear Hill Road, Bethany
- a. 1936 Litchfield Turnpike
 - b. 1966 Litchfield Turnpike - Eicher Property
 - c. Zwick Property – 282 Seymour Road

NOTE: Mr. Kriz also requested the north field and the field adjacent to West River located on the Darling House property at 1907 Litchfield Turnpike. The motion will reflect that these two fields will be referred to the Amity & Woodbridge Historical Society and the Thomas Darling House Advisory Committee for discussion and report back for the Board of Selectmen December 9, 2020 meeting.

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

Krystyna & 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.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/DIRECTOR OF FINANCE REPORT

Monthly Report – Mr. Genovese reported that as of October 31st he is projecting a year-end deficit of \$213,778. Because the current Town budget includes an allocation from fund balance of \$400,000, projected decrease to fund balance at year end is \$613,778. Fund balance at 6/30/21 is projected to be \$5.9M or 11.8% of annual projected expenses.

He noted that the Town has received \$70K from the COVID fund and \$36K from FEMA. Mr. Genovese thanked Ms. Hammill, Public Works Adm. Assistant for her hard work in apply for the funds. He also noted that tax collections are trending higher that this time last year and income from conveyance tax (sale of home) is increasing.

TAX REFUNDS

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statute Section 12-124 to 129 and the recommendation of the Tax Collector, the Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Crisco) to refund motor vehicle taxes in the amount \$12,155.07.

FUNDING REQUEST

Ms. Heller said that funding request 2021-07 in the amount of \$10,000 is to hire a part time Town Planner and made the following remarks.

“Should we choose to hire a Town planner, he or she could

- *create a plan to determine long-term use for the Town-owned former Country Club of Woodbridge*
- *revitalize the Town’s business district*
- *work on the planning and implementation of the Town’s Complete Streets plan*
- *help us coordinate with the federal government on the terrible flooding issues in lower Woodbridge*
- *help work on the State-required creation of an affordable housing plan*
- *add support to the ad hoc 2030 Task Force*

*Town Planners not only **plan** how to best use land while being mindful of big picture issues like tax revenue, recreation and open space needs, they also **implement** plans, and stay on top of regional and statewide issues. In our small town, these are all important things, and none of these issues fall clearly into any one’s job description. Instead they haphazardly land in the laps*

of either Tony and Betsy, reactively vs. proactively. Betsy and Tony who are tasked with a variety of other duties, and it puts a greater burden on their already full list of duties.

As I said before, I believe that this position is very important if we want to see thoughtful movement on improving our town for all residents through an expanded tax base, a thriving business district, diversified housing options, safer streets and more.

Thank you"

Note: the draft job description was included in the Board's meeting packet.

Ms. moved and Mr. Crisco seconded that the Board of Selectmen recommend funding request #2021-07 in the amount of \$10,000 to the Board of Finance.

Discussion – Ms. Stein agreed with Ms. Heller and said that there is plenty of work for someone with planning knowledge and expertise and is very important to augment the skill set now available to deal with many of the issues Ms. Heller mentioned, offer advice, and then translate into implementation. She noted that though the funding is small – it's a start to access the value of the position. There were no further comments and Ms. Heller called the question.

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED** to recommend the following funding request to the Board of Finance:

#2021-07 – Intradepartmental transfer Amount: \$ 10,000

To: Selectman's Office Part Time Clerical (1110-00/50310)

From: CNR/Selectman General Prof. Services (302-1100/52100)

Purpose: Hire Part Time Town Planner

(Heller – Crisco) Unanimously Approved

BID AWARDS

Bid #2021-01 – Brush Grinding – The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Stein) to award the bid for Brush Grinding to Running Brook Farms, LLC, 219 Route 80, Killingworth CT 06419 in the amount of \$33,000.

Bid #2021-02 – Sodium Chloride (Road Salt) – The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Cardozo) to award the bid for Sodium Chloride (Road Salt) to Champion Salt at \$58.08 per ton.

ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Event on Town property - Ms. Yagla presented a request to use the former country club property for a running race

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Stein – Crisco) to approve Jeffrey T. Gee of the Woodbridge Park Association use of the former Country Club of Woodbridge for a running event on December 6, 2020 (Rain date December 13, 2020).

Shelter Agreement – Ms. Yagla explained that currently the only "shelter" identified for weather or other emergencies is the Center Building (senior center/gym) and it might not be big enough due to COVID capacity restriction. The Board has entered into an agreement with the Woodbridge Board of Education to use part of Beecher Road School for over-flow.

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Rowland – Cardozo) to authorize the First Selectman to execute the Emergency Shelter Agreement with the Woodbridge Board of Education.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

Assessor Position – The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Stein – Cardozo) to offer the position of Assessor to Marsha Benno at the salary and additional subsidy described by Mr. Genovese.

Blight Control Officer – The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Stein – Rowland) to change the name of the position to Property Maintenance Officer and to offer the Eight (8) hour per week position to Michael Marganski at \$30.00/hour.

APPOINTMENT(S)

Agriculture Commission - The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** Heller – Crisco) to appoint the following to the new Agriculture Commission:

- Andrea Urbano for a term ending June 30, 2021
- Steve Munno for a term ending June 30, 2021
- Krystina Hulland for a term ending June 30, 2023
- Christian Sorensen for a term ending June 30, 2023
- Leland R.G. Torrence for a term ending June 30, 2023

Fire Commission: The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Cardozo – Heller) to appoint Stephanie Ciarleglio to the vacancy on the Fire Commission to June 30, 2023.

ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE 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, 2020 and the cumulative report from July 1, 2020 to October 31, 2020.

MINUTES

The minutes of the October 14, 2020 Regular Meeting were **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED** (Heller – Crisco)
The minutes of the October 20, 2020 Special Meeting were **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED** (Heller – Stein)

TOWN COUNSEL'S REPORT

Updates – Town Plan & Zoning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals Applications

Active Adult Community – North Side of Bradley Road, developer Steve Weiss has applied for a zoning permit change for the property he owns on the north side of Bradley to develop an “Active Adult Community”.

New England Brewery has received a zoning variance to construct the new brewery on the south side of Bradley Road.

America Medical Response Contract (“AMR”) – the Town is in negotiations with AMR as the current contract expires on December 31, 2020.

COMMENT ON CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Stein commented on the photographs of Shanti's Rose Garden included in the packet under correspondence. She remarked on the beauty of the Prasad Family's generous gift to the Town that has been installed along the Community Garden path on the Fitzgerald Property.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 6:29 p.m. the Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Stein) to enter into executive session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 1-200(6) for the following purpose:

- a. discussion of application to amend zoning regulations re 2 Orchard Road pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 1-200(6)(B)
- b. discussion of draft agreement re C-MED Services pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 1-210(a)(1)

At 7:25 p.m. the Board of Selectmen moved out of executive session and returned to the regular session.

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

ADJOURNMENT

On a non-debatable motion by Mr. Cardozo, seconded by Mr. Dey the meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Geraldine S. Shaw, Clerk