

**BOARD of SELECTMEN  
SPECIAL MEETING  
September 26, 2016 at 7:30pm  
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM**

**Present:** Acting First Selectman Dennis Tracey, Selectman Chris Spaulding, Town Administrator Tom Landry, Administrative Assistant Randi Derene, Weston Residents

**This meeting was videotaped. The tapes are available in the Selectmen's office. The meetings are available for viewing online via the Town's website.**

**Mr. Tracey called the meeting to order at: 7:30pm**

**Pledge of Allegiance:** led by Dennis Tracey

**Discussion/decision to appoint Roberto Ordonez as an Alternate on the Board of Assessment Appeals to fill the term vacated by Leslie Riback to end December 31, 2019. Mr. Spaulding made the motion. Mr. Tracey seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Discussion/decision regarding Building Committee PD Renovation Report – Allen Swerdlowe, Building Committee Chairman.** Mr. Swerdlowe presented their June 29<sup>th</sup> report (see attached). The Building Committee unanimously voted for Option #2. Mr. Spaulding asked about foreseen operational costs with different options – Mr. Swerdlowe advised that operational costs would be lower with a new building vs. renovating an old building. Discussion ensued regarding renovation options.

**Discussion/decision regarding interest in possible adoption of a blight ordinance**  
Mr. Tracey explained the reasons for a blight ordinance – under state law, the municipality is empowered to pass such an ordinance to state whether a premise is blighted and to provide remedies. An ordinance would provide standards to follow regarding whether the house is a safety hazard or causing blight in the neighborhood. This topic will continue to be discussed. Former First Selectman Gayle Weinstein added her input. Some of the issues that came up were to make sure the ordinance is enforceable, particularly in a suburban setting. Another issue is to address persons who cannot afford to maintain their homes. Discussion will be continued.

**Discussion of Norfield Road tree condition and Tree Warden hearing process– Bill Lomas.** Mr. Lomas posted the tree under state law on September 26. Mr. Lomas assessed the tree. He has received requests from the Bus Company, Police Chief, Police Commission, Superintendent, and Town Engineer to remove the tree. He's had other letters from residents asking him to remove the tree due to a line of sight issue. He has had the health of the tree assessed by experts – reports are attached. Taking all this into consideration, Mr. Lomas feels that it is an unnecessary risk to keep the tree standing. Mr. Lomas is now accepting comments from residents and will hold a public hearing if

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necessary to hear from residents personally. The final decision would then be made by Mr. Lomas.

A resident asked for confirmation that the tree is on town property and covered under town insurance – the answer was yes to both

Ms. Margaret Wirtenberg stated that there was a public hearing about this back in 1998 – it can now be viewed on the town website.

Resident Michelle Halpin asked about the hearing from 20 years ago and wanted to know if the road was widened as per F/S Guidera's request. The road was not widened, but the grade of the hill was reduced to increase site visibility. Mr. Tracey reviewed the mitigations that were put into place by Guidera and implemented.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Chairman, Ray Rauth, asked about widening the road on the other side – and also stated it is a notable tree

Weston Arts Commission member, Cindy Armijo, made suggestion about making a memorial for the tree – perhaps creating a bench from the wood for example – and letting one of our many artists in town create something to remember the tree.

Mr. Joe Parsons asked if the reports are publicly available. Mr. Lomas said he will have them all on the town website tomorrow.

Police Commission member, Dawn Egan, and Animal Control Officer, Mark Harper, also spoke in support of removing the tree.

**Discussion/decision regarding request for access to the vehicle Sinking Fund in an amount not to exceed \$45,000 for the purpose of purchasing an Animal Control Van – Mark Harper** Mr. Harper spoke of his need for a new van with AWD. Since companies have stopped making 4WD vans, a new van would be purchased and then modified with 4WD, as well as adding lettering, security partition and a radio. Mr. Landry confirmed this has been included in the budget. Mr. Spaulding moved to approve a withdrawal from the Vehicle Sinking Fund in an amount not to exceed \$45,000 for the purpose of purchasing an Animal Control Van. Mr. Tracey seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Discussion regarding general update and next steps in the animal rescue operation of birds and reptiles at 82 Newtown Turnpike-** Mark Harper. This item will be tabled as the case is still open.

**Discussion/decision regarding Authorization to Enter into Agreements with Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection.** Mr. Spaulding moved to authorize the First Selectman to enter into agreements with the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. Mr. Tracey seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**Discussion/decision regarding approval of meeting minutes of: August 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup>.** Mr. Spaulding moved to approve the BOS Meeting minutes of August 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. Mr Tracey seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

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**Discussion/decision regarding approval of the following tax refunds:**

<b>Douglas Shankman</b>	<b>\$251.98</b>
<b>Honda Financial</b>	<b>\$988.46</b>
<b>Sandra Weigman</b>	<b>\$26.99</b>
<b>Walter Dadik</b>	<b>\$116.52</b>
<b>USB Leasing LT.</b>	<b>\$1374.10</b>
<b><u>Daimler Trust</u></b>	<b><u>\$2142.68</u></b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b><u>\$4900.73</u></b>

Mr. Spaulding moved to approve the Property Tax Refunds, as listed above, for a total amount of \$4900.73. Mr. Tracey seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Acting First Selectman's Update:**

- a. **Eversource Transmission Line Project** – this is to upgrade transmission lines that go through Redding and Wilton, with a very small portion in Weston. They will be replacing the existing lines with higher gauge lines.
- b. **Job searches for Town Assessor, Town Administrator and Youth Services Director.** Mr. Landry gave an update – at this time we have 3 applicants for youth director, we have 3 applicants for town assessor and 2 candidates for the Town Administrator.
- c. **Update on CT D.O.T. Route 57 Construction Project.** Mr. Landry stated this is not a town project, it is a state project. The project engineer Jim Zarevich explained the process (see copy of his statement attached)

**Adjourn:** Mr. Tracey moved to adjourn at 9:25pm. Mr. Spaulding seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Randi Derene, Administrative Assistant

Approved: October 26, 2016

New Police Facility Report  
The Building Committee  
June 29, 2016

Over the past six months, the Building Committee (BC) has reviewed and vetted various alternatives for building a new Police Facility in Weston. The three main alternates are as follows:

**Option 0**

First proposed in 2013, the firm of Humes Jacunski designed a new “Public Service Facility” to be constructed west of the existing Fire Station. The proposed 14-15,000 sf building has offices and facilities for Police, EMS, the public, and a connection to the existing Fire Station. It has a service court for emergency and official vehicles with two means of egress – one to Norfield Rd, the other to Routes 53/57. The building has a public “face”, main entrance and public parking located off of Routes 53/57 behind the Onion Barn. All public business and emergencies would be conducted here. The Onion barn would remain as is in a newly constructed plaza. Current site issues, including drainage and septic are resolved in this option.

**Option 1**

Proposed by First Selectman Nina Daniels in 2015, this option would require the acquisition of 48 Norfield Rd (aka: the Guidera Building), where several Town officials would relocate their offices from Town Hall. The architectural firm headed by Phil Cerrone was retained to study the feasibility of creating Town offices at 48 Norfield. His report itemized an expenditure of about \$500,000, including work both immediately necessary and optional, to provide new structure, insulation, septic, site improvements, accessibility and to bring the building to code for the stated occupancy. The Police would renovate vacated Town Hall offices as well as their existing space into a newly refurbished 8,300 sf Police facility designed by Humes Jacunski.

**Option 2**

The Town was asked by the BC in 2016 to study the feasibility of constructing an addition on the north side of Town Hall for additional Police facilities. Humes Jacunski developed a proposal to add about 3,200 sf to Town Hall. This plan, along with renovation of existing Police facilities (5,700 sf), leaves Town offices as is, thereby, rendering the purchase of 48 Norfield unnecessary for the relocation of Town offices. It also allows for expansion of EMS adjacent to their current facility and all emergency vehicles to be located in an emergency court away from the public. Some police and personal vehicles would still be parked on the upper level by the communications tower. A public entrance is located on the upper level opposite the library.

## **Findings**

Regarding the construction of new Police facilities, the BC has attended and presented in various venues, including, but not limited to, their own meetings and those of the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and Police Commission. It has conferred with Selectmen, Police Commissioners, the Police Chief, the President of EMS, the Town Administrator and the public. It concludes the following:

If cost were not a factor, the BC would strongly recommend Option 0. It builds for the immediate and long-term and places all necessary public and emergency functions in the right place with the correct adjacencies. It provides a recognizable front door for the public and eliminates current confusion of where to go in an emergency. It allows for all Town offices to move back to Town Hall. Nevertheless, though visionary and practical, it requires a significant investment with bonding, which may not be feasible to achieve at this time.

We recommend taking another look at Option 0 by modifying the plan to reflect the reduced square footage requirement in Option 2. In the long run, this option may be economically prudent for the Town, in that it allows for Land Use and other offices to move back into the vacated Police Station. Additionally, it would be constructed and occupied with virtually no disruption to the business of the Town, Police and EMS. The BC is not opposed to reviewing this modified option, which should include an analysis of how offices now in Jarvis and the portables would work in the current Police Station.

Option 1, the purchase of 48 Norfield, could make a welcoming statement at the gateway to Weston. With the implementation of a streetscape program (sidewalks, new crosswalk materials, lighting and signage), it would signify and define Weston as a "place". However, it would further fragment Town offices into four places – Town Hall, Jarvis, the portables and itself and would inconvenience the public, its vendors and visitors when doing business with the Town. It also requires the moving of files and paperwork from one place to another with wasted staff time and performance. Nevertheless, the acquisition of 48 Norfield and its reprogramming for an Arts Center, Informational office, Historic office, etc., or combination of such is a wonderful idea and should be independently pursued by the Town.

If a revised Option 0 is not further studied, then Option 2 is the preferred alternative. It is competitively priced with Option 1 and does not require additional bonding at this time. It allows for the expansion of EMS and segregates public and emergency functions with all current facilities remaining under one roof and in one place. However, in the next several years, the long-term goal of bringing offices at Jarvis and the portables back to Town Hall will require a second addition to Town Hall, the cost of which should be studied along with this option. Unlike Option 0, it will disturb the work of Police and Town during construction and does not strategically solve all the issues as identified in that option.