

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF WESTBROOK, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING
September 9, 2021
Mulvey Municipal Center
Multi-Media Room and via ZOOM

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectman Bishop called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. In attendance included; First Selectman Bishop, Selectman Hall, Selectman Fuchs, Rich Annino, Director of Park & Rec., David Maiden, Building Official, Donna Castracane, Director of Finance, Courtney Burks, Director Senior Center, Chet Bialicki, Kit Bishop, Amy Amenta, Kevin McCarthy, Tony Cozza, BOF member, Ken Butterworth, IT, Taylor Foss, Great Blue Research, Paul Winch, BOF member/Westbrook Foundation President, Jack Boehme, Pat Marcarelli, COB President, Heidi Wallace, Inland Wetland Official, Lee McNamar, WPCA Chairman, Vince Gentile, Fire Dept., Retirement Board, Don Izzo, Emergency Management Director, Chris Ehlert, BOF member/Energy Committee Chair, Darlene Briggs, 7 other audience members

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION – Westbrook Community Center

Mr. Bishop reported that at the 6/8/21 meeting, the BOS made the following motion:

“Mr. Bishop made a motion that the Ad Hoc Committee (members listed above), review information developed by Great Blue, and provide recommendations to the BOS no later than 8/10/21. Said recommendations are to include action steps, potential project costs, location of proposed Community Center, on-going maintenance costs, a business plan to include projected revenues and operating costs. Additional individuals/entities will be involved as appropriate. Mr. Fuchs seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously”.

The Committee has met twice and offered the following:

- A draft of a plan/specs for a potential Community Center
 - 12,000 sq. ft.
 - Gym
 - Multi Purpose Room
 - Office space
 - Open lobby
 - Pre-school room/party room
- The Lee Co. and Old Saybrook Rec. Center were toured.
 - Lee Co. has the type of building that the Committee is considering
- The Outlet Center was considered as an area that may have space for a Community Center
 - After meeting with Outlet manager, they are not interested in a Community Center at their location.
- In consultation with the Superintendent of Schools, there is no space at the schools for a Community Center.
 - Mr. Bishop will follow-up with Dr. Martineau, Superintendent of Schools, to provide documentation relative to potential space at the schools as enrollments have dropped considerably in recent years.
 - Note that the schools were not designed as a Community Center and the central location of the gym may post security concerns when school is in session. Also, the schools use the space throughout the day and it would not be available for community use.
- Potential locations for a Community Center: Dump Road, Wren Park, area between Library and Daisy.
 - Wren Park and Library/Daisy area have access to electric, water and gas
- A list of potential new programs (Senior Center and Park & Rec.) included in BOS packet and posted to website.
- A cost analysis developed by Ms. Castracane, Director of Finance, included revenue and expenditure estimates.

As previously discussed, Great Blue Research was commissioned to develop and administer a survey to Westbrook residents to determine the interest in a Community Center. Over 700 survey responses were

received. Mr. Taylor Foss, Great Blue Research, provided an executive summary of the results and was available to respond to questions/comments from BOS members and the public.

There was a question regarding the potential for coordination of programs with the YMCA. A resident reported that the YMCA could offer no space for daytime court use to accommodate Pickle Ball.

Ms. Burks, Senior Center Director, and Mr. Annino, Park & Rec. Director, provided information relative to increased programs/ services that could be provided at a Community Center. Currently the Town does not have ample space for necessary growth of programs and services.

Mr. Winch, BOF member and Westbrook Foundation Chairman, reported that the Westbrook Foundation is supportive of a Community Center and looks forward to working with the Town on same.

Ms. Burks and Mr. Annino provided an update on initiatives in surrounding towns; i.e. Old Saybrook and Clinton. Ms. Burks reported that the Town of Clinton has created a part-time Senior Center position and they are in the infancy stage of developing a Senior Center. She does frequently work with the Old Saybrook Estuary (Meals on Wheels Program); however, as programs in Old Saybrook are federally funded and the Westbrook Senior Center is town funded, it is difficult to regionalize programs. Mr. Annino reported that the Old Saybrook Rec Center only allows Old Saybrook residents use of the facility (non-residents using the facility must be accompanied by an Old Saybrook resident).

Mr. Fuchs requested that additional information on a “business model” and construction costs be provided to include site work, day to day expenses. Mr. Maiden, Building Official, will refine the cost estimates and contact local contractors for pricing/estimates on site work, etc. Wren Park, as a potential location for a Community Center would require perk tests to determine if the site is appropriate.

The consensus of the Board was to not explore costs associated with the inclusion of an Emergency Shelter.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Bishop made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:49 p.m. Mr. Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Attest,

Suzanne Helchowski
Executive Assistant

Noel Bishop
First Selectman