

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
October 12, 2017

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, October 12, 2017, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and noted that the meeting was being recorded by the Country Journal reporter.

Present: William Sayre, David Mathers and Denise Banister

Also present: Jason Connell (Fire Chief), Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Peter Spotts (reporter, Country Journal), Kenneth Taylor, Santo Tomasine, Savannah Tomasine, Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

Police: Shane Pinkham, Charles Valencik, Denise Wickland

1. Personnel – employee evaluation – Fire Chief Jason Connell – Board members feel that Chief Connell is knowledgeable, capable, innovative and caring. He is well respected, taps into the expertise of department members, and encourages camaraderie. He works well with the Police Department and departments from surrounding towns. He is working hard to bring the department up to what is needed today. He is learning about making do with limited resources. Board members would like to see budget reports quarterly, to get a handle on the budget lines earlier in the year. The Town Administrator added that she enjoys working with him, that he is easy to talk to, he gets back to her in a timely way, he looks for grants, and follows through. Board members agreed that the town is lucky to have him as Fire Chief.

2. Fire Department – Fire Chief Jason Connell made his regular report to the Board. The run numbers have increased; 289 incidents so far this year, with an average of three responders per call. They are paying members quarterly, to help track labor costs more effectively, and capping the amount paid toward training. They have adopted a new patch to represent the department, combining elements from the two original engine companies. The gear washer is up and running, thanks to the great support of Jim Moran and Winston Bancroft (plumbing and installation donated by Moran and electrical by Bancroft). The gear washer will also be available to the police. He described the various town activities that members are involved in on a volunteer basis or through grants and donations. The Firefighters Association maintains the lights along the sidewalks in the center of Williamsburg. Members also buy and donate equipment. He reported on issues with the vehicles. Tires are supposed to be replaced every seven years, and all the apparatus is over ten years old, though most departments do not adhere to the rules. It was noted that the critical issue is sidewall cracks; fire trucks are always out in the sun. When there are inspections for permits, he would like the inspector to keep the whole permit fee instead of giving a portion back to the town; he will follow up with the Town Administrator. He talks to Denise Banister a lot and considers her to be his liaison with the Select Board.

3. Highway – vehicle fuel tank quote – Highway Superintendent reported that the department uses 400 gallons of fuel for an eight to twelve inch snowstorm. The current tank holds 1000 gallons and they have run out occasionally. They used to get emergency fuel from a local

business that is no longer operating. He said his big concern is that there would be a storm with power outages for a week. He proposed a new tank, holding 2000 gallons, for \$9000, from the same company that put in the new fuel system. Concerning whether this would be a replacement tank or an additional tank, he said there is no reason to get rid of old tank, it could just be capped. Although he thought it would have no value, he will look into selling it on Municibid. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to support the vehicle fuel tank purchase, for \$9000, which will be Article 4 at Special Town Meeting. **So voted** (3-0)

4. Highway – Highway Superintendent Bill Turner reported that they are starting the water main project on South Main Street and there is a little more to do on Petticoat Hill Road. Board members pointed out that there outdated signs referring to a construction zone in Conway which could be removed.

5. Police – personnel – Police Chief Denise Wickland introduced two candidates for part-time officer positions. Charles (Chad) Valencik is a full-time officer at the Veterans' Administration and a part-time officer in Chesterfield; she has worked with him. Shane Pinkham was sponsored by the town at the Police Academy; he has done a lot of volunteer ride time; this is his first law enforcement job. Shane said he was excited about working in a small community and interacting with people in positive ways. Chad says he has lived in Chesterfield much of his life and Williamsburg is like a second home. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to appoint Charles Valencik III and Shane Pinkham as part-time Police Officers, term to June 30, 2018. **So voted** (3-0). The Board welcomed the two new officers.

6. Licenses – live entertainment – Santo Tomasine of the Hampshire Lodge of the Masons requested a live entertainment permit for a jazz combo and another live band for their Chili Cook-off. He explained that the name is the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, originally brick layers. They are hoping to reconnect with the community and do more events to raise money for charity. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to grant a Live Entertainment permit to the Hampshire Lodge for live entertainment on Saturday, October 28, rain date Sunday, October 29, from 12 to 3 p.m. **So voted** (3-0).

7. Senior and Veterans' Volunteer Tax Relief programs –

a. Number of participants – The Administrative Assistant reminded the Board that, because of the number of applicants, they had wanted to consider raising the number of places in the Senior tax work-off program. Assessor Denise Banister reported that the Assessors had no objection to raising the number from ten to fifteen. The Administrative Assistant had estimated that eleven people would probably earn about \$13,000; the maximum liability for fifteen people earning the maximum amount of \$1500 each would be \$22,500. Since the money comes out of the overlay, it does not affect the budget, but it does affect taxes. There are currently twelve applicants. Board members felt that the work being done was worthwhile, that twelve sounded reasonable, and that the number could be raised again as needed. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to increase the number of Senior Tax Work-off people from ten to twelve. **So voted** (3-0).

b. Approval of applications – Twelve applications for the Senior program for twelve positions, one being shared by a couple, and two applications for the Veterans' program were presented.

Motion was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the applications as presented. **So voted** (3-0).

8. Conservation Commission – personnel – The Conservation Commission had appointed Melinda McCall as their secretary. The Select Board acknowledged the Conservation Commission’s authority to appoint their own secretary and extended a welcome to Melinda McCall.

9. Veterans’ Day – Gordon Cranston and Jim LeBeau had both given years of work to the Veterans’ Memorial Committee. The Board, wishing to recognize and appreciate their work, signed Certificates of Appreciation, for presentation on Veterans’ Day. It was decided which Selectmen would speak at Veterans’ Day.

10. Public Safety Complex – Board members commented that the recent forum on the public safety complex was a good community discussion. There are a number of people who don’t want to use the James lot and there was a sense that the Owners Project Manager should look at other sites, though that might cost more than the \$30,000 being requested from Special Town Meeting. It was acknowledged that the make-up of the current Public Safety Complex Committee is not the right composition to consider the larger issue of the use of the whole James Building and lot. One possibility, favored by the Public Safety Complex Committee, is to expand the committee and add new voices; another possibility is to form a new committee, the OPM Steering Committee. The Board looked at a draft charge of an OPM Steering Committee and list of possible names, to be discussed at the next meeting.

Capital Plan – The Board also looked at three possible capital plans with varying costs for the Public Safety Complex, and a spreadsheet showing the average family tax bill, town’s total debt, the town’s total reserves, and the target recommended minimum for the reserves. The Board will plan to discuss at the next meeting with the chairs of Finance and Capital Planning.

11. Personnel review process – Chair William Sayre described the proposed changes for the employee evaluation process, including having a designated Board member gather comments, meet one-on-one with the employee, and report to the Board meeting. Meeting one-on-one could make for honest dialog and the opportunity to talk about goals, both of the employee and of the department. Board members liked the proposed process and will try it out with two employees this year, Highway Superintendent and Town Administrator.

12. Department liaisons – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that several of the department heads liked the idea of a Select Board liaison. Assignments will be made next meeting.

13. Town Administrator’s report –

Helen E. James playground – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi conveyed concerns from Building Supervisor John Hoogstraten. The playground equipment is not about to fall apart but may have splinters. Other areas of concern are the curb, sandbox and garden structures. Charlene has been in touch with MIIA, the town’s insurance company.

Insurance for vacant buildings – She is in the process of getting quotes for insuring the Haydenville Library and Old Town Hall. As of now she would recommend staying with MIIA.
Insurance for Old Town Hall contents – The Historical Society does not have insurance for items in the Old Town Hall.

Municipal aggregation – electricity – Information session will be held October 21, hosted by the Energy Committee.

Health insurance costs – Group insurance will be making increases and will be able to change costs without negotiating with the unions. Teachers are upset that they weren't asked to weigh in. On the other hand, the current teachers' contract does not require that the teachers' union be consulted.

Hampshire Regional capital plan – High School principal had noted that not everything on the draft plan will be funded and nothing is in the works right now.

Helen E. James fall cleanup – Final fall cleanup by Rory Zononi will be \$350; last year it was less because they were mulching, not removing. She will go out to bid for next year's mowing, in the winter.

Snow clearing – Snow clearing by Ken Woofenden at Town Offices and Fire Department has the same prices as last year. She will go out to bid for next year, in the spring.

Tree cutting complaints – A concern was raised that more town trees were cut and the proper process was not followed. A suggestion was made to add provisions to the driveway permit specifying the process for removing trees. Highway Superintendent Bill Turner is being asked for his input.

Parking in Lashway lot – It was confirmed that about 30 cars were parked there for the Town Picnic.

Police/Fire basement windows – Open windows are on Building Supervisor's list to address. It was noted that the basement was well cleaned.

Jim Locke memorial – Memorial will be November 4 at 2 at the Dunphy School.

Assessors' and Town Clerk's new computers – Ongoing issues have been resolved, using a lot of hours. Charlene is working on improving communication.

Mill River Greenway RFQ responses – They received three responses and will meet Friday to review them.

Helen E. James loss of power – Electricity went off Sunday night, pumps did not run, and the elevator area was flooded.

Free cash certification – Free cash certified at \$821,000, more than estimated.

Lighting in auditorium – New LED lights would be a low-cost improvement.

Microphones – There have been complaints about not being able to hear when meetings have been held in the auditorium. She will look into possibilities.

Mill River Greenway funds – They got \$30,000 in transportation funds and are very excited.

National Grid bill – She noted that overbilling was found and addressed, four \$80 service charges for streetlights.

14. Minutes –

Employee evaluation 9/28 – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the employee evaluation of Denise Wickland. **So voted** (3-0). Board members commented on how lucky the town is to have her.

Minutes 9/28 – It was noted that the Town Administrator and Administrative Assistant had heard things slightly differently. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to approve the minutes of September 28. **So voted** (3-0).

15. Warrant – Approved and signed the warrant.

16. Miscellaneous –

Valley View Road – Nothing has been heard from the individual. Other sources say that all of the property behind Tilley's was sold.

Special Town Meeting – Meeting Monday, October 16. Board members decided who would move which articles.

Police – A comment was made that the two new officers are very impressive young men.

Transfer Station – A Board member who spent time handing out information at the Transfer Station noted being very impressed with how the Transfer Station is operating.

Fire patches – The new patch and old patches will be put in a frame. Board members commented that it was nice that the department has become one.

Fireworks – There were fireworks Sunday night at a private event. Some people thought it sounded like gunfire and called 9-1-1. The Town Administrator had made sure that Dispatch and Zoning Enforcement were notified.

Documents used

Agenda and notes

Fire Department report

Vehicle fuel tank quote

Live entertainment application

Senior and Veterans volunteer tax relief program list and applications

Certificates of appreciation for Veterans' Memorial Committee

Draft charge for OPM Steering Committee

Personnel review process

Minutes

Warrant and expense report

Adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk