

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
November 17, 2022

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, November 17, 2022, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

Present: Denise Banister and William Sayre

Absent: David Mathers

Also present: Nick Caccamo (Town Administrator), Nathan Rosewarne (Treasurer), Sharon Strzegowski (Collector), Aimee Wallace (Police), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant), Denise Wickland (Police Chief)

1. Treasurer – Treasurer Nathan Rosewarne made his regular report. Following the work on the public safety complex bond in the summer, things are quiet. He is balancing with the Accountant and catching up with the Collector's turnovers. Soon he'll focus on W-2's, ACA reporting, and tax title. The tax title for 125 Goshen Road is moving forward at the usual slow pace. In response to the audit, the Assistant Treasurer has been added as signer on a few accounts, and the Treasurer and the Accountant reconcile more frequently. Board members thanked him for his good work.

2. Police –

New employee – Chief Police Wickland introduced Aimee Wallace, who had worked for the department before and is interested in returning. Chief Wickland recommended hiring her back, with six-month probation, part-time, one shift a week, with additional shifts if she wants them. **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to appoint Aimee Wallace to the position of part-time police officer, effective today, November 17, and the six month probationary period starts today. **So voted** (2-0).

Police outside detail rate – Chief Wickland recommended increasing the police detail rate from \$50 per hour to \$60 per hour, with the overtime rate \$90 per hour, and raising the cruiser use fee from \$12 to \$15. There is also a 10% administrative fee on the labor. Outside details are paid by the companies, with no cost to the town, and can provide a way for the officers to supplement their pay. She presented a list of the current rates of other towns. Officers are required to work in their home communities before going to another town. The town gets requests for two to three details a week, so an officer who wants a detail would get perhaps one eight-hour detail a week. **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to increase Williamsburg's detail rate from \$50 per hour to \$60 per hour, effective Dec. 1. **So voted** (2-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to increase the cruiser use fee from \$12 per hour to \$15 per hour, effective Dec. 1. **So voted** (2-0).

Sick time – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to approve the use of sick time by the Police Chief to care for a family member, at her discretion. **So voted** (2-0).

Board members thanked her. She said she loves it here and even with better-paying possibilities elsewhere, she is choosing to stay here and be happy.

3. Collector –

Report on collections – New Collector Sharon Strzegowski plans to report to the Board quarterly. She presented a list of outstanding balances. Motor vehicle excise tax balances are minimal. People need to pay before they can renew a license. Personal property of businesses is all caught up for FY22 and includes some pre-payments for FY23. The pre-payment caused some confusion but it's now straightened out. The real estate balance is concerning. The steps are to send a demand, then advertise in the paper, then put a lien on the property. The previous Collector had been reluctant to do this, but the current Collector wants to follow the rules, clean things up and move forward with the process. Taxpayers are notified numerous times before the embarrassing advertising. Finally, water/sewer balances from the previous year are added to the real estate bill, as towns don't want to shut off water but need to protect the town's interests. Overall the amount outstanding is \$373,000, as compared to \$468,000 last year. The town is in good shape. The Assessors make the decision to move forward with tax title; the Board asked to receive a list when that happens.

Software – She said that the current software is very outdated and she has done some research. The best and most expensive system is Munis. Vadar is what she has used in the past and she likes it. QDS is the one she is recommending. Many towns in the area have been using its predecessor and are converting. Start-up cost is \$6,000, yearly cost is \$11,000. There are additional features for the Treasurer and Accountant that can be added. Payment information through Unibank can be uploaded automatically rather than being entered by hand. The system would talk to the Assessors' software. She has \$2000 in her budget, Assessors have \$1000, and Water/sewer could contribute some. She recommended starting with QDS at the end of FY23. ARPA money could be used for the one-time start-up cost of \$6,000, and the budget would need to be increased by \$8,000. Board members would like input from the Town Administrator and other departments and will plan to consider the request at the next meeting.

4. Highland Ambulance – Highland Ambulance Board member Denise Banister reported. She said they are limping along. They have issues with staffing paramedics and are looking at raising the pay. They are speccing out a new ambulance for next year. The building is holding up well but has a floor problem from when it was built. Cost of employee health insurance is going up. They are trying to get Medicare and Medicaid to reimburse more. Funds have been established for donations. She said Mike Rock is an incredible director.

5. Appointments – Mill River Greenway – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to change Frances Borden from full member to alternate member and to appoint Rachel Koh and John Connolly to the Mill River Greenway, through June 30, 2023. **So voted** (2-0)

6. Special Town Meeting – Board members reviewed the Special Town Meeting warrant and discussed who would present each article.

7. MassDOT transportation bond letter – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to sign the letter to MassDOT District Director Heming acknowledging receipt of information about the transportation bond bill. **So voted** (2-0).

8. Town Offices condition assessment – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo reported that the evaluation by Building Conservation Associates has been received, a good roadmap for preservation of the Town offices. Board members will review it to discuss and come up with a plan in the next few weeks. An immediate priority is new windows for office space and the meal site. There will be questions to answer about historic integrity and appearance, as well as good functioning. Nick Caccamo will work with the Capital Planning Committee. He reminded the Board that \$300,000 in renovations triggers the need to adhere to the building code. Nick will check with Dick Guzowski of the Energy Committee, who said there was a recent energy audit.

9. Staff evaluation schedule – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo reviewed the process for evaluation of staff members, including forms, timeline, and which board member will be reviewing which department head.

10. Senior and Veterans Volunteer Tax Relief Program – The Administrative Assistant reported that \$3615 was earned in the past year, less than in recent past years. The Senior Center used the most hours.

11. America Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo reported on the various approved projects. He will get input from staff about priorities for the Town Office improvements. Meal site upgrades are going piece by piece. Meekins gutter planning is in process. Assessors are getting quotes for the full field audit. For an energy audit of the Meekins, they are looking to join the Mass. Higher Education Consortium, a collective purchasing organization in the state, and procure an energy audit through them, ahead of the Green Communities block grant in the spring. New requests: Cemetery Commission requested money for deferred maintenance. The Collector requested money for software transition. Several people have asked to come before the Select Board to present their requests. Water/sewer would like to start the South Main Street project, important to do before MassDOT redoes the road. Discussion included whether taxpayers or ratepayers should pay for South Main Street, i.e., whether to use ARPA money or have it come up at Town Meeting for discussion. The MassDOT construction schedule needs to be determined. In terms of painting Old Town Hall, someone is needed to manage it and suggestions were made.

12. Town Administrator's report –

Vacation – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo reminded Board members that he will be on vacation Thanksgiving week.

MCPPO – He has signed up for the Mass. Certified Public Purchasing Official training Dec 6-8.

Winter travel – He initially couldn't get up over the mountain today. Snow tires will be put on next week. Last year there were no issues.

Newsletter – Newsletter is planned for January. He intends a direct mailing model, like the 250th Anniversary booklet, rather than a saturation mailing.

Crosswalk sign – A broken crosswalk sign will cost \$3-4,000 to replace. Board members thought that it could wait till spring when the ground is not frozen.

One Stop Grant, MassWorks – The MassWorks grant for the Mill River Greenway switchback was denied. Nick Caccamo and Nick Dines met with the administrators and learned a lot, and

think that the STRAP grant program, small town road safety program, is not the best source of money for that.

13. Correspondence – Roberts Energy had informed the Lower Pioneer Educational Collaborative that they would not honor their fixed price contracts for heating oil. LPVEC advised that the contracts could be rebid but the price of oil would come in very high. Roberts could be sued for breach of contract, but that could be very expensive once lawyers got involved. LPVEC recommended buying oil from the spot market and barring Roberts from future bids. It was suggested that the town ask Town Counsel for advice. Board members decided not to call Town Counsel at this time but could revisit the question later.

14. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to approve the minutes of November 3, regular meeting. **So voted** (2-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to approve the minutes of the November 3 special session as amended. **So voted** (2-0).

15. Warrant – Chair Denise Banister will review and sign the warrant. Payroll warrant WP23-11 for \$129,217.54 and expense warrant W23-11 for \$835,342.37, effective 11/23/22.

Documents used

Municipal police detail rates

Collector's outstanding balances

Letters of interest

Special Town Meeting warrant

MassDOT letter

Board/staff liaison/review list

Tax workoff report

LPVEC and Roberts Energy correspondence

Minutes

Adjourned at 12:13 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk