

*Minutes*  
*Williamsburg Board of Selectmen*  
*January 14, 2021*

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, January 14, 2021, by video conference call. The chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Present: William Sayre, David Mathers and Denise Banister

Also present: Jim Hyslip (Water Sewer), Dan Lovett (Hill Engineering), Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Nathan Rosewarne (Treasurer), Peter Spotts (reporter, Country Journal), Michael Sullivan (Interim Superintendent of Schools), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant), Melissa Wilson (Senior Center Director)

Local School Committee: Amber Smith-Harder, Matt Wilhelm, Marissa Nye (candidate)

1. School Committee – The joint meeting of the Board and the Local School Committee was called to order at 9:00 a.m. Matt Wilhelm, chair of the School Committee, explained that Cindy Kassell had resigned and Marissa Nye had stepped forward. Marissa has been attending School Committee meetings as a community member and parent, and the committee is excited to have her join the committee. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to appoint Marissa Nye to the School Committee, term to end June 30, 2021 (DM/DB). **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye, Wilhelm aye, Smith-Harder aye). Marissa was warmly welcomed, and reminded that she will need to be nominated at the caucus and elected for the term starting in July.

2. Senior Center – Senior Center Director Melissa Wilson gave her regular report. Staff members are working at home or in the office; there is always someone in the office Monday through Thursday. The new laptops and air purifiers are working well. The center is providing meals and responding to requests for medical equipment. They are putting together care packages for people over 80, both fun items and practical items. They have asked the Elder Trust Fund to provide some funding for this project. They are talking with the Library Director about a joint grant that will help seniors with technology. There are three new people joining the COA Advisory Board; a new chair will be elected next meeting. The Senior Center is part of the Northern Hilltown COA Consortium, which is funded by a grant through the Mass. Council on Aging. She has been in touch with the Board of Health and Veterans' Agent about vaccinations and has participated in the Emergency Dispensing meeting. The Board thanked her for the great job.

3. Police – Police Chief Denise Wickland will be rescheduled for next meeting.

4. National Day of Remembrance – On January 19, the day before the inauguration, there will be a national day of remembering people lost to Covid-19. It is recommended that churches ring bells and towns illuminate buildings. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to sign the proclamation of the National Day of Remembrance on January 19. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye).

5. 125 Goshen Road – Treasurer Nathan Rosewarne presented the draft Purchase and Sale Agreement and Deed for the property that was taken by tax title. Jason Harder had made the successful bid, of \$15,100, at the auction. The closing is expected around February 1. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DB) to authorize the Board to sign the Purchase and Sale Agreement and the Quitclaim Deed as prepared by the Town’s attorney for property at 125 Goshen Road. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye).

6. Heating oil contract – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi explained that this is the time of year to renew the town’s heating oil contract for next winter through the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative, and recommended signing it for 11,000 gallons, which is 80% of the town’s average use, and authorizing the LPVEC staff person to lock in the price when it is a good time. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to sign the Notice of Buy Order and Designation of Agent for the purchase of 11,000 gallons of heating fuel oil. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye).

7. Payroll – State minimum wage – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi said that the state minimum wage went up to \$13.50 per hour on January 1, and the town has five library positions which are now below the minimum wage. While municipalities are not subject to the minimum wage law, Board members would like to follow it. The issue was initially tabled until the cost of the increase was known. Later in the meeting it was learned that the cost is \$50 per payroll, for the 13 remaining payrolls of the year, or \$650. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to increase the five positions below the state minimum wage up to the \$13.50 minimum wage. The increase is retroactive to January 1, 2021. **So voted** (DM aye, DM aye, WS).

8. Hampshire Regional Superintendent screening committee – A screening committee for school superintendent is being formed and will include one slot for a person to represent the five towns. No one from the Board of Selectmen or Finance Committee is interested in this slot. Matt Wilhelm from the School Committee is already on the screening committee, and care will be taken in putting the committee together that Williamsburg is well represented, perhaps through a teacher, principal, or parent. The screening committee is just to go from a long list of applicants to a short list of finalists; there will be plenty of opportunity for feedback on the finalists. The Board decided no action was needed.

9. Town Administrator’s report –

Covid-19 update – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that the town has no active cases. The Board of Health chair is continuing to complete documents and provide information for the Emergency Dispensing Site. The school had one case over the holidays, but no exposure to the school, and families are continuing to be proactive. One town employee is out because of possible exposure and is awaiting test results. The town sign boards will emphasize wearing masks.

Private school – There was an inquiry about a private school and whether it would be allowed in the rural district. This was forwarded to the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

Oldest resident, Boston Post Cane – Helen Molloy, the town’s oldest resident, has passed away, and the Town Clerk has informed the Board of the next person to be awarded the Boston Post Cane. The normal procedure involves getting in touch with the person or family and potentially acknowledging the person with a ceremony, a certificate or proclamation, and a small replica

cane. In the days of Covid an in-person ceremony is not possible. Selectmen's staff will follow up.

Highway – Charlene reported that the Highway Department worked a lot over the holidays, with no time off. The Highway Superintendent will be taking comp time since he is not allowed to accumulate too much. The Board will write a card of thanks for their dedication and service.

All Boards meeting – An All Boards meeting with a presentation from the OPM Steering Committee is planned for Thursday, February 18, at 6 p.m.

Budget – Charlene reported that budget request forms are ready to go out to the departments, and the joint letter from the Finance Committee and Select Board has been drafted. Board members approved the letter.

Newsletter – The OPM Steering Committee plans to send out a stand-alone 6 page newsletter. There are not enough items to make a regular newsletter, so other items can be posted on the website or sent out electronically.

Hampshire Regional budget meeting – Charlene attended a preliminary budget meeting. She will reach out to Sen. Hinds and Rep. Blais for projections about state aid.

Mountain Street – Charlene reported that the 25% design plans are being reviewed. She and Select Board chair William Sayre, Highway Superintendent Dan Banister and Joint Transportation Committee alternate representative Nick Dines attended the Joint Transportation Committee meeting about the TIP. She noted that Rep. Blais has emphasized that it is very important for the town to attend these meetings regularly. Charlene has met with Town Counsel and MassDOT to talk about Right of Way acquisitions. Obtaining the right of way for one property in Hatfield will require legislation.

10. Depot Road culvert – Jim Hyslip of the Water/Sewer Commission and HyGround Engineering and Dan Lovett of Hill Engineering reported on the current state of the Depot Road culvert project. The current structure is a five foot long, round corrugated pipe in various stages of collapse that is long overdue for replacement. A grant for \$350,000 has been obtained. Jim Hyslip showed pictures of the existing and the proposed culverts. Since construction needs to be done in July/August/September during the low water period, they are gearing up for this summer. The plan is for a precast open bottom culvert, with footings on top of the shallow bedrock, and increasing the length from five feet to just under ten feet. The previous design had been for a 25 foot span with a cost of well over \$1 million and adhering to the Stream Crossing Guidelines. The new plan is for 9.6 feet – under 10 feet does not require the Stream Crossing Guidelines – at a cost within the \$350,000. This kind of design has been used successfully in other nearby towns. The next step is submitting a new NOI to the Conservation Commission. They would like to go out to bid as soon as possible, aiming at mid-February. Charlene will work with Town Counsel on the bid documents. The grant makers have said they are fine with the new plan and think it is a more reasonable size.

11. GPS device – Jim Hyslip reported that the town's GPS system, bought in 2012, has gotten a lot of use but is now outdated. The original company suggested getting it diagnosed and possibly doing a software upgrade to make it useful for another couple of years. A new system would cost \$10-15,000, would be a capital expenditure, and would be split 50/50 with Highway. Water/Sewer will discuss this.

12. Town Administrator's report, continued –

Highland Ambulance – A zoom meeting has been scheduled with Highland Ambulance on February 1 at 6:30 for a budget presentation.

Emergency personnel vaccination – Police, fire, and Emergency Manager are getting their first shots by the end of this week.

Bridge in Whately – The bridge in Whately out past Nash Hill Road is open as of January 8. Charlene will check with Highway Superintendent Dan Banister about signage.

Opioid litigation – Charlene had sent a confidential litigation update by email.

13. Personnel – sick time request – An employee has asked to use four hours a week of sick time to support and care for a family member. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the employee request to use sick time to support and care for a family member. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye).

14. Annual report dedication – One suggestion was made. Other suggestions may be sent to Charlene before the next Board meeting.

15. Correspondence – Correspondence included a MassDOT Bridge Inspection report.

16. Minutes – A minor change was suggested. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the minutes of December 17 as amended. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye). Since a quorum of the Board of Selectmen often attend OPM Steering Committee meetings, the meetings, agendas and minutes need to be posted, but they can be simple, just directing the reader to the OPM agendas and minutes.

17. Warrant – Selectman Dave Mathers continues to review and sign the warrant. Any issues have been easily resolved.

18. OPM Steering Committee and Public Safety Complex – Charlene reported that Kevin Chrobak, architect, said that going out to bid in early summer could save the town money. This would require a special town meeting and all-day vote in March. Various suggestions for a special town meeting were made including a tent with heaters, the school gym, and doing most of the process ahead and having only a brief meeting for the vote.

Documents used

Proclamation National Day of Remembrance

125 Goshen Road Purchase and Sale Agreement and Deed

Heating Oil documents

Depot Road culvert drawings

Minutes

Adjourned at 11:39 a.m.

Approved:

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Clerk