

*Minutes*  
*Williamsburg Board of Selectmen*  
*January 25, 2024*

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, January 25, 2024, at the town office auditorium. The chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Present: William Sayre and Paul Wetzel

Absent: Denise Banister

Also present: Dan Banister (Highway Superintendent), Nick Caccamo (Town Administrator), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant), Jim Weigang

Mill River Greenway Committee: Jennifer Black, Frances Borden, John Connolly, Nick Dines, John Hoogstraten, Gaby Immerman, Dave Weber

Conservation Commission: Melinda McCall, Joe Rogers (also Greenway)

1. Highway – Highway Superintendent Dan Banister gave his regular report. They are very busy. There was bad ice this morning and three school buses got stuck. Since the last regular report all trucks and equipment have arrived and been outfitted. They are wrapping up paving and patching. They assisted with taking down the tree at the library. They installed parking signage at the Public Safety Complex as well as bicycle Share the Road signs. They helped move equipment from the fire and police stations to the Public Safety Complex. They removed equipment from trucks to be deaccessioned. Pump replacement at the wellhouse is in process. They are stocking up on sand and salt for the winter. The 2011 F550 is in bad shape; he thought it could limp along a few more years but something happened to it last year and it is costing them a lot. They may be looking to replace it. It was on the capital plan for last year or the year before. They use it all the time. The big 10 wheeler trucks are still good, though the one he drives is starting to act up. They also want to get a new brush chipper. The state is authorizing \$20,000 for the town for flood damage; it isn't clear whether that comes in the form of a check. The newest employee has been here for six months and is working out well and Dan requested a \$1 wage increase. This will be considered at a future meeting with other salary increases. Selectman Paul Wetzel offered to help with the wetland restoration behind the public safety complex, cutting down dead trees, helping with fencing, and working some logs into the ground for erosion control. There was some discussion, including expression of some concerns about methods and liability. In response to a comment about a guardrail down, Dan Banister said that there are a lot of guardrails that need to be replaced, they are very expensive, and that Chapter 90 doesn't cover guardrails. Board members expressed deep gratitude to Dan and his crew for keeping the roads open and safe.

2. Mountain Street – MassDOT has scheduled a public information hearing for February 8, a virtual meeting. This is a continuation of the 25% design hearing. The plans call for a uniform 24' rebuilding of Mountain Street. Residents have been notified.

3. Live entertainment – **Motion** was made and seconded (PW/WS) to grant a permit for live entertainment on Saturdays February 3 (band) and March 9 (D.J.), 7-11 p.m., at American Legion Post 236. **So voted** (2-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (PW/WS) to grant a permit

for live entertainment for a band on Saturday, January 27, 6-10 p.m. at Burgy Bullets Snowmobile Club. **So voted** (2-0).

4. Appointments – Open Space – **Motion** was made and seconded (PW/WS) to appoint Melissa Adams to the Open Space Committee, with term to end June 30, 2024. **So voted** (2-0).

Constable – **Motion** was made and seconded (PW/WS) to appoint Robert Cayo as Town Constable, term to June 30, 2026. **So voted** (2-0).

5. Community Development Block Grant – Hilltown Community Development Corporation is including Williamsburg in its annual block grant. **Motion** was made and seconded (PW/WS) to authorize the chair to sign the Community Development Block Grant application for Williamsburg. **So voted** (2-0).

6. South Main Street – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo presented a list of Mill River Greenway actions including \$6.3 million in grants and interactions with the Select Board since 2012, and a series of letters or emails with opinions from residents about the proposed changes to South Main Street. He also brought forward a letter to MassDOT with questions for clarification on the MassDOT Bridges and South Main Street project. Chair William Sayre noted that the amount of work the committee has done is impressive and the letters, which he has read carefully, address different issues and are respectful and to the point. The meetings with the committee and residents have been productive. The letter is a consensus document that all agreed to. **Motion** was made and seconded (PW/WS) to sign the letter about MassDOT Project #607675 – Bridge Replacement, W-36-011 and W0360017, Bridge Street and South Main Street over Mill River. **So voted** (2-0).

7. MassTrails – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo presented the Mill River Greenway MassTrails application for \$204,000 in construction funds for the switchback, to supplement the \$500,000 in Complete Streets funding. Design plans are fully fleshed out, in preparation for bidding. Smith College engineering students had worked on a previous version of the plans. The plans call for just a single bridge, upgrading the existing footprint. **Motion** was made and seconded (PW/WS) to sign a letter of support for the 2024 MassTrails grant program application to finish off the switchback. **So voted** (2-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (PW/WS) to support the grant application for the 2024 MassTrails grant project to finish off the trails. **So voted** (2-0).

8. Conservation – Joe Rogers and Melinda McCall presented a proposal, put forth by the town of Ashfield, for grant funding for one year of a shared conservation agent for multiple towns. Each town would be asked to fund its share of an agent for another two years. Williamsburg does not need full-time support but because of the increase in the complexity of issues, they could use some support from someone with technical expertise. They talked about hiring a consultant on an as-needed basis, but have come around to wanting a shared agent at a more professional level. The costs for the shared agent would be proportional to the size of the town, with Williamsburg the largest at 24%. The Commission had gone back and forth whether a consultant or a shared agent would be better. The other towns are Ashfield, Buckland, Whately, Goshen, and Hawley. Gaby Immerman of the Mill River Greenway said that one person for the watershed would make sense, and the town's MVP watershed grant could provide a

recommendation that the town needs an agent to address the increased impact on the town. A one-year pilot could lead to an MVP action grant to bring in some funds. She also noted that water gets managed in a watershed, not because towns are near each other. She urged them to bring this issue to the MVP meeting. The Conservation representatives concluded with a request for support to be included in the grant proposal for a shared agent, with a secondary request for serious consideration of funding years two and three. **Motion** was made and seconded (PW/WS) to authorize the chair to sign a letter in support for the grant for a shared agent. **So voted** (2-0).

9. Mass. Cultural Council grant – **Motion** was made and seconded (PW/WS) to accept the Mass. Cultural Council grant of \$5500 for FY24 and authorize the chair to sign the documents when they arrive. **So voted** (2-0).

10. Town offices new copier – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo reported that the Sharp copier on the first floor, acquired as part of the Dunphy School renovation, and used a lot, is showing its age, and staff have requested a new copier. Board members approved moving forward to get a new copier.

11. Paragus IT and town server – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo reported on a recent invoice from Paragus, the town's IT provider, and reviewed the history of the server. Several years ago, Town Meeting appropriated \$20,000 for a new server. The first one installed was defective and the new one, with a different fan cooling structure, is very loud. The process has not been smooth and Paragus has spent a lot of hours, and there have been three different project managers. They have a policy that anything over 75 hours on a given project is free, and the current invoice, for 9.5 hours, brings us to 75 hours. Paragus has agreed to apply unused retainer hours over the next five months, with a final reckoning in June. He said he has a good working relationship with them and we chose the right provider. The Board went on to talk about putting doors on the server closet to cut down on the noise and make the office usable. It has been difficult to find a carpenter. They have a quote from one firm. Various options are being explored. The Board would like to move it forward.

12. Police letter of appreciation – **Motion** was made and seconded (PW/WS) to sign the letter of appreciation to the Williamsburg Police, as discussed at the last meeting. **So voted** (2-0).

13. FY25 budget letter – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo presented the town's annual budget letter to departments discussing the budget process. Board members would like to work more closely with Finance Committee, starting with joint meetings with department heads. The salary structure will need to be addressed, either piecemeal or with a comprehensive plan. The February 22 meeting will start at 4 for the Select Board and 5:30 for the initial joint meeting. **Motion** was made and seconded (PW/WS) to sign the kickoff letter for the FY25 budget season. **So voted** (2-0).

14. Elections – The Town Clerk would like the Board to sign the town caucus call and the warrant for the town election and will suggest the dates soon. **Motion** was made and seconded (PW/WS) to authorize the Board to sign the warrants when they are ready for signature. **So voted** (2-0).

15. Town Administrator's report –

Upcoming meetings – Highland Ambulance service budget meeting February 8. MassDOT hearing February 8. Board of Health meeting February 8. Hampshire Regional budget unveiling February 5.

Town Office Building scan and building improvements – The scan by Bond Building was completed, a good use of \$8000 paid from ARPA funds. The next phase is furthering of construction plans and how the Board wants to proceed given the ceiling of \$30,000. To get the restroom, window, painting and awning documents, it will go over \$30,000. It looks as if the windows will not get done because of money and procurement capacity.

Municipal Empowerment Act – The recently proposed Municipal Empowerment Act will be helpful for town operations.

Old Town Hall Invitation to Bid – The bid package should be finished tomorrow and posted on Monday. There has been some interest in it.

Public Safety Complex – There are a number of remaining issues, including a boiler pipe blowing apart, blinds as a security issue, security camera, generator. The project is far from being totally closed out.

16. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (PW/WS) to approve the minutes of December 28, 2023, with the suggested changes. **So voted** (2-0).

17. Warrant – Chair William Sayre will review and sign the warrant.

Documents used

Agenda and notes

Highway report

Live entertainment permits

Letters of interest

South Main Street letters from residents

Mill River Greenway interactions with Select Board

Letter to MassDOT about Bridges Project and South Main Street

MassTrails grant application and letter of support

Conservation shared agent proposal and letter of support

Paragus invoice

Letter of appreciation to Police

FY25 budget letter

EDM Studio report

Minutes

Adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Approved:

---

Clerk