

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
January 28, 2021

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, January 28, 2021, by video conference call. The chair called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Present: William Sayre, David Mathers and Denise Banister

Also present: Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Peter Spotts (reporter, Country Journal), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant), Denise Wickland (Police Chief)

Mill River Greenway Committee: Nick Dines, Gaby Immerman

1. Appointments – Zoning Board of Appeals – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to appoint Mickey (Michelle) Gallagher to the Zoning Board of Appeals as Alternate, with a term to expire June 30, 2021. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye).
2. Council on Aging Formula Grant – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi explained that the Council on Aging receives a formula grant every year from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, normally used for outreach and rides. Under Covid, it is used for support bags, things to decrease loneliness, and outreach phone calls. This year's amount is \$7,227 and is based on the number of seniors. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to authorize the chair to sign the COA formula grant contract for \$7,227. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye).
3. Personnel policy – vacation time carryover – The policy for carrying over vacation time from one fiscal year to the next is that an employee can carry forward no more than the amount of time earned in the prior fiscal year. An employee had asked about a waiver to allow more time to be carried over. Board members were reluctant to allow such a waiver since people could accumulate a large amount of vacation time. Sick time is different and can be carried over, up to 180 days. Charlene will send a memo reminding people to take their vacation time.
4. Police Chief – Police Chief Denise Wickland gave her regular report. Health – All officers are healthy and being careful. Some are getting tested for their full-time jobs. Academy – Officer Peter Fisher has passed the physical and is on the waiting list. If no spot comes up, he will work full-time on a waiver and enter at the next available time. Grant – They have finished the first mobilization under the Municipal Road Safety Grant, for targeted enforcement of impaired driving. This allows officers to focus on traffic enforcement and not be called off for an emergency. Several arrests were made for impaired driving. Vehicle – The Chief's cruiser was out of service for a month; all repairs were done under the warranty. Coats for Vets program – Officers picked up buckets of coats, hand sanitizer and other supplies, to distribute to veterans and the homeless. Homeless – There are five or six permanent homeless people in town, and others who travel through. Officers try to stay in touch, help with getting to shelters, and help with medicines and other needed items. Budget – The budget is in good shape. The department needs to replace outdated computers. It was suggested that Covid funds might be used for buying laptops. Busy – The department is very busy these days. Office – The new lighting has helped a lot and headaches have decreased. The new air purifiers are running 24/7. Thanks – Board members asked the Chief to thank the officers for their good work, and reminded her to ask for what she needed without waiting for the quarterly meeting.

5. Mill River Greenway – Gaby Immerman and Nick Dines reported for the Mill River Greenway Committee.

25% design level – They would like the VHB engineers to meet with the Select Board to discuss the plans for the Greenway design and rebuilding of Route 9. A date was set for February 18 at 10 a.m.

Water and Sewer – They are working to coordinate with the Water and Sewer Commission and the Route 9 water main replacement project. Jim Hyslip serves on both committees.

Culvert, Route 9 Depot Road intersection – They are asking the engineer to give some attention to the culvert under Route 9 at the intersection with Depot Road and coordinate with MassDOT's Route 9 project. (Note: this is different from the culvert under Depot Road discussed elsewhere.)

Other non-participating components of Route 9 project – They are looking at what can and cannot get folded into the MassDOT project and be done at the same time, such as the bridge to Skinnerville Park, the Public Safety Complex site, and working with the Anne T. Dunphy School on the terminus design.

Transportation bond – The \$2.39 million line item has been signed into law in the Transportation Bond. The money is not yet appropriated, so is not actual dollars yet. The Board will write a letter to Jose Delgado, the new Governor's representative in Western Mass., and also a letter of thanks to Sen. Hinds for his help.

Bridges project – They want to include the whole stretch of South Main Street from the two bridges up to the Fort Hill intersection. Currently only half of South Main Street – the section between the two bridges – will be redesigned and reconstructed as part of the MassDOT project. They want to dovetail the reconstruction of South Main Street southeast of Bridge Street for a seamless construction project.

MVP (Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness) – They convened a meeting of multiple town committees to brainstorm action items for the MVP grant.

Mass. Trails grant – They plan to submit another Mass. Trails grant, for the same area of South Main Street from Bridge Street down to the Mass. trails connector, to advance the engineering design.

Closing – Board members thanked them for all their good work, dealing with the bureaucratic maze and keeping things moving forward.

6. Oldest citizen – The town's new oldest citizen is Betty Levrat and the Boston Post Cane will be awarded to her. She will be presented with a certificate, along with flowers and a small reproduction cane suitably engraved. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to authorize the chair to sign the certificate and proclamation. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye).

7. Town Administrator's report –

Covid and department updates – Senior Center – Operations are going well. They have made gift bags for people in their 90's, they are getting a lot of calls about vaccines and are letting people know how to register. They are reaching out to people in isolation. William Sayre noted that the Elder Trust has \$18,000 and has approved \$1000 for the Senior Center to use for gift baskets for people over 80. Highway – Department is doing well. School – One person tested positive but was already in quarantine and has not been in the school building. Vaccination – Police, Fire and Emergency Management have gotten their first shots. Phase 2, including people age 75 and older, starts Monday. Cooley Dickinson Hospital says they are hiring a lot of people to call patients to set up appointments.

Sewer leak at Helen E. James – Charlene reported that Highway Superintendent Dan Banister said that there was a sewer leak at the James, caused by tree roots getting into the pipe, allowing groundwater to flow in. Highway will plan to fix it when the ground is free from frost. There is also another sewer leak at a manhole on Mountain Street that Highway will fix.

Highway trucks – Truck 6 had corrosion on the electronics due to road salt. Truck 3 needed brakes, tires and front-end work. It also received its inspection sticker. All have been repaired.

State budget – The governor’s proposal invests in core governmental functions and education without raising taxes at the state level.

Old Town Hall – A former resident is interested in running a business in the Old Town Hall and inquired what was happening with it. Discussion included having to put in a heating system and bring the building up to code. The Select Board and town are focused on the Public Safety Complex right now but the Historical Society or Historical Commission will be asked for their opinion. Charlene will get in touch with the Historical Society and Historical Commission.

Highland Ambulance – The upcoming meeting will be just to present the budget. Denise Banister will attend as the town’s representative, and William Sayre will not attend.

Special Town Meeting – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to set the date and time for the Special Town Meeting as April 3 at 2 p.m. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye). The Board of Health and Health Agent have been consulted. Discussion included tent rental, chairs and heaters. Highway, the Fire Chief and the Moderator are being consulted about logistics.

8. Annual report dedication – The Board decided on the dedication.

9. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the minutes of January 14. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye). **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the OPM Steering Committee minutes of December 13, 17, January 7, 13, and 21. **So voted** (DM aye, WS aye, DB abstain).

10. Miscellaneous – Tax title, Haydenville Gas & Electric – Charlene will talk to Zoning Enforcement Officer Louis Hasbrouck.

Sign – She will follow up with Louis Hasbrouck; he is to send a letter to the owner of the sign saying the sign needs to be removed from the town right of way and needs to conform to the zoning bylaw.

Overall – Gratitude was expressed for the town having done so well during the pandemic, especially Charlene Nardi’s organization and Denise Banister’s stepping forward in her role as Emergency Manager.

11. Warrant – Selectman Dave Mathers will review and sign the warrant.

Documents used

Letter of interest

COA Formula grant contract

Police Chief report

Mill River Greenway report

Minutes

Adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

Approved:

Clerk