

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
February 21, 2017

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in a special joint session on Tuesday, February 21, 2017, with the Finance & Capital Planning Committees at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Denise Banister, William Sayre, and David Mathers

Absent:

Also present: Charles Heath, Paul Wetzel, Eric Cerreta, Charles Dudek, and Jacqueline Dufresne, (Finance Committee Members), and Jeff Ciuffreda, Melissa Zawadzki, and Mitch Cichy (Capital Planning members), Dick Kisloski and Chris Morris (Finance & Capital Planning members), Mary Dudek, and Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator).

The Town Flag Committee made a request to spend \$500 for working with a graphic designer on the final design of the town flag and getting estimates for production of the one flag to hang in the Hall of Flags in Boston and reproduction of flags to be sold to residents. The Board approved the expenditure and will fund one-half from the Town Administrator expense line and one-half from the Selectmen expense line. The Board would like to know the cost estimate for producing flags to be sold to residents and recommend that the production of flags to be sold be done based on pre-orders. The Town Administrator will confirm that the Town can sell the flags.

Bus Stop at Helen E. James: The bus company that picks up Williamsburg children who attend Charlemont Academy would like to change the pickup location from Meekins to the Helen E. James building. Currently there are about 5 children that attend and pick up is at 7:10 a.m. and drop-off times are 4:15 and 6:15 p.m. The Commons Coworking Group was consulted as a courtesy. The Board approved the use of the Helen E. James lot for that purpose. The Town Administrator will notify the company that plowing of that building is done right after the Anne T. Dunphy School area and if the local school is cancelled it falls farther down on the priority list.

The Joint meeting was called to order by Denise Banister at 5:35 p.m.

Bill Sayre gave a brief overview of the Facilities Master Plan Committee four recommended main action items which were:

1. Make the facility needs of the Police and Fire Departments a first priority;
2. Retain the James Building and site for future town use
3. Look at all possible sites for a future Public Safety Complex and reduce the programmatic design of the building;
4. Develop a capital budget and plan for the recommended facility projects.

It is the fourth one that prompted the meeting. The Board of Selectmen would like to have the financial committees create and recommend a long-term (20 to 40 years) capital budget for the town facility projects and then recommend a budget amount for the public safety complex

consistent with the Town's long term capital budget. He noted that the Public Safety Complex Committee was not given a budget for the initial feasibility stage and now the work needs to be done within that set limit. It was noted that the town tax rate has increased and it is now one of the highest in the state when it used to be in the middle of all the municipalities. Discussed whether the tax rate or the average single family tax bill was a better and more accurate measurement for comparison across the State. It was also suggested that similar towns should be compared versus including larger communities with two tax rates and larger population/tax base. Discussion about the value of including the old Town Hall in a long-term capital debt plan versus chipping away at it with a couple of thousand a year to address issues; fundraising was also suggested for that building. Comments were made about the value of renovating (1.5 million for outside envelope) and retaining the James; survey results showed that the James was valued by the community. USDA loans that can be utilized and are at a slightly lower interest rate and spread over 40 years were mentioned. Community Preservation Act (CPA) was considered as an option; some in favor and others concerned that asking voters to approve CPA and authorize a debt-exclusion in the same year wouldn't be successful. Debated the accuracy of a 20 to 40 year plan versus 5 to 10 years; however, it was noted that the plan would be reviewed and updated annually. Budget numbers for the public safety complex that were tossed out were 2 to 2.5 million, some suggested that 3 was more reasonable and doable. Bill suggested that the number be backed into so it is defensible by first determining what is an acceptable tax rate and then project that out over the timeframe so that it keeps the tax rate steady; then from that determine a budget for the safety complex.

Capital Planning Committee has been discussing a plan that has built in debt for general annual maintenance which would provide general upkeep maintenance for the facilities at 30,000 to 40,000; in addition they have discussed an annual borrowing to stabilize debt. The Capital Planning Committee will take on the task of creating and proposing a capital facilities budget plan.

Documents used

Facility Master Plan Committee Report
Capital Plan Document

Adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk