

*Minutes*  
*Williamsburg Board of Selectmen*  
*February 24, 2022*

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, February 24, 2022, by video conference call. The chair called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Present: David Mathers, Denise Banister and William Sayre

Also present: Lisa Bertoldi (250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary), Nick Caccamo (Town Administrator), Shaw Israel Izikson (reporter Country Journal), Bonnie Roberge (Collector), Donald Taggart (National Grid), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

1. Pole hearing – National Grid – The public hearing opened at 9:02 a.m. Donald Taggart of National Grid presented the petition to install a pole on Petticoat Hill Road, to support a customer's service. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to approve installation of a utility pole on Petticoat Hill Road as proposed by National Grid. **So voted** (DB aye, WS aye, DM aye). The public hearing ended at 9:05 a.m.

2. Town Collector – Collector Bonnie Roberge presented her budget and her regular report. Budget – She has submitted a level-funded budget. The Deputy Collector expense line is close and may need a reserve fund transfer at the end of the year. The tax title line has not been used yet this year. She is confident that the general expense line will have enough. Report – The office is very busy. There are many calls and emails about car excise bills. This year there is a big mail delivery issue, since the post office is returning things that don't list a post office box. Work with the auditors went well. She and her software programmer have been working on streamlined interfaces with water/sewer meters and with the treasurer and accountant. Working from home allows her to give undivided attention to people on the phone. Money is coming in well.

3. 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Lisa Bertoldi, new chair of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee, gave an update. She reported that young people are coming in with a great deal of enthusiasm, and the committee is working to pull in different constituencies in town and bringing in public-private collaboration. The main events are planned for over the July 16-17 weekend. The Saturday activities will be in the center of Williamsburg and heavily focused on families and children, with children's activities through the Grange and the library and including a craft fair, ice cream social, band, and an evening beer garden. She is working with the Police and Fire Chiefs for safety and will plan regular calls with the Emergency Manager. Sunday will be the parade, with classic cars, stilt walkers, and floats. The American Legion is thinking about a chicken barbecue. Everyone she has talked to has been super to work with. She will need a small army of volunteers. She has a lot of experience organizing the state sheep festival but is new to a town-wide celebration. The Board thanked her for jumping in and taking charge.

4. Economic Development Self-Assessment contract – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo presented the contract for the Economic Development Self-Assessment grant under the state's Community Compact for best practices. Payment will be \$20,000, made in two installments.

The final report is expected at the end of August. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS to authorize the chair to sign the Economic Development Self-Assessment contract. **So voted** (WS aye, DB aye, DM aye).

5. Shared Streets and Spaces grant program – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo presented a new grant opportunity from MassDOT for pedestrian-focused equipment. He consulted Highway Superintendent Dan Banister. He suggested a blinking crosswalk light for three places, the crosswalk between the Meekins and the Post Office, the James crosswalk, and the bus stop in Haydenville. And since the town may be eligible for two things, he proposed adding fixed bike repair stations, which could be installed later at locations on the Mill River Greenway. Comments included checking with the Mill River Greenway and considering a place for people to park their bikes and lock them. Board members asked Nick to go ahead with the application, which is due March 1, and also to ask the police to monitor those crossing places.

6. One Stop grant program – There is still plenty of time to submit expressions of interest. This will be planned for the next meeting.

7. FY23 budget timeline – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo reported that all budget requests have been submitted and he is organizing them to be easily readable for the next meeting. Board members agreed that some budgets are presented in person with quarterly reports and any budgets that are level-funded do not need a meeting with the department head. Budget review is expected to wrap up by the end of March.

8. Municipal aggregation – Town Administrator reported on a meeting with Colonial Power, the town's municipal aggregation electricity utility. The current aggregation rate expires in May 2022 and the three-year contract with Colonial Power expires in July 2023. Various scenarios were presented, including rates from five suppliers, terms for six months to three years, and various amounts of renewable energy. Jim Piermarini of the Energy Committee was part of the conversation. Energy prices are volatile and rising and a softening is predicted. After discussion, **motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to authorize the chair to enter into a contract with Colonial Power for aggregated electricity and to select the 6 month term and the 51% renewable plus 49% VREC (voluntary renewable energy credit) option. **So voted** (DB aye, WS aye, DM aye).

9. Meetings – While the Governor has approved allowing public bodies to meet remotely till July 15, Board members decided to go back to meeting in person next meeting.

10. Town Administrator's report -

Covid – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo reported that the Board of Health has extended the mask order to March 15 and will revisit it at their next meeting on March 8. There are 11 active Covid cases in town. The state has lifted the mask requirement for schools as of the end of February, when students return from February break. In terms of employees working from home, the Board would like employees to come back to the office once the Board of Health mask mandate is lifted, to allow for in-person service to residents. The Board also discussed replacing

the windows in the Town Offices, for improved ventilation, and looked at possible funding sources.

Whately's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary – The town of Whately is looking for participants for their parade on June 26. Nick has talked with the Fire Chief about a town fire truck. Board members would like to participate but some do not want to walk.

Board of Health meeting – Board of Health will be meeting March 8.

Highway garage doors – The doors are still in process. The contract with Raynor Doors was signed several months ago. Several doors are en route to Raynor, two are currently being manufactured. The company continues to update the town and be responsive. The doors will have higher R values so there will be fuel cost savings.

Town Administrator's time off – Nick requested vacation days March 18 and 21, April 1 and 4, and personal time March 25. Board members approved.

Marijuana – The Planning Board is hosting a listening session on proposed updates to the zoning bylaw relating to cannabis. There was concern about odor, both indoor and outdoor. The Right to Farm bylaw, which says that farming comes with odors, apparently does not apply to cannabis. There has been an inquiry about a business delivering in town.

#### 11. Miscellaneous –

Tree – The tree at the Helen E. James building has been down for a while. Dave Mathers will coordinate getting it picked up and taken to Lashways. William Sayre plans to seal the trunks today. He has checked out the facilities at Dawson's for making plaques and coaster sets.

Storm – Another storm is due this weekend, the Highway crew will be out again, their labor budget is running out, and the Highway Superintendent's comp time is capped at 80 hours. Nick was asked to work on a way to compensate the Highway Superintendent for the extra hours.

Funds for town building improvements – Nick was asked to look into the trust funds.

12. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to approve the minutes of February 10 as presented. **So voted** (DB aye, WS aye, DM aye).

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

#### Documents used

Agenda and notes

Pole hearing documents

Economic Development Self-Assessment contract

Photo of street with pedestrian crossing light

Electricity pricing

Minutes

Adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Approved:

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Clerk