

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
November 10, 2016

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, November 10, 2016, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The chair noted that the meeting was being recorded, at the request of the reporter.

Present: Denise Banister (also Assessor), William Sayre and David Mathers

Also present: Chris Flory, Shayla Howe (Animal Control Officer), Jim Locke (Building Supervisor), Sally Loomis (Hilltown Land Trust), Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Peter Spotts (reporter, Country Journal), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

Assessors: Glen Everett, Peter Shumway

1. Assessors – Denise Banister disclosed that she is a member of the Board of Assessors. Glen Everett and Peter Shumway of the Board of Assessors explained that the current computer software for assessors and collectors through the Community Software Consortium (CSC) will soon be unsupported and the Assessors want to move to another company through the CSC. The recommended company is Tyler; if enough communities sign up, the state will help with the cost of conversion of data. Joining the group will not commit the town but will make the bargain group rate available. Details are not available yet. Costs are supposed to be comparable to current costs but expected to escalate over time. The Town Administrator noted that this was a great opportunity. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to authorize the chair to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with Tyler, in conjunction with the Assessors, with Mass IT, for the CSC CAMA software end of life conversion. **So voted** (3-0).

2. Tax Classification – public hearing – The hearing opened at 7:15 p.m. Chair Denise Banister read the ad for the hearing. Peter Shumway presented the Assessors' recommendation to continue to tax all classes of property at one rate. He explained that every year they look at residential commercial, industrial and personal property taxes and have the option to increase the tax rate on commercial/ industrial/ personal property but that that would increase the burden on businesses with little savings for residential property. Land in Chapter 61 is considered commercial and so would also be taxed at a higher rate. The hearing closed at 7:25 p.m. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to accept the Assessors' recommendation to maintain a single tax rate for FY17. **So voted** (3-0).

3. Appointment – Planning Board – The chair read a letter of interest from Chris Flory. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to appoint Christopher Flory to the Planning Board, for a term to expire June 30, 2020. **So voted** (3-0).

4. Highway and Tree Warden – Highway Superintendent Bill Turner gave his regular report. The department has been busy. High Street is done for the winter; the top coat and manholes will wait till spring. They will work on the water main on South Main Street while River Road is closed. The High Street stump has been taken out. The majority of the Goat Path Dismount work is done and went better than expected; blacktop is next. They have tree stumps taken from the Goat Path and a quote of \$3500 to grind them all, with a discount for doing it in November; funds will come half from the grant for the Goat Path and half from the Tree Warden/Shade Tree Committee. He is planning to go out when he has time to look at trees that really need to come down. Regarding a proposal from Don Lawton to contract to plow snow, **motion** was made and

seconded (DM/WS) to accept Don Lawton's proposal to plow snow as contractor for winter of 2016-17. **So voted** (3-0). South Main Street utility poles – Dave Mathers talked to National Grid about the pole locations and the company's concerns. The next step is to have the company engineer take a look. Bill Turner suggested an asphalt berm; Board members thought that could be a good solution.

5. Animal Control Officer –

Barking dog – Animal Control Officer Shayla Howe reported that there have been no stray dogs or dog bites but there have been a lot of barking dog complaints. One barking dog situation on Fort Hill Road is ongoing. The dog owner is trying different things, trying to comply. Since there is no ordinance defining what excessive barking is, and no noise ordinance, there is not much the Animal Control Officer can do, short of a barking dog hearing.

Software purchase – She has not been able to purchase the software she requested because the company did not want to bill the town but wanted her to pay upfront. Town Administrator informed her that there is now a town credit card.

Miscellaneous – She has attended a few classes, including an Illinois animal cruelty school. She just won her first court case in Northampton. She has not kept dogs at her house but finds out right away whose dog it is.

Field driver – appointment – She is willing to try being Field Driver. A group of eleven willing residents was set up by the Administrative Assistant, so when someone calls, Shayla has a list of people to reach through a group text message. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to appoint Shayla Howe to the position of Field Driver, term to expire June 30, 2017. **So voted** (3-0).

6. Planning Board –

Valley View Road – Planning Board chair Jim Locke reported that the end of Valley View Road was discontinued years ago, and now a resident wants to create a building lot down at the end by splitting an existing lot. Because of subdivision regulations he thinks that the 175 feet of frontage would meet the Approval Not Required requirements of acreage and frontage, though he confirmed that 200 feet is the normal frontage required. He is consulting Town Counsel.

Solar project – Jim Locke reported that someone wants to put up a solar farm; the town bylaw limits solar farms to 20 acres, the person wants 35 acres and has asked if he can divide it into two. Jim's interpretation is that if the person divides it into two legal lots and makes two applications, he can do it. Jim plans to consult Town Counsel.

7. Hilltown Land Trust – Sally Loomis of the Hilltown Land Trust reported on a conservation initiative by the Kestrel Land Trust, the Massachusetts Fish & Game Department, and the Hilltown Land Trust, for an area of land, mostly in Westhampton but also in Williamsburg and Chesterfield, undeveloped land that they are trying to protect. They would like the conservation restriction to be held by Williamsburg's Conservation Commission, which would mean monitoring the property once a year to be sure nothing unsuitable happens; the Conservation Commission is enthusiastic. **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to write a letter in support of the Hilltown Land Trust's grant application to the Landscape Partnership Program for the purchase of conservation land including the Collins land in Williamsburg. **So voted** (3-0).

8. James Building – Commons Co-Working lease – Town Administrator Charlene said that the lease would be expiring soon and the tenant had asked to renew it for a year, at the recent rent of \$500 per month. Board members were not comfortable with a year's lease at the current rent. Charlene reported that the building costs for the last year known were \$32,632, including oil,

boiler inspection, phone, elevator, electricity, mowing, snow shoveling, etc. Suggestions were made to write into the lease that it is for an interim period while the town considers the use of the building, to communicate that if it were to continue on, on a professional basis, the cost would be much different, and to include a provision that the board will review and re-evaluate the rental amount every quarter, in case the cost of oil increases dramatically or in case they have more renters. Charlene will make the changes and invite Dave Chase to come in.

9. Community Development Strategy – HCDC – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi presented the Community Development Strategy, which had been discussed with the Hilltown Community Development Corporation staff on July 21 and updated based on that meeting. Board members were impressed by how much the town has accomplished over the years. **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to authorize the chair to accept and sign the 2016 Community Development Strategy. **So voted** (3-0).

10. Purple Heart proclamation – The chair read the proclamation aloud and signed it. It will be read at the Veterans' Day celebration. Copies of the Veterans' day schedule were distributed.

11. Licenses – Late Closing and Live Entertainment – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to approve a license for Live Entertainment for the Beaver Brook Lounge for a D.J. for Saturday, December 10, 8:30 to 11:30 p.m. **So voted** (3-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to approve Live Entertainment for American Legion Post 236 for Sunday, December 4, Karaoke, 4 to 8 p.m., and for Late Closing and Live Entertainment Saturday, December 17, a band, 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. **So voted** (3-0).

12. Senior and Veterans' Volunteer Tax Relief program – It was reported that eight seniors and three veterans worked a total of 1840 hours, most of it for the Council on Aging and the Library, and most of it unpaid extra hours, earning \$8777. Board members were pleased.

13. Flag donation – The town received a donation of \$1500 from M.J. Moran for the Flag fund. The Board was very appreciative.

14. Holiday observances and meeting schedule for 2017 – The Board reviewed the proposed schedules.

15. Constables – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that she discussed the role of the Constables with Constable Paul Sanderson. There is generally no real training for Constables. She reiterated to him that the Board does not want them to carry guns. A written policy was suggested. The Police Chief may like assistance from Constables with serving papers; a Police Officer would need to serve as an escort since Constables don't carry guns. Charlene will follow up with the Police Chief.

16. Town Offices heat – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that the conversion process is going well and almost all thermostats have been programmed. The Collector's office remains cold and she and Building Supervisor Jim Locke recommend a radiator, for a cost of \$3886, to come from the amount voted at Town Meeting, with the remainder coming from Building Repairs. Board members approved.

17. Warrant – Designating a person to sign warrant when board not available – If a meeting is cancelled for a holiday, someone still has to sign the warrant. Someone can be designated, as mentioned at the September 15 meeting, or two or three members can come in. Since Board members will be available for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, this is not needed for now.

18. Town Administrator's report – Fire Station floor – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that Building Supervisor Jim Locke says that the Highway Department will bring gravel, Firefighters will provide labor, cost will be less than \$1000, to come out of Building Repair. Ice rink – Charlene reported that a load of fill has been put on the area and the plan is moving forward.

Police Chief – She reported that the Police Chief is back at work after her leave. She reminded the Board that the Chief's contract will be up in June and has a provision requiring six months' notice to renegotiate or not to renew. The Board felt that that was not an issue. It was suggested that for employees with contracts that require notice not to renew, the timing of personnel reviews should be changed, so that there is a recent review when any decision is made.

Trees at Town Offices – Charlene reported that the two ornamental trees in front have a lot of broken branches, and the oak tree on the side has dead branches leaning on the roof and gutter and other branches hanging low. She liked Kevin Larkin for the tree work because he was less expensive and she walked around looking at the trees with him. Larkin will be asked to do the oak tree and a small silver maple, for his bid of \$550, and Dave Mathers and Bill Sayre will trim the ornamental trees out front.

Deer Haven Trust – She reported that Tom Masters is no longer trustee for the subdivision trust set up in 2003. The new trustee, Angela M. Wycherley, is looking to dissolve the trust and would like the town to take over responsibility for the catch basins. The town accepted the road in 2008. The Highway Superintendent is not interested in taking on the catch basins. Charlene will meet with the trustee next week.

Shooting, Village Hill Road – She reported that there are more complaints of shooting, on November 6, and that the Building Inspector is handling them.

Meeting with Finance Committee – Wednesday, November 16 at 5:30, to discuss salary survey.

19. Correspondence – Included copy of letter from MassDOT about Mountain Street.

20. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to accept the minutes of November 7 as printed. **So voted** (3-0). Update on minutes of October 13: The Town Collector's notification of certification was actually recertification, as she has been a Certified Massachusetts Municipal Collector for five years; certification needs to be renewed every five years, with additional qualifications.

21. Warrant – Approved and signed the warrant.

Documents used

- Agenda and notes
- Memorandum of Understanding with Tyler
- Tax rate information
- Letter of interest
- Purple Heart proclamation
- Live Entertainment licenses
- Holiday and meeting schedules
- Minutes
- Warrant and expense report

Adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk