

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
March 11, 2021

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, March 11, 2021, by video conference call. The chair called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Present: William Sayre, David Mathers and Denise Banister

Also present: Meaghan Jones, Sally Loomis, Shelby Macri (reporter, Country Journal), Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant), Sandra Warren, Melissa Wilson

1. Licenses – public hearing – Williamsburg Snack Bar LLC – The public hearing opened at 9:02 a.m. and the chair read the notice of hearing. The Administrative Assistant confirmed that all the paperwork was in order. Applicant owner Meaghan Jones said that they would like to be able to sell beer and wine and there has long been a liquor license in this building. They will have trainings for serving alcohol. She is requesting hours of Monday through Saturday 8 a.m. to 1 a.m., Sunday 12 noon to 1 a.m., even though they are not currently open those hours. The hearing closed at 9:10 a.m. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the Wine and Malt Beverages license for Restaurants for Williamsburg Snack Bar LLC. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye). **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to issue the license once the ABCC approves. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye).

2. Warren Conservation Restriction – Sally Loomis of the Hilltown Land Trust presented the Conservation Restriction discussed at the February 25 meeting, saying that Sandra Warren is donating the Conservation Restriction to the Hilltown Land Trust. Sandy Warren added that her husband Jim Locke was still alive when they started the process and he would be pleased that this was completed and that the trail on the property will be preserved. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the Warren Conservation Restriction from Sandra Warren to Hilltown Land Trust, Inc. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye).

3. Senior Center – Senior Center Director Melissa Wilson made her regular report. She and her staff have been making calls to everyone over 75 to ask about Covid and vaccination. Most folks were interested and able to get an appointment. Some people were not interested, or not able to get appointments, or needed help. They have identified six people who are housebound, and there is ongoing discussion about how to provide vaccine to them. People in the community have offered to give rides, including Fire Chief Jason Connell and his firefighters and Emergency Manager Denise Banister. Another big project for the Senior Center is the Gift Bag program. They have distributed about 100 bags and people have been very appreciative. The state Formula Grant, the Highland Valley grant, and the PVTa grant continue to support their programs. Daily activities include answering phones, providing information and referral, providing medical equipment, delivering meals, and outreach. They are discussing trying to envision how and when to reopen. Board members thanked her for the wonderful job she and her staff are doing. Budget – Her budget is level-funded overall; she has moved funds out of some budget lines and into others to accommodate changes in staff hours and responsibilities.

4. Licenses – live entertainment –

Brewmasters Brewing Services d/b/a Burgy Brews – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve a live entertainment license for Brewmasters Brewing Services d/b/a Burgy Brews. The Board discussed whether to grant live entertainment just for a month or whether to extend longer, and decided to go through April 30. Motion was amended (DM/DB) to approve the live entertainment permit for March 1 through April 30. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye). Dot's Golf LLC – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve live entertainment for Dot's Golf from March 1 through April 30. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye). The licenses are valid only for events authorized under the Governor's reopening guidelines, and both businesses will be reminded of that.

5. Appointment – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to appoint Don Lawton as Inspector of Animals, term to expire April 30, 2022. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye).

6. Special Town Meeting – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to sign the warrant for the Special Town Meeting on April 3. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye).

7. Special Election – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to sign the warrant for the Special Election All Day Vote April 19. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye).

8. National Grid utility poles –

Pole hearing – The date for the hearing was set for March 25.

Route 9 pole replacement – The poles are being replaced because of the solar fields being built; the project is unrelated to the MassDot redoing of Route 9.

9. Fire Department AFG grants – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to authorize the chair to sign the letters to Rep. Richard Neal and Sen. Elizabeth Warren in support of the Fire Department AFG grants. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye).

10. Resident concern about COVID, schools and costs – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to authorize the chair to sign the letter about how the Coronavirus has affected the schools and the budget. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye).

11. Police Chief – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve allowing Police Chief Denise Wickland to run for the elected position of constable in the Town of Chesterfield. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye). It was noted that this kind of work is permitted by her contract, that little labor is involved, that in case of conflict Williamsburg comes first, and that this is a great way for Chief Wickland to honor her father.

12. Chapter 61 right of first refusal letter – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to authorize the chair to sign the letter stating that in July 2019 the Board voted not to exercise the right of first refusal on the Margaret Misner property at 73 Old Goshen Road. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye).

13. Budget and Capital Planning – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reviewed the proposed budgets with the Board.

Selectmen – Many or most lines are level-funded. Town Office Internet might be reduced but will stay the same because of the unpredictability of Comcast rate increases. Town Heating Oil could be reduced to match last year but will stay the same since weather and usage vary widely from year to year. Computer Services will increase but perhaps not as much as in the budget request because she and the Tech Committee are exploring an alternate provider that seems very promising. Comprehensive Insurance includes a 4% increase since the actual number is not yet known. Highland Ambulance will go down a significant amount overall, as discussed previously, though the vehicle and building lines are going up a bit. The PVPC assessment increased a little in FY21; the FY22 amount is unknown. Workers comp is budgeted at a 4% increase; the number won't be known until August. OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits) budget line increased from \$1,000 to \$5,000 on the recommendation of the Treasurer.

Fire Department – The Fire Chief proposed increasing the Administrative Assistant's hours from 6½ to 10 per week, saying that the person actually works 20, and increasing his rate to match the firefighters. Selectman Denise Banister recused herself from the discussion. Board members agreed with the increase in hours but not the increase in hourly rate. The Board would like a salary survey done in FY22 to identify where the town is in comparison to other communities and to address the varying rates within town government for similar positions such as administrative assistants. The Chief also proposed increasing the firefighters' rate from \$15.93 per hour to \$17.75, with further increases over the following two years, to align their rate with a part-time police officer, currently at \$21.39, and making similar increases for Chief, Deputy Chief, Captain and Lieutenant. Board members were generally positive about some increase in the amount but were reluctant to compare rates across departments for very different jobs, and will look at the firefighters' rates for comparable nearby towns and consider this further.

Police Department – Everything is level-funded except for the salary request, which will be discussed in executive session. She and her sergeant don't know yet how the new POST (Peace Officer Standards and Training) legislation will affect the budget.

Capital Plan – brush truck – Selectman Dave Mathers reported that it is in remarkable shape for its age – it has only 15,000 miles on it and has been inside its whole life – and he thinks that replacement can be put off for another year. He will talk with Fire Chief Jason Connell.

14. Executive session – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to go into executive session under MGL c. 30A sec. 21(a)(2), to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel involving the Police Department. It was announced that the Board would return to public session. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye). The Board went into executive session at 11:02 a.m. and returned to public session at 11:28 a.m.

15. Freezer – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that a volunteer food donation group is looking for a place to put a freezer, and someone had inquired about putting it at the Town Offices, at an outside outlet. While the Board was supportive of the project, they were not comfortable, for liability reasons, in having a private operation on town property.

16. Warrant – Selectmen Dave Mathers will review and sign the warrant.

17. Special meeting – Because time was running short, the Board decided to reconvene on Wednesday, March 17, at 8:30 a.m.

Documents used

Agenda and notes

Liquor license application

Warren Conservation Restriction

Live Entertainment permits

Special Town Meeting warrant

Special Election warrant

Budgets

Adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

Approved:

Clerk