

*Minutes*  
*Williamsburg Board of Selectmen*  
*March 17, 2021*

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in special session on Wednesday, March 17, 2021, by video conference call. The chair called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

Present: William Sayre, David Mathers and Denise Banister

Also present: Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

1. Budget –

Fire Department – Fire Department Labor – The Fire Chief has asked for an increase from \$15.93 per hour to \$17.75 per hour. He said that at the current rate firefighters don't want to get out of bed and lose sleep, or give up earning at a higher rate at another job. He said there is good firefighter response in the evening but at other hours it is barely enough. He also said that the low rate of pay makes recruitment harder. According to the salary surveys, the range of other towns is between \$14 and \$22, with an average of \$18.77. The Chief also asked for increases for the following two years to \$19.27 and to \$21.39, and for similar increases for lieutenant, captain, deputy chief and chief. Board members agreed that the increase to \$17.75, and the parallel increase for the officers, was appropriate. One member noted that the current rate was not much more than minimum wage. Future years would be decided in the future. The Chief also asked for a \$1 differential for overnight, 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. This amounted to 156 hours last year, or \$156. Board members agreed to the increases for the first year, FY22. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to increase the Fire Department Labor line by \$2,782. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye.) Fire Department Training – Using the same hourly rates just approved, **motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to increase the Training line by \$2,066. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye.) Fire Department Administrative Assistant – At the last meeting the Board approved increasing the hours from 6½ per week to 10 per week and to keep the rate of pay the same, at \$15.92. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to increase the Administrative Assistant line by \$2,808, for a total of \$8,295. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye.)

2. Capital Planning –

Highway items, ethics disclosure – Selectmen Denise Banister disclosed that the Highway Superintendent is her son, but since the items relate to the department, and not to the person, she was advised she could participate in the discussion.

Highway garage doors – The current quote to replace the garage doors is \$20,792. Last year, before this was postponed due to Covid, the Board supported moving forward with it. Board members approved this item to go forward to the Capital Planning Committee.

Highway garage generator – Last year's quote was \$22,322. The Board decided not to update the generator last year because they felt that old generator still worked, even though it was not convenient to use. This year Board members felt that money would again be tight, that the garage doors were more important, and that the generator could wait until next year. There was also a question whether the proposed generator was larger than needed.

Computer server – The server is six years old, which is old for a server, the warranty is up and there is no guarantee that there will be parts or that it could be fixed. If the server went down, there would be no access to computer documents and no backup onsite. Board members agreed that replacing the server was necessary. The Tech Committee is still waiting for quotes and is using \$20,000 as a placeholder.

Fire Department rescue truck – The quote for the proposed rescue truck is \$232,536. (This is separate from the grant request submitted to FEMA for a \$410,000 pumper tanker, for which the town's match would be \$20,500.) Selectman Dave Mathers had looked at the old vehicle and thought it was fine, but two safety issues have been brought up since, problems with the steering column and with the pump. The Board agreed to see if those items could be fixed, before deciding on replacement. The request will be forwarded to Capital Planning so that they are aware of it, but without approval.

Police cruiser – The scheduled replacement for the 2014 cruiser is estimated at \$46,894. It has already been put off for a year. A complication is that the department's 2018 cruiser that was recently totaled in an accident is also being replaced this year. The replacement schedule will need to be addressed. The Board will get information about the mileage and condition of the 2014 car and consider this item again at the next meeting. Board members also asked about removing the damaged vehicle from the Highway garage.

Other items – The \$20,500 match for the FEMA grant for the pumper tanker will go on the Capital Plan, and the match for the smaller FEMA grant for the fill station in the amount of \$2,500 will go on the Town Meeting warrant as an article.

### 3. Town Administrator's report –

Covid and departmental updates – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that there are seven active cases in town, all in the same household. The departments are doing well and everyone is healthy. The Town Clerk's office is busy. She meets people at the back door. She plans to use the meal site for the April 19 voting. The Collector has requested a plexiglass screen for the top half of her door. The Senior Center staff continues to work a combination of onsite and remotely. While employees are eager to get vaccinated, there is an issue of what to do when people want to come in to meals and are not vaccinated. Charlene will talk with Town Counsel. Seventy-five percent of people over 75 have been vaccinated.

Highway – windy days – Highway was out cleaning up; a lot of trees were down.

Chapter 90 – The FY22 Apportionment of Chapter 90 is estimated at \$188,025, which is about the same as the prior year. The Highway Superintendent is planning to redo Nash Hill Road with Chapter 90 funds.

Petition for warrant article – The resident wants to assure people that the town will not hold on to the Police and Fire department buildings, and that revenue from their sale will offset the debt on the safety complex. It was explained to him that the Board will want to sell the buildings as soon as practicable, and that the Town Meeting doesn't have authority to decide what to do with the money; however, it is the practice of the town to use all revenue as much as possible to reduce the impact on taxpayers.. The resident will hold off on the petition until the June 2021 Annual Town Meeting. He was encouraged to ask these questions on Town Meeting floor, so that everyone could hear the answers.

Westhampton Public Safety Complex – Westhampton approved their public safety complex at a Special Town Meeting.

Hampshire Regional Superintendent – Anne T. Dunphy School Principal Stacey Jenkins is a finalist.

National Grid pole replacement – In National Grid's pole replacement project on Route 9 to support the solar farms, the town must hire its contractor to change the town-owned lights to the new poles. Charlene has asked the contractor for a quote. This will be a Town Meeting warrant article. It was suggested that the town should negotiate payment from the solar companies for moving the lights. Charlene will ask the electric company for details on which farms are involved and will talk to Town Counsel. A Board member asked if the town could negotiate with National Grid to take back ownership of the lights. Charlene will look into it.

4. Correspondence – Correspondence included an email of appreciation for Officer Peter Fisher.

5. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to approve the minutes of February 11 regular meeting, February 18 with Mill River Greenway, February 23 about bonds, February 25 regular meeting, February 25 executive session, March 1 with legislators, January 28 revised minutes, and brief minutes of February 4 with OPM Steering, February 18 with All Boards, March 3 with OPM, and March 11 with OPM. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye).

Documents used

Agenda and notes

Budgets and capital planning items

Minutes

Adjourned 10:08 a.m.

Approved:

---

Clerk