

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
All Boards Meeting
Tuesday, April 18, 2017

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in special session for the All Boards Meeting on Tuesday, April 18, 2017, at the town office. The meeting began at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Denise Banister (Selectboard, Assessors, EMD, Public Safety Complex Committee), William Sayre (Selectboard & Public Safety Complex Committee), David Mathers (Selectboard), Kenneth Taylor (Fire Dept.), Brenda Lessard (Town Clerk), Pat Billingsley (Library Board), Fred Goodhue (COA Advisory Board), Robert Barker (Planning), Rusty Luce (Health Board), Jason Connell (Fire Chief), Kayla Solomon (School Committee), Carl Schlerman (Regional School Committee), Paul Wetzel (Finance Committee), Marcianna Caplis (Conservation Commission), Nathan Rosewarne (Treasurer), John Hoogstraten (Building Supervisor), Kim Boas (Energy Committee), Charles Dudek (ZBA), Mary Dudek (Cultural Council), Cynthia Barker (Library Board), Nick Dines (Facilities Master Planning Committee & Mill River Greenway), Gaby Immerman (Mill River Greenway), Denise Wickland (Police Chief), Dave Chase (School Committee & Tech Committee), Meg Taylor (Agricultural Commission & School Committee), Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator),

On behalf of Chair Denise Banister and the Board of Selectmen, Charlene welcomed everyone.

Bill Sayre gave an update on the Public Safety Complex Committee. He reported that after hearing from the community, officials and the Facilities Master Plan Committee, the WPSCC reviewed all the sites again with a few additional ones to determine possible locations for a new safety complex. He noted that the Committee is also keeping an eye on the budget but is most likely looking at a 3.5 million dollar budget due to prevailing wage and Mass. procurement law requirements, which include the hiring of an owner's project manager. The two sites being considered after the additional review are the James site, town owned, and 45 Main Street, which is for sale. 45 Main Street has two buildings on it that would need to be removed. It is proposed that the WPSCC will request \$250,000 for design in the fall of 2017.

Nick Dines reported that the Facilities Master Plan Committee gave its final report to the Board of Selectmen in January 2017. He highlighted some of the recommendations, which included the Public Safety facilities / complex as a priority, retaining the James for future town use, and utilizing a decision framework to broaden the vision when considering projects.

Paul Wetzel, Finance Committee, gave a presentation on the FY18 budget which showed an approximate increase of \$376,000 over last year's budget. He noted that the three highest contributors to that increase were the increases in the Smith Vocational assessment, Group Insurance (Health), and the Highland Ambulance assessment. He showed our current and proposed future debt as graphs and how it effects our budget, and highlighted different ways to think about structuring it to impact the tax rate the least. It was asked what percentage of debt is generally accepted / recommended as part of a town's annual budget. Nate Rosewarne, treasurer,

will look into that. Paul noted that last year and this year it is proposed that free cash be used to address the expected rise in debt service due to the school to lessen the impact on the tax payers but there is discussion on the Finance Committee that the Town may have to consider an override at some point to maintain the budget.

Mary Dudek, Cultural Council, gave an update on all the wonderful events sponsored by the Council through its grant awards. The Council gets over 35 applications each year and makes Williamsburg and related projects a priority. Some examples of recipients of grants are The O-Tones; Williamsburg Woodland Trails dam brochure; “Acorn People”, “Reading is Magic,” and STEM project for Machine Engineering all for the school; Hilltown Choral Society; John Porcino, storyteller/musician; HRHS musical.

Marcianna Caplis, Conservation Commission, reported that in the 1950’s the role of the Commission was to protect open space, and then in 1972 the Commission was given the responsibility for the wetlands protection. The Commission’s focus over the past two years has mostly been wetlands protection. The Commissioners work with residents to support their projects, but do so within the constraints of the water protection laws. She noted that it is very time consuming and the Commission looks forward to turning its attention to its three stewardship properties this year.

Pat Billingsley, Board of Library Trustees, reported that the Library is in its 32nd year of acting as the library for the school. It is only one of two in the State that has that function. She reported that the historic stair repair is in progress and with the Mass. Historic Emergency Grant award it is expected that the Town will save \$19,000 of the \$40,000 voted for the project.

John Hoogstraten was introduced as the new Building Supervisor. It was noted that Jim Locke did an excellent job and will be missed; however, the Board and Town Administrator were very confident in John’s ability and skills. He was thanked for taking on this very important role.

Kim Boas, Energy Committee, reported that all \$142,975 of the Green Community funds have now been spent. While there are many energy projects that can be identified, it was challenging because of the unknowns with the future use of buildings. Funds were used for audits, which are required, lighting at the Meekins and two propane-fired boilers at the Town Offices. The Energy Committee is committed to working with the WPSCC to making the safety complex a reality with the most energy efficient options available.

Gaby Immerman, Mill River Greenway, reported that the Mill River Greenway, established in 2012, has been working diligently towards its charge of creating a non-motorized connection between the two villages. The first several years were spent determining if it was feasible, which the 50 page report, available online, shows it absolutely is. The second focus was building consensus within the community around the concept. Gaby stated that she and the members feel there is consensus around the desire for the Greenway and they have the data to back that up. They have engaged the community on multiple levels and are proud of the work they have done in bringing folks together on this issue. The MRGC has received a \$50,000 grant, has worked in cooperation with the Highway Department on the connection piece to the Leeds section of the

Northampton Greenway, and has received matching funds in the form of work from several businesses. She also noted that the MRGC will host a third public presentation on Sunday, April 30th, from 2-4 in the Town offices, outlining the next steps in the project.

Bob Barker, Planning Board, stated that the Planning Board doesn't do much planning, but instead is reviewing the zoning bylaws and will present some changes at Town meeting this year. The members have also drafted a letter about signage to go out to all businesses later this spring.

Rusty Luce, Board of Health, reported that they will be asking for the Town's support at this year's annual town meeting for purchasing a compactor. Currently the compactor, not owned by the town, can only hold 2 tons of paper recyclables and the new one will hold 8 tons which will save on the dumping costs. He also noted that we are one of only two towns in the HRMC that has not gone to charging per bag at the transfer station. The operational cost of the transfer station is such that charging per bag may be the only option for the town in several years to maintain services at an affordable cost. It was also noted that this change could encourage people to recycle more.

Mary Dudek noted that she and the Board of Health will be hosting a presentation about radon in water in May 2017.

Jason Connell, Fire Chief, stated that call volume is up this year with 100 calls already. Last year, 2016, they logged about 300 calls. Generally they average 20 calls per month. Recruitment and retention of younger members continues to be the challenge for the department. The new fire truck should be arriving this week. Maintaining the two fire station facilities is a priority.

Brenda Lessard, Town Clerk, reminded voters that May 1, 2017, is the annual election and that the polls are open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. She encouraged everyone to come out and vote.

Kayla Solomon, Local School Committee, thanked the group and all voters for the wonderful new school. She explained that it is utilized to its full potential by the recreation department and the school community. She stated that the administration and committee are working to understand the new systems in the school and how best to use them at maximum efficiency. She said they have made progress in that area and were able to cut utility budgets this year because of energy savings. She noted that the school continues to provide a vibrant and enriched curriculum which includes Spanish, music, and a year round garden program with the new greenhouse. The food from the garden program serves the lunch program, which allows students to see and understand the value and purpose from beginning to end. It was mentioned that the school musical was again a huge success, in great part to experienced and dedicated teachers. She reported that there are four longtime experienced teachers retiring this year.

Meg Taylor, Agricultural Commission, said that the Agricultural Commission is a seven member board with five members having active farms. There are 13 farms within Williamsburg. The Commission will be producing a brochure highlighting all the farms and products produced soon. She reported that eleven individuals in the farming community have volunteered to act as on-call field drivers for live-stock issues within their field of expertise and comfort level. This is the

first time in a long time that the town has had this position filled. She noted that the local farms provide products for the Harvest Feast at the school.

Carl Schlerman, Regional School Committee, acknowledged that the school budget was the largest percentage of the town budget, and noted that the school committee works diligently to spend that money wisely. He stated that Hampshire Regional is a good school and has a good reputation; however, Williamsburg still has the highest choice out and charter out population. Choice out and Charter out takes money from the school budget. It is important in budget considerations for the school to provide enriching programs and meet state mandates so that our students not only get a quality education but keep our money in the community. We need to retain the student population. He mentioned that many students from Holyoke and Easthampton choice-in to Hampshire Regional, which helps offset those resident students who go elsewhere. He also reported that Worthington pays a higher than choice-in amount to attend and be a part of the school system, which brings in another revenue stream. He expressed concerns of how the towns will continue to sustain the funding with constant increases in continued unfunded mandates and the costs of special education needs. The School Committee has established a capital budget line within the regular school budget to address regular maintenance needs to maintain the school. Carl reported that the School Committee signed a contract to buy electricity from a local solar farm, which is in the approval process of the utility company.

Charles Dudek, Zoning Board of Appeals, stated that there are three members and two alternate members on the Board. Osa Flory, a long-term member is not seeking reappointment this year and it is expected that Marcianna Caplis, currently an alternate, will be asked to step up to fill the full member position. The workload of the Board is based on the number of applications and projects that come in. The Board reviews and make decisions on projects / applications based on the Zoning Bylaws.

Fred Goodhue, Council on Aging Advisory Board, reported that the Senior Center services the senior population well in meals three times a week and brown bag; however it is looking at more ways to serve and engage the 'baby boomer' population in activities they desires. He noted that the Senior Center operates on a very small budget as a percentage of the total town budget and that the senior population is growing. He stated that the Senior Center provides an online monthly newsletter and is always looking for volunteers to help facilitate programming and fundraising, such as the selling of aprons, that support activities.

Denise Wickland, Police Chief, stated that the department handled about 1500 calls that went to 911 dispatch and an additional 1000 calls to the department. The department continues to deal with all the issues prevalent in larger communities such as drugs, domestic violence, and burglaries. She noted that traffic accidents are down, which is a good thing, but reduction in incidents make the department not eligible for grants for more patrols. Currently, the department has a great group of officers, but it is not at full staffing and she is looking to fill two more part-time positions. Patrols are generally from 7 a.m. to midnight most days of the week. In addition to the replacement vehicle article which comes every other year and is included this year, she is asking for funding support to purchase Tasers for her department. The Chief feels strongly this is another device that her officers will have in their tool belt to keep them and any person they are

dealing with safe. She reported that policing is being a part of the community and her department is instituting programs to keep good relationships with the community, such as the Coffee With A Cop program to start soon.

Denise Banister, Selectboard Chair, thanked Bob for taking on the Planning Board Chair position with the resignation of Jim Locke, and she thanked all officials for their passion and dedication to their roles and responsibilities. She noted that the Town could not operate with such efficiency and effectiveness without each one of them. Emergency Management Director, Denise urged departments, boards and committees to engage her in any emergency planning needs. As Assessor, she reported that the Assessors would be doing map enhancements required by the state and looking at future updates to the maps further down the road. She noted that the Assessors meet 48 weeks out of the year (Tuesday evenings) and are happy to work with property owners to better detail their parcels and structures.

Town-wide picnic is tentatively scheduled for September 10, 2017, in conjunction with Revelation Day, which will highlight some aspects of the Mill River Greenway project and Complete Streets options. It is expected to have traditional games such as sack races and face-painting in addition to a bounce house. The police department, fire department and other town groups are involved in making it happen.

Adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk