

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
April 23, 2020

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, April 23, 2020, by conference call. The chair called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Present: Denise Banister, William Sayre and David Mathers

Also present: Dan Banister (Highway Superintendent), Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Peter Spotts (reporter, Country Journal), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

1. Message to town –

Finances – The town is coming from a strong financial position and heading into a year of financial uncertainty for both the town and the state. If a new FY21 budget is not approved before the beginning of the new fiscal year, the town can spend 1/12th of the FY20 budget each month.

Annual town meeting – Town Meeting may need to be postponed. The town is closely monitoring the situation and taking guidance from the state. This will be considered at the next Select Board meeting.

2. Highway – Personnel – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to appoint Mark Loven as Laborer/Operator for the Highway Department, effective April 15, 2020, with a probationary period ending October 15, at the rate of \$21.45 per hour. **So voted** (3-0).

Flaggers – Highway Superintendent Dan Banister said that he does not wish at this time to replace the employee who is leaving, because the department is no longer doing major projects for Water/Sewer, and is not doing other bigger construction jobs in-house. He proposed instead hiring part-time certified flaggers, as needed, so that he would not have to pull his crew off a job to direct traffic. The cost would probably be \$500 for equipment and training. This would result in significant savings. He already has one flagger and would like one more. The Board supported the plan and commended him for his innovative ways to save money.

3. Memorandum of Agreement regarding Emergency Responder Quarantine Facility in Hadley – Several concerns were raised with the proposed agreement, including the uncertainty of reimbursement from MEMA, the cost per responder, and the high cleaning charge, the possible need to move out if there are symptoms, and comparison with a free service supported by MEMA and FEMA at another location. Charlene will follow up.

4. Proclamation – Children’s Mental Health Week – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to authorize the chair to sign the proclamation for Children’s Mental Health Week May 3-0. **So voted** (3-0).

5. Budgets – Police Chief salary – Board members decided that a raise in one department was not appropriate when other departments were not getting raises. Board members will plan to look at it next year. Charlene and Police liaison Denise Banister will follow up with Chief Wickland.

Summer mowing – Contractor Rory Zononi had requested a price increase, namely \$50 increase for spring clean-up and fall clean-up for each location, and \$10 increase per mow. He estimates that he does 23-26 mows per year, and the increase would come to \$360 additional for each of the three properties, James Building, Veterans Memorial, and Town Offices. He has not had a rate increase within memory. Board members agreed to recommend half of the proposed increases this year, with a plan to consider again for next year.

6. Timber cutting – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to approve the revised minutes of March 26 as they pertain to timber cutting. **So voted** (3-0).

7. Town Administrator's report –

Election – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that the Board of Health has approved the procedures proposed by the Town Clerk for the annual town election on May 4. Board of Health members will plan to be present.

Staffing report – The situation is stable, no one is sick, employees are working remotely or in the office.

Complete Streets grant – She reported that MassDOT accepted the town's proposal for the East Main Street sidewalk and crosswalk. She will send a letter next week asking for an extension, as the grant runs out on June 30. Highway Superintendent Dan Banister will put together a proposal with the cost of the work.

Depot Road update – She has met with Selectman Dave Mathers, Highway Superintendent Dan Banister and resident volunteer engineer Jim Hyslip. The grant is for \$350,000 and they are concerned that the cost may be more. They are looking at options.

Street light project update – The issues are that four of the lights that were updated with LED lights belonged to National Grid, not the town, so the town needs to remove the LED lights; three of the lights that should have been done were labelled not found; a resident is concerned about lights shining in the eyes; one light is out on Buttonshop Road; and a pole on South Street was hit by a vehicle. The broken pole could be an insurance claim. Suggestions were made about who might give additional quotes.

Mountain Street – There was a recent meeting with Rep. Blais, Sen. Hinds' office, Whately's senator, Whately personnel, the TIP, FRCOG, and MassDOT. It was discussed that MassDOT is expecting the towns to take over the costs from the 25% design to 100% design, which would cost an estimated \$500,000 for each community. Williamsburg cannot do that, as it has only \$180,000 in Chapter 90 funds each year. Conversations are ongoing. Whately is on the FY25 TIP for their region; Williamsburg is trying to get onto the FY25 TIP so the two towns can go out to bid together. Whately and Williamsburg feel it is important to use the engineer that MassDOT has contracted with for the 25% regardless of how we move forward. She suggested that it may be important to have more of the Select Board members involved as discussions continue.

Accountant's reports – She reported that for the Special Revenue accounts, any reimbursement needs to be done soon, as a negative balance at the end of the fiscal year would affect free cash.

Collector's report – Collector Bonnie Roberge reports that money is coming in well. She noted that other communities that pushed the due date off have found that the tax payment services have not sent in money because it is not due yet. She is working with the IT consultant on her computer. She noted that phone service is intermittent; it may be due to the fact that it is VOIP (voice over internet) and more internet is being used in the community.

Town Administrator's tasks – Charlene has put a list of her tasks in Dropbox in case she should get sick.

Meeting time – Board members agreed that 3 p.m. is a good meeting time for May Select Board meetings.

Meeting access – The Zoom link will change each time.

Annual town report – The report was sent to the printer this morning. The plan is to have the presentation and distribution at Annual Town Meeting.

Newsletter – The usual spring newsletter will be skipped, as there is very little information, and it would involve going to the Northampton bulk mailing office to send paper copies. Board members supported the idea of not spending valuable time on it. The Board of Health may put information on the town website.

Annual Town Meeting – Charlene is starting to work on the articles for the town meeting warrant.

8. Correspondence – Correspondence included MassDOT bridge reports and updates from KP Law.

9. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to approve the minutes of April 9 as presented. **So voted** (3-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to approve the minutes of April 15 as presented. **So voted** (3-0).

10. Warrant – Selectman Dave Mathers will come in to sign the warrant tomorrow.

Documents used

Agenda and notes

Memorandum of Agreement about Emergency Responder Quarantine Facility

Proclamation of Children's Mental Health Week

Minutes

Adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk