

*Minutes*  
*Williamsburg Board of Selectmen*  
*April 8, 2021*

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, April 8, 2021, by video conference call. The chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Present: William Sayre, David Mathers and Denise Banister

Also present: David Chase, Lincoln Fish, Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant), Denise Wickland (Police Chief)

Open Space Committee – Eric Bloomquist, Kenley Clark, Paul Kennedy, Sally Loomis, Markelle Smith

Reporters – Dennis Hackett (Reminder papers), Peter Spotts (Country Journal)

1. Community Forest Stewardship Plan – Lincoln Fish proposed a project to control invasive plants and to improve bird and pollinator habitat on the land around the Transfer Station. The first step would be to apply for a Mass. DCR Forest Stewardship grant to create a management plan for the property. Once the management plan is in place, the next steps would be to apply for grants to control the invasive plants and then to improve the bird and pollinator habitat. There would be no cost to the town, as all costs would be picked up by the grants and any required matches could be met by in-kind services. The parcels he is interested in are the main Transfer Station (Map H, Lot 15, 35.3 acres), land on both sides of Mountain Street (Map K, Lot 46, 4.1 acres), and possibly a parcel on the road off to the right (Map H, Lot 20, 9.04 acres). This last is land that the Fire Department uses for training; he would like to include that area, with the Fire Department's permission and with the understanding that the needs of the Fire Department come first. He noted that the grant application does not need the exact acres pinned down, so there would be no commitment as to that piece of land. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to proceed with the Forest Stewardship management plan on the acreage described. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye). The Board thanked him for working on this issue.

2. Open Space Committee – Sally Loomis of the Open Space Committee presented the draft Open Space and Recreation Plan Update, last updated in 2011. She described their community engagement process, including a survey, a visioning session, and participating in the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) planning. Further steps will include posting the plan for public comment and getting letters of support from the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board. She described the community concerns and interests, plan goals, and action plan highlights. It was noted that there is more focus this time on climate change resilience and coordination with MVP work. Discussion included Chapter 61 land and creation of a Master Plan with funds from the MVP process. The Board will plan to review the plan and discuss it at the next meeting. The Board thanked the committee for its hard work.

3. Police – Police Chief Denise Wickland gave her regular report. Officer Peter Fisher is in the third week of the Police Academy. He will need to take a cruiser for a week for the driving course. Town Administrator Charlene Nardi has accepted the offer of payment from MIIA for the damaged 2018 cruiser. The town is waiting for approval to order a replacement cruiser.

Capital Planning Committee has approved the scheduled replacement of the 2014 cruiser. There will be a grant-funded mobilization and extra patrols in mid-April targeting distracted driving. The department has been busier this year, with 20 arrests in the first quarter of the calendar year, compared to 11 last year. They are waiting for the permit to put the traffic signs into the roadway for the season. The “Your Speed Is” signs have arrived and will be mounted. The budget is fine, though they are watching the expense line closely as some costs for the Academy have gone up. The new training standards are an issue and she expects amendments to work out the bugs. The officers will need 200 hours of academy training, to be phased in over three years, in addition to the regular 40 hours per year. All the officers want to continue to work for the town, but eventually after they leave, the new standards may be an issue in getting part-time officers.

4. Helen E. James Building lease agreement – The Commons Co-Working group lease expires June 1 and they have been asked to leave by then. Dave Chase asked if it would be possible for them to stay a little longer, offering to do whatever it would take. The Board felt the town needed to stay with the June 1 date, because of the need to move forward within the tight timeframe for the Public Safety Complex, but asked Town Administrator Charlene Nardi to check with the architect about whether another two weeks or month might be just as convenient. All agreed that the group has been an excellent and helpful tenant and caretaker, and that the town had generously given them a low rent. The Board agreed to reduce the rent for the last months that they are there, retroactive to April 1. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to reduce the rent of the Commons Co-Working group to \$150 per month for April and May. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye). Further discussion included a plan for a tour of the old school by school alumni, a photo shoot, and retaining the basketball court and possibly some small pieces of the building.

4. Elections – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB to sign the warrant for the Annual Town Election on May 3. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye).

5. Inspection services contracts – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB to sign the FY22 contract with the City of Northampton for Building Inspection Services for \$42,500. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye). **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to sign the FY22 Electrical Inspection contract, which is paid for by the fees charged and is at no cost to the town. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye).

6. School teacher contract budget question – Interim School Superintendent Michael Sullivan asked whether the Select Board or Finance Committee had any guidance about raises during teacher contract negotiations. The last contract raised salaries by 2% each year. The town gave zero increase to town employees last year; the Finance Committee has not yet made a recommendation for this year. The Board would be more comfortable limiting a teachers’ increase to 1 to 1½%.

7. Mountain Street project –

Engineering – The town has agreed to pay 17% of the engineering cost, or about \$239,000, presumably over the next three years, or about \$80,000 a year. This could be from free cash, Chapter 90 funds, or borrowing, or a combination.

Resident concern – A resident of Mountain Street expressed concern about the Mountain Street road project as it relates to speed of travel on the road. There will be public hearings at each step of the process. It was noted that the town cannot afford to fix the road on its own.

Construction timetable and funding – PVPC has indicated that it is unlikely that the project will be on the TIP for 2025, when Whately's portion is. Rep. Blais is talking with federal Rep. Neal about federal funds to allow coordination with Whately's timing.

8. Contracts for Public Safety Complex – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi recommended moving forward at the next meeting with amending or renewing contracts with the architect and the Owner's Project Manager.

9. Public Safety Complex Building Committee – The Board discussed establishing a building committee for the Public Safety Complex and will discuss names at the next meeting.

10. Articles for Annual Town Meeting –

Town Administrator Charlene Nardi listed the projected articles. Capital Planning Committee has approved most capital items and is still considering the Fire truck; Fire Chief Jason Connell and Selectman Dave Mathers will be part of that conversation. Charlene recommended putting off the possible change of Technology consultant until next year.

11. Town Administrator hiring and transition – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that all eight members of the search committee have agreed to serve and they are moving forward. The Board will discuss next steps at the next meeting.

12. Town Administrator's report –

Flag fund – Recent donors have been William Sayre and Lisa Bertoldi, James and Cynthia DiDonato, and B Mango and Bird.

Wetlands bylaw – Conservation Commission has withdrawn its proposed bylaw for this year.

Funding for municipal buildings – There is new proposed legislation for municipal buildings to operate like the School Building Authority. It is still in the initial stages and the soonest it could be effective is FY2023. There may also be federal funding for infrastructure in FY2022. It is not wise to hold off on the public safety complex project; it is important to move forward as planned.

COA bylaws – The COA Advisory Board is looking at bylaws relating to the COA, both the town government bylaws and the in-house COA bylaws, and amending and updating them. They will bring a recommendation to the Select Board and eventually to Town Meeting.

Town Office debris – Spring cleanup is this Friday.

Old Town Hall doors – Charlene notified the Historical Society of the plan to replace the doors. William Sayre will be talking with Building Supervisor Dan Hathaway.

Ross property – The Zoning Board of Appeals has received an application for a special permit for a used car dealership at the gas station. The owner has not responded to the chair's email about unpaid taxes, and the ZBA may deny based on that, which would mean the applicant could not apply again for a certain period of time.

Solar array PILOT income – The three operational solar arrays bring in approximately \$133,000, and two others are in negotiation. There was a suggestion to use the money for the Public Safety

Complex. Changes are coming in state law and things are uncertain. It was suggested that the money be used for short-term spending since it will cease in 20 years.

Sign on Mountain Street – Building Inspector Louis Hasbrouck has sent a message to the owner.

Marijuana RFI – Town Counsel has advised that the deadline can be extended or the RFI can be put out again, or it can be put out on a rolling basis without a deadline.

13. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the minutes of March 25 as amended. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye). **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the minutes of April 1. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye).

14. Warrant – Selectman Dave Mathers will review and sign the warrant.

Documents used

Agenda and notes

Open Space and Recreation Plan update presentation

Election warrant

Building Inspection contract

Electrical Inspection contract

Minutes

Adjourned at 11:19 a.m.

Approved:

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Clerk