

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
May 25, 2023

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, May 25, 2023, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Present: Denise Banister and William Sayre

Absent: David Mathers

Also present: Nick Caccamo (Town Administrator), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

1. Annual Town Meeting warrant and budget – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo presented the latest version of the warrant. The largest items are the operating budget and the large sweep of capital requests. He went through the articles and the Board discussed them. After some routine articles, there was one to set up a revolving fund for firearms licensing, to be used for additional firearms training. He noted that the town used to list an assessors’ revolving fund, but it is not included in the town bylaws. After the plan for capital spending for the next five years, the next one is the operating budget, totaling \$9,068,534, with \$8,808,534 to be raised from taxation. The Smith Vocational line is down, because students are graduating. Hampshire Regional School District assessment has increased but the school district voted to apply extra money to reducing the assessments. Some items have large percentage increases but small dollar amount increases, such as some salary lines. People earning the least – less than the minimum amount in the recent UMass Boston wage study – were bumped up significantly. The general cost of living increase across the board was 5%. He and the Board members reiterated the need for retaining employees and the difficulty in hiring with low salaries. The Fire Chief’s position moving to full time represents a 50% increase, with an understood commitment to the other 50% increase in FY25. Some utility costs have decreased – heating has traditionally been over-budgeted and this budget reflects the price that has just been locked in. Electric has historically been under-budgeted so it looks like an increase but in fact the town has locked in a favorable electric supply rate. Fire Department labor, which historically has been overspent and required a reserve fund transfer, is now a more realistic number. The overall increase is 5.8%, comparable to other local towns. Many of the remaining lines are for free cash for various equipment requests, primarily fire and highway. The Agricultural Preservation Restriction for 96 Mountain Street is still in the works and will probably be completed in June of 2024. The amount for the 5% contribution will probably not change. The Board discussed the amount to move from free cash to stabilization and settled on \$160,000 after looking at the numbers for current stabilization, 10% of the operating budget, the money for capital improvements, the proposed amount to offset the tax rate, and the amount that would be left in free cash. One of the last articles would allow for the creation of an Opioid Settlement Fund, with the money received from the opioid litigation. Another is for accepting the statute making the Police Chief a strong chief. The last one is a citizens’ petition to adopt a Land Acknowledgment Statement. **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to approve and sign the warrant for June as amended. **So voted** (2-0).

2. Select Board meetings – June 1 and June 15 were moved to 1:00 p.m. because of a conflict.

3. Memorial Day – William Sayre will do the welcome at the beginning and Denise Banister will make closing remarks.

4. Public Safety Complex change order – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to approve Change Order #4 from Forish Construction dated 5/18/23, as revised, in the amount of \$85,070.75

5. Town Accountant update – Nick Caccamo talked with the administrator of the FRCOG accounting program and will continue to check with him weekly. One possibility is a firm in eastern Mass. that is fully remote, towns would send their documents by overnight or would bulk scan. Another possibility is internal movement among staff already present, and leaving FRCOG. The Accountant does not need to be a CPA. Another possibility is to look for another outside contractor. The Town Administrator was asked to check with other towns to see who they use and if there are possibilities there.

Documents used

Annual Town Meeting warrant

Public Safety Complex change order

Adjourned at 10:31 a.m.

Approved:

Clerk