

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
March 17, 2016

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, March 17, 2016, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The chair noted that the meeting was being recorded, at the request of the reporter.

Present: David Mathers, Denise Banister and William Sayre

Also present: John Hoogstraten (Woodland Trails), Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Peter Spotts (reporter, Country Journal), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant), Marie Westburg (Director of Senior Center)

1. Personnel review – Director of Senior Center Marie Westburg – Board members appreciate the good work that Marie Westburg is doing. They are pleased with the progress in the past year – day-to-day operation of the Senior Center has improved, there is less friction among staff and seniors, and programs and services have increased. They praised her leadership and organization, her insight, enthusiasm and ability to marshal people. They also noted the limitations of budget. They think she is doing a great job and are glad to have her as director. Marie Westburg responded that she appreciated both the Board’s support of her hard work and the Board’s being open with her about budget constraints. She said she can be creative about making a lot happen with few resources. She noted that there are some new volunteers to help where her staff does not have time. She also noted that the staff is flexible about working as a team and that the space is small.

2. Council on Aging – Senior Center report– Director of the Senior Center Marie Westburg reported that they have increased programming for people who want to come after 4 p.m., to engage baby boomers and more active seniors. The intern is working on marketing through social media.

Budget – Board members were troubled by the large budget request, pointing out that the town is limited to a 2½% increase to cover all departments. Marie responded that she is just asking for the ideal; the number of seniors is increasing and they are trying to prepare. The Board approved purchase of a laptop, needed especially for home visits, to come from the Technology budget, and a barcode scanner and an amount for programs, for an expense line increase of \$1300. Marie requested increasing the Administrative Assistant’s hours, acknowledging that that would create eligibility for town benefits. She noted that whenever she applies for grants she includes some administrative hours. She supplements staff time with volunteers. Board members said that a long-term perspective and strategic planning would be helpful. Regarding the request to use the Helen E. James Building temporarily for programs, Board members were reluctant because people will get used to being there, other departments will also want to use the space, and there would be maintenance costs, but suggested that she could talk further with Town Administrator Charlene Nardi.

3. Highland Ambulance – Budget – Leslie Smith of the Highland Ambulance Board discussed the organization’s income and expenses over the past several years. With the move into its new

building this year, there will be added costs in utilities and maintenance; the basic wage has been raised from \$10 to \$11 an hour; health insurance is increasing; and vehicle insurance has gone up with the new ambulance. The total increase from FY15 to FY17 over the six towns is \$100,000. There are separate assessments for operating expenses, ambulance debt service and building debt service. Williamsburg's total assessment will increase in the coming year from \$72,429 to \$93,879. The town has not yet paid anything toward the new building debt service because there is no mortgage as yet.

Comparative costs – Regarding the Board's question in December about comparative costs, Leslie Smith said the other ambulance services in the area are very different, and not necessarily as reliable; the one that is closest to Highland Ambulance in quality and accessibility is Pioneer Valley EMS. All agreed that it would be awkward for her to inquire, and it should be up to the town to do the research. Board members acknowledged that Highland Ambulance does a great job and has a long history of satisfactory service.

4. Woodland Trails – Flood and Forest Trail Agreement – Dam Site – John Hoogstraten of the Woodland Trails Committee reported on the project and presented the draft agreement with the adjacent landowners. Due to the recent rain the route has been relocated slightly. It was suggested that the map attached to the agreement be signed and then if changes are made it can be signed and dated again. The agreement is for five years, with ongoing automatic renewal. The committee is very enthusiastic about the project – John Hoogstraten called it the most exciting thing they are doing as a committee. They are working with the Historical Commission, for interpretive material, and with the Northampton Department of Public Works. The overall budget is \$10-12,000. They are applying for grants; a fundraising letter is about to go out to local businesses, with a later appeal to individuals for volunteer time and contributions. They anticipate getting one-third of the needed funds from grants, one-third from local individuals and businesses, and they would like the town to support one-third and will propose a free cash article for \$4000 to Town Meeting. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to authorize the chair to sign the Williamsburg Flood and Forest Trail Agreement between the Town and the adjacent landowners. **So voted** (3-0).

5. Audit – Letter of Representations – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi explained that the letter of representations to the auditors is done every year and it says that the town has given the auditors full information. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to authorize the chair to sign the letter of representations to the auditors. **So voted** (3-0).

6. Audit – Management Letter – Charlene reported that the departments have responded to the auditor's Management Letter. The deficit in the withholding account was brought up, as it had been mentioned in previous years. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to authorize the chair to sign the Management Letter responses to the auditor for the FY15 audit. **So voted** (3-0). Charlene noted that a new accountant is training.

7. Election warrant – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to sign the May 2 Annual Town Election warrant. **So voted** (3-0).

8. Appointments –

COA Advisory Board – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to appoint Nancy Winger to the vacancy on the COA Advisory Board, term to expire June 30, 2018. **So voted** (3-0).

Inspector of Animals – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to appoint Donald Lawton as Inspector of Animals for the term May 1, 2016, to April 30, 2017. **So voted** (3-0).

Mill River Greenway Committee – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to accept the resignation of Lisa Tucker from the Mill River Greenway Committee with regret and thanks for her service. **So voted** (3-0).

Hampshire Regional School Committee – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to accept the resignation of Diane Bishop from the Hampshire Regional School Committee with regret and thanks for her service. **So voted** (3-0).

Hampshire County Emergency Communication System Oversight Committee – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to accept the resignation of Donald Turner from the Hampshire County Emergency Communication System Oversight Committee with regret and thanks for his service. **So voted** (3-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to nominate Daryl Springman to the Hampshire County Emergency Communication System Oversight Committee. **So voted** (3-0).

9. Conservation Committee – The chair read a letter from the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions that Joe Rogers completed the MACC Fundamentals for Conservation Commissioners course.

10. Licenses – Live entertainment – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to approve a Live Entertainment license for the Beaver Brook Lounge, D.J., 9 to 11:45 p.m., for Friday April 1, Friday April 15, Saturday April 16, Friday April 22, Saturday April 23 and Friday April 29. **So voted** (3-0).

11. Public Safety Complex – There was discussion of possible sites for a Public Safety Complex. Bill Sayre of the Public Safety Complex Committee reported that the committee decided against pursuing the National Grid site, because it flooded during the hurricane, the 500-year flood zone encroached on most of the property, and more stringent regulations are starting to be put into place. Since then they have heard that the flooding during the hurricane came not from the river but from water coming down the hill and pooling there, and that the federal government is opposed to building in the 500-year flood zone but only if they are funding it. The James Building lot and Lashway lot were also discussed. Presentations to various groups in town are being planned, to give information and get feedback. The Board will plan to discuss again afterward.

12. Budget – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi presented departments' budget requests. Fire Department – The Fire Chief has asked that the labor line not be reduced when the hose testing is moved to the expense line, because the labor will be needed for other purposes. The expense line is confusing; Charlene clarified that it is actually an increase of \$3000 to cover the cost of hose testing, though it appears to be a decrease because the costs of utilities were inadvertently left in the expense line when they were moved to town-wide utility lines. Board members agreed to the requested budget.

Emergency Management – The Reverse 9-1-1 system will be changed from Blackboard Connect to Regroup, on the recommendation of the Town Administrator and Town Clerk, and the expense line will remain the same.

Select Board – The Board discussed the budget line by line. For most of the lines they recommended level funding. Town Office Expenses can be reduced by \$900. Internet services can be combined into a town-wide line; Charlene will talk to the departments. Copier Maintenance can be reduced by \$500. The Board reviewed the heating oil and electricity usage at the Helen E. James Building, noting that while heating oil gallons have gone up, the cost has gone down. Because of the lower price of oil, Town Heating Oil can be reduced by \$6000, or about 10%; Town Electricity can also be reduced by 10%, or \$3100. Town Computer Service will go up because of the decrease in Comcast funds and because of the monthly backup to the server. Town Building Repairs will be reviewed next meeting after a conversation with the Building Supervisor. Budget numbers from outside organizations, such as the Hampshire Council of Governments assessment and the Hampshire County Regional Lockup assessment, are not under the Board’s control. For OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits) the Board recommended \$5000.

Agricultural Commission – The Commission requested \$1500 for town farm brochures, including design, layout and printing. There was a concern about using town money to promote private businesses, but it was pointed out that promoting agricultural businesses is part of the Agricultural Commission’s charge. There was also a question about how many brochures were planned. Charlene will ask for more information.

Council on Aging – The COA requested increasing the Administrative Assistant’s labor line to 20 hours; she is currently at 13 hours, with 2 more hours coming from grants. The Board approved increasing to 15 hours; this will make her eligible for vacation and sick time, but not for town health insurance. The COA requested an increase in the Director’s hours from 20 to 30. The Board approved an increase of 3 hours. The Board approved \$1300 in expenses as discussed earlier. [At a later meeting the \$800 for the scanner was changed to a Town Meeting free cash article.]

13. Capital planning request – Library – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi presented a letter from the Board of Library Trustees requesting significant repairs to the libraries, including repair of the side walls of the stairs to the old part of the Meekins Library; the design work would cost \$10,000. A question was raised about how to prioritize town needs; other needs mentioned included new town mapping for the assessors and voting equipment. Board members will look at the library steps and talk with the Building Supervisor and plan to revisit the request at the next meeting.

14. Salaries – Collector – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi distributed a revised salary survey that included fees for the Collector and Town Clerk. It was noted that the Collector’s compensation package including fees is a good income based on 26 hours a week. Board member reiterated that while they would like eventually to get the fees out of the position’s compensation, it could lead to unfairness – removing the fees and adding that amount to her salary would increase her salary rate way above everyone else, and removing the fees and adjusting her rate a lesser amount would reduce her total income, which isn’t fair to the current Collector. Therefore, it was recommended that the Collector’s salary be left as it is and the salary

rate be adjusted eventually when a new Collector is hired. Regarding the Collector's assertion that when she was hired she was promised a raise when she got the books in order, suggestions were made to look at the annual town reports and the Selectmen's minutes of that period. It was asked how the late fees are set, whether by the town or by state law. Charlene will follow up.

15. Town Administrator's report –

Finance Committee – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reminded the Board that they were invited to the Finance Committee meetings of March 16, 30 and April 6, and to the Water/Sewer meeting on March 29.

Helen E. James Building – She reported that people are making inquiries about using the building, including the Senior Center and realtors.

Grant events – The focus group for the Mass. Assoc of Health Boards/Mass. Dept. of Public Health grant will be March 24.

Zero-based budgeting – She reported that Terry Williams of the state Department of Revenue does not recommend zero-based budgeting; it is time consuming and it is used for budget cuts in the private sector, whereas the public sector has obligations and responsibilities that cannot be cut. Other towns in the Small Town Administrators network do not use it.

Building Inspector update – She reported that the Building Inspector is concerned about the building on Valley View without town approval or the ability to use it; he is working with the owners.

Tree issue at 156 Main Street – She reported that Mass DOT says that the tree is not dead, it just drops branches as it ages, and that it is not a Mass DOT tree. She has informed the homeowner.

Pigs at 13 Hyde Hill Road – She reported that according to the Health Agent and the FDA the business may continue but needs to follow a different process.

Sculpture at library – Board members expressed concerns about accepting the sculpture at the library, including the debt issue, and the need for maintenance, agreement by the library, liability insurance, and engineering.

Accident Adams Road – Letter about the accident that was sent to the town also appeared in the newspaper. Highway Department responded about their process of treating roads.

Town boundaries – She reported that Eric Weber reviewed the file on the town boundaries, calculated the GPS coordinates, and made thoughtful recommendations for walking the boundaries, including visiting the corners but not the entire boundary for each, doing a few a year over the course of several years, and making a longer hike as a fun town outing. Board members appreciated all of Eric's work and will revisit at a future meeting.

Smith Vocational School – She reported that vocational school rates are going down but that Smith Vocational has applied for a waiver to allow it to keep the difference, which would cost the town \$12,650. Other towns in the district are sending letters to the state asking that the waiver not be granted. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to authorize the Town Administrator to send a letter recommending against the waiver requested by Smith Vocational School. **So voted** (3-0).

Healthy Hampshire – She reported that there will be a training on April 7 on how to do agreements for use of public buildings.

Highway – She reported that the beaver dam on Briar Hill broke and the Highway crew has been cleaning up and repairing the road.

16. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to accept the minutes of March 3 as written. **So voted** (3-0). **Motion** was made and accepted to accept the Employee Evaluation of Bonnie Roberge on March 3. **So voted** (3-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to accept the Employee Evaluation of Eleanor Warnock on March 3. **So voted** (3-0). Executive session minutes will be addressed at a future meeting.

17. Annual report – Board members approved the written dedication for the Town Annual Report.

18. Warrant – Approved and signed the warrant.

Documents used

- Agenda and notes
- Budgets requests
- Flood and Forest Trail Agreement
- Audit letter of representations
- Audit management letter
- Election warrant
- Letters of interest in appointments
- Mass. Assoc. of Conservation Commissions letter
- Live entertainment permit
- James Building utility usage comparison
- Map of town and possible Public Safety Complex sites
- Capital planning request
- Salary survey
- Town boundary description and recommendations
- Smith Vocational student list and costs
- List of correspondence received
- Minutes
- Warrant and expense report

Adjourned at 11:20 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk