

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
June 3, 2021

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, June 3, 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: Nick Caccamo (Town Administrator), Dennis Hackett (reporter, Reminder), Lisa Jasinski (National Grid), J.M. Sorrell, Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

1. Pole hearing – National Grid – The chair opened the public hearing at 9:00 a.m.

South Street – Lisa Jasinski of National Grid explained that a guy wire in a rotting tree came down and there is a need to install a stub pole. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the installation of a stub pole on South Street 2000 feet from Unquomonk Road. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye).

Kellogg Road – Lisa Jasinski explained that a pole and anchor would be needed to accommodate the weight of the wires for solar fields. She had spoken with Brian Lashway and he did not have an issue. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to approve the installation of a pole on Kellogg Road as described in the application. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye).

The public hearing closed at 9:04 a.m.

2. Generator at craft and vendor fair – The Board had previously approved use of the Helen E. James property for a craft fair on June 12, and had included a number of conditions, including no generators. One of the vendors has requested use of a generator. The Fire Chief has said no precautions are needed if it is not in an enclosed space. Board members were agreeable, though expressed concern about possible noise. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to allow a generator at the craft fair on June 12. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye).

3. Appointments – Public Safety Complex Building Committee – Police Chief Denise Wickland requested that Robert Reinke be appointed to the building committee and Officer Reinke wrote expressing interest. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to appoint Robert Reinke to the Public Safety Complex Building Committee. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye).

4. Public Safety Complex Building Committee – The first meeting is scheduled for June 9 at 6 pm. Melissa McCall, currently secretary for the Conservation Commission, is willing to take minutes for the committee. A rate of \$15 per hour, to increase with all other town employees as approved by Town Meeting, was suggested for the position. The Building Committee is authorized to hire its staff and set its rates. The Board will recommend the person and the rate to the Building Committee.

5. Police Chief contract – The Chief had accepted the Board's salary offer in March but the contract was never fully signed. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve and sign the contract with the Police Chief, effective July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2024. **So voted** (DM aye, DM aye, WS aye).

4. Opening town buildings and holding public meetings –

Opening town buildings – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo reported that the Board of Health has recommended that town offices remain closed until June 15 and further recommendations

would be forthcoming. The Senior Center is eager to get back to programming, including offering rides, and holding community activities under an outdoor tent. Questions were raised about requiring masks or vaccinations. It was noted that the authority of the Board of Health ends with the end of the state of emergency June 15, and the Board will want to see what the Board of Health recommends. Meanwhile, **motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to open all town buildings on June 15, subject to recommendations of the Board of Health. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye). It was pointed out that some things from the past year are popular, such as the dropbox by the back door and online payments.

Specific departments – It was noted that the Board could explore flexible options about working from home or in the office, to meet the needs of the employees and the community. It was also pointed out that there are employees with disabilities or reasons to be vaccinated or not vaccinated. Collector – Board members would like some hours open to the public in the building. Suggestions included a range from 4 hours a week to the full 30 hours, meeting by appointment, and the possibility of an Assistant Collector, to be paid out of the Collector's salary line. The Collector will be asked to come up with a proposal. Other offices – The Board would like to talk with the various offices; it may take the month of June to sort it all out.

Public meetings, virtual, in-person, hybrid – The authority for virtual meetings expires with the end of the state of emergency June 15. Legislation has been filed to extend the ability to do virtual meetings. The Board would like to have all options available. Different committees may have different preferences about meeting in person or virtually. The Board will plan to meet in person and would like the public to be able to participate remotely. Nick will look into the technology. The next meeting, on June 17, will be virtual. [This was later changed, as the legislature had not extended the authority for virtual meetings.]

Time of Select Board meetings – Board members prefer to continue to meet in the morning for now and are willing to make accommodations.

7. July 1 meeting – The July 1 meeting had been cancelled due to possible vacations but plans have changed and the new Town Administrator will be away for the previous meeting. Board members agreed to hold the meeting on July 1.

8. Licenses – The Administrative Assistant reported that the special outdoor seating granted to licensees last year will expire 60 days after the state of emergency expires, i.e., August 15. She will reach out to the licensees.

9. Speeding on South Main Street – Resident J.M. Sorrell expressed her concern about speeding on South Main Street. The Board would like a speed study done and suggested either a speed trailer or a study through PVPC. Town Administrator Nick Caccamo will follow up.

10. Annual Town Meeting – Everything seems to be ready. The passing of Eileen Stewart and John Pope will be mentioned.

11. Town Administrator's report – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo made his first report.

Departments and reopening – He noted that the mask mandate ends May 29 the state of emergency ends June 15, the Board is waiting for what the Board of Health will recommend, and there is legislation pending about the future of virtual meetings.

Cat bylaw – Following up on a resident request for a cat bylaw, Nick reported that some communities have cat bylaws. Williamsburg has a dog bylaw and could adopt some cat-specific language. The question would be how to enforce it. It is also hard to determine whose cat is involved, since cats have no license requirements. He asked whether this was just one specific

problem or a town-wide situation. Board members felt that this is not a big problem in town and that the town doesn't even have adequate enforcement people for dogs. They concluded that a cat bylaw was not needed.

Animal Control Officer – Nick reported that Animal Control Officer Shayla Howe does not want to continue but is willing to until the town finds a new way forward. The Police Chief recommended a candidate but the person requested more money than is currently available. Discussion included a possible line item rather than paying a person out of the revolving fund, negotiations about the amount of pay, advertising for a new person, requirements for training, how many calls there are and whether they are repeat calls. Nick will continue to work on it.

MassDOT public hearing on Mountain Street – MassDOT will hold a hearing on June 16 on the design of the project so far and asked the town to post fliers. The meeting has been posted on the town website; other suggestions were a robocall (Code Red) to town residents, posting on the transfer station bulletin board and posting on Facebook.

250th Anniversary celebration – Sen. Hinds has secured a \$10,000 earmark for the town's celebration. Thanks will be sent to Sen. Hinds. Town Clerk Brenda Lessard has been the point person for the anniversary celebration committee. The celebration has been put off till next year because of Covid.

Covid – There were no Covid cases in town, according to an email yesterday.

Other work – He has been making connections with people in the community and with legislators, PVPC, MassDOT, and getting up to speed. He is learning a lot. He added that he is passionate about municipal government and loves this work. Board members thanked him for a great report, and are glad that he is here.

Future projects – He spoke with Rep. Blais and her legislative aide about the One Stop for Growth application for infrastructure and planning, and about opportunities for grants and earmarks. He feels it is important figure out what projects the town wants to prioritize for state and federal funding. Board members mentioned Mountain Street and the culvert that have been priorities for a while. He would like to pursue this, engage the town and do data collection, so as not to miss opportunities. Board members encouraged him to make an outline of what he had in mind.

12. Correspondence – Included an upcoming Legislative Affairs Forum with PVPC.

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

14. Finance Committee – A joint meeting with the Finance Committee for end-of-year issues will be July 15.

Documents used

Agenda and notes

National Grid pole petitions

Police Chief contract

Adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

Approved:

Clerk