

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
August 13, 2020

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, August 13, 2020, by video conference call. The chair called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Present: William Sayre, David Mathers and Denise Banister

Also present: Beverly Bullock (Library Director), Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Peter Spotts (reporter, Country Journal), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant), Melissa Wilson (Senior Center Director)

1. Senior Center – Senior Center Melissa Wilson gave her first regular report, including information about food programs, contacts, classes and activities, and medical programs. Food programs include Highland Valley meals on wheels (16 meals every weekday), Take & Eat (39 on Saturdays), Farm Share program (50) (all of these have expanded due to the pandemic); DTA-SNAP benefits, which is a new program, and Brown Bag (25) and the pantry at Dunphy School. A new program of weekly wellness calls to at-risk seniors is working well. Some classes and activities are meeting by Zoom, some outside. Foot care home visits are available but expensive. She is planning for in-person appointments for Medicare open enrollment this fall, and is thinking about a flu vaccine program. Staff is working mostly from home. The Senior Center won't open up until at least January or spring. Board members thanked her for the great job she is doing and for her excellent report.

2. High Street sidewalk – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported on Highway Superintendent Dan Banister's evaluation of the High Street sidewalk. He walked it, staked it out and took pictures. He estimated that it would take at least \$15,925 to repair. There is \$8,263 in the sidewalk fund, a lot of which is already committed to finishing the North Main Street sidewalk and damaged areas on Main Street and East Main Street. Whatever is left could be applied to High Street. There was particular concern about damage to tree roots. The Tree Warden can be consulted. A three-year plan might be helpful.

Letter to petitioners – The letter responding to the signers of the High Street petition was mailed out shortly after the July 30 meeting, and was also posted on Facebook.

3. East Main Street/ Nash Hill Road sidewalk – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi said that the work on East Main Street/ Nash Hill Road is funded by the Complete Streets program and is separate from the town's normal sidewalk work. Three bids were received within the timeframe. The lowest was Taylor Davis Landscape and Construction, for \$19,143, and she recommended awarding them the contract. The work includes ramps and a crosswalk and is to be completed by November 18. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to award the contract for the East Main Street/Nash Hill Road sidewalk construction, in the amount of \$19,143, to Taylor Davis Landscape and Construction, work to be completed by November 18, 2020. **So voted** (3-0).

4. Chapter 90 Project Request – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to ratify the signatures on the Chapter 90 Project Request for line painting. **So voted** (3-0).

5. Meekins library – mini-split repair – Library Director Beverly Bullock had sent a report regarding the mini-split air conditioning leaks. One of the mini-split units had leaked in June

causing great damage; this is the second time in one year that the unit had leaked. Jamrog HVAC proposed a system using gravity drains, costing \$2800. The alternative is \$400-500 per month for cleaning. The Building Repair budget line has \$15,000. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve \$2800 for Jamrog HVAC to repair the library mini-splits, from the Building Repair budget line. **So voted** (3-0).

6. Veterans' Services Inter-Municipal Agreement – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to authorize the chair to sign the Veterans' Services Inter-Municipal Agreement for FY21. **So voted** (3-0).

7. Personnel policy – proposed changes.

New state holiday June 19 – The new state holiday, Juneteenth on June 19, will be added to the personnel policy. Municipal offices will be closed. It will not cost the town more; the town just loses the day of work. There was discussion of how to handle making it a paid holiday, including making it a paid holiday only if it falls on a day the employee normally works; concern about treating this holiday differently from other holidays; allowing an employee to substitute it for another holiday such as Presidents' Day, Columbus Day or Patriots' Day; concern about adding another paid holiday to the already generous list. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to add Juneteenth, June 19, to the personnel policy under holidays and to treat it as a paid holiday for employees if it falls on a day the employee normally works. **So voted** (3-0). The change to the personnel policy will be brought back for a vote at the next regular meeting.

Sick leave – The Personnel Policy allows employees to accrue 180 days in sick time. The question was whether that was too much. Board members mentioned that very few people would actually use this, and that an employee who had worked for twelve years, without taking sick time, to accrue 180 days, should be able to use it if they are so sick they can't work. The provision has not been abused. The Board was fine with it the way it is.

Highway Department work hours – There was a question whether the Board would want to change Highway Department work hours to address winter storms, to reduce fatigue and limit overtime pay. Of the local towns, only Chesterfield does this. Board members commented on the high caliber and dedication of the Highway crew, and noted that former Highway Superintendent Bill Turner would see that employees would go home after plowing to get some rest before coming back in to plow again. Board members felt that Highway Superintendent Dan Banister is already taking responsibility to make sure the employees are not operating equipment when exhausted, and therefore leave the decision of hours and overtime up to him.

8. Comp time for Highway Superintendent – The Board reviewed the proposed provision to compensate the Highway Superintendent for overtime related to storms and emergency events, since as an exempt employee he is not eligible for overtime pay. This is essentially the same as the provision in the Police Chief's contract.

For road work related to storms or emergency events done outside of the normal work hours, the Highway Superintendent shall earn compensatory time on time and one-half basis. With notice to the Selectboard or Town Administrator in advance, except in case of an emergency or when circumstances do not permit, the Highway Superintendent shall be allowed to take compensatory time off as he deems appropriate during his normal workweek at such times as he reasonably determines will least adversely impact Highway Department operations. Unless the Selectboard approves otherwise, a maximum of sixteen (16) hours of compensatory time may be expended at one time. The Highway Superintendent may accumulate a maximum of 80 hours of compensatory time; any amount in excess of that

number will be deposited in a sick leave bank for use by the Superintendent in the event he exhausts his regular accumulation of sick leave accrual.

Town Administrator Charlene Nardi has discussed this with Highway Superintendent Dan Banister and he is in agreement. It was noted that this does not apply to ordinary overtime, e.g., to finish a patching job, but is for storms and emergency events. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to approve the policy as described. **So voted** (2-0, DB recusing herself).

9. Highway foreman pay – Highway Superintendent has recommended that Don Turner be named Foreman and receive Foreman pay. The current crew rate is \$23.41 per hour, the Foreman rate is \$25.41. The budget can support the change. Board members noted that Don Turner is a longtime employee and that he has stepped up since Dan Banister became Superintendent and has taken on the role of Foreman. The Board concurred with the Highway Superintendent's promotion of Don Turner to Highway Foreman.

10. Town Administrator's report –

Note of thanks to Police Chief – A note was sent to the Police Chief thanking her for her kindness after a bike accident.

Nash Hill Road petition – Residents submitted a letter of concern about the volume and speed of traffic on Nash Hill Road and the safety of pedestrians. Town Administrator Charlene Nardi responded with an update on the planned sidewalk and crosswalk work on East Main Street and Nash Hill Road and the larger project of addressing speed limits, signage and how to control traffic.

Vacation – Charlene is planning to take next week off.

After-storm update – The Highway Department, Fire Department and Police Department responded and everything was cleaned up by the next day. Emergency Management Director added that it was a well-coordinated collaboration and that they knew what to do.

Speed limit – Charlene reported that she has been working with MassDOT to understand the process for setting speed limits; it is hard to figure out and she has asked Town Counsel for help. First a Special Town Meeting needs to vote to adopt Chapter 90 Section 17C, and then the Select Board can vote to reduce the speed limit to 25 mph in a thickly settled area or business district, and notify MassDOT of the changes. The Police Chief is working to document all roads and speed limits. There is a 1981 vote, mostly for the village centers; outside of the village centers speed limits are not documented. The Police Chief is also getting quotes for "Your speed is" signs.

Savings in departments – Staffing reductions – Charlene noted that the Senior Center is not opening until January or spring, and the library is still closed for a while, and asked whether there is an opportunity for savings. Previously the focus was on preserving positions and helping people out but it's not clear the town can continue to do so. Part-time employees working from home may not be able to fill their hours or accomplish needed work tasks. Reduced hours and furloughs were mentioned as possibilities. She will discuss with department heads and look into the effect on unemployment insurance.

250th Anniversary Celebration update – As soon as the September primary election is over, Charlene will work with Town Clerk Brenda Lessard and the 250th Anniversary Committee about a recommendation to put off the anniversary celebration for a year or two. It was hoped to bring back the former chair to continue his leadership but that is not possible.

Health updates – Health Agent Mark Bushee sent an update about working with businesses when there was a concern about masks. Charlene will ask if Mark can send a report monthly. There is a new order from the Governor reducing the size of gatherings. As of August 1, anyone who comes

in from a state with a high number of cases needs to quarantine or have a negative COVID test before entering Massachusetts.

Dunphy School siding/trim – Regarding the fact that the work was done improperly, Charlene can ask Town Counsel what they recommend. When this was looked into in the past it was decided not to move forward because the cost to litigate would be greater than the return. It was also suggested that the architect DRA be asked for a copy of the specs.

School negotiations update – The parties have met, set ground rules, made proposals, and scheduled future meetings. Negotiating will be in executive session.

School reopening plans – The state has just come out with guidelines for shutting down if necessary for safety. Charlene will ask for a copy of the plan.

Haydenville church driveway – The church has asked if the Highway Superintendent could put in a berm to keep water from going into the driveway, and he felt he could add a little berm. There was concern that there may be more issues due to recent plantings with a lot of dirt by the drain.

Fort Hill Road B&B – The house is still operating as a B&B. Neighbors are concerned. The Board of Health and Building Inspector's office are working on it.

11. Correspondence – Correspondence included KP Law updates about the Governor's post-travel quarantine orders and the Governor's revised order on gatherings.

12. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the minutes of the 7/30 regular meeting. **So voted** (3-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the minutes of the 7/30 meeting with the OPM Steering Committee. **So voted** (3-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the minutes of the 8/5 special meeting. **So voted** (2-0, DB recusing herself).

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

14. Senior Volunteer Tax Relief Program – The Administrative Assistant reported that the application forms for the new work year were sent out yesterday. The new Income Preference Level is \$32,208, after the cost of living increase. Changes made last year were to set a maximum income at \$50,000, to specify how to compute the income, and to include some non-taxed things like Social Security.

Documents used

Agenda and notes

Senior Center report

East Main Street/Nash Hill Road contract

Chapter 90 Project Request

Veterans' Services contract

Comp time provision for Highway Superintendent

Note of thanks to Police Chief

Nash Hill Road petition

Minutes

Adjourned at 11:06 a.m.

Approved:

Clerk