

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
September 14, 2017

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, September 14, 2017, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and noted that the meeting was being recorded by the Country Journal reporter.

Present: William Sayre, David Mathers and Denise Banister

Also present: Kim Boas (Energy), Jeffrey Bosworth, Louis Hasbrouck (Building Inspector), John Mazzarino, Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), John Pohanka, Bonnie Roberge (Collector), Peter Spotts (reporter, Country Journal), Bill Turner (Highway), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

1. Highway –

Vehicle fuel – Highway Superintendent Bill Turner told the Board that Highway does not have an emergency source of vehicle fuel, which is especially needed if there are a couple of storms back to back. They used to rely on a company that is no longer in business. The closest alternative is not open on weekends. The town currently has a 1000 gallon tank; he would like 2000-2500 gallons. They could switch out the tank for a larger tank or add an additional tank. The Board asked him to look into the cost.

Boom mower – Bill Turner asked about using the boom mower for vertical mowing and cutting limbs off trees. They can't do everything by hand, and the boom mower allows them to get over guardrails but he has used it sparingly because the results are ugly at first. He will plan to do a test run at a place where no one will complain and will take pictures before and after

Petticoat Hill Road – The patching on Petticoat Hill Road is about half done; the worst spots have been done. Chip sealing will happen in the spring.

2. Valley View Road – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi said that Fran Tilley's property at the end of Valley View Road had been divided to create an additional building lot, and John Mazzarino is asking whether the town will maintain the road if he paves it. Highway Superintendent Bill Turner said that he was fine with maintaining the road if it is built to subdivision specifications. He would like a turnaround, which will be better than what is there. The town would have to authorize Mr. Mazzarino to work on the town's right-of-way. Mr. Mazzarino can extend the water and sewer, at his own expense. There was also some discussion about the property's 200 feet of frontage, computed by going down one side and up another, but it had been approved and so is not in question. Board members agreed that if Mr. Mazzarino improves the road up to specifications, the town will maintain it.

3. Personnel – employee evaluation – Bonnie Roberge, Collector – Board members feel that Bonnie is extremely competent, knowledgeable, and professional. Her many years of experience enable her to serve the town well. Board members appreciate that the town's receivables seem to be on target and that the audits are positive. Bonnie knows most of the taxpayers and knows how to deal with individual situations. She is cooperative and helpful and there are fewer complaints. Board members appreciate her monthly updates. She works well with other departments,

especially the Assessors, where the staff is still learning. Board members feel that her work is of the highest quality and are glad that she is part of the team.

4. Collector – regular report – Town Collector Bonnie Roberge gave her regular report. She has been recognized for being a Municipal Collector for ten years. The wall safe is working well for payments when she is not in. She is open 27-28 hours a week and does not go out to lunch. She and the Water Sewer Commission are still working on the water and sewer electronic meter conversion, which is almost complete. The new meters have been useful to the town and have helped a number of people to track down leaks. Collector software conversion is in process; it will combine everything into one system rather than the current two systems, and should result in substantial savings in software support. She is getting ready to send out water bills in the next couple of weeks. She has just sent the June 30 report to the auditors. Her continued goals are to reconcile accounts, keep the audits clean, keep positive working relationships, and complete the changeover to the new meters and new software. She continues to educate people about motor vehicle excise taxes, e.g., that they must go through the Registry of Motor Vehicles, not the town, for address changes and that the Assessors can help with the abatement process after a new car purchase. When taxpayers have issues, she tries to help them work toward a solution, e.g., home equity line or to making smaller more frequent payments; a number of people have gone from being afraid of losing their homes to paying their taxes on time.

5. Building Inspector – regular report – Building Inspector Louis Hasbrouck gave his regular report. He handed out the permit listing; things are slower than last year but there is discussion about new housing. National Grid is looking at property for solar. The new inspector has been well received. Signs – Regarding signs, he said it is up to the Planning Board. A lot of signs don't currently meet the requirements of the Zoning Bylaw. Since Cumberland Farms is applying to extend its hours, that is an opportunity for the Zoning Board of Appeals to bring up signage. He went on to say that the Cumberland Farms Special Permit refers to a plan but he has not been able to find the plan. There was discussion about what constitutes a sign, e.g., internal sign hanging in the window, a logo on the store, sign on a propane tank. He said he has written down every sign he could see for the Planning Board.

A Board member thanked the Building Inspector for his expertise on the Public Safety Complex Committee. The Town Administrator commented that even though the Building Inspector works in a big city, he is always very supportive of Williamsburg and helps the town accomplish its goals. LED lights – Regarding LED streetlights, he commented that they are cheaper to run but the light is different and brighter; after six to eight months people in Northampton are happy with them.

6. Valley View Road, continued – John Mazzarino and Jeffrey Bosworth told the Board that they have a building lot at the end of Valley View Road and would like the town to maintain the road. It is a public road up to two concrete posts; beyond the posts the road was discontinued at a Town Meeting in May 1988; up to the posts the public road has not been maintained. They would also like the water and sewer to be extended but are aware that they will need to pay for it. They pointed out the tax benefit to the town of having the property developed. They asked, if they grade the road and bring it into compliance, whether the town would pledge to maintain it. Board members told them that the Highway Superintendent would agree to maintain the road as long as it was brought up to subdivision standards, and would like a round area for a turnaround.

A Memorandum of Understanding will be drawn up. It will be up to Mazzarino and Bosworth to get the work done, at their expense. In response to a question about who would pull the permits, the Board could not think of permits that would be needed for paving. Mr. Mazzarino should check with the Highway Superintendent about what the Conservation Commission might need.

7. Energy – LED streetlights – Kim Boas of the Energy Committee asked the Board to support a Special Town Meeting article for LED streetlights. He said the cost is estimated at \$43,000, which after a utility rebate of \$7000 and a grant of \$9000 comes down to a net of \$27,000, though the full amount needs to be approved in order to proceed. These lights use less energy and will qualify for a lower rate and so there will be savings of \$7000 a year, or a four-year payback. (The numbers come from the Metropolitan Planning Commission, which has been running LED retrofit program for a number of years.) The light would be a different color, white to blue, more natural, less yellow. Police like it because they can see better. The apparent brightness is brighter. The only downside is that they will shine in people's windows, like the current lights, but the new lights will be more sophisticated in shielding; the Energy Committee will pay close attention to this concern. For ongoing maintenance, the town will go out to bid, but it could possibly piggyback on Northampton's maintenance contract with Siemens. The Energy Committee will support the article at Town Meeting. If people want to see examples, the Pharmacy has changed to LED, and so has the City of Northampton. He would propose rounding up the cost in the article to \$45,000. The town already has a grant through DOER, and can apply for a Green Communities grant to reduce the amount still further. Board members supported the project because of the payback period and will plan to vote on the articles at the next meeting.

8. Town signs – John Pohanka had evaluated the two Welcome to Williamsburg town signs. He recommended new signs, same image as before, one-sided, not routed (because less expensive), painted not vinyl (lasts longer), material that won't swell (fiberboard warps), stainless steel brackets (non-stainless-steel is affected by road salt), 42" x 60" and 1" thick, with 23 carat gold leaf (because it glows), paint the posts, don't attach the Right to Farm sign to the welcome sign (it belongs with the informational sign), and consider a different location (the western Williamsburg one is leaning because of soft ground). He also asked whether two additional signs at other entrances to town might be a good idea. The town currently has \$1100 in an account for welcome signs. He thought the Trust Fund could be approached, as it has money for beautification of the town. Projected costs were \$1675 or \$2500 per sign, plus \$1500 per sign to paint the posts and install, plus the cost of brackets. He and Town Administrator Charlene Nardi will work together to draw up specs.

9. Appointments – resignation – Water and Sewer Commission – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to accept the resignation of Jeremiah Roberge from the Water and Sewer Commission, effective July 1, 2017. **So voted** (3-0).

10. Energy – Municipal Energy Technical Assistance (META) grant – This is the contract for the grant presented by Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito on September 7. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to authorize the chair to sign the paperwork for the META grant for \$12,500. **So voted** (3-0). Kim Boas of the Energy Committee, which applied for the grant, explained that it will be used for site assessment and development assistance for a Request for Proposals for a community-owned solar project. The purpose is to assist residents who can't put solar on their

homes, and potentially to assist moderate and lower income people to participate. It is not for municipal buildings, which already have solar energy through a solar project in Rutland, MA.

11. Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) – The Emergency Manager explained that the EMPG grant is a yearly grant through MEMA and FEMA. The Fire Department will use it for hand-held GPS software and a laptop computer, for search and rescue. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to authorize the chair to sign the EMPG grant in the amount of \$2460.

12. Recreational Trails Grant – The Town Administrator explained that the grant from the Department of Conservation and Recreation will include connecting the Williamsburg trail to Northampton, fixing the retaining wall across from Fort Hill Road, and covering any survey work needed. Work will be done in the spring; deadline for completing work is December 2018. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to authorize the chair to sign the Recreational Trails Grant in the amount of \$47,250.

13. Copier – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to authorize the chair to sign the Copier Maintenance Contract with United Business Machines for the Sharp copier for \$1095. **So voted** (3-0).

14. Live entertainment – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve a Live Entertainment Permit for a D.J., 8:30-11:45 p.m., for Friday September 29, Saturday October 7, Friday October 13, and Tuesday October 31 for the Beaver Brook Lounge. **So voted** (3-0).

15. Personnel – Highway employee rate – The Town Administrator reminded that Board that when an employee works 40 hours a week and also works as an on-call firefighter, the person is working overtime, and the town has to pay a blended overtime rate. The formula was supplied by Town Counsel. The Highway Superintendent feels that his budget can sustain the overtime, and then it can be discussed at budget time if the employee is still working for the town. If the employee works four extra hours a week, that would mean \$35 above the usual hourly rate, or approximately \$1500 a year. The Board acknowledged that the employee will be paid a blended rate for overtime when he works more than 40 hours a week. Good things have been heard about the temporary employee.

16. Special Town Meeting warrant –

Article 1 – Public Safety Complex – Chair William Sayre and Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported on a recent meeting with an experienced Owner's Project Manager, since the last Board meeting. The OPM said that the town cannot do 10,000 square foot building for \$3.5 million; the scope of the building will need to be narrowed down to fit into that budget. Project costs, including construction and design, are about \$600 per square foot. He recommended spending \$30,000 for an OPM for pre-design services, to do programming for the James lot and James Building, to help develop a budget, to help work with the town to figure out how to make the decision, and to help with the selection of an architect. The Board agreed with the recommendation of hiring an OPM to help the town move forward. It was noted that several committees had responded after the joint meeting on August 31 but that they did not have access to the new information and recommendation; they will be notified of the change. While there was disagreement within the Board about the size of the budget – on the one side the town cannot

afford \$3.5 million, on the other there is reluctance to cheap it down if the town wants the building to last fifty years – the Board agreed on the use of the James site, noting that an assessment of renovation costs of the building is needed. Board members realized that a new committee may be needed to make the larger town-wide decisions that are now required but that were not foreseen at the time the Public Safety Complex Committee members were selected and charged.

Article 2 – LED Streetlights – Board members were impressed with the savings and four-year payback and will support the article. Though there are questions about brightness, they thought people would adjust.

Article 3 – Cash Management Software – The cost is for conversion and yearly maintenance and support, with an expected grant to offset some of the cost. Board members agreed to support the article.

17. Senior Volunteer Tax Relief Programs – The Administrative Assistant presented projected amounts for the tax work-off program – eleven people, \$13,000 – for the Board as they consider whether to increase the number of participants from the current limit of ten. The Assessors have been asked for their recommendation. It was noted that the work-off program is completely different from the Senior Tax Exemption.

18. Town Administrator's report –

Hampshire Regional tour – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that she and chair William Sayre have signed up for the tour of the Hampshire Regional High School.

Mill River Greenway Request for Qualifications – The RFQ for design and engineering services will be sent out tonight.

Zoning Board of Appeals notices – Hearing for Special Permit for accessory building at 46 Hyde Hills Road, hearing on appeal regarding 74 Village Hill Road, and decision on modification of Special Permit for 16 Valley View Road.

Meekins Library stair project – Project is complete. She is working on the final report to the Mass. Historical Commission. The check from MHC has been received.

Chapter 90 FY18 – Notice that \$188,064 has been approved, the amount expected.

Speed limits on roads – The police need to know what speed limit to enforce. A road has a sign saying 25 mph but there is nothing to say why. State law says 30 mph with some exceptions. Charlene will work with the Police Chief.

Select Board Association meetings – On September 19. Denise Banister plans to go.

Appointments – Moderator – vacancy procedure – Charlene reported that a vacancy does not require a special election; a Moderator must be elected by the Town Meeting. The Town Clerk opens the meeting and asks for nominations. The Select Board does not appoint the Moderator.

Insurance – vacant buildings – She reported that MIIA, the town's insurance agency, has said that there are three buildings that they consider vacant by their definition that less than 31% of the total square footage of the building is used to conduct customary municipal operations. The three buildings are the James Building, the Haydenville Library, and Old Town Hall. Apparently they had to pay a large claim on a vacant building. They will be giving a quote and it will be more expensive. Use must be municipal not rental (James), having two meetings a week does not count (Library), must be occupied by people not things (Old Town Hall). She noted that going to a different insurance company loses a lot of benefits and when the town went elsewhere in the past it came back again to MIIA.

Delinquent water and sewer – Highview – The nursing home has over \$30,000 in unpaid water and sewer bills. The town is consulting Town Counsel.

Healthy Hampshire grant – Mill River Greenway – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the paperwork for the Healthy Hampshire grant. **So voted** (3-0). The grant will support the Mill River Greenway Design Development Study.

Police vehicle – She asked if the Board wanted to sell the 2012 police cruiser on Municibid or take a guaranteed \$4000 trade-in. Board members asked her to see what vehicles go for on Municibid. Since it is a 2012 and mileage is not high, it will probably be better to go through Municibid.

Public Safety Complex forum – Informational forum is planned for October 10 in anticipation of Town Meeting.

Tree – Regarding a tree on Hatfield Road, a resident wants it taken down but the Tree Warden thinks it is healthy. A hearing with the Planning Board is being scheduled.

Audit – Audit for FY17 is planned for the week of December 4.

19. Correspondence – The legislation to allow James Ferron to work as a firefighter to age 70 is now ready to go to the House.

20. Warrant – Approved and signed the warrant.

21. Picnic – The turnout was awesome but people were disappointed that the food, which was free, ran out early.

22. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the minutes of August 31 as amended. **So voted** (3-0).

Documents used

- Agenda and notes
- Building permit listing
- Valley View Road map
- Resignation letter
- Grant contracts – META, EMPG, Recreational Trails
- Copier Maintenance Contract
- Live entertainment permit
- Special Town Meeting draft warrant
- Senior and Veterans' Tax Relief projections
- Notice about firefighter legislation
- Minutes
- Warrant and expense report

Adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk