

*Minutes*  
*Williamsburg Board of Selectmen*  
*January 18, 2018*

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, January 18, 2018, 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: Charles Dudek (Finance), Mary Dudek, Dick Kisloski, Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Peter Spotts (reporter, Country Journal), Rob Stinson, Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

Commons Corporation: Diana Chaplin, David Chase, Mark Corner, Sally Loomis

OPM Steering Committee: Jim Ayres (co-chair), Kim Boas, Dan Bonham, Mitch Cichy (co-chair), Jason Connell, Brenda Lessard, Jean O'Neil, Paul Wetzel (also Finance), Denise Wickland

School: Stacey Jenkins, Bobbie Jones, Kristen Smidy

1. Commons lease agreement for Helen E. James Building – Issues about the proposed lease renewal were the rent increase from \$500 to \$750 and the request for signage. Members of the Commons Corporation said that all income above expenses is put into upgrades, e.g., painting, furniture and marketing. They would like a freestanding sign on the road, which would be more visible than a sign on the building. Board members were not in favor of changing the signage until it is clear what will happen with insurance. The town's insurance company has said they don't consider a building occupied if it's not occupied by town employees, and therefore would need to be insured separately at a much higher rate. (The definition of unoccupied says "less than 31% is used to conduct customary municipal operations.") The town may need to mothball the building. The building currently costs \$25,000 in running expenses, not counting insurance; additional insurance may be \$8-10,000. It was noted that town money cannot be used to subsidize private business. The town is not interested in being in the rental business. It was suggested that the Commons come back with a proposal for a sign, and meanwhile continue to rent month to month at the current rate of \$500, pending a decision about the insurance. Board members agreed.

2. Police – Police Chief Denise Wickland made her regular report. Budget, next fiscal year – She requested level funding for FY19. She said they have faced cuts the last few years, most recently \$10,000 from labor; they have requested level funding for many years; therefore, she was concerned about further cuts to the department budget and said that they might not be able to continue operate if cut. Crosswalk – She said there is an officer at the school crosswalk mornings and afternoons as often as possible. When asked about placement of a possible flashing crosswalk sign, she recommended putting it at the library. Board members discussed several sites. New officers – She said the two officers are doing exceptionally well. They have finished their field training and are working on their own. Budget, current fiscal year – She said the labor budget is on track. Grant – She is presenting a grant to update the police records system. Vehicles – She agrees with changing the capital plan vehicle replacement schedule from six years to seven years, pointing out that they have a good maintenance plan and the cars are

constructed better. She added that they are looking into hybrid electric cars for the department, though understands that they may not be appropriate for winter. Thanks – Board members expressed deep appreciation for what she and the police force does, adding thanks for keeping budget requests down.

3. OPM Steering Committee – Public Safety Complex – The Board met with the OPM Steering Committee to review the committee’s charge – the mission, scope, authority and expected deliverables. The joint meeting began at 6:35 p.m. Committee members were sworn in by the Town Clerk. The Board thanked the committee members for taking on this challenging and important work. Board members commented that the committee members were chosen for their experience, skills, and ability to work through process and to listen, for the community or perspective they represent, and the ability to be open-minded about the solution; each member brings value to the committee. The Board had appointed Jim Ayres and Mitch Cichy as co-chairs of the committee. Copies of the charge were distributed and reviewed briefly, including the budget of \$2.5 million. Committee members will be given summaries of and links to the previous studies relating to the Public Safety Complex. It was noted that Town Meeting voted \$30,000 to work with the OPM and the goals may not all be achievable within that budget. The committee may need to pare down the list when putting out the Request for Services (RFS) for OPM services. The joint meeting ended at 6:55 p.m.

4. Community Compact grant for police department radio – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to authorize the chair to sign the Community Compact Cabinet Efficiency and Regionalization Program Grant from the Executive Office of Administration and Finance in the amount of \$10,350 for the IMC Mobile System for the Police Department. **So voted** (3-0).

5. Boiler and heating system maintenance contract – Jamrog – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi presented the proposal from Jamrog HVAC for heating system maintenance. Jamrog and Clark were both recommended; Clark’s proposal was more in depth. She talked to Jamrog and was satisfied that they do full maintenance. Building Supervisor John Hoogstraten met with people from both companies and was also satisfied with Jamrog. Jamrog’s price is less at \$1500. She had a concern about response time but was assured that they would come in an hour or hour and a half. The contract is for the remainder of the current year and rolls over for the 2018-19 season. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to authorize the Town Administrator as Procurement Officer to enter into the agreement with Jamrog HVAC for heating system maintenance. **So voted** (3-0).

6. Licenses – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to grant American Legion Post 236 a permit for late closing, 1:00 a.m., and live entertainment, a band, for Saturdays February 17 and March 17, 7-11:30 p.m.

7. Budget – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi distributed copies of the budget form for the Selectmen’s budget. She is most concerned about internet and computer service – Comcast (internet) rate has gone up, and Paragus (computer service) has been using more than the contracted number of hours; it also includes backup and cloud anti-virus. Town Counsel budget is running short this year but she doesn’t recommend changing it. Highland Ambulance budget will increase 2.3%. She added that it is important to use the Tech Upgrades budget so that office replacement PC’s are staggered and not needed all at once.

8. Employee review process – Board members reflected on the new review process, used this year for the Town Administrator and the Highway Superintendent as a pilot, where a Board member talks individually with the employee and reports back to the Board. One Board member was very positive, especially being able to talk about things that might not come up in an open meeting. It was suggested that the two people reviewed be asked for input. This will be discussed again after Town Meeting.

9. School budget – The Board met with members of the Hampshire Regional School District and members of the town Finance Committee to talk about the school budget, since that is a large part of the town's budget and capital expenses. The chair and Town Administrator noted that the Board is talking with all departments about the tight budget, and that the town has always supported the schools. School officials acknowledged that money is tight and that they are trying to provide level services, which is difficult with health insurance increase, school choice increase, and special ed. increase. Discussion about ways to make the schools more efficient included transportation (reorganizing to reduce the number of bus trips, reviewing bus routes, hiring a driver instead of using the van pool for special transportation, advocating with the state for the promised transportation reimbursement, use of vans rather than large buses, charging for transportation), allocating classes differently to accommodate bubbles in numbers of students, school adjustment counselor to keep students in-district, and opening slots for school choice in. In the past the town has used free cash to offset increases but this year with the expected increase, the levy limit would be exceeded and so there may need to be an override. Good communication is important, especially before budget season, and Finance Committee and Select Board will be invited to School Committee meetings.

10. Executive session – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to go into executive session pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21(a), subparagraph 1, to discuss the physical condition and potential dismissal of an employee. The chair stated that the Board would return to public session. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye). The Board went into executive session at 8:17 p.m. and returned to open session at 8:37 p.m.

11. Town Administrator's report –

FEMA grants – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that the Fire Department is applying for two FEMA grants, for a rescue truck and equipment. The grantwriter was not totally optimistic, saying the town is wealthy on paper. Charlene will draft a paragraph about finances. The question was raised about generally consulting with the Select Board and the Finance Committee early in the process before applying for grants.

James Building request – Charlene reported that the elementary school is putting on a play and asked if the James basement would be available for doing preparation. She was reluctant to have people coming and going and also mentioned that heat is kept low. They will follow up with more details if they want to make the request.

James parking request – A hike is planned for the East River on January 30. Charlene approved using the James lot for parking but noted that if there is snow, that is the last building to be plowed.

Meals tax – Town Clerk Brenda Lessard has asked about a meals tax, asking what the thinking was in the past and suggesting that it be looked at again. She said a local optional meals tax of 0.75% could generate additional revenue for the town; it would have been \$37,667 this past year.

It would help alleviate the burden of real estate taxes and would be taxed to those who go out to eat. A Board member remembered that it was rejected at the time because it was thought to be a burden to business; another Board member thought it would not affect people's eating habits. Charlene will look into the process, whether a vote of the Select Board or of Town Meeting.

Senior Center space – Charlene said she has met with Marie Westburg to do more brainstorming to cut down on the noise and activity level. One possibility is to see about moving a receptionist or outreach worker to where the Water/Sewer desk is, near the meal site.

Dispatch – Charlene reported that the Police Chief feels that Dispatch handles calls well and a policy is not needed, e.g., if there is a motor vehicle accident and no fluids or wires involved, Police is dispatched but not Fire; if there might be fluids or wires down, Fire is called. She said that if there is a cardiac arrest, they need more than two people at the scene and having Fire is beneficial. She noted that chiefs need to be able to make decisions about responding and a policy may hinder that. She encourages chiefs or those in charge to clear scenes as soon as possible. Discussion included how to support service but better regulate the response so it can stay within budget.

12. Warrant – Approved and signed the warrant.

13. Miscellaneous –

Scholarship – Information about the Tonet Scholarship can be put in the newsletter, annual report, on the website.

Flag Committee – Committee will be meeting Monday for the last time.

CPA tax – Board members were not in favor of the Community Preservation Act for additional revenue. It was mentioned that the rigid percentages for use for the categories – open space, historic preservation and low-income housing – have been relaxed.

Whiting Street Fund – The fund worked with the Fuel Assistance program and gave gift cards for Big Y to low-income people.

Name of Board of Selectmen – There was discussion of changing the bylaws to use Select Board rather than Board of Selectmen.

#### Documents used

- Agenda and notes
- Commons lease agreement
- Police budget request
- OPM Steering Committee charge
- Community Compact grant for police radio
- Jamrog heating system maintenance contract
- Late closing and live entertainment license
- Select Board budget
- School budget information
- Warrant and expense report

Adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Approved:

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Clerk