

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
October 20, 2022

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, October 20, 2022, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Present: Denise Banister, William Sayre and David Mathers

Also present: Richard Bart (Building Supervisor), Nick Caccamo (Town Administrator), Eric Cerreta (Water/Sewer), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant), Elizabeth Wroblicka (Hilltown Land Trust, Kestrel Land Trust)

1. Water/Sewer – Eric Cerreta, chair of the Water/Sewer Commission, reported on a dispute with the City of Northampton, which processes the town's wastewater. Northampton had complained about the town's effluent and instituted daily testing, currently at \$22,240 per year, and surcharges, at \$85,000. He said the town is paying as much in surcharges as it does for the main service. Water/Sewer initially assumed that the town was at fault and did a lot of remediation. Now the town and Northampton do testing of the water in the same sluiceway, with intakes 18 inches apart, and Northampton's readings are a lot higher. The town sends its samples to an outside lab, Northampton analyzes theirs in-house. When the town complained about some of Northampton's process, e.g., swirling the water and picking up unsuspended solids, the readings went down, but then crept back up. Tighe & Bond, which had designed the town's system, said they couldn't come in because of a conflict of interest, though Northampton later said they were not preventing Tighe & Bond from coming in. One suggestion was to pay the fees into an escrow account, to hold until the dispute is resolved. Another suggestion was that each side should take samples, and both parties test both samples, work cooperatively and come to a solution together. Another was to approach Tighe & Bond, if agreeable to both sides, to do an impartial sampling analysis, or find an outside lab, share the cost and evaluate both systems. Eric will take these ideas back to the Water/Sewer Commission.

2. Conservation restriction, 103 Briar Hill Road – Elizabeth Wroblicka, consultant for the Hilltown Land Trust and Kestrel Land Trust, explained that the 20.3 acres was part of a legal settlement involving the Department of Environmental Protection and Dynamic Energy Solutions, LLC, and a conservation restriction was being placed on the land in perpetuity. The Conservation Commission supports this. **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to approve the conservation restriction from the Hilltown Land Trust, Inc., to Kestrel Land Trust, Inc., as being in the public interest pursuant to Mass. Gen. Laws chapter 184 section 32. **So voted** (3-0)

3. Election warrant – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to sign the warrant for the 2022 state election. **So voted** (3-0).

4. Building Supervisor – New Building Supervisor Richard Bart made his first regular report to the Board. He described his background and his initial review of projects, including library gutters, Senior Center upgrades, Old Town Hall, and the Transfer Station recycling building. Some questions that arose were whether contractors need to be insured, since excellent small businesses often don't get insurance (the response was yes, they need to be insured, as best

practice), and whether gutter replacement is considered building construction, requiring prevailing wage, or a service. The plan is for Dick Bart and Town Administrator Nick Caccamo to identify problems, create a plan, and then focus in and start to create a scope of services to get quotes.

5. Appointments – Town Collector – Sharon Strzegowski had been offered the job of Town Collector, and she started work in September. She is now being officially appointed for a three-year term, pursuant to the town bylaws. **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to appoint Sharon Strzegowski as Town Collector, term to expire June 30, 2025. **So voted** (3-0). Board members noted that she is doing great work. Council on Aging Advisory Board – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to appoint Mary Bisbee as Associate on the COA Advisory Board, term to expire June 30, 2023. **So voted** (3-0).

6. Senior and Veterans' Volunteer Tax Relief Programs – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to approve the six applicants for the Senior Tax Workoff Program. **So voted** (3-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to approve the two applicants for the Veterans' Tax Workoff Program. **So voted** (3-0).

7. Special Town Meeting – Special Town Meeting will be held on Saturday, November 19, starting at 1 p.m. at the Town Offices. The Board recommended that the quorum be reduced from 60 to 30. At the next Select Board meeting on November 3, there will be two meetings, one at 9:00 to reduce the Special Town Meeting quorum, followed immediately by the regular Board meeting.

8. ARPA funds – The Board spent quite a while discussing the requests for use of the money. Discussion included prioritizing deferred maintenance projects and looking at other sources of funding for some items. **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to approve the following: meal site room upgrades (\$13,750), Meekins roof and gutter project (\$27,450), Town Office IT upgrades (\$14,000), Assessors' full field audit of residential real estate (\$33,000). Money will also be reserved for Town Office capital improvements (\$25-100,000) and Bridge Street easements (\$50,000-75,000), pending receipt of more information. **So voted** (3-0). Further projects will be considered at a future meeting.

9. Personnel review process – Board members reviewed who they would be evaluating in the upcoming personnel review process. They looked at the forms used last year and encouraged simplifying them, while ensuring that everyone's voice is heard, that employees feel valued, and allowing an opportunity to talk about ongoing issues. Interviews will be set up.

10. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to approve the minutes of September 22 and October 13 as presented. **So voted** (3-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to approve the revised minutes of September 8. **So voted** (3-0). The revised minutes deleted a troublesome sentence about the size of solar arrays in the Building Inspector's report.

11. Classification and compensation study – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo recommended moving the position of Highway Superintendent to grade E, the top tier, and he corrected several pay rate discrepancies. Board members approved. There were no other comments or corrections to the draft report.

12. Town Administrator's report –

Public Safety Complex – Updates will be reported to the Board regularly.

MVP (Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness) – Kickoff meeting was held September 17. The administrator for the project cannot already be a town employee. Monthly reports are required. Reports may be posted on the town website.

Municipal electricity aggregation – The program has been publicized. New rates start November 1. Constellation Energy is the new supplier and their rate is 0.20244 per kwh, an increase but still cheaper than National Grid's 0.33891.

Cell tower – Someone wants to lease town-owned land at 97 Cole Road for a cell phone tower. Nick will try to get more information, such as potential revenue, and input from town committees.

Depot Road culvert – Conservation Commission has issued a certificate of compliance, so the project is finished.

13. Correspondence – School – The Board selected William Sayre to represent the town at the Hampshire Regional School Committee meeting to choose a person to join the School Committee prior to union wage negotiations.

Construction – A resident neighboring the Helen E. James construction site complained about the earthquake-like shaking. Dave Mathers will get more information and will plan to talk to him.

Documents used

Agenda and notes

Water/Sewer contract and related documents

Conservation restriction

Election warrant

Letter of interest

Senior and Veterans Volunteer Tax Relief applications

ARPA funding requests and priorities

Personnel review forms

Minutes

Classification and compensation study

Electricity rates

Cell tower request

Hampshire Regional invitation

Resident complaint

Adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk