

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
October 24, 2019

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, October 24, 2019, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and noted that the meeting was being recorded by the Country Journal reporter.

Present: Denise Banister, William Sayre and David Mathers

Also present: Mitch Cichy (OPM Steering Committee), John Hoogstraten (Building Supervisor), Ruby Wilhelm Klarich, Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Leslie Smith (Highland Ambulance), Peter Spotts (reporter, Country Journal), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

School Committee: Cynthia Kassell, Matt Wilhelm

1. School Committee – appointment – Joint meeting of the Select Board and the Local School Committee was called to order at 6:03 p.m. Select Board chair read a letter of interest from Ryan Schiff and noted that there was a letter from the School Committee recommending the appointment of Ryan Schiff. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to accept the School Committee’s recommendation and appoint Ryan Schiff to the Local School Committee, term to expire June 30, 2020. **So voted** (Cindy Kassell agree, Matt Wilhelm agree, William Sayre I approve, Dave Mathers I approve, Denise Banister I approve). It was noted that since this is an elected position, Ryan Schiff will need to be nominated at the caucus so he will be on the ballot for the next election. The Board thanked the School Committee for filling the vacancy so fast and thanked Ryan Schiff for stepping forward. The joint meeting ended at 6:06 p.m.

2. Building Supervisor –

Regular report – Building Supervisor John Hoogstraten gave his regular report. There have been a number of small projects, no significant projects. He has learned that the old original front steps of the Meekins Library are icing up in the winter, because water sits on them and freezes; he is researching options. The roof over the new part of library was poorly designed and water pools there; he has sealed it so that water doesn’t go back into the building. Roof repairs of the Dunphy have just been finished by the contractor – damage was done when the previous roofing contractors moved equipment out of there.

Resignation – The Board received John Hoogstraten’s resignation letter with sadness. He responded that he has enjoyed serving the town but is trying to retire. He would like to be finished by the end of the calendar year but is willing to stay until a replacement can be found.

Motion was made and seconded (WS/DM) to accept the resignation of John Hoogstraten as Building Supervisor, with regret and deep appreciation, effective when he is replaced or by June 30 2020. **So voted** (3-0). Board members and Town Administrator Charlene Nardi spoke of the great work he has done, how much the town has relied on him, and how much they have enjoyed working with him. He has some possible names to suggest for his replacement, which will be discussed at some other time.

3. Highland Ambulance – Leslie Smith, outgoing board member of Highland Ambulance whose resignation was acknowledged at the previous meeting, made her last report to the Board. She said that the organization has made the transition from cash accounting to accrual accounting, and they are changing to a new auditor and are pleased about the improvement. They are getting a new ambulance – with four-wheel-drive rather than a van. She thinks the towns will not have to pay anything extra because Highland started with a \$150,000 donation toward the ambulance, last year's town assessment went toward the ambulance, and they have been doing fundraising. She said the annual meeting with the towns about the budget will probably be in January. Some challenges that the organization is facing are that the expenses are affected by the new minimum wage and that it is hard to fill up the staffing schedule – they are considering a full-time position with benefits. She added that she is very glad that Denise Banister will be the new Highland Ambulance Board member. Select Board members thanked Leslie for her service with Highland Ambulance, and for keeping the town informed, and wished her well and will miss her in town.

4. Senior Center Director – letter to Jennifer Hoffman – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to sign the letter to Jennifer Hoffman thanking her for the incredible job she has done with the Senior Center. **So voted** (3-0).

5. Appointments – resignation – OPM Steering Committee and Energy Committee – Kim Boas – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to accept the letter of resignation from Kim Boas from the OPM Steering Committee and Energy Committee, effective immediately, with regret and with thanks for his dedicated service. **So voted** (3-0).

6. Collective bargaining – Hampshire Regional Schools – The chair read a letter from Aaron Osborne, Superintendent of Schools, about upcoming negotiations with teachers and support staff and appointing a representative for the towns in the negotiations. Charles Dudek was nominated to do it last year; John Martin of Southampton was the one appointed. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to recommend Charles Dudek to be the towns' representative in negotiations with Hampshire Regional. **So voted** (3-0). William Sayre will go to the meeting with the other Select Boards to nominate Charles Dudek.

7. Mass. Cultural Council contract – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi explained that every year the local Cultural Council receives money from the Mass. Cultural Council, to support arts and activities in the local community. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to authorize the chair to sign the standard contract form with the Mass. Cultural Council for FY20, in the amount of \$4800. **So voted** (3-0).

8. Bridges and South Main Street – One-way loop – The plan is that traffic is two-way on Bridge Street to the American Legion, then a one-way loop across the bridge, down South Main Street, and out to Route 9 on the bridge by the Haydenville Library. Town Administrator Charlene Nardi said that she has spoken with Police, Fire, and the businesses who use those bridges, and all are in favor or understand the reasoning. The next steps are to talk to MassDOT and hold a public forum. The change is not expected to happen for a couple of years.
Stop sign on South Main Street – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to install a stop sign on South Main Street at the corner of South Main Street and Walpole Road in front of the

Freemasons' building for traffic traveling west. **So voted** (2-0, DB absent). This will be a regular stop sign not a flashing sign. A suggestion was made to put up a temporary warning sign before the stop sign.

9. OPM Steering Committee – Mitch Cichy reported for the committee. They recommend using the organization P3 to put together two RFP's, one for an environmental study and one for an engineering study of the Helen E. James Building. They feel that part of the committee's due diligence is to do more research into the building so that they can better inform the public and make a recommendation on the James Building. There is \$11,000 left in the Town Meeting article for the OPM Steering Committee work and there is \$5000 in the article for a study of the James that was voted in the article for the Mill River Greenway. The plan is to draft RFP's, present them to the OPM Steering Committee for review, put out the RFP's, evaluate the responses, recommend a firm, and bring a contract to the Select Board. For the environmental study, P3 has a firm they have worked with. For engineering and structural, the RFP will go to the next OPM Steering Committee meeting on November 14, with the hope that it will be put out by the end of November, asking for responses in January. Board members agreed.

10. Senior and Veterans' Volunteer Tax Relief Program (tax work-off) – The Board talked about the program and its goals. Goal – They felt the goal was both to help low-income people and to do work needed by the town. Discussion included that if the town will be giving up \$18,000 in tax revenue, it should be about getting work done that the town would normally have to pay someone to do. Requirements – Requirements of a nearby municipality were reviewed and were felt to be too strict, e.g., they don't allow work to be done by another person. Income computation – The Town Administrator and Administrative Assistant recommended a method for applicants to use in computing income that would be the same for everyone. The Board does not want to compute income or see tax forms; applicants would still just certify that they were below or above a certain limit. It was suggested that extenuating circumstances be considered, such as high medical bills. Tasks – Suggestions included offering benefits to residents through the HEN program. The plan is to reach out for ideas of needed tasks over the next month. Criteria – Since there are 15 applicants for the 12 slots in the Senior program, the criteria proposed for this year, in order to include everyone, were to give half slots to people who worked few hours, give full slots to people under the income preference level, give full slots to people with special skills, and divide the rest of the available money and hours evenly among the others. The Board agreed to use these criteria for the upcoming year and to consider the criteria further, including a possible maximum income cutoff, for next year. Applicants – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to approve the tax work-off applicants as presented. **So voted** (3-0).

11. Veterans' Day – Chair Denise Banister will welcome people to the event, and Selectman Dave Mathers will close the event. The focus of the event will be on Korean Ambassador for Peace medals, which will go to two local veterans of the Korean War.

12. Town Administrator's report –

MVP meetings – Board members went to the Oct 15 and Oct 23 meetings.

Senior Center Director replacement process – Charlene Nardi has met with the COA Advisory Board and will be meeting with Senior Center staff. Jennifer Hoffman's last day is Thursday,

October 31. There are job descriptions for staff members. Charlene recommends creating an advertisement for the Director position and appointing a search committee. Concerning the Personnel Policy's provision on posting job openings internally before advertising them outside, discussion included a concern that a less qualified person might be hired than if there is a full search, a response that if a person is offered a job they have to meet the criteria, and a suggestion to look both within and without.

Personnel files – Charlene's goal is to be sure personnel files have only what a personnel file should have, with a separate folder for items that should not be in the personnel file.

Energy use at school – She and Kim Boas met with the school. Energy use has increased; they plan to apply for retro-commissioning to identify areas to reduce energy.

Meekins fire alarm panel upgrade – The equipment is outdated and needs to be upgraded. Parts are no longer available and it gives false alarms on humid days. Cost is \$2,627.46. This will be an item for a future Town Meeting warrant.

Annual Christmas/holiday party – The date is Friday, December 20, at noon. It will be a scaled-down version like last year's.

Library incidents – Recent incidents were a burned finger from a hot glue gun, and bushes that had been driven over.

Evaluation updates – She and William Sayre met with Senior Center Director Jennifer Hoffman for her exit interview. They also met with Treasurer Nathan Rosewarne, for the first time since he became appointed rather than elected, and set goals.

Computer upgrades – There are 13 computers that use Windows 7. The Technology Committee will meet soon. She recommends paying \$50 per machine for security updates for a year.

Short-term rentals – The Town Clerk has found that only four people in the town have signed up under the state law to offer short-term rentals; she is aware that there are more. None have applied for a license to the town. Charlene will work with Zoning Enforcement Officer Louis Hasbrouck and determine how to proceed.

Shredding day – The date is Saturday, November 9, at the Highway garage from 9 to 11 a.m. There will be a cost to the town for the first time, which the Emergency Manager will cover. Cost is \$187.50 per hour.

13. Correspondence – Correspondence included notice of award of \$4200 from the Mass DEP Sustainable Materials Recovery Program; a letter about the consent decree under which the Lashway companies will contribute \$30,000 toward the Mill River Greenway for violating the Clean Water Act – Charlene will follow up with Gaby Immerman about how Mill River Greenway became involved; and notice of a Permanent Solution Statement to Mass DEP for Bacon's.

14. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to approve the minutes of October 10 as presented. **So voted** (3-0). Updates: Air conditioners – Have not been removed but rather are being insulated. Yellow jackets – Are not gone yet.

15. Warrant – Approved and signed the warrants: payroll warrant WP20-10 for \$120,020.54, and expense warrant W20-10 for \$234,548.70, payable 10/30/19.

Documents used

Letter of interest in School Committee from Ryan Schiff
Letter of resignation from John Hoogstraten
Letter to Jennifer Hoffman
Letter of resignation from Kim Boas
Mass. Cultural Council contract
Senior and Veterans' Volunteer Tax Program list
Letter on Sustainable Materials Program
Lashway Consent Decree
Bacon's Permanent Solution Statement
Minutes
Warrant and expense report

Adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk