

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
January 11, 2024

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, January 11, 2024, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Present: William Sayre, Denise Banister and Paul Wetzel

Also present: Nick Caccamo (Town Administrator), Robin Everett, Melinda McCall (HRMC, Conservation), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant), Denise Wickland (Police Chief)

1. Police – Police Chief Denise Wickland gave her regular report. Calls increased in the past year, from over 1600 in 2022 to 2900 in 2023. Calls are increasing across the nation. In November Officer Peter Fisher tracked down a theft with a skim card at an ATM at Cumberland Farms; he looked through a lot of camera footage and saw the person. These crimes usually aren't solved. The move to the new public safety complex hasn't happened yet. The police need access to the Criminal Justice Information System for data and report management, and the relevant person retired suddenly. A grant-funded co-responder program has been a huge success; a civilian rides with the police to deal with mental health emergencies without criminal consequences. The person left recently for another job and the police hope to find someone who fits in as well. Another program, Drug Addiction and Recovery Program (DART), which focuses on getting people with addictions into treatment, has been fairly successful. National Law Enforcement Day was this week and she recognized her dedicated officers and their length of service. The Board mentioned the recent work of the police on the fire on Chesterfield Road and the incident today at the public safety complex and would like to thank them for their outstanding service to the town. In terms of the public safety complex, it was noted that the shower is being removed from the police processing room as both unnecessary and a hazard. The procurement requirements for the temporary camera system, and whether it would cost over \$10,000 or under \$10,000, were discussed.

2. Conservation Commission – Melinda McCall as HRMC representative and member of Conservation Commission reported on several items.

Paint bill – Hilltown Resource Management Cooperative and Conservation Commission are in favor of the bill in the state legislature which would put responsibility for disposing of paint on the purchasers. Buyers pay a deposit when buying paint and can return paint through this program. Currently oil-based paint goes into hazardous waste. Conservation Commission is concerned that people are pouring paint onto the ground.

Conservation agent – Some towns in the area are talking about a shared conservation agent, but the Conservation Commission feels that a shared agent is expensive and doesn't make sense and instead would like a small increase in their budget to hire a wetlands expert as needed. The Board suggested putting that into a budget request.

Violations – The Conservation Commission can issue violation notices but they have no teeth in them. The Conservation Commission is proposing adopting a bylaw, with fines, and she mentioned the town of Hudson as a possible model. The Board recommended that they create a proposal for a bylaw with a fine system to take to Town Meeting and also suggested public education. Melinda noted that most people follow the rules. There are only a very few people who violate the rules multiple times.

3. FRCOG – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo presented the FRCOG collective highway bid participation paperwork. He explained that the Highway Department uses their services for line

painting, guardrail work, and tree work. FRCOG does the procurement for a modest price. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/PW) to authorize the chair to sign the agreement with FRCOG naming Dan Banister as the authorized signatory for procurement of these items. **So voted** (3-0)

4. Highway surplus – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/PW) to declare the 2014 F350 as surplus. **So voted** (3-0). This will be posted on Municibid.

5. EDM Studio, Town Office improvements – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo presented the EDM Studio renovation report, and the Board discussed how to proceed. The company has done the architectural assessment of the building and phase two is entering into an agreement for the various construction documents. The fees included \$9,500 for an existing-conditions report, necessary for further projects, \$18,900 for the bathroom construction documents, and \$11,900 for window construction documents. They gave the name of the firm they recommend for the existing-conditions report and recommended that the town reach out directly to them. In terms of construction, the bathroom and then the windows are the top priorities, with painting and the portico over the front door also mentioned. The money available is \$137,000 in ARPA funds, plus \$50,000 approved by Town Meeting. If the engineering cost for the construction documents is under \$30,000, the town doesn't need to solicit competitive pricing. Nick will reach out to EDM for a \$30,000 scope of work plan.

6. Mill River Greenway, South Main Street, MassDOT – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo and Select Board Chair William Sayre explained where the town is in the process. MassDOT sent a memo on Nov 28 requesting the town's position on the design of the street's cross section. Representatives of the Mill River Greenway, South Main Street residents, and Select Board/administration are meeting to try to find a resolution. They found a number of things they agreed on, and they plan to write a letter asking MassDOT to clarify some construction requirements, including whether a one-way street through upper South Main Street is required, and whether a bike boulevard is acceptable. A bike boulevard, favored by the residents, has bikes traveling in the road with cars, with markings and cautions, and a shared-use path, favored by the Mill River Greenway Committee, has bikes sharing a path with pedestrians, outside of the roadway. There is a concern that the state funding requires a shared-use path. The Board does not want to force anything on the neighborhood, nor do they want to forfeit the state funding. Additional discussion included: The overall plan does not need Town Meeting approval but some elements might, e.g., easements. The lower South Main Street section, funded by the state Transportation Bond, and the upper South Main Street section, which is part of the MassDOT Bridges project, depend on each other, since it doesn't make sense to have a bike boulevard for one and not for the other.

7. Wage rates – The Board considered how to move forward with wage rates for the coming year, and considered the UMass classification and compensation study of town positions from August 2022. Last year the wage earners near the lower end of the wage scale were increased, and both the Select Board and the Finance Committee wanted to return to the process in a more systematic way. They agreed that they want to be fair and consistent and want to keep employees happy. Questions that arose were: what communities to compare, whether towns the size of Williamsburg or whether to include other nearby municipalities as they affect the market; whether the A, B, C, D, E groupings were correct for the town and whether the town adopts the classification list; how to value longevity, training and certifications, and performance; who will make decisions about wage rates and classification structure, the Select Board or the Finance Committee; ways to compensate other than money, e.g., vacation; how to think about cost of living increases; how to incorporate this into the personnel policy; and collecting more information by formalizing the recommendation and

running test cases. Nick will tentatively insert the classification as a draft into the personnel policy, and the Board and the Finance Committee will consider longevity, professional development, performance, and vacation time.

8. Select Board meetings – One Board member will be away January 25, another will be away February 8. February 22 is the joint meeting with the Finance Committee.

9. Town Administrator's report -

Public safety complex – The muffler was installed today on the Plymovent system for truck exhaust. National Grid rebates of \$12,000 for the HVAC systems will go into the general fund. National Grid system impact study about upgrades to accommodate the solar system has been received, work is expected to cost \$8,000 and will be done in the next month, and both the impact study and the upgrades will be paid from MVP funds.

Meekins gutter project – The gutters have been installed, total \$36,000 for the project. They look nice and blend in well.

ARPA funds update – Nick reported that \$319,000 has been paid out. Ongoing and earmarked total about \$400,000. There is about \$18,000 remaining unallocated.

MVP (Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness) – He presented the monthly report for the Public Safety Complex grant, and an updated budget for the Public Safety Complex. Final money will not be released until the generator is working. There is also a year warranty.

Comprehensive Plan visioning process – He reported that the Planning Board is holding listening sessions on various topics for the Comprehensive Master Plan.

Capital Planning Committee – There are two vacancies on the Capital Planning Committee and not much interest. Nick recommended having a joint Capital Planning and Finance Committee meeting and have a dedicated capital plan review. He noted that the Department Local Services has some useful resources about capital planning, which he will send to department heads.

10. Annual report dedication – The Board decided on the dedication of the annual report.

11. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/PW) to accept the minutes of December 14 as written. **So voted** (3-0).

12. Warrant – Chair William Sayre will plan to review and sign the warrant.

Documents used

Agenda and notes

Police report

FRCOG collective purchasing paperwork

EDM Studio renovation report

South Main Street correspondence

Compensation and classification study and current wage rates

National Grid system impact study

ARPA funds report

MVP monthly report

Minutes

Adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk