

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
January 12, 2023

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, January 12, 2023, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Present: Denise Banister and William Sayre

Absent: David Mathers

Also present: Dan Banister (Highway Superintendent), Nick Caccamo (Town Administrator), Louis Hasbrouck (Building Inspector), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant), Denise Wickland (Police Chief)

Legislators: Sen. Paul Mark, Rep. Lindsay Sabadosa, Jon Gould (staff)

1. Legislators – The Board welcomed the town’s new state legislators, Rep. Lindsay Sabadosa and Sen. Paul Mark. Rep. Lindsay Sabadosa said that she is working to correct the unfair new law for ambulance services that would drive the cost of Highland Ambulance very high, and is working on a civil service bill to give small towns the opportunity to opt out of civil service for police and fire. She is happy to be called or emailed directly, so that she can stay in touch and get to know her communities. Sen. Paul Mark, formerly a representative, is now senator for 57 cities and towns in western Mass. His staff member, Jon Gould, will have office hours here at the town office building twice a month and he himself will come when he can. They would like to know of projects ahead, since there may be short notice to get something in the state budget bill. Town projects discussed were the Mill River Greenway switchback along South Main Street, the Mountain Street project, and the Bridge Street bridges project. It would probably not help for them to get involved in the disagreement with Northampton about sewer fees and testing. Money for Chapter 90 and unrestricted government aid is always welcome. Other topics included the remote meeting law, the low procurement threshold for towns as compared to schools, the police Bridge Academy, the shrinking landfill space, and grants for maintenance of town-owned buildings.

2. Police – Police Chief Denise Wickland gave her regular report. The budget is in good shape. One officer just completed the Bridge requirements, and last group is set for next year. Recent incidents included manufacture of credit cards, a lot of domestic violence, and a lot of car crashes; they are also starting to see more drugs. The town cannot afford two officers per shift, but responding alone can be dangerous for the officer. She would like to come back to the next meeting with a recommendation to raise the rates of the police officers, especially in comparison to other town employees. She would also like to propose adding a civilian administrative assistant. There is room in her budget. Retention of officers is hard, and the pool of part-time officers is drying up.

3. Highway –

Pay rate – Highway Superintendent Dan Banister requested a pay raise of \$1 an hour for new employee Jack McGill. Dan said he has been performing above and beyond, shows up on time and works hard all day. This has been done in the past, to help retain workers. **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to increase the pay rate for John McGill from \$22.97 to \$23.97, effective the next warrant. **So voted** (2-0).

Road repair – Dan Banister would like to do a pavement management study. Cost is \$20-30,000, which could be funded by the state Community Compact program. Or it could be considered for the ARPA money. He doesn't currently have an official road plan, he just goes around and looks at the roads. The assessment would be valuable for him and could also be useful in getting MassWorks grants.

Budget – Vehicle Fuel has spent 67% of the year's budget, because of the high prices.

Praise for Dan Banister – A nice letter was received from the chair of the Water/Sewer Commission praising Dan for the extra work he put in when National Grid drilled into a sewer main on River Road.

4. FRCOG collective bid – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to appoint Daniel Banister, Highway Superintendent, to be the authorized signatory for the FRCOG collective purchasing program for the Highway Department. **So voted** (2-0).

5. Building Inspector – Building Inspector Louis Hasbrouck handed out the permit listing for calendar year 2022. He reported that the Public Safety Complex building is going well. Williamsburg still has tremendous interest in solar projects and has a high solar capacity per capita.

6. Pole hearing – On a petition from National Grid and Verizon and in the absence of a company representative, **motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to permit National Grid to install one JO pole 16-1 on Ashfield Road beginning at a point approximately 4151 feet NW of the centerline of the intersection of Village Hill Ave. for house #43, to correct low wires. **So voted** (2-0).

7. Appointments – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to appoint James Packard to the Water Sewer Commission, term to expire June 30, 2023. **So voted** (2-0).

8. Public Safety Complex – Change order #3 – For the addition of Alternative #1, radiant flooring, **motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to authorize the chair to sign Change Order #3 for the Public Safety Complex, in the amount of \$159,420.87. **So voted** (2-0).

9. Capital Planning – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo has sent capital planning request forms to department heads and committee chairs, due January 31, for review and consideration by the Capital Planning Committee.

10. Town Administrator's report –

Public Safety Complex – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo reported that there was a site visit this week by police and fire personnel. The work is moving along nicely and is still on budget. A request for qualifications (RFQ) for a solar designer was published, with a walk-through planned for next week and responses due February 1. The Fire Department has requested a pad for trailers and other equipment on the east side of the building. There is a concern about not enough storage space.

Mail-in voting – The Town Clerk had notified the Select Board that if the town wants to opt out of mail-in voting in local elections, the Board must hold a public hearing 45 days before the election. This applies only to local elections, not to state or federal elections. Opting out of mail-in voting does not affect traditional absentee ballot voting. The Town Clerk was spending many unpaid hours on mail-in voting; because the state was asking for fast turnaround, she had to come in seven

days a week for five weeks before the election. Board members were not in favor of the extra work required and were in favor of holding the opt-out hearing. It will need to be scheduled in early March each year.

Town office improvements – The Senior Center improvements are moving ahead nicely. Nick is waiting for fencing information from Fitzgerald Fence. Kronenberger said that a window frame repair is \$1600 per sash, or \$3200 per opening, with paint removal another \$1700, for \$4900 per window to remediate and repair. There is a visit with another window company later today. The Whately congregational church is happy with the way their window restoration is progressing. There are conversations with the new carpenter and the electrician about the basement. Wifi improvements are moving forward.

11. Annual report dedication – to be considered at the next meeting.

12. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to approve the minutes of July 14, 2022, as presented. **So voted** (2-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to approve the minutes of December 12 as presented. **So voted** (2-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to approve the minutes of December 15 as presented. **So voted** (2-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to approve the minutes of December 29 as presented. **So voted** (2-0).

13. Miscellaneous –

Daryl Finch – The Board noted the recent death of Daryl (Buster) Finch, who did a lot of work at the Police station.

CDBG – Denise Banister intends to go the CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) meeting at HCDC next week.

Old Town Hall – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo will meet with the carpenter about the doors. Eric Weber of the Historical Society would like to replace the fluorescent tube lights with LED's, and Nick will get someone to look at them.

14. Warrant – Chair Denise Banister will review and sign the warrant. Payroll warrant WP23-15 for \$116,327.58 and expense warrant W23-15 for \$813,868.21, effective 1/18/23.

Documents used

Agenda and notes

Police Chief report

Praise for Dan Banister

FRCOG signatory authorization

Building Inspector permit listing

Pole hearing documents

Letter of interest

Public Safety Complex Change Order

Town Clerk memo on mail-in voting

Minutes

Adjourned at 11:54 a.m.

Approved:

Clerk