

*Minutes*  
*Williamsburg Board of Selectmen*  
*December 3, 2020*

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, December 3, 2020, by video conference call. The chair called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Present: William Sayre, David Mathers and Denise Banister

Also present: Peter Fisher (Police), Louis Hasbrouck (Building Inspector, Zoning Enforcement), Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Peter Spotts (reporter, Country Journal), Nathan Rosewarne (Treasurer), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant), Denise Wickland (Police Chief)

1. Treasurer – Treasurer Nathan Rosewarne gave his regular report. Things are going smoothly and he is getting ready for the standard audit at the end of December. Tax title balance is \$240,000. Of the 14 properties in tax title, eight are being foreclosed on; hopefully they will not go all the way to auction. The number is a little higher than average because of catching up from past years. It does not include properties in arrears because of COVID-19; those will not come to him until May 2021, because the Town Collector works with the property owners before turning the properties over for tax title procedure. The Board thanked him for his report.

2. Police – Covid-19 – Police Chief Denise Wickland reported that everyone is healthy, following protocol, and being extremely careful.

Full-time police officer – Chief Wickland said that they have been trying to fill the full-time police officer position for some time. She recommended current part-time officer Peter Fisher, saying that he has done a phenomenal job, he has the respect of everyone in the department and has had nothing but positive comments from people on the street. He expects to enter the Police Academy starting in March, finishing in June or July, and will be paid during that time. He is expected to make a commitment of at least three years and he will sign the paperwork to pay back costs of the Academy if he should leave before that. There is money from a Town Meeting article to pay for the Academy and gear. There is money in the current budget to pay for a full-time officer for the remainder of this year. The budget will be re-evaluated for next fiscal year. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to appoint Peter Fisher as full-time police officer, contingent on successfully completing the Police Academy. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye). Officer Peter Fisher joined the meeting and Board members thanked him and welcomed him.

Grants – Chief Denise Wickland went on to describe recent grants. A new grant from the state, for \$12,000, is for targeted traffic enforcement for speed, operating under the influence, and texting while driving, and includes money for extra patrols and portable radar signs. Another grant, from MIIA, the town's insurance company, for \$2900 will fund body cameras.

Air quality – Air purifiers have been ordered for the police station, and Chief Denise Wickland thinks that they will help tremendously. She also asked about changing out the old fluorescent lights, which may be triggering headaches. Town Administrator Charlene Nardi said that similar work was done at the Highway Department and that people are happy with it. She will follow up.

3. Building Inspector and Zoning Enforcement – Louis Hasbrouck, not quite retired, was welcomed back by the Board.

Gas station – Louis Hasbrouck reported that he sent a letter to the business owner saying that he is in violation of the town bylaws by selling used cars and having unregistered vehicles on the property. He also does not appear to have a special permit for selling gas. There was discussion of previous owners, to what extent a pre-2003 use may continue, what constitutes abandonment of underground storage tanks, and whether permits go with the property or with the owner. If there is no response, Louis Hasbrouck will write another \$100 citation on Monday, and will keep writing tickets until the owner goes to the Zoning Board of Appeals. The ZBA can sort out the permits and the interpretation of the zoning bylaw.

Sign – The sign in question is a commercial sign in the town's right of way. The sign is not allowed by size according to the town's sign bylaw. The Board of Selectmen had previously voted on June 21, 2018, that all commercial signs on town property would be removed. The Board now made it clear that that includes the town's right of way. It was noted that the Board intended that non-commercial temporary signs in the town's right of way, such as political signs, signs expressing opinion, and real estate signs, would be left alone. The Zoning Enforcement Officer will reach out to the business owner to ask them to remove it because it is in the town's right of way and it violates the town zoning bylaw relating to signs.

4. Hatfield Agreement – The town has long had an agreement with the town of Hatfield that Williamsburg would plow the Jog and Cole Road in Hatfield, in exchange for an amount of sand and salt. The signed agreement had not been renewed in a while. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to sign the Hatfield plowing agreement. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye.)

5. Chapter 90 reimbursement request – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to sign the Chapter 90 reimbursement request for line painting. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye).

6. Appointments – Council on Aging Advisory Board – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to appoint Dianne Martin to the COA Advisory Board, term to expire June 30, 2023, Linda Gibbon, term to expire June 30, 2021, and Barbara Bricker, Associate Member, term to expire June 30, 2021. **So voted** (DB aye, DB aye, WS aye). Board members were glad to see these good people come forward.

7. Licenses –

Live entertainment – Burgy Brews – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve live entertainment for Brewmasters Brewing Company d/b/a Burgy Brews, for three months. They will be expected to follow CDC, state and local guidelines. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye). **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve Sunday live entertainment for the 2021 calendar year, January 1 to December 31. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye).

Common victualler's license – Williamsburg Snack Bar LLC – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to approve a Common Victualler's license for the Williamsburg Snack Bar, from today, December 3, 2020, through December 31, 2021. **So voted** (DB aye, DB aye, WS aye).

Ambika, Inc., d/b/a Main Street Package Store – The ABCC has approved the transfer, and the Board will sign the license.

8. Senior Volunteer Tax Relief Program – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to approve the application presented. **So voted** (DB aye, WS aye, DM abstaining because applicant is a relative).

9. Police Chief contract – The Police Chief’s contract is due to expire in six months. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to notify the Police Chief that the Board plans to renegotiate her contract. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye).

10. Tax Classification hearing – The preliminary tax values have been approved. If there are no concerns or appeals, the Tax Classification hearing – about whether to have a single rate or a split rate – can be held December 10 or 11; if there are appeals, then the hearing will be further out.

11. Holidays and meeting dates – Board members reviewed the proposed list of calendar 2021 holidays and the Select Board meeting dates. According to the personnel policy, federal holidays that fall on Saturday get pushed to Friday, and, for employees who don’t work on Friday, get pushed to Thursday. Juneteenth, which is a state holiday and does not move, falls on Saturday. The lists will be sent out as corrected.

12. Town Administrator’s report –

Department updates – *Library* – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that the library needs hand sanitizer and the Emergency Management Director has extra. The library is quarantining books as they come in. Staff members have self-quarantined where applicable but have tested negative. They offer curbside pick-up and no-touch browsing.

*Senior Center* – The Senior Center Director comes in Monday through Thursday, other staff work both remotely and in the office; they wash hands, wear masks and keep their distance. No one has been sick. An air purifier has been installed. They have updated their volunteer manual, clarifying the distinction between volunteer staff and town employees.

*Highway* – Everyone is well. They are cautious about safety. They have finished major projects and are cleaning ditches before the snow comes. They are recycling donated equipment that was never used; they received over \$700 for steel and iron.

*Health* – There are four cases in town, all in one cluster. They have hired new staff for enforcement and education.

*Fire* – All is going well.

COVID-19 generally – Systems are in place, the town is ready. There is plenty of PPE and each department has adequate protocols. The Board of Health will be working with state to handle dispensing the vaccine. The federal government and the state have not finalized how the vaccine will roll out.

Police ventilation – The system in the Police Department is up and running. Three air purifiers have been ordered: for the booking room, for the room where the officers sit, and for the Chief’s office.

Fire Department radio communications – The Fire Chief has asked the Board to hold off on reaching out to the Select Board in Hatfield (discussed at meeting of 11/5/20) because he wants to reach out to the Fire Chief there. He hopes for a long-term answer at the state level, and Rep. Natalie Blais is looking at how the state can help small communities address the issue.

CARES Act – The second round of funding was awarded, earmarked for ventilation, and it can be used for air purifiers. The school has exceeded their budget and the town is allowed to use CARES Act money for that. The town must wait until the state has approved the town’s

quarterly reports to know what has been approved and what funds may be kept. Charlene is also exploring whether FEMA money can be used for the school.

Free cash and water and sewer enterprise funds – These have been certified at Free Cash \$804,929, Water \$777,478, and Sewer \$174,117.

Resident complaint – trespass along former train bed – A town resident asked the town to put up a barrier to stop people from going onto private property at the end of the public bike and pedestrian path that terminates onto South Main Street. Discussion included researching the deed for an easement from the electric company to property owners that specified that no permanent structures or barriers be erected, and trespass enforcement by the police. There is signage and a structure indicating the end of the trail. It was felt that another fence would not stop those who are determined to go around it. While the Board understands the property owner's frustrations, the Board members agreed that the owner must work with the Police Department on resolving this issue, as preventing trespass onto private property is the responsibility of the landowner, not the town.

MIIA grants – Police are receiving \$2900 for four body cameras, and the town is receiving \$13,400 for hand sanitization including wall-mounted dispensers for the six buildings.

Special Town Meeting – Board members discussed how to have a Special Town Meeting in February, whether outdoors in a tent, in the school gym, in another location such as the Hampshire Regional auditorium, or a hybrid arrangement, how to vote, or whether the Town Meeting should be pushed off to March or April. Concerns included how to manage 300 people, parking, and an older population that is not tech savvy and would not want to meet in person. This will be brought up at the OPM Steering Committee meeting tonight.

Vacation – Charlene will plan to take the week between Christmas and New Year's. The audit is currently scheduled for that time but the auditor has indicated that they will be working offsite.

13. Correspondence – Correspondence included notice of the MIIA annual meeting in late January.

14. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the minutes of November

19. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye).

15. Warrant – Selectmen Dave Mathers will review and sign the warrant.

#### Documents used

Agenda and notes

Hatfield plowing agreement

Chapter 90 reimbursement request

Appointment letters of interest

License applications and certificates

Senior tax application

Lists of holidays and meeting dates

Minutes

Adjourned at 11:21 a.m.

Approved:

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Clerk