

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
February 1, 2018

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, February 1, 2018, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: William Sayre and David Mathers

Absent: Denise Banister

Also present: Pete Banister, Kim Boas (Energy), Sally Loomis (Open Space), Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

Jason Connell (Fire Chief), Daryl Springman (Deputy Fire Chief)

Mill River Greenway: Gaby Immerman, Nick Dines, John Hoogstraten

1. Fire Department –

Report – Fire Chief Jason Connell presented his regular report, including a breakdown of types of incidents. There were 359 calls in 2017, the most in a single year. Of those, 54% were sick person calls; the cost of the sick person calls was \$7395. Average number of responders was 3, with 2 for medical and around 15 for building fires. In response to questions, he said that the increase in medical calls is probably due to the aging population, he is dead set against charging for false calls as he doesn't want to deter anyone from asking for help, one place in town has had multiple calls, they still send a responder even when a caller tries to cancel, most rescue and medical calls use either the Chief's vehicle or the mini-pumper, the smallest truck. The Board thanked him for the interesting and comprehensive report. Inspections – Chief Connell added that they do almost 200 inspections in addition to the calls, starting to do ones that haven't been done in the past; there is no cost to the town because they are paid by permit fees.

Budget – Chief Jason Connell presented the Fire Department proposed budget. It included \$5800 increase in labor and \$2371 increase in expenses. The labor line includes required training, details, maintaining equipment. The expense line includes some maintenance that doesn't come up every year but that does come up this year. He has also been notified by vendors that costs are increasing; the biggest increase is in apparatus repair and maintenance. If he were to cut back, he would start with pushing oil changes off into the new fiscal year. He could also not buy new gear and not buy new equipment. Board members were not in favor of cutting vehicle maintenance and were reluctant to take away from equipment and safety. They suggested looking at labor, and the increase in medical calls especially in light of the separate ambulance service and how to make it all work. They suggested creating a separate budget line within the Fire Department budget for medical responses, in order to make it visible to Town Meeting and create support among the taxpayers. There was some confusion about thinking that this was a way to cut medical calls. Chief Connell pointed out that the department and the medical calls saved lives; he also noted that people are happy to see familiar faces (i.e., local people, not from the ambulance service) and that the department responders arrive quickly. In order to increase political support it was suggested that the department name might be changed to Fire/Rescue. Board members knew that the Finance Committee was also very concerned about the budget and suggested talking about the budget further and finding a way to make it work.

Statement of support – Knowing that some Firefighters have felt that the Board did not fully support the department and the building of the Public Safety Complex, the Board read a written statement saying that each of the members supports the Chief, the Fire Department, its members and its work and a public safety complex; that each one feels strongly that the Fire Chief has brought positive and much needed improvements to the department and has shown leadership in recruitment, training, bringing the two departments into one cohesive group, improving tracking of calls, and updating of technology, equipment and fleet. They went on to say that it is the Board's responsibility to oversee all the town departments and to balance the needs of the departments and the impact on taxpayers to achieve the town's goals, and to provide a balanced and affordable town budget. Discussion included Selectman Dave Mathers' frustration that people say he doesn't support the public safety complex when he had worked to bring the proposal for a safety complex to the Board before he was on the Board; acknowledgment that the safety complex budget is restricted and this year in particular is a tough year financially; request that the Fire Department leadership combat the negativity and check the facts; sense that the medical call budget issue will keep coming up and will need brainstorming, and that medical calls have saved lives; the idea that each group has its role, the department asks for what it needs and the Board says what the town can afford; that a rescue truck will be easier to justify than a third fire truck; and that the Fire Department is working on a Fire Department master plan.

2. Mill River Greenway Committee and Open Space Committee – Gaby Immerman of the Mill River Greenway Committee reported on acquisition of land for the town. Eversource is interested in selling a 45 acre parcel. Susan Fortgang of Valley View Farm and Phil and Diane Merritt are interested in buying the other portions; the town's portion is about four acres. It is only accessible by building a bridge; the bridge will be non-vehicular except for emergency vehicles and the cost of the bridge will be incorporated into Greenway construction costs, paid through state and federal construction funds. There is a financial snag – the assessed value is \$1000 per acre, and Eversource is using a value of \$1500 per acre and as a publicly regulated utility Eversource is not allowed to give a discount. An appraisal could be expensive but the committees will look into it. The purpose is to acquire park land at no cost to the town; there are grants and Mill River Greenway has raised \$25,000, some in memory of Jim Locke and a bequest from Jim Locke. The Board supported the project and would like them to pursue it.

3. Town's 250th anniversary celebration – Peter Banister met with the Board to discuss plans for the town's 250th. Charlene Nardi noted that he has a lot of enthusiasm and had been involved in both the 200th and 225th. The Board designated him as the initial organizer and predicted that he would be the committee chair. Peter Banister and the Board discussed how many members on the committee (5 to 7 – so Open Meeting Law quorum wouldn't be too difficult – plus lots of volunteers), whom to invite (names were suggested), how often to meet (not too often so as not to wear people out), how to ask the town for money (no town money for parties but OK for the community as a whole; ask for smaller amounts over several years), whether one town bank account or one town account and one separate account (need to collect more information and decide later), what name (Town of Williamsburg's 250th Anniversary Celebration), how many days for the celebration (up to the committee but four probably too many), what date (suggestions of third week of July and September town picnic).

4. Energy Committee -

META (Massachusetts Energy Technical Assistance) grant – Kim Boas of the Energy Committee reported that the committee is looking at hiring a consultant to determine feasibility of a small to medium scale solar project by the transfer station on Mountain Street or on Water Department land off South Street. The committee recommends Beacon Integrated Solutions. The company will look at assessments, deal with DEP permits, develop an RFP, and also evaluate responses to the RFP. The grant is for \$12,500 and Beacon said they would not exceed that. The firm has done a lot of these, including working with a lot of the smaller towns in the area. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to hire Beacon Integrated Solutions as consultant for the META grant for survey work for solar siting. **So voted** (2-0).

LED streetlights – Kim Boas also reported on the LED streetlight retrofit project. The committee has been working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and recommends hiring RealTerm Global Energy as a consultant to do the streetlight audit and be the project manager. The cost comes to slightly over \$10,000 and the committee did the procurement with MAPC's help. RealTerm Global Energy has a local office and is strongly recommended by MAPC. He noted that MAPC says that prices have been coming in lower, and the committee will be submitting a grant to the Department of Energy Resources in a competitive grant program. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to hire RealTerm Global Energy to perform the audit and manage the LED retrofit. **So voted** (2-0).

Lights – It was pointed out that the lights that the Firefighters Association put in in the center of town are not working. Suggestions were made to install new fixtures rather than retrofitting, and to consult with Peter Banister of the Firefighters Association.

Thanks – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi thanked Kim Boas for all the work he has been doing, especially the annual report for Green Communities, which other communities do only through outside organizations. He is knowledgeable and experienced. Board members also expressed their appreciation.

5. Town office heating system – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that the boilers have been off every day; Kim Boas has been at the town offices every day including weekend since the beginning of the cold snap, and John Hoogstraten has been checking regularly. It was pointed out that the new town office boilers, installed by Guardian, were not done according to the manufacturer's specifications. Kim Boas feels that Jamrog has a good reputation. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to approve the boiler repair by Jamrog in the amount of \$3,926. **So voted** (2-0).

6. Elections – Town Caucus – The Town Clerk had suggested the date of Monday, March 5, at 7 p.m. for the Town caucus. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to set the Town Caucus date for Monday, March 5, at 7 p.m. in the Town Office auditorium. The list of people up for re-election was reviewed briefly.

7. Licenses – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to approve live entertainment, a D.J., for the Burgy Bullets Snowmobile Club, Saturday, February 3, 7 to 11 p.m. **So voted** (2-0).

8. Appointments – Mill River Greenway – resignation – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to accept the resignation of Matt Wilhelm from the Mill River Greenway Committee and to thank him for his participation. **So voted** (2-0).

Mill River Greenway – appointment – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to appoint Brett Towler to the Mill River Greenway for a term to expire June 30, 2018. **So voted** (2-0).

9. Town Administrator's report –

TIP meeting – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that new forms need to be submitted to the state Transportation Improvement Program for Mountain Street and Mill River Greenway projects.

PVTA – The town's representative has reported that there will be public hearings on March 1. Changes will probably not affect the route schedule but will raise the fares.

Dogs on town properties – The resident who would like dogs banned on town properties was told about the town's balanced approach but now would like the Board to look at some research.

Helen E. James elevator – She reported that the elevator passed inspection.

10. Correspondence – Included a letter of praise for the Transfer Station employees and a notice to abutters of a hearing on residential ground-mounted solar array on Chesterfield Road.

11. Minutes – Because of the lateness of the hour the Board asked that the drafts be posted.

12. Warrant – Approved and signed the warrant.

13. Miscellaneous –

Professionalism – Charlene Nardi reported that she has been talking with town departments about professionalism, in particular townspeople wanting to have long personal conversations with town employees.

Letters of support – Board's letter of support for the Fire Department and the resident's letter of praise for the Transfer Station will be forwarded to the Country Journal newspaper.

Documents used

- Agenda and notes
- Fire Department report
- Fire Department budget
- Statement of support for Fire Department
- Eversource land map
- Jamrog boiler repair contract
- Live entertainment permit
- Resignation and letter of interest
- Letter of praise of transfer station
- Notice of hearing on solar array
- Warrant and expense report

Adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk