

Minutes – Revised
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
March 26, 2020

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, March 26, 2020, by conference call. The chair called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Present: Denise Banister, William Sayre and David Mathers

Also present: Mitch Cichy (OPM Steering Committee), Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Peter Spotts (reporter, Country Journal), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

Library: Ken Borden, Beverly Bullock, Charlotte Meryman, Pat Billingsley

1. Library – Personnel – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that the town will pay two weeks of hourly/non-exempt employees' wages if the employees cannot come in and cannot work from home. The Library Director and Trustees have recommended that part-time library staff continue to come in and work their regular hours, so that the building is checked on regularly, the return dropbox is emptied and the items are decontaminated and stored, shipments of items ordered weeks ago can be received, and a major project in the Children's Room can move forward. Charlene endorsed this proposal. She pointed out that these positions are hard to fill, that we want to support our staff, that letting the employees go might save some very small portion of budgeted funds but that paying unemployment to laid-off employees would raise the town's unemployment insurance rates. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to continue to pay all part-time and full-time library workers as described. **So voted** (3-0).

2. Town government operators – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that the Administrative Assistant is working from home. The Senior Center is continuing to deliver 7 or 8 lunches a day – lunch delivery could not be switched to Highland Valley Elder Services. The Senior Center is calling seniors. If the Town Administrator gets sick, one of the Selectmen will have to take on the role, with the help of the Administrative Assistant; chair Denise Banister said that she is available. Charlene can make a list of the things that she does and a list of things that need to be done this week or next week.

3. Heating oil – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative awarded the heating oil bid to Roberts Energy and that Selectman Dave Mathers had signed the contract with Roberts on behalf of the Board. He had also signed the Notice of Buy Order, specifying the number of gallons the town wishes to purchase, and the Authorization and Designation as Agent, to allow the LPVEC staff person to lock in the price for the town. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to ratify the contract signed with Roberts Energy LLC for FY21. **So voted** (3-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to ratify the Notice of Buy Order and the Authorization and Designation as Agent for the fuel oil contract for FY21. **So voted** (3-0). Charlene was asked to follow up with LPVEC about the plan for locking in the price, since oil prices have been falling dramatically.

4. Appointments –

Council on Aging Advisory Board – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to move Nancy Winninger from full Member to Associate Member of the COA Advisory Board, term to expire June 30, 2020, and to move Dean Acheson from Associate Member to full Member, term to expire June 30, 2022. **So voted** (3-0).

Historical Commission – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to appoint Leah Chava Reiner, known as Hobbit, to the Historical Commission, for a term to expire June 30, 2021. **So voted** (3-0).

Animal Inspector – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to appoint Don Lawton as Animal Inspector for a term May 1, 2020, to April 30, 2021. **So voted** (3-0).

5. Shed at Highway Garage for Building Supervisor tools and Woodland Trails equipment – John Hoogstraten, former Building Supervisor and current member of the Woodland Trails Committee, would like to build a shed at the Highway Garage to store tools and equipment purchased by the town, currently being stored at John’s home. Highway Superintendent Dan Banister approved and they marked an appropriate place. Cost for materials would be \$1000-1500, from the Building Supervisor account, and John and current Building Supervisor Dan Hathaway would do the work. It was noted that the Woodland Trails Committee works on weekends, when the Highway Department is closed, and the tools will be more secure in a locked shed than in the Highway Garage. Board members approved.

6. Public Safety Complex –

P3 contract amendment – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi presented the amendment to the P3 contract, as recommended by the OPM Steering Committee, for \$18,000 for designer selection and the schematic design phase. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to approve the P3 contract amendment as presented. **So voted** (3-0).

RFQ for architect – Charlene presented the draft RFQ that P3 prepared. It specifies a building size of 8500 to 9500 square feet. While the OPM Steering Committee felt quite clear about that range, there was a feeling on the Board that it is too big and needs to be reduced to get the town to approve it. Charlene will write to the OPM Steering Committee with the Board’s concerns. Dave Mathers and William Sayre will plan to discuss with Rob Todisco of P3.

7. Conservation Commission draft bylaw – Board members expressed concern about the need for the bylaw in a small town. Town Administrator Charlene Nardi will write to the Commission to ask them to share their reasoning as to why the proposed bylaw is necessary, where the draft came from, and whether other nearby communities have similar bylaws. After the Board has reviewed the response, the Board may want to meet with the Commission.

8. Police Chief salary – Board members discussed the Police Chief’s request for a salary increase and looked at a salary survey of comparable towns. They agreed on an amount to offer, subject to Town Meeting approval. Select Board chair Denise Banister and Town Administrator Charlene Nardi will meet with Chief Wickland.

9. Budgets –

Police – The Police Chief requested that \$1000 be moved from the Police Department Labor line to the Police Department Expense line to support training. The Board approved.

Fire Department – The Fire Chief had requested an increase in salary. Board members noticed that the figures from the salary survey varied widely and suggested asking Chief Connell to list what he typically does and for how many hours, as a place to start. The Fire Chief also requested that the Fire Department Administrative Assistant's hours be increased from 6½ to 15 per week. There was a concern that working 16 hours or more, including tax workoff work, triggers benefits, such as vacation pay. The Chief will be asked what specifically the Administrative Assistant does during the hours.

10. Capital item requests – Requests included the Police Chief's car, Highway overhead doors, Highway pickup, Highway stand-by generator, \$60,000 toward a Fire Department brush truck, and computer replacement. A Green Communities grant of \$5000 may be available for the Police Chief's car; Dave Mathers will review the requested equipment. Dave Mathers will talk with the Highway Superintendent about the pickup, including when it is due for replacement on the Capital Planning list. There were questions about the new generator for Highway, especially whether it was bigger than needed. Of the two quotes for the overhead doors – \$10,700 for replacement of panels and two motors, versus \$19,600 for replacing everything – the Board leaned toward doing it all, getting more for the money. Dave Mathers will take a look when he is there. As for the \$60,000 toward a Fire Department brush truck, the Board agreed the truck was needed but wondered about the fiscal method, since the money cannot be earmarked without a special stabilization fund for the purpose. It was also noted that the Public Safety Complex is the priority; the truck will be a priority after the Public Safety Complex. The computer replacement has to be done because the computers are old and their operating system will no longer be supported with security updates. Fortunately, there is approximately the amount needed in the Comcast account.

11. Town Administrator's report -

Haydenville Fire Department vehicle apron – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that Highway Superintendent suggested that instead of patching it, that it be done right, and would need \$2500 in materials, with work by the Highway Department. The Board agreed that it needs to be done, though too bad on a building that will go out of use soon.

Timber cutting – Charlene reported that it had been suggested that there be timber cutting on town lands, and she had asked Lincoln Fish for his recommendation. He said that the last time it was done was more than 30 years ago, when he would mark the trees, put it out to bid, and oversee the work. He said there are valuable outcomes from timber cutting, in resilience and sustainability of forests. Because timber prices are down, any cutting should wait until next year at the earliest. Based on his past experience, he said the relevant parcels to look at would be Petticoat Hill Road, the Chesterfield/Geer Hill Road landlocked parcel, and he would add the Transfer Station. He is not recommending the Conservation Commission lots. Charlene will confirm that those lots are under the Board of Selectmen's authority. He recommended that in the meantime the town apply for a DCR grant to do management plans. Board members thought it was a good idea to start the DCR grant process.

Personnel, payment, especially overtime – Charlene reported that she spoken with Town Counsel and learned that when an employee is exempt (salaried), the town does not have to pay a blended overtime rate. She learned that if non-exempt people are sent home, the town does not have to pay them. So if a big storm is coming, the Highway crew’s hours can be adjusted to reduce the need to pay overtime. If the town wishes to go this route, it should be discussed with the Highway Superintendent and then, if agreed, be shared with the department crew prior to the winter. Non-exempt people in the town offices don’t need to be paid if the building is closed for severe weather or an emergency. She also learned that there are no guidelines to limit the number of hours a person can plow.

Green Communities grant – The grant application for the Police vehicle is ready to go if the Board decides to proceed.

Helen E. James Building – Dave Chase of the Commons Corporation co-working group has closed the building to all people except essential workers.

Annual Town Meeting articles – Charlene listed the expected articles for Town Meeting, including the Meekins fire alarm control unit (\$2,700, unit is old and parts can’t be found), the walkway to the old Meekins entrance (\$9,850), Hampshire Regional capital items ((\$53,000, and they won’t ask for more until 2025), overdue balance at Williamsburg Pharmacy from 2016-2020 (\$500, to be determined), overdue Verizon bill that Charlene paid so that nothing would be shut off (\$33), and the capital items discussed earlier. Free cash: \$722,203 at beginning, \$310,000 used in budget if same amount as used last year, \$412,203 available for article requests, \$123,401 remaining if all items were approved. A concern was raised that if the economy is heading into a recession what effect there will be on the budget.

12. Annual report dedication – The Board approved the written dedication.

13. Correspondence – Correspondence include a MassDOT notice that Chapter 90 allotment for FY21 is \$188,610.

14. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to approve the minutes of March 19 as presented. **So voted** (3-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to approve the minutes of February 27. **So voted** (3-0).

15. Warrant – Dave Mathers will come in to sign the warrant on behalf of the Board.

16. Future meetings – Meetings will continue to be every two weeks, at 3 p.m. rather than 6. The Board decided to use telephone conference call rather than Zoom video.

Adjourned at 6:11 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk