

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
March 30, 2017

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, March 30, 2017, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. The chair noted that the meeting was being recorded, at the request of the reporter.

Present: Denise Banister, William Sayre and David Mathers

Also present: Robert Barker (Planning), Charles Dudek (Planning), Osa Flory, Louis Hasbrouck (Building Inspector), John Hoogstraten, Brenda Lessard (Town Clerk), Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Nathan Rosewarne (Treasurer), Stephen Smith (Planning) Peter Spotts (reporter, Country Journal), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

1. Personnel – employee evaluation – Eleanor Warnock, Administrative Assistant – The Board stated that Eleanor Warnock continues to be a dedicated employee who conducts herself and represents the Board of Selectmen in an excellent manner. She makes people entering the office feel welcomed and easily interfaces with and addresses the many needs of the public. Members noted that she is capable, efficient, and knowledgeable. Her thoroughness in reviewing applications, knowledge, preparation, and overall coordination of the license and permitting process is exceptional and makes it very easy for the Board to make informed decisions. Her tracking of items and drafting the agenda are instrumental in keeping the Board on track to hit deadlines throughout the year. It was mentioned that her attention to detail made the Annual Town report one of the best in the area. The Board acknowledged Eleanor's dedication and hard work, noting that her support of the Select Board and Town Administrator were invaluable to the efficiency of the office. Town Administrator Charlene Nardi also expressed appreciation for Eleanor's support, work and skilled independence in handling the functions under her purview. While acknowledging that Eleanor has limited time in the office, the Board noted its preference for submission of draft minutes being a priority. Members thanked Eleanor for her commitment and acknowledged that the town was lucky to have her.

Eleanor stated that she appreciates the Board's comments and feels very supported by the Select Board and Town Administrator. She enjoys working with this Board and appreciates the different perspectives each member brings to it. She stated that she has respect and admiration for the members and their work for the town.

Goals: Eleanor noted that the position is task oriented and tasks vary depending on the time of the calendar year. She stated that she and the Town Administrator will be working on steps to make the office more efficient, but didn't feel goal setting was appropriate for the position responsibilities.

2. Personnel – employee evaluation – Charlene Nardi, Town Administrator – Board members said that Charlene Nardi is the lifeblood of town government. She is extremely well organized. She is capable, efficient and energetic. She is proactive, follows through, and is good at prioritizing and coordinating. She is supportive of staff and committees and is well liked and respected. Due in part to her leadership, the town departments work efficiently and are friendly

and attentive to people's needs. She is willing to look for solutions to difficult situations. She takes on a large amount of work and does more than could reasonably be expected – way beyond the hours she is paid for, and she would be hard to replace. She makes the Select Board's job much easier.

Charlene responded that she has great respect for the Board members and appreciates that they have always supported her. She likes her job and likes the people she works with – feels they have become a really good team. She appreciates that the Board members come from different perspectives and can therefore come up with the best solutions.

Goals: Charlene presented a long list of goals, both specific projects she is working on and general goals in her work.

3. Highway – Chapter 90 reimbursement request – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to approve the Chapter 90 reimbursement request, for project approved September 2016, for chipseal of Hyde Hill Road and Lawton Hill Road, in the amount of \$85,571.46. **So voted** (3-03).

4. Fire truck loan – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to sign the note for \$265,000 for the fire truck, and related documents. **So voted** (3-0). The remainder of the cost will come from free cash. It was noted that the 1.24% was an excellent interest rate.

5. Licenses –

One-Day Special Liquor License – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to grant a Special License for Wine and Malt Beverages to Snow Farm, The New England Craft Program, Mary Jo Murphy, Saturday, April 29, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., hours of serving April 29, 5:30-8:30 p.m. **So voted** (3-0).

Live entertainment – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to grant a permit to Burgy Bullets for Live Entertainment, a D.J. for Friday, April 28, and Saturday, April 29, 5 p.m. to midnight. **So voted** (3-0).

6. Appointments –

Zoning Board of Appeals alternate – Mimi Kaplan – The chair read a letter of interest from Mimi Kaplan. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to appoint Mimi Kaplan as alternate to the Zoning Board of Appeals, term to expire June 30, 2017. **So voted** (3-0). Board members were very impressed with her qualifications and noticed that she would be a good fit for the Planning Board.

Community Development Advisory Committee – It was suggested that the Board get some outside input on the committee charge. This will be discussed at a future meeting.

7. Audit FY16 – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to authorize the chair to sign the representation letter to the auditor Melanson Heath. **So voted** (3-0). This is the standard letter saying that the audit was done based on information provided to them. As for the audit Management Letter, Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that she has received responses from town departments mentioned and will write a letter combining the responses.

8. Planning Board –

Signs – Bob Barker, new chair of the Planning Board, presented a draft letter to send to businesses in town about what is and is not allowed by the town bylaw. Discussion included size of signs, signs that are not for business advertising, long-time businesses with signs that the town has ignored for years, possibility of waivers, total number of signs in town, signs required by law, neon signs, signs grandfathered after six years with a permit, ten years without a permit. The Planning Board believes that it should try to enforce the town bylaw but tried to word the letter in a low-key way. Starting the dialog is necessary because there have been complaints. Board members thanked the Planning Board for taking this step, and also expressed concern about being confrontational.

Proposed bylaw changes – License or permit renewals, denial or revocation for nonpayment of local taxes or fees – Proposed draft bylaw was presented. It includes an exception for trivial permits. Their focus is on Special Permits. It would also apply to liquor licenses. It was noted that this can't be put into effect unless a certain statute is accepted.

9. South Street request for sod – It was reported that a South Street resident was upset that his lawn was damaged by water that drained off the road; Highway Superintendent Bill Turner thought that part of the problem was that Northampton continued to do salting when they did their turnaround and he would ask Northampton not to salt there; the resident requested a strip of sod. Concerns were raised about setting a precedent of fixing someone's lawn, and that the Highway Department is not trained in this work, but that the town could offer materials. Charlene will ask Bill Turner whether the town has some good loam to drop off, also whether the town has grass seed and hay.

10. Building Inspection – inspection program permit fees – Building Inspector Louis Hasbrouck presented a proposed revised permit fee schedule. The previous one dated mostly from 2003 and the revision is in keeping with what other towns are charging. Costs are based on square footage, with minimum fees. He said that it's the smaller projects that run up against the minimum fees, that there is a debate whether increasing the permit fees discourages people from getting permits, that permit fees are supposed to fund the inspection department, which also provides services that don't generate revenue such as zoning issues, that the proposal is catch-up for years past and allowing for the future, and that the re-inspection fee was not because people did something wrong but because they thought they were ready and weren't. Board members were generally supportive but were concerned about some of the fees. Louis Hasbrouck will make some reductions and send it back for the Board's approval.

11. Resident concern – There was a concern that a local brewery held an event with drones, alcohol, a light show and smoke machine; there were concerns about safety. It was suggested that the Board find out what the state rules allow for the licenses that the business holds. The Board wants to treat the business respectfully.

12. Sculpture – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that the library had written to sculptor James Kitchen asking him to remove the sculpture but has not heard anything. The piece has fallen and is in the way of the fence that the library wants to install. Charlene will talk to the library about asking James Kitchen if he has made any progress.

13. Budget FY17 Reserve fund transfers – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that the Town Office and Buildings and Grounds expense lines are running short and she will ask Finance Committee for Reserve Fund transfers. She explained the reasons, including firing of one reverse 9-1-1 notification system and hiring of another, and Flag Committee needs; and Helen E. James Building elevator expenses, Fire Station winter snow removal, and general spring cleanup.

14. Appointments – Building Supervisor – John Hoogstraten – A letter of interest from John Hoogstraten was read. He added that he had had a long talk with outgoing Building Supervisor Jim Locke and feels that the work falls easily within his experience and skill set. Board members reminded him that he does not have to do all the work himself. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to appoint John Hoogstraten to be Building Supervisor for a term through June 30, 2017. **So voted** (3-0). Board members were impressed with his qualifications and expressed gratitude for his doing this.

15. Budget FY18 –

School – Charlene reported that the school budget increase is \$51,000.

Oil and Propane – Only 45% has been spent, because the budget was based on higher oil prices and colder winters. The Board would recommend reducing this by \$10-15,000.

Buildings and Grounds – Is too low. It was suggested that some be moved over from Oil and Propane

Highland Ambulance – Board members acknowledged that they do not have control over Highland Ambulance's budget, and that the paramedics have been paid very little.

16. Cichy snow plowing agreement – MassDOT has sent a letter saying that snow cannot be piled in parking places on the state road. The Board decided to continue the agreement with Cichy's to plow the snow but to pile the snow on the business's property, and the Highway Department will remove the pile as soon as possible.

17. Town Administrator's report –

Town Offices heat – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that the Town Offices had no heat on several occasions. Subcontractor Adams came and fixed it; different causes. Charlene has been looking into maintenance contracts and an alarm system if the boilers fail to operate.

Salary surveys – She had sent the FRCOG and HCOG surveys to the board.

Anne T. Dunphy School walk-off rugs – The school principal has rugs in place from the front door to the gym, where people walk; she does not feel rugs into the gym are necessary.

Town Meeting articles – Charlene has sent a list of the proposed articles; will be discussed at the next meeting.

River Road – Is still closed, projected to open mid-April.

Mountain Street – MassDOT has put out a Request for Proposals for design; things are moving forward.

Meekins Library – They would like to repurpose the article for library insulation (\$15,000), which was never used, for projects that need to happen first.

Helen E. James Building roof drains – One was done last year, Building Supervisor would like to see the other two done.

Helen E. James painting, art, storage – The Commons Co-Working Group is painting their area, with permission. They would like to hang art from local artists that people could go look at, like a gallery. There was also a newspaper article about a regular non-partisan Indivisible meeting. Board members acknowledged increased traffic and increased maintenance, on the one hand, and bringing people and energy to the building. The town is saving \$22,000 a year in insurance. The Board leaned toward letting the group use the space for meetings under its purview, until the town decides what to do with the building. In response to the Commons' request for furniture storage on a different floor, the Board was not in favor.

Public Safety Complex Committee vacancy – A resident was interested but withdrew due to his extensive travel obligations.

DLTA award commitment – The chair had signed the commitment letter.

Tax title – The Collector is putting seven properties into the tax title process.

Revelation Day – One-day event about infrastructure improvements to make Williamsburg center more walkable and vibrant, to be coordinated with the town picnic in September.

Smart Growth America economic planning – Board members noted that the report appeared to be largely a canned form, with some errors, but that the organization did run a good workshop, though it was not what they said they were going to do.

Capital planning articles – The Assessors have withdrawn their request for funds for mapping, as they need more information.

Easthampton's application for PVPC technical assistance for Hampshire County Community Health Improvement Plan – While the town would like to support Easthampton, there was a concern about giving up Williamsburg's future needs for technical assistance; more information is needed before the town proceeds.

Town Administrator's projects – The Board acknowledged that there are too many things coming in, they need to slow down, and pressure needs to be taken off the Town Administrator. Suggestions included thinking creatively, having the Town Administrator not work Sundays, and if things don't get done they don't get done.

18. Annual report – Board members approved the Selectmen's report, written by Clerk William Sayre. The presentation of the annual report will be on April 27, the last Select Board meeting before the election.

19. Executive session – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to go into executive session under M.G.L. c. 30A, sec. 21(a)(2), to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel. **So voted** (WS aye, DM aye, DB aye). The chair announced that the Board would be returning to open session. The Board went into executive session at 10:10 p.m. and returned to open session at 10:45.

20. Personnel – Town Administrator contract – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to renegotiate the contract with the Town Administrator for three years. **So voted** (3-0). A letter will be sent to the Town Administrator, according to the terms of the contract. A similar letter was sent to the Police Chief earlier.

21. Correspondence – Included the MassDOT bridge inspection report of the bridge by the library, which noted extensive cracking, and the Hampshire Council of Governments annual report.

22. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to accept the minutes of March 16 as amended. **So voted** (3-0). The Board also signed the March 16 employee evaluation of Marie Westburg.

23. Warrant – Approved and signed the warrant

Documents used

- Agenda and notes
- Chapter 90 reimbursement request
- Fire truck loan documents
- License applications
- Letters of interest in positions
- Audit representation letter
- Proposed letter about sign bylaw
- Proposed bylaw about licenses and non-payment of taxes
- Proposed inspection permit fee schedule
- Annual report draft
- Minutes
- Warrant and expense report

Adjourned at 11:10 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk