

*Minutes*  
*Williamsburg Board of Selectmen*  
*April 11, 2019*

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, April 11, 2019, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. When the Country Journal reporter turned on a recorder at 6:55, it was announced that the meeting was being recorded.

Present: David Mathers, Denise Banister and William Sayre

Also present: Jason Soukup (Police Sergeant), Peter Spotts (reporter, Country Journal), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant), Denise Wickland (Police Chief)

1. Election – warrant – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to sign the warrant for the May 6 town election. **So voted** (3-0).

2. Memorandum of Understanding – PVPC – It was announced that Kim Boas is stepping back from his very active role on the Energy Committee and the town has arranged for grant-funded technical assistance on Green Communities from the Pioneer Valley Planning Committee. **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to authorize the chair to sign the Memorandum of Understanding between PVPC and the Town of Williamsburg. **So voted** (3-0).

3. Police –

Budget – Training – In response to questions from last meeting, Police Chief Denise Wickland said that there is mandatory in-service training, 40 hours per officer; she includes 60 hours in the budget to cover other topics such as firearms, defensive tactics, and legal updates. Some training hours can be done during time on shift, such as watching a training video, but that pulls the officer off the street. State police will screen calls when officers are not on duty but will not respond except for emergency calls.

Schedule – She gave a sample of the current schedule, including hours not filled.

Budget increase – She has requested a \$23,878 increase for FY20. Board members acknowledged that \$15,790 had been cut from her budget in each of the last two years. With the current state of the budget, the town is \$13,000 over the levy limit, which would require a Proposition 2½ override. They noted that she has not used all of her budget for the last three years. She responded that they have not used all of the budget because they have been understaffed and there is a huge turnover rate. Issues with low staffing include: they rely on members of the Fire Department to assist police with traffic control; investigations take longer when staffing is low; mental health issues and addressing overwhelming force take multiple officers; overlap of an hour or two is best, to allow officer coming on to speak with officer going off. Board members would be willing to offer the amount cut, \$15,790, which is \$8000 less than the amount requested. Chief Wickland said that she needed the full-timer and she will do what she needs to do to make it happen, which may mean cutting part-time officers. Board members were persuaded of the need for an increase and will support the increase of \$15,790 at Town Meeting.

Cost of academy – Chief Wickland pointed out that with a full-time person comes the cost of the Police Academy. Requiring the candidate to pay would eliminate good candidates. She

proposed doing what some other towns have done, that the town pays upfront and if the officer leaves in less than three years, the officer would have to reimburse the town, prorated according to the length of time worked. Costs are \$3000 for tuition and \$2000 for equipment; a \$5000 article on the Town Meeting warrant would cover the costs.

Report – Chief Wickland reported that everything was ready for the upcoming 5K run sponsored by the Police and Fire Departments; Deputy Sheriffs will be doing traffic control so that officers can run; \$6000 has been raised from sponsors, donations, and walkers/runners. For the administrative position, an officer has been filling in but former officer Aubey Luszczi is willing to come back and would be a good fit; Board members approved. Board members asked that the quarterly report could include a table showing hours spent on patrol, administration, and court, compared to a year ago; Chief Wickland will get the Dispatch log. Board members noted that the luncheon today to honor all the responders to a recent medical crisis was a wonderful event and made it clear why it is critical to have the whole team, ambulance/EMS, fire, and police.

Budget, continued – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to recommend to the Finance Committee the \$15,790 addition to the budget of \$118,320 for Police Labor, for a total line of \$134,110. **So voted** (3-0).

4. Town Meeting warrant articles – Possible articles include:

Article for Police Training – The Board had previously agreed to put this article on the warrant and let the town vote on it.

Article on non-criminal disposition of laws – accepting Chapter 40, Section 21(d) – This would allow the town to issue fines, e.g., Board of Health issues, dog bylaws, sidewalk clearing.

5. Multiple positions for one employee – Town Counsel had advised that the town is permitted to turn down an applicant for an additional position if the additional hours would make the person eligible for health insurance. Discussion included that health insurance is a big part of the budget and that the minimum hours for benefits may need to be looked at, that 20 hours is a low threshold, or that the town could pay a different amount, such as 50%. Town Administrator Charlene Nardi will be asked to do research into how the 20 hour number was established. It was noted that if there were a change, current employees would be grandfathered in.

6. Town Administrator's report – The Administrative Assistant reported for the Town Administrator.

Conservation Commission – The Commission is interested in proposing a wetlands protection bylaw and a request for a 12-month moratorium on commercial-scale ground-mounted solar projects. It was suggested that a moratorium could be a topic for a fall special town meeting.

Litigation – 74 Village Hill Road – Some issues against the town (First, Second and Fourteenth Amendments, Open Meeting Law and Conflict of Interest) have been dismissed and the appeal on the remaining issues goes back to Land Court.

Helen E. James Building roof – The Duralast cost estimate is \$18 per square foot or \$117,000, based on 6500 square feet. Peak Performance quoted a price of \$63,000 but it is not clear whether that includes paying prevailing wage. It was noted that the project is not going on the Town Meeting warrant because it is less of an emergency than had been previously thought.

Anne T. Dunphy School garage roof – Peak Performance quoted at \$4,300.

Mill River Park – The area has been posted and the invasive plant remediation has begun.

7. Correspondence – Correspondence included MassDOT Chapter 90 project request approval for North Main St. and various paving; Mass. DEP letter on recycling contract; notice of Mill River Greenway Forum; reply from Sen. Hinds about the town’s recent resolutions supporting funding for local schools and for public higher education; notices from ZBA about a short-term rental on Fairfield Avenue and a site plan review for a solar project on Hatfield Street.

8. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to approve the minutes of March 28 as presented. **So voted** (3-0).

9. Warrant – Approved and signed the warrants: payroll warrant WP19-22 for \$114,389.93 and expense warrant W19-22 for \$91,784.92, payable 4/17/19.

10. Miscellaneous – Wetlands bylaw – Concerns were expressed about the proposed bylaw, including that it is stricter than state standards, and it was written for another town and may not fit Williamsburg.

Documents used

Agenda and notes  
Election warrant  
Memorandum of Understanding with PVPC  
Sample police staffing schedule  
Minutes  
Proposed wetlands bylaw  
Warrant and expense report

Adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Approved:

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Clerk