

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
May 18, 2023

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, May 18, 2023, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Present: Denise Banister and William Sayre

Absent: David Mathers

Also present: Nick Caccamo (Town Administrator), Diane Clowes (National Grid), Louis Hasbrouck (Building Inspector), Nathan Rosewarne (Treasurer), Kim Schott (Hampshire Regional School Committee), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

Recreation Commission: Ben Thompson, Collin Black (also member of the Williamsburg School Committee), Geoff Smith (candidate)

1. National Grid pole hearing – Diane Clowes of National Grid presented the request of National Grid to install a pole on Ashfield Road near Village Hill Avenue due to the long span between two existing poles. The chair opened the public hearing. There were no comments.

Motion was made and seconded (WS/DB) to close the hearing at 9:04 a.m. **So voted** (2-0).

Motion was made and seconded (WS/DB) to install one jointly owned pole on Ashfield Road as set forth in the plan. **So voted** (2-0).

2. Appointment – Recreation Commission – Joint meeting of Select Board and Recreation Commission – Ben Thompson of the Recreation Commission reported that they had lost a member due to the death of Al Golash, and they proposed Geoff Smith to join the Commission in his place. Geoff Smith expressed his interest, including that he likes sports, has a young daughter, and this is a good way to start getting involved in the town. **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to appoint Geoff Smith to the Recreation Commission, term to expire June 30, 2024. **So voted** (2-0). He will need to be nominated at the next town caucus to run in the next town election.

3. Schools – Collin Black of the Williamsburg School Committee and Kim Schott, member of the public and chair of the Hampshire Regional School Committee, reported on a recent discussion about regionalizing the elementary schools. They urged one of the Select Board members to participate, noting that other towns have Select Board members on the School Committee.

4. Building Inspector – Louis Hasbrouck of the Building Inspector's office made their regular report. They will be getting new software, which will make the permit report readable. The Public Safety building is proceeding nicely. They won't be going back till the final inspection. Contractor Forish is really good. Discussion included an issue with insulation and plans for solar. Generally construction has been slow this spring with 56 permits this calendar year, \$9600 in permit fees, and \$1.36 million cost of construction. For affordable housing, apartments are much less expensive than houses; townhouses might be appropriate for Williamsburg. There

will be a new opt-in energy code for residential buildings, more stringent than the stretch energy code; the decision would be made at town meeting.

5. Treasurer – Treasurer Nathan Rosewarne made his regular report. Things are quiet. Open Enrollment is wrapping up. There is a backlog in processing payroll data by the outside firm. In the summer there will be another round of tax title. The new computer system with the Collector, Accountant and Assessors is working well.

6. FY24 Budget – schools – Hampshire Regional School Committee chair Kim Schott asked if the town was supporting Hampshire Regional in the town's budget. It was noted that the town has built the school assessment into the town budget and that funding education is important to the town. The minimum local contribution has gone up; the formula for apportioning is unknown. Kim Schott said that after free cash was certified, the school district used \$367,500 to bring town assessments down for FY24. They are working on a capital plan and the high school needs a roof. Town Administrator Nick Caccamo noted that there are currently discussions about bringing the high school under the Williamsburg green communities umbrella. He also noted that Southampton had rejected the Hampshire Regional budget and that if two of the five communities reject the budget at town meeting, the school committee has to go back to the drawing board.

7. Planning Board – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo reminded the board that the town received \$10,000 in PVPC Direct Technical Assistance funds for the first step toward a town Comprehensive Plan, and Planning Board has requested an additional \$15,000 in ARPA funds, to make it a more robust process. The PVPC contract is expected next meeting. The Planning Board would like a letter of support from the Board of Selectmen and would like to hand out information at Town Meeting. He described the three-step process – visioning, creating an RFP using Community Compact funds, and hiring a consultant to do multiple years of work.

8. Appointments – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to appoint Mark Girard to the Veterans Memorial Committee, term to expire June 30, 2024. **So voted** (2-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to appoint Terry Tangredi and Donna McGill to the Cultural Council, terms to expire June 30, 2024 and 2026. **So voted** (2-0).

9. Licenses – live entertainment – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to approve live entertainment for American Legion Post 236 for a band on June 3 and 10, and D.J. on June 11 and 24. **So voted** (2-0).

10. Surplus – Senior Center – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to declare the Senior Center couch as surplus. **So voted** (2-0).

11. Annual Town Meeting warrant – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo presented the current version of the warrant. A couple of recommended new articles have been added for receiving grants and gifts and disposing of unused town equipment. Budget numbers haven't been finalized. There are a number of articles to use free cash for capital items. There is an article about an agricultural restriction for 96 Mountain Street, one to transfer a substantial free cash

contribution to the stabilization fund, and one to create a special-purpose stabilization fund for opioid settlement funds. The Police Chief has requested an article to become a strong chief and to create a separate fund firearm licensing fees. A citizens' petition asked the town to adopt a Land Acknowledgment Statement. The Board will meet May 25 sign the warrant.

12. FY24 budget – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo presented the latest draft of the budget. Finance Committee has used a different methodology for looking at town employee wages; they used the UMass Boston wage study, looked systematically at all employees not just those making requests, used a 5% cost of living increase but if an employee was below the minimum from the wage study, moved the employee up according to a metric. Capital improvement items for this year are slated to be fully funded by free cash. The Board plans to meet with Finance Committee tonight. The full-time fire chief is a significant change and a significant difference between the Board, which supports it, and Finance Committee, which hasn't.

13. IT consulting agreement – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo discussed the responses to the RFP. Of the four proposals, one was out of the price range, one was right at the top of the price range. They interviewed the two affordable ones, Paragus, the current provider, and Suzor out of Orange MA. Both are fully capable of providing IT services for the town. Both gave compelling interviews. There were no red flags. The costs are about the same. They handle billing differently, Suzor with a blanket cost, Paragus based on hours. References were not glowing. One town had transitioned from Paragus to Suzor and it was difficult and took town administrative time. Paragus does a lot of things really well and some things not as well. While there have been frustrations with Paragus, they listened, and they also see this as an opportunity to reset the relationship and treat the town as a new client. Dave Martin of the Technology Committee was a great resource, very knowledgeable, and would be fine with either choice. Nick leaned toward staying with Paragus. The Board thanked him for his diligence. **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to award the IT service contract to Paragus for three years. **So voted** (2-0).

14. Solect Energy agreement for solar design and construction at the Public Safety Complex site – The process is moving forward but there is no contract yet.

15. MassDOT Safe Bicycle Passing signage – MassDOT would supply signage and the town would supply the locations based on MassDOT's criteria. All of Route 9 would qualify and there or four or five other good places. **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to authorize the chair to sign the Memorandum of Agreement between MassDOT and the Town of Williamsburg regarding the Safe Bicycle Passing signage. **So voted** (2-0).

16. Town Administrator's report –

Public Safety Complex and MVP grant – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo reported that he and the town's MVP grant administrator are comparing construction invoices with the MVP grant, developed when the schedule was unknown, in order to maximize the grant dollars. A newsletter will be mailed soon.

Accountant – Kala Fisher will be leaving FRCOG for a better paying position. The town is in conversation with FRCOG, which is undergoing some changes, as some communities have

dropped out. Other options are being explored, including having the Treasurer move to Accountant and the Collector to Treasurer/Collector. The Town Administrator will look into the requirements, e.g., whether CPA licensing is required.

17. Miscellaneous –

Personnel – Tammy Johnson has taken over as Custodian and has expressed interest in continuing.

Public Safety Complex – The committee approved having the solar project design include a full canopy over the parking area, with a plan to revisit in July.

18. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/BD) to release the executive session minutes of March 2. **So voted** (2-0).

19. Warrant – Chair Denise Banister will review and sign the warrant. Payroll warrant WP23-24 for \$124,074.84 and expense warrant W23-24 for \$922,776.13, effective 5/24/23.

Documents used

Pole hearing request and order

Building Inspector permit report

Letters of interest

Live entertainment permit

Annual Town Meeting warrant

FY24 budget

IT consulting agreement

MassDOT Safe Bicycle Passing signage MOU

Minutes

Adjourned at 12:31 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk