

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
May 19, 2022

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, May 19, 2022, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Present: David Mathers, Denise Banister and William Sayre

Also present: Nick Caccamo (Town Administrator), David Eisenthal (by phone), Jonathan Flagg (Building Inspector), Shelby Macri (reporter, Country Journal), Julia Peters (Local Power), Nate Rosewarne (Treasurer), Mark Wamsley (Kestrel Land Trust), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

1. Members of public – solid waste disposal – Local resident Julia Peters said that while her company, Local Power, does consulting with communities about energy issues, they are also looking at solid waste as a pollution problem. They are starting to meet with city councils and select board to talk about alternative technologies, especially converting solid waste to hydrogen. She would like to come back and talk to the town about it. Board members recommended that she start with the Board of Health.

2. Building Inspector – Jonathan Flagg gave his regular report. Everything is as usual, but with a dropoff in permits in the aftermath of Covid, a diminished workforce and lack of materials. A big solar field is going smoothly so far. A couple of new houses will be coming in. There is not much interest in accessory apartments. There is interest in tiny houses but they are not legal in Massachusetts. He will send the permit report. There was discussion about the Mountain Street sign. There are questions about whose property it is on and whether the size is too large under the town bylaw. The Zoning Enforcement Officer was asked to measure the sign and determine whether it conforms or not. He and Louis Hasbrouck will figure out a way forward and update the board in two weeks.

3. Licenses – pool table – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to authorize the chair to sign the permit for one pool table for American Legion Post 236. **So voted** (2-0, DM abstaining as an officer of the Legion).

4. Veterans Volunteer Tax Relief Program – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to approve the application for the Veterans Volunteer Tax Relief Program. **So voted** (3-0)

5. Treasurer Nate Rosewarne gave his regular report. The Goshen Road property tax title issue is going slowly because of issues about separate parcels and title. The Highway truck money has not yet been borrowed because the truck is not yet available; it's been almost two years. Dave Mathers will look into options for moving forward with the truck.

Public Safety Complex borrowing – Nate presented the various borrowing scenarios for the Public Safety Complex. Finance Committee recommended borrowing \$3.6 million, taking the other half million from ARPA funds, and to borrow for 20 years with a level debt payment. The Board discussed borrowing \$3.6 million or \$4.1 million, for 20 or 30 years, with payment of level debt or level principal. After discussion, including what large projects will come up in the

future, other uses of the ARPA money, and impact on the taxpayer, the board decided on \$4.1 million, 20 years, and level debt payment. The exact amount of the payment will need to be set by Special Town Meeting once the interest rate is known. David Eisenthal of UniBank joined the meeting by phone and answered questions. Current interest rate is higher than the 4.1% from April. There is an eight year period before the bonds are redeemable, i.e., before the debt can be refinanced. Borrowing documents will be signed in July. After he left, **motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to borrow \$4.1 million for the Public Safety Complex for 20 years at level debt service. **So voted** (3-0). The town's bond rating is good. Board members thanked Nate for his good work.

6. 250th Anniversary – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo reported on the progress of the 250th Anniversary Committee. The planning is going very well, including fireworks and merchandizing, and there is good energy going toward that weekend. They are not charging for participating in the parade. People are donating toward the program booklet. Police, Fire, and Highway are working closely with the Emergency Manager. There is a spending plan for the \$10,000 earmark from the state.

7. Waste disposal contract – Kathleen Casey of HRMC and Donna Gibson of the Board of Health recommended a three-year contract with Republic Services, to start May 30, following on the bridge contract recently approved. The cost for the first year is \$94 a ton, second year \$97.76, third year \$101.67, funded through fees at the Transfer Station. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to authorize the chair to sign the Republic Services Disposal Agreement, to expire June 30, 2025. **So voted** (3-0)

8. FY23 budget – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo presented the Town Meeting warrant, the budget as finalized last night by Finance Committee and the tax levy worksheet. Some highlights are an increase (\$10,000) in the Reserve Fund in response to concerns about fuel and heating costs, moving \$60,000 from free cash to offset the tax rate, paying for the front-end loader for the Highway Department (\$140,000), investment in the Town Office Building (\$60,000), and moving \$191,000 to Stabilization Fund. Smith Vocational School costs are down significantly from last year. Finance recommends a 5% cost of living increase for town employees. Overall difference from last year's budget is 2.12%.

9. Mountain Street property – Dept. of Agricultural Resources – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo reported that the state Department of Agricultural Resources is working with a local family to put the property at 96 Mountain Street into the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program. They are asking for a local contribution of 5% of the valuation, or \$20,500. Mark Wamsley of the Kestrel Land Trust said that the Kestrel and Hilltown Land Trusts are interested and can provide perhaps half of the amount. The timeframe is no sooner than July 2023. Board members were in favor of the project, were concerned about the funds, and will plan to seek funds. **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to check the box saying "we will seek approval for this contribution." **So voted** (3-0).

10. Open Meeting Law violation – The town's response is late, because of a misunderstanding about the deadline. The Attorney General's office has said just to send it in as soon as possible. Town Counsel's draft response is expected tomorrow.

11. Annual Town Meeting – The Board set the time for the annual town meeting at 6 pm at the Anne T. Dunphy School and discussed Covid preventive measures. Town Administrator Nick Caccamo reviewed the warrant article by article. Discussion about the light rescue truck for the Fire Department (\$240,000) to replace a 1992 vehicle included support for the purchase, Finance Committee’s desire for alternatives to reduce the cost, and the possibility of getting multiple bids. **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to approve the sign the warrant, with the recommended changes. **So voted** (3-0).

12. Mill River Greenway – Mass Trails grant opportunity – The Committee has an opportunity to apply to Mass Trails for additional design work for the switchback/goat path, \$250,000 including the town’s matching amount.

13. Chesterfield Road, removal of invasive bittersweet – The Conservation Committee is concerned about bittersweet on a town-owned parcel adjacent to the Gere Hill Conservation area and would like support of the Select Board to hire someone to address it. This will be discussed next meeting.

14. Building Supervisor – Richard Bart has applied for the position of Building Supervisor. **Motion** was made and seconded to offer Dick Bart the job of Building Supervisor. **So voted** (3-0). Board members felt he was an excellent fit.

15. Select Board meeting time – Board members decided to leave the meeting time as it is at 9 a.m. It was suggested that if someone wanted to come who could not make that time, a meeting could be shifted to 5. There was also a suggestion that meetings might be recorded.

16. Town Administrator’s report –

Covid – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo reported that Covid cases continue to trend upward in the state and region but there is no impact on town operations. A question was asked about the protocol if a town employee tests positive.

Boiler inspections – Town boilers are inspected through a program through the town’s insurer, MIIA. Several buildings were not on the list and will need some upgrades to pass inspection. Nick will work with Jamrog and an electrician. Estimated cost is \$5000.

Town tax collector – Sally Bastiaans has accepted the Collector position, tentative start date May 31. Board members would like to recognize outgoing Collector Bonnie Roberge’s important service to the town.

Tax non-payment – The Collector had sent information that a particular business owner was behind on taxes and water/sewer payments. Follow-up will be left to the Collector for now. Another business, in Northampton but supplied water by Williamsburg, will be addressed by Water/Sewer Commission.

Handicap parking – A resident had asked about handicap parking at the entrance to the bike path on River Road. Mill River Greenway chair Gaby Immerman responded that they plan parking along South Main Street including several spots reserved for people with handicap permits.

Time off – Town Administrator will take a few Fridays off. Administrative Assistant will take next week off.

17. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to approve the minutes of May 5 as written. **So voted** (3-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to approve the minutes of May 10 as written. **So voted** (3-0).

18. Miscellaneous –

Culvert on Nash Hill – The culvert collapsed. It crosses an intermittent stream, not full flow. Highway is not eager for additional work associated with it. The thought is to engage a consultant to evaluate and get a path forward.

James site survey – Nick has talked with Gaby Immerman of Mill River Greenway and with Hill Engineers. The plan is to move forward with the site survey, for \$4500 from the earmarked money.

Meekins roof and gutter repairs – Library Director Bev Bullock brought in another company to evaluate the situation. There is a concern about replacing the cracked window and doing water and stormwater management in conjunction with that. The new Building Supervisor can be involved.

Public Safety Complex signage – The committee will plan to meet and discuss and get another quote.

19. Town Meeting warrant – Board members signed multiple originals of the Town Meeting warrant.

20. Bill and payroll warrant – Selectman Dave Mathers will review and sign the warrant.

Documents used

Agenda and notes

Pool table license

Veterans Volunteer Tax Relief program application

Public Safety Complex borrowing scenarios

Republic Services waste disposal contract

Town Meeting warrant with FY23 budget

Dept. of Agricultural Resources letter about Mountain Street property

Mill River Greenway grant-related documents

Letter from Conservation Commission about bittersweet removal on Chesterfield Road property

Building Supervisor application

Boiler inspections

Note from Collector about overdue taxes

Email about handicap parking

Minutes

Adjourned at 12:17 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk