

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
May 7, 2020

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, May 7, 2020, by teleconferencing. The chair called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Present: Denise Banister, William Sayre and David Mathers

Also present: Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Peter Spotts (reporter, Country Journal), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

1. Resident concern – A resident whose property abuts the bike path and old rail trail is concerned that people are walking on her property, taking down her signs, and posting angry things on Facebook. The police have been dealing with this for years. The town is unable to post signs on property that it doesn't own, but the town will make sure that there is a barrier and appropriate signage at the end of the bike path from Leeds into Haydenville. Other suggestions included that the resident install a deer camera, which will send pictures immediately to her phone. Charlene will follow up with the Mill River Greenway.
2. Police Chief contract – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to sign the Police Chief contract for one year. **So voted** (3-0). The Board will revisit the Chief's salary next spring for FY22.
3. Appointments – resignation – Energy Committee – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to accept the resignation of Mark Corner from the Energy Committee with regret and with thanks for his service. **So voted** (3-0).
4. Licenses – Brewmasters Brewing Services d/b/a Burgy Brews – It was reported that the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission had approved the Farmer-Brewery Pouring Permit for Burgy Brews, and the Board will sign the license. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to approve a Live Entertainment license for Brewmasters Brewing Services d/b/a Burgy Brews for June 1 through August 31. **So voted** (3-0).
5. Electronic signatures – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi explained that there is an option to accept electronic signatures the same as in-person signatures with ink. This would give Board members permission to operate without coming into the office to sign documents. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) that the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Williamsburg hereby recognizes and accepts the provisions of M.G.L. c.110G regarding electronic signatures and that its members will henceforth execute documents either with electronic signatures or with wet ink signatures and that both will carry the same legal weight and effect. **So voted** (DM aye, WS aye, DB aye). The chair will plan to sign the Certificate of Vote Authorizing Signatures Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 110G on May 12.
6. Town Meeting date – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi proposed postponing Annual Town Meeting to June 29, and doing only the budget and articles that are necessary. Suggestions

included reducing the size of the quorum and meeting outdoors, provided that the proposed legislation is approved. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to postpone Annual Town Meeting from June 1 to June 29. **So voted** (3-0). Charlene will look into the possibility of renting a tent.

7. Town Meeting warrant – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi presented the draft warrant for Annual Town Meeting. Board members discussed the items, especially which capital items need to be done in June and which could be postponed to a Special Town Meeting in the fall. It was noted that since borrowing money is cheap right now, it might be better to borrow for expenditures, spreading payment over three to five years, rather than using free cash.

8. Budget planning – A recent webinar from the Association of Town Finance Committees had suggestions about planning in anticipation of various COVID-19 scenarios. While Board members felt it was too soon to know what might happen, they agreed that tracking revenue, and thinking about revenue for the next several years and comparison to the past, might be useful. Charlene will communicate with the Finance Committee.

9. Public buildings closed – Town buildings are closed until further notice. The Board will wait until next meeting to think about reopening, when it will have more information from the state. Some employees want to continue to work from home. Charlene will look into guidance for how to treat employees and what the town's liability insurance covers. She noted that everyone is working and getting things done.

10. Land for kennel – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that Northampton is looking for land for a kennel for dogs that are picked up, as required by the state, noting that such a kennel could serve the town's interests too. Several pieces of land and several businesses were suggested. Charlene will ask department heads for creative ideas.

11. Hatfield anniversary – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that Hatfield will be celebrating its 350th anniversary and would like the Williamsburg Selectmen to make a short video wishing them happy birthday to be incorporated into their program. She noted that Williamsburg used to be part of Hatfield, and that Williamsburg will be celebrating its 250th anniversary next year. She will draft something, Denise Banister will be the main speaker and David Mathers and William Sayre will chime in.

12. Hilltown Community Development Corporation and the CARES Act – HCDC is looking for input on the best way to use the available money to help the community.

13. Town Administrator's report –

State lawsuit against solar developer – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that the state Attorney General's office informed her about a lawsuit against Dynamic Energy Solutions for environmental protection violations in 2018 in Williamsburg and the West Branch Mill River area. The town's Conservation Committee was involved.

Helen E. James building boiler – She reported that there is a crack in one of the three boilers. Jamrog says the parts are not available; they are shutting it down and capping it off.

School budgets – She reported that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has encouraged schools to continue to pay for transportation and special education, so those companies will be able to stay in business. Bobbie Jones of the Hampshire Regional School District is trying to renegotiate the bus contracts. Concerns were voiced about using taxpayer money to keep private companies in business.

Highway sweeping – Highway Department is sweeping the village centers, since MassDOT has said it does not expect to get to it.

Complete Streets – East Main Street – The state approved the proposal to go forward with the East Main Street crosswalk and sidewalk work, and the chair has signed the paperwork.

Depot Road culvert – Charlene reported that she and Dave Mathers, Dan Banister, and Jim Hyslip met with Hill Engineering on the site. The plan is to proceed with the ten-foot culvert. The engineering is expected to cost no more than \$28,000, and the grant has \$31,400 for it. This is considerably less than the \$125,000 estimate from the other engineering firm, though the plan has changed as well. The work won't happen until 2021 and the town is asking for an extension of the grant to June 30, 2022. The original plan called for 23 feet, but while there is no guarantee it won't flood over the road in a major storm, the ten-foot plan is more than double the capacity of what is there, and the engineer is confident that it should be more than adequate.

OPM Steering Committee Request for Qualifications – The committee has received 15 responses, which they will review and rank and begin to set up interviews.

Building Inspector retirement – Louis Hasbrouck has announced his retirement. He had planned to retire next year, but as Northampton has been looking at layoffs, he wanted to be sure they did not lose Jonathan Flagg as his replacement. The two will be invited to the next Board meeting.

Town election update – Charlene reported that 29 people voted in person, with 167 total ballots cast. The setup worked well, except that the wind was strong and so they took the sides off the tent. The Town Clerk was well supported by the Fire and Highway Departments, as well as the Board of Health.

Vacation – The Administrative Assistant is taking the week of May 11, and Charlene plans to take several days the week of Memorial Day.

14. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to approve the minutes of April 23 as written. **So voted** (3-0).

15. Warrant – Dave Mathers will sign the warrant and will flag anything that the Board should know about. Town Administrator Charlene Nardi noted that the legal expenses line is way over-spent, with most of it being for 74 Village Hill Road litigation, and she will request a reserve fund transfer.

Adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk