

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
August 15, 2019

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, August 15, 2019, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and noted that the meeting was being recorded by the Country Journal reporter.

Present: Denise Banister, William Sayre and David Mathers

Also present: James Ayres (OPM Steering Committee), Jennifer Hoffman (Senior Center Director), Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Peter Spotts (reporter, Country Journal), William Turner (Highway), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

1. OPM Steering Committee – Public Safety Complex – Jim Ayres of the OPM Steering Committee reported that they have been working with P3, Project Planning Professionals, Inc., that it is a good group to work with, and that the committee would like to extend the contract with them for the next phase. The feasibility study phase looked at the location for a new Public Safety Complex; the next phase is reaching out to the public and sharing what they have learned. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to approve the change order to the contract with P3 for the Public Safety Complex Project in the amount of \$8,000. While the Helen E. James appears to be the most practical site, the committee doesn't want to move forward without engaging the public in the discussion. This amendment will take the committee through Town Meeting and the Request for Proposals (RFP) for an architect. The project is likely to cost more than originally projected. It was noted that other towns have found that the cost of upgrading buildings is very high, that the \$6 million estimate to renovate the James is incomplete and that the cost to bring the James up to code is unknown. Integrating the James and a free-standing new building could be problematic and it is important not to commit to a new building without considering the James. The current yearly expenses for James Building as it stands today run to \$41,000. Motion to approve the change order was **approved unanimously** (3-0).

2. Senior Center – Senior Center Director Jennifer Hoffman gave her regular report. She listed the grants she has been applying for, including the annual Formula Grant (which has increased from \$7,000 to \$11,000), a small falls prevention grant (\$150) and a walking program grant (\$250) from Mass COA, National COA grant on aging well (\$3500), Title 3 grants for carpool and companion programs and a new application on isolation, and a Boston Food Bank grant to work with local clergy on food. RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) highlighted the town's senior center in its upcoming newsletter. She has reached out to the school and library and is working with them on isolation. There will be a special outreach group to isolated veterans. She is reaching out to the local newspapers about publicizing weekly events. She will be offering SNAP and Fuel Assistance registration at the Town Offices rather than having people go to Community Action in Greenfield. The Consortium is receiving a three-year SIG grant for \$81,500, and \$25,000 for the newsletter. TRIAD is thinking about making emergency totes. Upcoming events include a law seminar and a Silkworm/library fundraising event in October. Discussion included that the Senior Center is very busy, active, and people stay longer. Denise Banister, Emergency Management Director, noted that there may be funds in her annual grant to help with emergency programs. Board members thanked Jennifer Hoffman for the great job she is doing.

3. Highway Department – South Street sidewalk – Highway Superintendent Bill Turner presented the South Street sidewalk construction plan, pointing out areas where the road is to be widened. The Complete Streets grant will pay for the reconstruction of the sidewalk, Chapter 90 will pay for the reconstruction of the road. Engineering will be done in-house out of the MassDOT manual. The town will grind and pave the road this fall, a contractor will do the sidewalk next spring. Bill Turner will plan to meet personally with the resident most affected. Water lines are fine; sewer leaks have been repaired. **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DM) to approve the South Street sidewalk construction as outlined on the plan from Holmberg and Howe dated June 26, 2019. **So voted** (3-0). The road work had already been approved.

East Main Street sidewalk – One plan for East Main Street is for the sidewalk to come down Nash Hill on one side, and cross over to the other side partway down, where the sight distance is a little better than at the bottom. The Police Chief is concerned about the sight distance. The town could work with the state for flashing signs and push buttons for the crosswalk. The engineering cost that the town would need to come up with in order to use the Complete Streets grant is probably not worth it.

Closing Mountain Street for tree removal – Highway Superintendent Bill Turner reported that the Department of Public Works in Northampton needs to remove dead trees at the Whately town line, which would require putting a crane in one lane of the road, and approached him about closing Mountain Street for several days. He recommended closing the road, as the safest way, rather than closing just one lane. Board members agreed and suggested signage at every road, a police officer at Adams Road, and notifying residents ahead of time.

Mountain Street water main – Northampton is concerned about the fragility of the Mountain Street water main. If the water main through Beaver Brook breaks, they will need the Mountain Street water main as backup for the Mountain Street reservoir. The ideal time for redoing the water main is when the state rebuilds Mountain Street. High Street, which the town just repaved, will have to be entirely repaved, at Northampton's expense.

North Main Street – Chapter 90 funding for North Main Street has been approved; the issue is the sump pumps in houses along the route. Residents need to put in a dry well and some may have to pipe the overflow under the sidewalk into the storm drain. If people have questions they should talk to Bill Turner.

Visibility on Route 9 near the Snack Bar – A concern was raised about what happens when a small car is pausing to turn into the Snack Bar driveway and a vehicle going fast in the other direction doesn't see it in time because of the trees on the curve. Charlene has spoken with MassDOT. The town would recommend cutting trees and putting up a warning sign.

Water breaks in hot weather – Crew is doing fine.

4. Conservation Commission – Conservation Wetlands Consultant – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that the Conservation wanted to create a position of Conservation Wetlands Consultant and to designate the position a Special Municipal Employee. She explained that if a firm works for the town and wants to work for a town resident and appear before a town board on the resident's behalf, there is a conflict of interest unless they are a Special Municipal Employee. If the position is not made a Special Municipal Employee, no firm would be interested in working for the town because they would then not be able to work for anyone else. **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to create the position of Conservation Wetlands Consultant. **So voted** (2-1). **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to designate the position of Conservation Wetlands Consultant a Special Municipal Employee. **So voted** (2-1).

5. Veterans' Services Inter-Municipal Agreement – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi presented the agreement, saying that it was the same as in past years, except for the amount, which is \$11,222. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to authorize the chair to sign the Veterans' Services Inter-Municipal Agreement between the City of Northampton and the towns listed. **So voted** (3-0).

6. FRCOG agreement for highway procurement – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi said that the Franklin Regional Council of Governments took over the bulk procurement from the Hampshire Council of Governments, that this is the form that all the towns sign. While Town Counsel would like to remove all language which limits liability, the form is fine since FRCOG would not change it for just one town. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/WS) to sign the contract with FRCOG for the Collective Purchasing Program for Highway Products and Services. **So voted** (3-0).

7. Town Office sign – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi presented three possible colors for the background of the sign in front of the Town Office Building, with the artist's recommendation of the blue. Board members liked both green and blue and decided on the bold blue. Regarding the signs at the edge of town, it was noted that they would be expensive to redo; it was suggested that the town get quotes and ask voters at Town Meeting for the money.

8. Senior Volunteer Tax Program – The Administrative Assistant reported that raising the preference level by the 2.8% cost of living increase brings it to \$31,701. If there are more applicants than available slots in the program, people making less than this amount would be given preference.

9. Ethics – Disclosure by Special Municipal Employee of Financial Interest in a Municipal Contract – Selectman David Mathers had been asked to do maintenance and repair of town vehicles; he noted that he had received the necessary certifications under his previous employer. **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to accept the disclosure of David E. Mathers as a Special Municipal Employee with Financial Interest in a Municipal Contract to maintain and repair town vehicles and to approve the exemption under Mass. Gen. Laws chapter 268A, section 20(d). **So voted** (2-0, DM abstaining).

10. Town Administrator's report –

Bridges – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that she, Highway Superintendent Bill Turner, and any Selectmen available, are scheduled to meet with MassDOT on site for the Bridge Street and South Main Street bridges.

Taking water breaks in hot weather – She reported that town employees are being reminded to take water breaks during the hot weather. She will look into relevant handouts or awareness training.

Hearing with Department of Labor – The hearing before the Department of Labor on the teachers' union's Charge of Prohibited Practice – alleging that the town failed to notify the union before voting to adopt Mass. Gen. Laws chapter 32B, sections 21-22 – was held Wednesday, August 7. An agreement was reached, after a lot of conversation, and they are awaiting signatures.

Municipal Vulnerability Program (MVP) grant planning meetings – Meetings have been set for Tuesday, October 15, and Wednesday, October 23.

Billing insurance for Fire Department calls – She reported that according to the Small Town Administrators network, the only fire departments that do this are ones that operate ambulance services.

Gas station in Haydenville – Zoning Enforcement Officer Louis Hasbrouck has spoken with the owner. Gas is currently being sold.

Traffic on South Main Street – The Board had asked for the traffic information on South Main Street. The speed limit voted in 1981 was 25 mph. There was some discussion of speed issues; the Board can discuss these with the Police Chief when she comes in on September 26 for her regular report.

VOIP phones – Phones will shift to the new system on August 27.

Copier – New copier has come.

Town computers – There have been some problems to address, including connecting computers to the copier. She noted that many things take up the town's contracted hours, e.g., setting up computers bought by a department.

Helen E. James Building – The question was raised whether there is steel in the James outside structure holding it up; it was suggested this should be looked at before a final decision is made about the building. Charlene pulled out the plans for the James building in 1986; she and Town Clerk Brenda Lessard will go to the library archives for older plans.

11. Correspondence – Correspondence included notice that Dot's Golf has applied for a Keno license and if the town objects it must claim its right to a hearing; bridge inspection report; complaint about visibility in the Snack Bar area of Route 9; and a letter from the Governor about Community Compact grants.

12. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (WS/DB) to approve the minutes of August 1 as written. **So voted** (3-0).

13. Warrant – Approved and signed the warrants: payroll warrant WP20-05 for \$112,982.09, and expense warrant W20-05 for \$325,418.33, payable 8/21/19.

Documents used

- Agenda and notes
- P3 contract amendment
- South Street sidewalk construction plan
- Veterans' Services Inter-Municipal Agreement
- FRCOG agreement
- Disclosure by Special Municipal Employee of Financial Interest in a Municipal Contract
- Blueprints of Helen E. James Building
- Minutes
- Warrant and expense report

Adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk