

*Minutes*  
*Williamsburg Board of Selectmen*  
*August 17, 2017*

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, August 17, 2017, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and noted that the meeting was being recorded by the Country Journal reporter.

Present: William Sayre, David Mathers and Denise Banister

Also present: Robert Barker (Planning Board), Donald Dextraze, Lisa Jasinski (National Grid), Caitlin Marquis (Healthy Hampshire), Charlotte Meryman, Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Ruthie Oland, Joe Pasternak, Lori Phaneuf-Burns, Kevin Rubeck, Peter Spotts (reporter, Country Journal), Ben Thompson, Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant), Jennifer Westlake (Highway)

Colonial Power Group: Denise Allard, Mark Cappadona

Energy Committee: Kim Boas, Mary Dudek

1. Pole hearing – The public hearing opened at 7:00. Lisa Jasinski of National Grid presented the request to install seven midspan poles on Ashfield Road to correct the long spans and low wires on the road. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the additional pole installation on Ashfield Road. **So voted** (3-0). The hearing ended at 7:05 p.m.

2. South Main Street – sidewalk – Business owners on South Main Street expressed concerns about the recent sidewalk work. Issues included fewer parking spaces, narrowed road such that two vehicles can't pass and fire trucks could not get through, sidewalk is raised and people have to step up and down, handicap accessibility may not be up to code, money has been wasted, and they were not notified and asked for input. Board members responded to some concerns and promised to look into the process and hopefully involve neighbors in the future. The business owners were encouraged to get in touch with the Town Administrator after the meeting with their concerns and the issues would be looked into immediately.

3. Tree removal – resident concern – A resident of Village Hill Road told the Board that two town trees were taken down without following the proper procedure, which includes holding a public hearing. The chair apologized and invited her to stay when the tree removal process would be addressed later in the meeting.

4. Resident concern – streetlights – Another resident of Village Hill Road was concerned about streetlights and thought that the pole hearing was about that. She was reassured that any new pole requires a pole hearing and that today's pole hearing was only about Ashfield Road.

5. Horse Mountain – Ruthie Oland of 13 Cole Road would like to move her driveway slightly onto the edge of the Horse Mountain property that the town just acquired, along a six-foot long strip, to make the driveway straighter and go directly to her garage. A Board member replied that the town cannot do anything because of the deed restriction, it would be costly even to find out, and it would have to go to town meeting. Board members agreed that they did not wish to pursue

the possibility. The suggestion was made to run the driveway right along the property line and then turn in.

6. Energy – electricity – municipal aggregation – Colonial Power Group – Mark Cappadona of the Colonial Power Group presented the plan for municipal aggregation. It was approved by the Department of Public Works and it is an opt-out plan, which means that once the town makes the choice, everyone is included unless they opt out. There is no cost to opt out or to opt in, and they can opt out at any time and opt back in with no penalty. National Grid will set its pricing on Sept. 13 and Colonial Power will do so a week later, to take effect October 1 for six months. Colonial Power plans to do a mailing to everyone in town who is on National Grid basic service, with an opt-out card and envelope, will also put an article in the newspaper, and information on their website and the town's website. It was also suggested to have information at the town picnic, to have a Reverse 9-1-1 call, and to have multiple informational events. There will be 30 days for people to opt out, and the start date will be the second week in November. There is no minimum number of customers. National Grid will continue to be the distributor. At the time of final pricing, the town will have two hours to lock in participation. It will not affect the town's electricity, since the town is already with a competitive supplier.

7. Complete Streets policy – Planning Board – Bob Barker, chair of the Planning Board, presented the proposed Complete Streets policy and described the sources and process. It was noted that the policy should be incorporated as appropriate, and that the town is not obligated if the cost is excessive; these are just things to take into consideration when planning. A lot of things are not particularly expensive, e.g., better striping. There was discussion of evaluation measures including measurement of sidewalk width through a grant. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to approve the Complete Streets policy dated 8/17/17 as presented. **So voted** (3-0).

8. Signs – Planning Board – Bob Barker presented the Planning Board's proposed letter to business and property owners about signs and compliance with the town's sign bylaws. He said they are hoping to get a conversation going; they feel that bylaws should be respected and adhered to and if they don't make sense they should be changed. Board members commented on the tone, that this version talks about not being in compliance with bylaw, and they would like to see something about encouraging dialog and welcoming suggestions for improvement. Bob Barker offered to add a sentence saying if you have concerns about the sign bylaw, get in touch with the Planning Board. and if you have questions about enforcement and being in compliance, see the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

9. Veterans' Services contract – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to approve and sign the new Veterans' Services contract for FY2018 for the amount of \$10,111, as appropriated at Town Meeting, and containing the new verbiage about termination to protect all towns that are signed on. **So voted** (3-0).

10. Mill River Greenway – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to accept the Mass. Recreational Trails Program grant from DCR in the amount of \$47,250. **So voted** (3-0). It was noted that this was accepting the grant but that the contract is not present yet.

11. Highway – Chapter 90 – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to approve the Chapter 90 project request for Old Goshen Road and Hemenway Road for crack seal in the amount of \$14,940. **So voted** (3-0). **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to approve the Chapter 90 project request for \$121,241.80 for the purpose of chip sealing and blacktopping of Petticoat Hill Road. **So voted** (3-0). A Board member asked if there is a list of approved projects and a plan for Chapter 90 projects. Town Administrator Charlene will talk to the Highway Superintendent.

12. Highway – new temporary employee – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to hire Daniel Banister as a temporary employee for the Highway department. **So voted** (2-0, DB abstaining). Denise Banister recused herself from discussion because the employee is her son.

13. Appointments – Cultural Council – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to appoint Tom Adams and Sherry Loomis to the Cultural Council for terms to expire June 30, 2020. **So voted** (3-0).

14. Town Picnic donation account – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to authorize the Town Accountant to establish a Town Picnic Account. **So voted** (3-0). Town Administrator Charlene Nardi explained that donations cannot be put into a separate account unless it has been authorized. So far \$2025 has been received. Donations are supposed to be used for the stated purpose. Once established, the account can be used for future year donations.

15. Helen E. James lawn – facilities request – A request was received from Wendy Peppercorn for use the Helen E. James lawn for a concert as part of next year's Angel Park Music Series. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the use of the lawn of the Helen E. James Building for a concert on June 28, 2018. **So voted** (3-0).

16. Meeting with Public Safety Complex Committee – Chair William Sayre spelled out the plan for the meeting on August 31 with the Public Safety Complex Committee and various other committees to talk about the progress on the Public Safety Complex, use of the Helen E. James Building and lot, and plans for the Special Town Meeting on October 16. He reminded the Board that the charge for the design scope for the Public Safety Complex on the James lot, including bid documents, is \$380,000, and that looking at the whole site and its uses is \$575,000. He noted that the committee looked for over a year and the James lot was the only viable location. Board members agreed that it was a good idea to get everyone together to talk. A Board member praised the exceptional job William Sayre has done in keeping the Public Safety Complex Committee focused and moving forward over four years.

17. Select Board meeting time -

Beginning and end time – Board members agreed to start at 6:00 rather than 7:00, starting next meeting, and to end by 9:00 if possible.

Time for discussing bigger issues – The chair suggested having time in the yearly schedule to talk about larger issues, e.g., what do we want the tax rate to be, larger scale policies, scope of various departments, communication during budget season with Finance Committee. He proposed a single detailed Board schedule for the year, including meetings with department heads, to see

where the larger items belong. Additional meetings may be needed on off weeks during budget season. The chair will work with the Town Administrator.

Scheduling personnel reviews – Board members approved moving personnel reviews to the fall instead of having them during budget season.

#### 18. Town Administrator's report –

Tree removal permit process, continued – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that Tree Warden and Highway Superintendent Bill Turner authorized removal of two dead town trees, hemlocks, on Village Hill Road – dead trees can present a hazard and do not require a public hearing – but did not see two other healthy town trees, cedars, that were also removed. He apologized for his error and has spoken with both the landowner and neighbor Charlotte Meryman. Charlene presented an updated draft of the tree removal process, which she and Bill Turner had revised based on Massachusetts shade tree law. After discussion and further revision, **motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to approve the Tree Removal Permit Process as outlined and amended. **So voted** (3-0).

South Main Street, continued – Jennifer Westlake of the Highway Department, who is in charge of the project on South Main Street, recommended filling the hole for safety until a decision can be reached on how to continue, and not starting in front of the next business.. Board members agreed; next steps can be addressed with the Highway Superintendent when he returns on Monday. A suggestion was made to delay the rest of the project for a week or two.

Mountain Street project – She reported that she and the Highway Superintendent had met with MassDOT Districts 1 and 2, Whately, and Rep. Kulik. Rep. Kulik will be in touch with the Transportation Secretary to encourage release of funds to continue the design engineering.

Horse Mountain – Kestrel Land Trust is discussing options with the new owners and the possibility of releasing the town from the driveway agreement.

Old Town Hall – A resident would like the town to fix up the Old Town Hall even just esthetically. Building Supervisor John Hoogstraten says that he has it on his list, emphasizing the need to prevent further damage.

Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) – Charlene reported that one person does not have time to join the committee even though she is interested. Other names for a fifth person were mentioned.

Air conditioners – Charlene has been looking for air conditioner units for the Planning Board Room and the Selectmen's office and has been getting estimates, as the current ones are too small and don't cool the rooms; they are also noisy. It was suggested that this could be revisited next spring when more is known about the future of the building.

Auditorium lighting – She has asked Winston Bancroft how to get better light in the room.

Litigation update – Miller v. ZBA – Court ruled for the town in the case about Robert Lockwood's business, that the ZBA acted within their authority in granting the Special Permit.

Boiler maintenance – Town boilers have been cleaned.

Generator batteries – Have been replaced.

Brewmaster's Brewery – She reported that there have been concerns about more activity at the Brewmaster's Brewery and rumors that different people are running it. It was noted that a brewery is licensed by the state, not by local licensing authorities. She suggested that when retail liquor license renewal forms are sent out by the town, a letter be included to all licensees about the obligation to apply for a change of manager and certain other changes.

Signs on town shade trees – Regarding the sign on the town tree discussed at the last meeting, she said that when she asked other Town Administrators, no one had a policy. After discussion, **motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to establish a policy that no sign or item may be attached to or hung on a town-owned public shade tree within the right of way, policy to be effective January 1, 2018. So voted (3-0). When the town becomes aware of such a sign or item, it will write a letter to the homeowner asking them to take it down

Town signs – She reported that a Gazette article said that Easthampton had put together a GoFundMe campaign to fund their town signs. She would like to see someone energetic get a fund going. The town has some money for signs. A suggestion of a contact was made.

Building Supervisor – She reported that John Hoogstraten keeps a detailed list when he goes anywhere and will be providing an activity log regularly.

Town flag – The Flag Committee has met and will meet one more time. The Board prefers including just the year, not the month and day, and “incorporated” rather than “established.”

19. Energy – Colonial Power, continued – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to authorize the Town Administrator to lock in the price with Colonial Power, and sign any necessary documents, after consultation with the Energy Committee chair. **So voted** (3-0).

20. Warrant – Approved and signed the warrant.

Documents used

- Agenda and notes
- Pole hearing documents
- Tree removal permit process
- Complete Streets policy
- Signage letter
- Veterans’ Services contract
- Mass. Recreational Trails Program grant
- Chapter 90 project requests
- Highway employee application
- Letters of interest
- James lawn request
- Warrant

Adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Approved:

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Clerk