

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
September 7, 2023

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, September 7, 2023, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Present: William Sayre and Denise Banister

Also present: Dan Banister (Highway Superintendent), Michael Bullock, Nick Caccamo (Town Administrator), Jonathan Flagg (Building Inspector), Libby Jalbert, Ned Jalbert, Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

1. Bridges project – Michael Bullock spoke on behalf of the South Main Street neighbors and asked the Select Board to attend the MassDOT meeting expected to take place in October, so that everyone will have first-hand information. He emphasized that the neighborhood is in favor of the project and wants it done well, and just wants to convey what they have observed in terms of issues and challenges. A document is being prepared to express their concerns. The Select Board offered to meet with the neighbors and the Mill River Greenway Committee prior to the MassDOT meeting. The Highway Superintendent is also willing to attend. It was noted that one important issue is the order in which the two bridges are replaced; closing one bridge for replacement when the other bridge is already closed for safety purposes makes no sense. A resident noted that MassDOT can have a tendency to overdo bridges in rural areas.

2. Highway – Highway Superintendent Dan Banister made his regular report. They are dealing with a lot of trees, many of them private trees. They have ground up big pile of brush. They have cleaned catch basins and culverts in known problem areas. Mowing and sweeping is ongoing. The 1988 sweeper is wearing out. Truck maintenance continues to be an issue. The signage and delineators installed as part of MassDOT's FoRRRwD program were installed, to mixed reviews. School and radar signs were installed and programmed. The storms in the second week of July were a challenge. The new hire is working out well. White lines will be painted on South St and North Farms Road by a line painter, with WRAP money, so that the delineators can be eliminated, and people have asked that the double yellow lines be repainted. Riprap was put in on South Main Street. The stop signs on South Main are just waiting for approval from the Select Board. Salt has gone down in price. Last year salt usage was high, because of the ice. The salt shed roof will need attention soon. The tractor has come. They are keeping the old tractor because it has a sickle bar mower. They hope to do more patching in a couple of weeks. Next year another truck will need to be replaced after years of rugged snow plowing. They will have a hearing with the Conservation Commission about doing the second half of Adams Road blacktop. Part of Goshen Road is crowned and they want to flatten it so it is easier to plow. East Main Street is starting to cave in and crack and he plans to put some stone in there.

3. Building Inspector – Building Inspector Jonathan Flagg made his regular report and handed out the permit listings. A total of 47 building permits were issued last quarter, with fees of \$18,600 and projects costing about \$3 million. Things seem to be picking up since the pandemic. Electrical permits are low, perhaps because most people who want solar have already put it in. He has been getting calls from people interested in adding accessory units. A big parcel on Goshen Road is planning for a house and garage for a landscaping business. When noise is an issue, the Building/Zoning department tries to work with the owner, since the town

doesn't have a noise bylaw, but noise shouldn't be an issue in this case because most work will be done inside the garage. The public safety complex is coming along nicely. Lighting in the parking lot may be an issue, since the wall light packs are aimed out toward traffic. Another issue is the sprinkler system in the ceilings, since the sprinkler heads were put in right next to large duct work. In response to a question about a building on Ashfield Road that has issues, he said the builder is trying hard and it's a plus when an eyesore is taken down. In response to a question about a house on Village Hill Ave that took out an inground pool a few years ago, leaving an unfenced hole, he said he'll take a look. In terms of the occupancy permit for the public safety complex, that will need all the signoffs from plumbing, electrical, fire, etc., and often a temporary occupancy permit can be issued so that the building can start being used. Board members said that the planting and the solar array will probably come in the spring.

4. Appointments – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to appoint Mary Bisbee as a voting member of the COA Advisory Board, term to June 30, 2025. **So voted** (2-0).

5. EDM proposal – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo presented a proposal from EDM Studio, an engineering firm in Pittsfield, to do a renovation study of the Town Office Building and produce a design package with specs that could be provided to a general contractor. This is the next logical step after the recent needs assessment and materials assessment by Building Conservation Associates. It can address the critical issues: window replacement, roof replacement, and an accessible restroom. The fee is \$12,500 plus minor reimbursable expenses, and money can come from ARPA funds. Since it's less than \$30,000, the town can just engage them without getting three proposals. Construction documents could be ready by the end of fall. They would work to have the construction stay under the 30% rule. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to authorize the chair to sign the proposal dated August 23 from EDM Studio, in the amount of \$12,500. **So voted** (2-0).

6. Mass Energy Insight – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo explained that Mass Energy Insight is the Commonwealth's portal for energy usage, used by the Department of Energy Resources and the Green Communities Division. The town uploads its energy usage and the portal produces charts and graphs of the town's energy needs. Certain people need to be given authorization for full access, including Town Administrator Nick Caccamo, Administrative Assistant Eleanor Warnock, James Piermarini, chair of the Energy Committee, and Catherine Ratte of the PVPC, with partial access to Mimi Kaplan of the Energy Committee. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to authorize the chair to sign the MEI user authorization. **So voted** (2-0).

7. Highway dump truck purchase order – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo presented the updated purchase order, with the price discrepancy resolved. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to authorize the chair to sign purchase order #09072023-HWY for the purchase of a 2023 Chevy Silverado 5500HD 4WD with options chosen, in the amount of \$84,152.00. **So voted** (2-0). Town Meeting had allocated up to \$110,000.

8. FY24 MIIA risk management –

Risk management grant – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo mentioned the annual grant from MIIA, the town's insurance company, for items that reduce risk. He is currently working through the eligibility criteria and determining what makes sense for the town.

Public safety complex walkthrough – MIIA did a walkthrough and will do a report.

Trainings – Nick added that MIIA offers trainings and the town can get a reduction in premiums if we participate.

Safety committee – The MIIA representative encouraged creation of an internal safety committee. She also noted that the town doesn't file workers comp claims often. She mentioned that when work is outsourced, such as digging trenches, the risk is borne by the outside firms. The Board had a mixed reaction – on the one hand, the town is drowning in committees, and on the other, some towns have monthly department meetings with safety as a constant agenda item, and it could be good to have someone involved who knows about safety issues.

9. Public Safety Complex change order – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo presented Forish change order #6 incorporating previous change orders. **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to authorize the chair to sign Forish Change Order #6 in the amount of \$182,098.65. **So voted** (2-0).

10. Select Energy contract – The contract is still being revised by attorneys for the two sides. The Select Board would like to push them to do it as soon as possible, and would also like to look at what it has cost to date in legal fees.

11. Cleaning out surplus – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to declare the three boxes of miscellaneous cords, adaptors, and other useless electronics as surplus. **So voted** (2-0). The doors to the Select Board closet are awaiting a carpenter and several names were suggested.

12. FY24 Community Compact – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo reminded the Board of the state Community Compact program that funds grants to municipalities for best practices. Two years ago it funded a wage study through UMass Boston and an economic development study with UMass Amherst, and the town is eligible every two years. One grant topic could be to assist the Planning Board in developing an RFP for a comprehensive master plan, as the volunteer board does not have the expertise or time. Some suggestions were made for the other one. On a related topic, Emergency Manager Denise Banister noted that she is waiting to hear on her application relating to emergency management and hazard mitigation.

13. FY24 MassDOT Shared Streets and Space – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo said that another round of funding in the Shared Streets and Spaces has opened up. It had previously been used to fund new crosswalk signals on Route 9. A number of suggestions were made, though some did not meet the eligibility criteria. The work needs to be completed by the end of December 2025. The Board will plan to consider this at the next meeting.

14. ARPA money update – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo went through the most recent accounting of the \$737,000 awarded, included money spent, projects in progress, and future projects pending. The Comprehensive Master Plan visioning is under way, as is the Assessors' Field Audit. Half of the Fire Department radios are on order. The Meekins gutters are out to bid. The Meekins energy audit is slated for September. The three biggest pieces are the improvements to the Town Offices, the Water/Sewer upgrades to South Main Street, and Old Town Hall improvements. The Meekins HVAC system was quoted at \$50,000 and will probably be done through a Town Meeting article. Some people including William Sayre have met about the Old Town Hall improvements to get things moving.

15. Stop sign on South Main Street – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to authorize the Highway Department to install a stop sign on South Main Street on the corner by the Masonic Lodge. **So voted** (2-0).

16. Town Administrator's report –

Public Safety Complex – Town Administrator Nick Caccamo gave an update, including the most recent requisition from Forish with an accounting of the spending so far. The epoxy floor can be paid by ARPA funds, releasing the contingency amount. There was discussion about signage. The Board favored a carved three-dimensional sign rather than a printed graphic, and talked about the town seal.

MassDOT Shared Streets – Highway has completed installing the signage – the lighted flashing beacon system outside the Meekins and the solar-powered speed sign.

Meekins HVAC – The Meekins Library has three mini-split systems that cool the building but two of the three have failed, and since they are 20 years old, from the building renovation, they are old technology and hard to repair. Since there is ARPA money set aside for an energy audit at the Dunphy School, it has been suggested that the money be used for an energy audit of the Meekins, and then to submit a Green Communities grant to fund a replacement HVA system. B2Q has worked with the town before. The Board would like to move ahead, and Nick and Energy Committee chair Jim Piermarini will oversee.

HRHS – Hampshire Regional Principal Lauren Hotz sent a regular report. They will be hosting an open house in October.

Meeting on September 21 – Since one Selectman will be away, the question was whether to cancel the meeting, meet remotely, or have a hybrid meeting. Since a hybrid meeting is not efficient, the Board decided to wait until September 18, when the meeting would need to be posted, to decide whether a meeting is needed.

17. Correspondence –

Honoring Dave Mathers – Some residents have suggested honoring Dave Mathers in the Public Safety Complex in some way. There was some hesitation about honoring one person without honoring a lot of past chiefs. A tribute like the one in the Town Offices honoring Rabbit Haskell seemed more appropriate. It was suggested that something could be put up in the Town Offices, mentioning Dave's service on the Dunphy School Building Committee, his many years as chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals, as well as his many years of service on the Select Board. William Sayre will also talk with the Chiefs about a possible plaque at the Public Safety Complex. Town Administrator Nick Caccamo reminded the Board that the town's representatives at the Statehouse – Rep. Lindsay Sabadosa and Sen. Paul Mark – want to do something. The town will send them text, they put it on parchment paper, read it on the floor, and give copies to Dave's widow and the town.

Other correspondence included information from KP Law about PFAS litigation, and a letter from a concerned group of residents about plans for South Main Street.

18. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/WS) to approve the minutes of August 24 as presented. **So voted** (2-0).

19. Warrant – Selectman Denise Banister will sign the next two warrants, today's and the one for September 21.

Adjourn 11:43

Approved:

Clerk