

**Board of Selectmen
Minutes
May 27, 2008
Center School Offices
7:00 p.m.**

Select Board Chair Paul Newlin called the regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Whately to order on Tuesday, May 27, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. Also present were Selectmen Jonathan Edwards and Alan Sanderson, Jr., Town Administrator/Town Clerk Lynn Sibley, and Municipal Secretary Barbara Hancock. Minutes from the May 13th meeting were accepted as written. Vendor and payroll warrants were reviewed and signed.

Board Reorganized - The first order of business was for the Board to reorganize. Jonathan Edwards moved to appoint Alan Sanderson, Jr. as Chairman and Paul Newlin as Clerk. The motion was seconded and all voted yes.

Town Administrator, Lynn Sibley: Police Station Renovation – A problem arose as work got underway at the Police Station. Insulation found within an interior block wall is being tested for asbestos. The levels of possible asbestos are expected to be very low if present at all, and at the most may require special disposal. Also, Jim Cerone, building inspector, will require a handicap accessible sidewalk before an occupancy permit would be issued. Packed TRG would be acceptable. **Trench Regulation** – The Board reviewed and signed a letter addressed to the Division of Local Mandates to question the unfunded mandate discussed at the last meeting. Lynn plans to draw up a list of questions and concerns the Town has with the new regulation. **Recognition for Adelia Bardwell** who had decided not to run for another term on the Cemetery Commission was omitted at the last meeting. The Selectmen will send a letter of appreciation. **Senior Center Update** – At a recent meeting, the three town administrators along with the senior center members drafted a help wanted ad for a new director. The part-time position (3 five-hour days per week) will require some experience and resumes are due by June 6th. A search for a new social worker will begin once the director's position is filled. **Audit** – Tom Scanlon's office is expected to start an audit of the FY06 and FY07 records beginning tomorrow. **Sunderland/Superintendent of Schools Budget Correspondence** – Sunderland Selectmen wrote a letter recently to the Superintendent of Schools, Regina Nash regarding several issues they would like addressed with regard to the Frontier budget. The Selectmen reviewed the response from Don Scott, Business Manager for the Union 38 and Frontier School district.

Town Clerk, Lynn Sibley: Elections – There were a total of 96 voters who turned out for the elections held on May 20th. One of the three vacant positions was filled when Roland Kinsman accepted the position of Cemetery Commissioner after receiving 23 votes. Lynn will contact individuals that received votes for the other vacant positions of Assessor and Library Trustees. If the write-ins are interested in serving, the Selectmen can appoint them until the next election when they could run for election to the positions. **Dog Licenses** – Reminders went out to dog owners that have not licensed their dogs. A late fee of \$25 will apply starting June 1st. Late notices will go out June 3rd.

New Business

Special Town Meeting – The Board agreed to hold a special town meeting on June 24th at the Whately Elementary School at 7pm. The regularly scheduled Selectmen's meeting will be held at 6:30pm at WES.

The warrant will be prepared for the next Selectmen's meeting. Articles that need to appear: 1. Transfer \$26,957.32 from Smith Vocational account to Stabilization. 2. Susan has a bill from FY07 for \$150. 3. Vote to allow the Selectmen to be the appointing authority for the trench permitting position. 4. Transfer from Highway Salaries to Winter Roads for \$2,272.08. This amount was previously voted by the Selectmen along with a \$5000 transfer from the same account for the removal of stumps at the old stump dump. The two votes exceeded the \$5000 maximum allowed for each transfer so it must be voted by town meeting. 5. The salary amount voted previously, incorrectly listed the cemetery commissioner's salary. Must increase the salary amount by 2.5%. 6. Due to refinancing of Frontier's debt, Whately will receive an assessment refund of \$19,829 for FY08. Since a debt exclusion exists, the refund should be applied to the assessment account instead of reverting to free cash. The best way would be to use the \$19,829 to lessen the debt for FY09. 7. Need to move the \$60,000 storm damage reimbursement back to the Highway Department's account. Lynn will ask the accountant about how to handle this transfer.

Cemetery Equipment – Fred and Adelia Bardwell have served as cemetery commissioners for years and have handled all the lawn care themselves. The Town has paid an annual rental fee to the Bardwells for the use of their equipment. Now that Adelia is no longer on the commission, the lawn care will likely be handled by people other than the Bardwells. The Board discussed how to best handle the lawn care needs of the cemeteries. Lynn will try to get some estimates for a private company to maintain the cemeteries.

Fuel Bids – It is time to request fuel bids. With the price of fuel so high and changing so quickly, the Board questioned whether companies will offer a fixed price bid. Bids will likely be based on a fixed mark-up price, which makes it harder to budget. Lynn will check with FrCOG, although the last inquiry found their bids to be higher than ours.

Comcast is changing 8 analog channels to digital, which will require some residents to obtain a converter box for \$3.95 per month to continue to view those channels. The Selectmen took issue with the fact that service is being reduced and the cost to the consumer is increasing. The Board will send a letter addressing their concern to the Department of Telecommunications, which is Comcast's licensing board.

Frontier Class Night and Graduation – The Board has been invited to attend class night on June 4th and graduation on June 6th.

Franklin County Selectmen's Association – The next meeting will be on June 19th at the Stillwater Restaurant in Charlemont on the topic of employee evaluations.

Letter from ICLEI – The future of rail transportation along the Connecticut River, freight and passenger, will be discussed at a meeting in Hartford, Ct on June 10 from 2 – 4pm. Jonathan plans to attend. Whately has been concerned with the condition of the railroad tracks passing through town. Residents have voiced the same concerns. The Board felt another letter should be written to site the deteriorating condition of the tracks.

Highway Department – Lynn updated the Board. **Mass Highway** will hold a public hearing tomorrow evening at 7pm in the Town Hall for the Haydenville Rd bridge repair. Pat Devine from the Conservation Commission contacted the Selectmen's office to discuss a request from the Bardwells who abut the bridge. According to Patty, the Bardwells wanted any rock removed during the repair to be used to shore-up the eroding banks of the stream behind their house. Lynn recommended Patty discuss it at the Mass Highway public hearing. **One-ton Dump Truck Bids** have gone out. Bid opening will be June 4th at 3pm. An addendum was added to the original specifications to include both 2009 and 2008 models, because it may be too late in the model year to order a 2008 and availability is limited.

Police Cruiser – Jim Sevine is working on new cruiser through a state bid. There was a short discussion about the possible uses for the old cruiser.

Northampton Public Works Ribbon Cutting Ceremony will be held at the new facility on Friday at 1pm. Lynn plans to attend (her office will close for the afternoon). Paul and Jonathan are going to try to attend.

Liberty Tree will be planted during a short ceremony on Saturday, May 31 at 3:30pm at the library.

Spring Workshop will be held on June 5th from 5:15 – 7pm in Amherst. Terry Williams from D.O.R. will speak regarding school spending.

There being no further business to come before this meeting it was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Newlin, Clerk