

**Board of Selectmen
Minutes
August 12, 2008
Center School Offices
7:00 p.m.**

Select Board Chair Alan Sanderson, Jr. called the regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Whately to order on Tuesday, August 12, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. Also present were Selectmen Paul Newlin and Jonathan Edwards, Town Administrator/Town Clerk Lynn Sibley, and Municipal Secretary Barbara Hancock. Vendor and payroll warrants were reviewed and signed. Minutes from the July 29th meeting were accepted as written.

Historical Commission – Chair, Alan McArdle was present to discuss the role the Historical Commission could play in researching available local, state, and/or federal grants to fund a renovation project at the Town Hall. The Town has postponed upkeep on the building in recent years because budgets have been so tight. The building needs to be painted along with other projects. Before the Town spends large amounts of money on maintenance (the painting estimate given two years ago was \$30,000), a decision should be made regarding the future plans for the building. Mr. McArdle explained that funds from a CDBG grant may be used for such a renovation project and CPA funds, if enacted by residents. In addition to researching available grants the Historical Commission could assist with grant writing, assemble professionals to examine the project, and provide evidence to the historical significance of the property. Lynn reiterated the need for a structural assessment before any plans are considered. The feasibility study conducted a few years ago, which outlines two different renovation plans, could still be used although costs would need to be updated. Mr. McArdle agreed to ask Nicholas Jones and/or Mike Denehy for their professional opinion as to the structural integrity of the building. The Board asked Mr. McArdle to research available grants, have the structural integrity evaluated, and create a timeline for the project and the necessary amount of funding. The project would likely be funded by a debt-exclusion once other debt-exclusions come off the tax roles in 2010. The design plans would have to be completed earlier, funded as a capital plan item.

Demetrios Konstantopoulos owner of Castaway Lounge appeared before the Board with Andy Demis, director and producer of a film to be shot at the Castaway Lounge. Mr. Konstantopoulos requested a change in the closing hours from Sunday Oct 5th to Thursday Oct 9th allowing him to remain open until 2am. Lynn directed him to provide the Board with a written request. The Board would need to consider an extension for both his liquor license and his entertainment license. Mr. Demis explained the film titled *Black Light* is a romantic comedy about fictional characters. The film will be geared toward an adult audience but will not be pornographic. Filming will be contained within the building. There will be no outside lighting or filming. An advertisement will appear in the newspaper for movie ‘extras’. The bar will be open to the public during the filming, but no one will be allowed in after 1am. Mr. Demis explained that the bar’s atmosphere would probably be more controlled during filming to allow for camera set up and silence during dialogue scenes. Public hearings will be needed to establish the new extended hours and another hearing to reestablish regular hours, held consecutively. The Board referred to Police Chief Sevigne, also present, regarding any concerns. Chief Sevigne had no concerns since there will be no outside activity or increased traffic. The Board will schedule the public hearings following Mr. Konstantopoulos’ written request.

Town Administrator, Lynn Sibley: State of Emergency – The Board voted to lift the State of Emergency voted on July 19th. Lynn explained that she has put a call in to the Director of Accounts at DOR to discuss the possibility of applying for emergency funding. This storm struck early in the Town’s fiscal year and it is difficult to tell if the budget will run short at the end of the year as a result of storm expenses. The Board approved necessary emergency spending. **Police Station Update** – The project is near completion. There is some interior finishing work, such as painting and installing hardware. The sidewalks and propane system should be installed this week. The police department hopes to move in by

early September. **Recreation Commission Vacancies** – Jim Sevigne reported that the Commission has three people to recommend as candidates for its vacancies. Jim submitted his resignation from the Commission, which created the third vacancy. The Board supported the Commission's recommendations and voted to appoint Fred Warren, Jamie Vielmetti, and Todd Jarvis.

Police Department Business, Chief Sevigne stayed on to update the Board on the Department. Activity has been fairly quiet. Most of the calls recently have been alarm calls (perhaps increased lately by the strong storms), domestic disturbances, medical calls, and bear sightings. Chief Sevigne did report a decrease in speeding and vehicle accidents. Chief Sevigne hopes police patrols have led to the decrease in motor vehicle violations. Child booster seat laws recently changed and Chief Sevigne plans to circulate educational materials through the school. There have been no problems with communications between Whately and the State Police in Northampton. Jim needs to initiate communications sometimes, but that is understandable. **Assessor's Position** is still vacant. Anyone interested in serving should contact Lynn.

CDBG Approved – Whately applied for Community Development Block Grant under the lead town of Erving. The grant was recently approved and residents should contact the Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority for eligibility guidelines. There is a link on the Town's website for more information. **Cemetery Commissioners** met with Lynn recently. They continue to discuss management issues such as, mowing the cemeteries and how funds are handled. Lynn has arranged with the Town Accountant for opening graves fees to be received and paid through an agency account until next year when a revolving account can be set up. Landscaper's estimates to mow the cemeteries were too high for the Commission to consider. The Commissioners decided to hire someone to do the mowing. The newly hired transfer station attendant, Lee Felton has since agreed to help Alan Thackeray. This arrangement should take care of the mowing for the rest of this year. The Commissioners will need to decide what to do for next year regarding staff and equipment. Currently the Town rents the Bardwell's lawn mower and equipment. The Commission may approach the Highway Superintendent to see if a shared seasonal employee would benefit the Town. **AmeriCorps** - Kate Allen was interested in using the meeting space at the Town Hall. The Selectmen authorized the use at the last meeting with a \$100/month fee. Kate would like the Selectmen to reconsider the amount. The Selectmen will hold firm at the \$100/month. **Thank You Letter from Superintendent** – Lynn read the letter from Superintendent Nash to all those that helped clear all the fallen trees at the Elementary School following the July 19th storm. **FCAT** – Joyce Palmer-Fortune was on hand to update the Board. FCAT is moving into their new location on Elm St in S. Deerfield. As a result of the move, Comcast will require a sign-off agreement from each town. Joyce distributed a preliminary version of the agreement. The Selectmen raised an issue with a phrase designating FCAT as the sole oversight of Ch 12 and '*any future "public" channels*'. Joyce will address the Board's concern at the next FCAT meeting. Joyce also distributed a list of FCAT's fourth quarter objectives. FCAT Director, Marty McGuane plans to attend the next Selectmen's meeting to address any questions the Board may have. **Office Space at Center School** – Lynn reviewed with the Selectmen, some ideas for the empty space in the Center School created when the police department moves to their new location. The Historical Society and Board of Health have each been looking for additional meeting space. Lynn would like to establish an area as the designated emergency management center because the generator is available. The Selectmen's Office is currently in desperate need of additional storage for Town Clerk/Town Administrator/Selectmen's files. The Selectmen felt all those needs could be addressed in the space available. A dehumidifier would probably be necessary during the summer months.

American Tower sent a preliminary letter because another company wants to collocate on the tower. Currently Whately collects approximately \$34,000 per year. **Letters Finalized** – The Selectmen reviewed and signed letters reviewed at the last meeting: New England Wildflower and the Railroad. **Veterans' Benefits** - Currently benefits are paid by the Town when an eligible veteran resides in town. This creates an issue when benefits are not known at budget time. Leo Parent, director of veterans' services proposed that each town budget \$5,000 per year just in case benefits are needed throughout the year. The town would then receive some state reimbursement the following year. Lynn suggested that the state pay the benefits and charge it off on the Town's cherry sheet the following year. Leo encouraged Lynn to write a letter to that effect. The Selectmen reviewed and signed the letter.

Town Clerk, Lynn Sibley: Same Day Voter Registration did not pass. The last day to register to vote in the September 16th primary, is August 27th. Town Clerks in Massachusetts would like same-day registration to be examined to find the best way to implement it without creating confusion.

New Business

Franklin County Home Care- A FCHC representative has offered to attend a Selectmen's meeting to explain their services.

Chapter 90 Reimbursement – The Selectmen reviewed and signed the Ch.90 reimbursement forms totaling \$27,000, submitted by Highway Superintendent, Keith Bardwell.

Northampton Fire Intercept Contract – The new contract includes a rate increase of \$50 for each transport and will charge for all transports. Currently Whately pays \$225 for each Medicare transport. Lynn will discuss the contract with John Hannum.

Solar Lighting for Memorials – There is a grant available to fund the installation of solar powered illuminating lights for memorials or flagpoles. There is not enough space at the Town Hall but the Selectmen suggested the Center School flag. Lynn will prepare the application.

Grange Community Service Award – The grange has chosen the Whately EMS as the recipient of their Community Service Award this year. The grange has invited the Selectmen and would like them to speak at the award ceremony on September 25th at the Whately Elementary School at 7pm. Alan agreed to participate.

September 16th Warrant – The Selectmen reviewed and signed the warrant for the Sept. 16th primary.

Senior Center Director's Position – Applications will be reviewed at a meeting next week between Town Administrators and the Senior Center Committee. Shirley Pielock has remained on as Director past her resignation. But she is only available through the middle of August.

There being no further business to come before this meeting, it was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul K. Newlin, Clerk