

**Board of Selectmen
Minutes
April 14, 2009
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, April 14, 2009 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. Minutes from the March 26th meeting were accepted as written. The vendor and payroll warrants were reviewed and signed.

Town Administrator, Lynn Sibley: Frontier Senior Center Celebrity Potluck will be held Monday, April 20th. Rep. Kulik and Sen. Rosenberg are scheduled to attend. The program starts at 11am. Stan Rosenberg plans to arrive at 10:30am to play cards with the seniors. Jonathan and Alan plan to attend. Alan chose shepherd's pie as his dish. **Rosenberg Conference** – Lynn attended the April 4th conference. The discussions focused on the 'doom and gloom' fiscal outlook. The topic of regionalizing local school districts was also discussed. The state is monitoring the progress of the Franklin County Public School Program, which is examining possible ways local schools may be able to collaborate or consolidate. The state may eventually require regionalization. The conference held separate sessions on the Municipal Relief Package and the Federal Stimulus Package, which Lynn attended. The state is disbursing the federal funds for this program, which includes 153 million for transportation projects. There was a discussion about the inequity of the projects that are receiving funds compared to those that seem to meet guidelines and yet were not funded. Seminar speaker Theresa Murray polled the attendees and was surprised to hear the strong support for increasing the income tax to bring up revenues. The eastern part of the state is opposed to raising the income tax rate.

Groundbreaking for the Franklin Regional Transit Center is scheduled for April 17th at 10am located at the corners of Olive St. and Bank Row in Greenfield. The project is receiving some funding from the Federal Stimulus Package. The center will include a depot for bus and taxi service and FRTA buses will be garaged there. The center would also serve as a railroad depot if rail service is established in the future. The Franklin Regional Council of Governments offices will also be located at the center. **Franklin Regional Retirement System's** annual report is available in the Selectmen's office for anyone interested in reviewing it. **Town Counsel** – Lynn was forced to notify Leonard Kopelman that Joel Bard was not responding to the Town's requests for information in a timely manner again. The planning board was awaiting an opinion needed by March 26th but still had not heard from Joel when Lynn contacted Leonard on April 6th. Mr. Kopelman said he would assign a new attorney to represent Whately.

Town Clerk, Lynn Sibley: Elections – Nomination papers will be available until Friday, April 17th. Currently there are four incumbents that are not seeking reelection: Selectman, Library Trustees (2), and Assessor. Nomination papers have been filed for the Selectman's position and for one of the library trustee's positions.

Highway Department – Lynn updated the Board. **Haydenville Rd Bridge** – Still working out conveyances and determining whose lawyer will prepare the deed/right-of-entry. It was determined that the new mylars would not be necessary. **Haydenville Road repairs** - Keith is working with the Conservation Commission on a Determination of Applicability on the project. **Long Plain Rd** – working with the Conservation Commission on a new Notice of Intent. **STRAP** – working on the grant application. **Hatfield Shared Equipment Contract** – The Hatfield Select Board is scheduled to review it at their next meeting. **FY10 Chapter 90** will be level-funded at \$114,019.

New Business

Beavers – The beavers have been active on Westbrook Rd and at the Christian Lane and State Rd intersection. Alan suggested the Board of Health be notified to contact trappers.

Door 2 Door Drill – Whately’s Emergency Dispensing Plan will be tested Saturday through a door-to-door drill. Volunteers will visit every household delivering the annual town report along with information about the emergency plan and collecting information from residents. Volunteers will meet at the Whately Elementary School at 7:30am to sign-in and receive some training. Lynn encouraged the Selectmen to attend and participate. Jonathan will arrive late.

BHA Contract – Lynn resolved some of the issues she had with the contract and presented the final draft for the Selectmen’s review and approval. The contract is nearly identical to the AmBCare contract. BHA’s flat fee of \$250 applies to Blue Cross Blue Shield and Medicare claims only. The Selectmen reviewed and signed the contract.

Warrant – A draft copy of the warrant will appear in the town reports distributed to all households on Saturday. Lynn presented the final version of the warrant for the Selectmen to review and sign. Most of the changes made from the draft copy included formalities such as punctuation/capitalization along with a change of the appointing authority for the Community Preservation Committee from the Moderator to the Selectmen. Lynn reviewed the warrant with the Board. The Finance Committee decided to present the balanced budget they have drafted even though the state budget has not been set. If the state budget includes unanticipated cuts then a special town meeting will be scheduled. The Finance Committee’s budget included the following decisions: Cut temporary loan interest by \$1000 because quarterly billing should reduce the need to borrow, Lowered town vehicle fuel based on the present gas prices, and Removed the transfer station repair project (\$75,000). Northfield’s highway department recently repaired their transfer station themselves. Keith is willing to work on the project along with the Board of Health. The Board suggested speaking to Gary Lawrence about working together with the highway department on the repairs. The Selectmen also discussed the Elementary School’s new roof to be paid through a Proposition 2½ debt exclusion. Lynn explained that the tax rate would increase by about 30¢ to \$14.69 per thousand. The insurance company will not cover the cost because the shingles are at the end of their useful worth. And the shingle company prorated the eighteen-year old shingles from the original purchase price and sent the Town a check for \$15,000. The cost of the roof is based on one estimate so far of \$245,000. A metal roof may be considered. Whatever decision is made, the roof repair will have to be paid through a debt exclusion. Lynn also removed the article referring to worker’s compensation insurance for town officials that the Board discussed at the last meeting. The Selectmen signed the warrant.

Municipal Relief Package – Whately would receive revenues if the legislature passes the package, as follows: \$14,509 through a tax on the owner of telecommunication cable/poles through town, \$21,959 in meals tax, and \$430 in hotel/motel taxes.

Whately Water District – The small water district that provides water to approximately 40 households in the center of town (including the town buildings), is scheduled to vote to increase their rate per thousand gallons from \$4 to \$6.50. The district has experienced significant repair and maintenance costs over the last couple of years.

Verizon Hearing – Verizon has requested a hearing with the Dept of Telecommunications and Cable requesting the number of subscribers be omitted from the outage and consumer complaints report.

Franklin Hampshire Career Center has received Federal Stimulus funds that will be used to employ income eligible youths from 14-24 years old in the area throughout the summer. Will consider any town projects that may be suitable.

Senior Center – Continuing to work things out.

There being no further business to come before this meeting, it was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted.

Paul K. Newlin, Clerk