

**Board of Selectmen  
Minutes  
Aug 18, 2009  
Center School Offices  
7:00 p.m.**

Select Board Chair Jonathan Edwards called the regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Whately to order on Tuesday, Aug. 18, 2009 at 7 p.m. Also present were Selectmen Paul Newlin and Joyce Palmer Fortune, Town Administrator/Town Clerk Lynn Sibley, and Municipal Secretary Barbara Hancock. Minutes from the August 6<sup>th</sup> meeting were accepted as written. The vendor and payroll warrants were reviewed and signed.

**Town Administrator, Lynn Sibley: Room & Meal Tax Increases-** The Board discussed the Town's option to accept the new section of state law that would allow towns to increase meals tax by .75% and rooms tax as much as 2%. The state will reimburse the Town quarterly for the additional tax collected. Jonathan Edwards motioned to put the tax option on the next special town meeting warrant, increasing the meals tax by .75% and rooms tax by 2%. Paul and Joyce agreed.

**Senior Center Picnic** will be held next Friday at the Senior Center. **Senior Center Letter** – Deerfield Selectmen's Chairman Mark Gilmore spoke to Lynn recently regarding Whately's response to working on a three-town MOU for the Senior Center. Lynn explained that Whately is reluctant to sign a three-town agreement because Deerfield's Council on Aging has been conducting themselves without the involvement of the Consortium or the Sunderland and Whately Council's on Aging. Furthermore, the Deerfield Selectmen have not intervened to guide their Council on Aging members toward cooperative endeavors. Mark Gilmore wants to create a MOU so that the CoA members can be guided based on the agreement. The Board supported a meeting of the three towns' full Select Boards to discuss the MOU. The Selectmen would also like Whately's Council on Aging Chair Barbara Banik to attend their next meeting. **Quinn Bill** – According to Town Counsel, Whately has two choices regarding the Quinn Bill. Whately can accept their vote that adopted the bill, even though the disclaimer is not allowed, and be responsible for entire amount including the state's portion. Or, void their vote because of the disclaimer and pay the officer nothing toward the Quinn Bill. Town Counsel has reviewed an option allowing a written agreement that the officer is willing to accept that would entitle him to the Town's portion of the Quinn Bill only. Lynn will continue to investigate the best course for the Town.

**Police Dept, Chief James Sevigne** appeared before the Board to update them on the department's recent activity. **Activity** – There has been a significant number of Breaking and Entering offenses over the last few months. Many of the houses and cars that have been broken into were unlocked. The surrounding towns have seen the same amount of activity and there has been successful multi-town cooperation in solving a majority of these crimes. **Vandalism** continues to be a problem at Herlihy Park, attributed mainly to local older teenage youths. Recently the building was damaged with tagging (spray painting). Attempts in the past to keep the building lit have resulted in the lighting being destroyed. Other vandalism elsewhere in Town resulted in property damage totaling over \$10,000. Paul suggested the department patrol the turnoff on Williamsburg Rd on Saturday nights because he has found evidence of drinking in the area on his Sunday morning walks. **Other** activity seems consistent with previous years.

**Triathlon** was very successful although a lesser amount was raised due to an increase in costs. The department has received \$4000 as a result of the fundraiser. The department may donate some of that money to the support organizations that have helped the past two years, the dive team and fire department. The remaining funds will be used to power wash and paint the outside of the building. A new sign has been created for the building and its installation may be postponed until after the exterior work is completed. Volunteers will be sought to do the exterior sprucing. Jim was encouraged to prepare a Scoop article to advertise for volunteers. The Scoop deadline for the September issue is Aug 31<sup>st</sup>. **Grant** – The department earned a \$3000 grant from the Highway Safety Bureau, which will be used to purchase a small enclosed trailer. The trailer will mainly be utilized to transport equipment to a site and can be towed by the police cruiser. **Staff Shortage** has left shifts without personnel. Three part-time officers have recently become unavailable. Jim requested the Selectmen's permission to hire two new officers. Jim will check resumes on file and see if any trained officers from other towns that may have been let go due to budget cuts are available. **Schools**– The Selectmen asked whether the Police department has planned any programs with the schools, Whately Elementary and Frontier. Jim says that he visits the Elementary School on a regular basis and participates whenever asked. Interaction with Frontier is more difficult because other towns' police departments would need to coordinate. Self-defense courses are offered each year. **Public Information**- The Selectmen suggested that the Chief submit an informational article in the next edition of the Scoop on firearms safety, for example. The Selectmen thanked Jim for coming to the meeting with the updates.

**Town Administrator (cont) – Municipal Regionalization** – Lynn plans to attend the Sept 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting in Worcester regarding municipal services, other than schools, that may be shared/regionalized between area towns. Joyce Muka from the Accounting Dept at FrCOG will speak regarding the accounting program. Lynn plans to attend discussions on police/fire and possibly ambulance regionalization. **Free Cash Certified** at \$215,090. **Next Selectmen's Meeting** – The Board agreed to cancel their regularly scheduled Aug 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, as they have met twice in August and don't expect the need to meet again next week. The next Selectmen's meeting will be on Sept 8<sup>th</sup>. **FC Selectmen's Association** will hold their next meeting on Sept 17 at the South Deerfield Polish Club. Linda DunLavey from FrCOG will be the speaker. The Board members must RSVP. **Thank you Letter** was reviewed and signed thanking Suzanne Cycz for her years of service on the Tri-town Beach Commission. **ESCO Contract** – Lynn has not heard from Roland Butzke despite emailing him several times. Bob Deane from FrCOG is trying to get one town's counsel to review the contract on behalf of all the towns rather than have each town's counsel review it separately. Each town could then have their own counsel review their town specific sections only. **Water Dept Truck Bid**- Bid specs and invitations to bid were sent and advertised. Bids will be opened on Aug 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Town Clerk, Lynn Sibley: Dog Licenses** – Twelve dogs (seven owners) remain unlicensed. Court demands will be initiated on August 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Highway Dept** – Lynn updated the Selectmen. **Haydenville Rd** – No new updates from Mass Highway. **STRAP** – The Commonwealth Capital application is almost complete. **Shared Equipment** – No new information regarding the Hatfield grader. **Williamsburg Rd** – Continuing to work on the Hazardous Mitigation Grant application along with working together with Northampton. **Haydenville Rd** contract signed for NOI.

## **New Business**

**Conway Rd Culvert** – Massachusetts River Way Program have been studying fish in the area and have determined that fish are having a difficult time getting through a culvert on Conway Rd at certain times of the year. The program would like to replace the culvert, funded through a private foundation. Whately would need to write a letter of support for the project and offer a match that may be paid in-kind, such as: Highway Dept manpower and handling the bidding for the project. The project is expected to be done in the spring and should be completed quickly with minimal disruption for residents in the area. The project would save the Town money, as the culvert would need to be replaced in the proposed paving project submitted in the Town's STRAP grant application. The group is willing to work together with the Highway Dept to assure that the new culvert complies with the project the Town has planned. The Selectmen supported the proposed work.

**Connect CTY** – Town Counsel and Connect CTY have negotiated an agreement. Town Counsel referred one section, regarding provision for attorney's fees to be paid to prevailing party in the event of court litigation, to the Selectmen for their review and approval. The Selectmen reviewed and unanimously approved the contract, which was signed. The system allows Town officials to contact residents simultaneously by telephone with emergency information or town announcements. Residents can opt out of all but the emergency contact service. Residents will be provided the opportunity to add additional contact telephone numbers, such as cell phones. Connect CTY does not share residents' information. Lynn will supply information on the website and in the Scoop to residents about the system when it nears activation.

**Town Hall Structural Assessment** – Two engineers have submitted quotes (\$1200 and \$1500) to do a structural assessment of the Town Hall that will help guide the Town in making future plans for the building. Both engineers commented that the building is in good shape. A third engineer is expected to submit a quote. Stricter building code guidelines would apply to the project if the space usage changes. If the upstairs remains a meeting space and downstairs offices, then those building codes would not apply.

**APR** – The Selectmen provided comments of endorsement for the Farrick APR announced at the last Selectmen's meeting but no financial support. The APR permanently preserves 8 acres on Christian Lane as agricultural/open space.

**Vacancies** – Lynn will prepare an announcement for the September issue of the Scoop to advertise the Town's current board and committee vacancies, currently: 2 CoA, ZBA Alternate, 2 Cultural Council, and a Fence Viewer & Field Driver.

**Next Selectmen's Meeting** will be Sept 8<sup>th</sup>.

There being no further business to come before this meeting, it was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted.

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Joyce Palmer Fortune, Clerk