

**Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
September 12, 2023
Town Offices
Hybrid Session via Zoom
6:00 pm**

The open session of the Selectboard of the Town of Whately was called to order on September 12, 2023, at 6:01 pm by Chairperson Fred Baron. Also present were Selectboard members Joyce Palmer Fortune, and Julie Waggoner (Via Zoom). Town Administrator Brian Domina, Administrative Assistant Jessica Murphy and Town Clerk Amy Lavallee were present.

1. Meeting Minutes: Review and vote whether to approve the meeting minutes from August 29, 2023

Joyce made a motion to accept the minutes from August 29, 2023. Fred Seconded. All in Favor. Fred-yes, Joyce-yes, Julie-yes

2. Vendor & Payroll Warrants: Review past vendor and payroll warrants

No Comments

3. Public Comment: Listen to comments from the public related to items not listed on the agenda

None

4. Scheduled Appointments:

None

5. COVID19:

Fred stated that COVID 19 is making a comeback, reminding residents that free tests are available at the Town Offices, Library, and Police Station.

6. Old Business:

a. To review and discuss the draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for the sale and restoration of the Whately Center School

Brian informed the Board that he is still waiting for documents from the Town Counsel. He noted that a Right of First Refusal isn't necessary, but possibly a development agreement, which will press the owner to complete the project within a certain timeframe. This in turn might discourage certain developers from submitting proposals. Brian also noted that Whately Center School will be under a historic preservation restriction when sold, protecting the building if

neglect were to happen once purchased. Brian anticipates having the draft RFP at the next meeting.

b. To discuss and consider the use of CLFRF monies for the repair of the emergency backup generator at the Whately Elementary School

The Selectboard shared feedback they received from residents who vocalized the imperativeness of having the emergency backup generator repaired as soon as possible. Brian noted that Whately Elementary School is an emergency shelter for the town, therefore having it repaired quickly would be advantageous, especially with the winter months approaching.

Joyce made a motion to approve CLFRF monies up to 5K for the repair of the emergency backup generator at the Whately Elementary School. Fred Seconded. All in Favor. Fred-yes, Joyce-yes, Julie-yes

7. New Business

a. To discuss and vote whether to approve the new lease for SCEMS to occupy its current location owned by the Town of Deerfield

Brian informed the Board that he was not yet provided with the new lease from SCEMS but hopes to have it for the next meeting.

b. To discuss and vote to appoint a representative to the screening committee for a new SCEMS Director

Fred recommended Fire Chief, JP Kennedy as the representative for the hiring of a new Director at SCEMS. Fred expressed that JP would be a great candidate due to his experience with the Fire Department.

Fred made a motion to appoint JP Kennedy as the Representative for the new SCEMS Director screening committee. Joyce Seconded. All in Favor. Fred-yes, Joyce-yes, Julie-yes

c. To discuss and vote to set the polling locations for calendar year 2024 as recommended by the Town Clerk

Town Clerk Amy Lavallee shared that she would like to host the next elections at the Town Hall. Amy stated that along with the Town Hall's historical significance, it is conveniently located for residents. Amy noted that going forward, all early voting will

take place at the Town Offices, while all day of voting will be held at the Town Hall. Communication regarding this will take priority in order to eliminate confusion. Amy also shared that she spoke with Neal Abraham about storing election equipment at the Town Hall, who confirmed that there would be enough space to do so.

Julie moved to approve the Town Hall as the day of voting location for 2024. Joyce Seconded. All in favor. Julie-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes

d. To discuss and vote revise the fee schedule for services provided by the Town Clerk

Amy shared with the Board the updated fee schedule, which has already been compared to surrounding towns (Deerfield and Sunderland). Amy noted that she will revisit the fee schedule every 5 years in order to update accordingly.

Joyce moved to adopt the fee schedule. Julie Seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Julie-yes Fred-yes

e. To review, discuss and vote whether to send a comment letter to the Department of Public Utilities regarding its proposed “guidelines” for municipal aggregation program

Brian informed the Board that he was unable to attend the phone call with Colonial Power (Town’s consultant for the municipal aggregation program). Brian stated that Colonial was going to send an email with an outline and template letter which he will provide at the next meeting.

8. Selectboard Liaison Updates: Timely updates from the Selectboard members serving on other boards and committees

Joyce shared that Jennifer Remillard (South County Senior Center Director), was able to obtain a total of \$154K in grant money. Joyce also noted that the South County Senior Center gained 106 new members since January, 9 of those being Whately residents.

Fred shared that he has a meeting with Housing Committee member Cate Wolkowicz at the end of the week.

9. Town Administrator Updates: (Items likely to be discussed)

Library projects update:

Brian shared that the stairs have been refinished/repared and the projects for the electrical and plumbing remain on schedule for completion.

Water Department borrowing:

Brian shared that the Water Commissioners have decided to pay down \$55k and reborrow the remaining amount (\$100k) for six months. Brian stated this will give time for their Retained Earnings to be available for appropriation and the loan is scheduled to be paid off in April 2024.

Christian Lane drainage research:

Brian shared the Water Department extensions plans from 1990, which show the location of the drainage system outside the public right of way. Though it may be a slow process, the Board suggested looking into grant opportunities to address the situation.

Tom Borawski, property owner on Christian Lane, shared some of his previous experience working in construction, stating he believes there can be resolution made through eliminating the roots in the drainage system, or relining the pipe with a smaller pipe, if possible, instead of replacing the whole drainage pipe.

Jeff Kocot, property owner on Christian Lane, expressed his concern regarding constant flooding on his property, stating that he agrees with Tom Borawski about finding a solution, whatever that may be.

The Board will work with Wayne and Keith on obtaining the scope and neighborhood survey to find the nature and extent of the issue.

Haydenville Road reconstruction project:

Brian shared that there is an issue around the use of a soil nail wall which will require the need for a much larger easement therefore impacting Art. 97 land. Brian noted plans to have further conversation with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the City of Northampton to decide next steps.

Forests as Climate Solutions Initiative:

Brian informed the Board that the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs will host a public meeting on efforts to conserve and manage forest land on September 12, 2023. An additional meeting will then be held to seek public input to inform the development of forest management guidelines.

10. Items Not Anticipated

None

11. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 7:05. Motion Seconded. All in Favor

Next Meetings: September 26, 2023 & October 10, 2023

Documents:

Meeting Minutes, August 29, 2023

Vendor and Payroll Warrants, WP24-06

SCEMS Building Lease Agreement

Letter from Amy Lavallee regarding Election Space

Town Clerk Fee Schedule

Water Departments Extension Plans