

**Selectboard  
Meeting Minutes  
October 10, 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 October 10, 2023, at 6:02 pm by Chairperson Fred Baron. Also present were Selectboard members Joyce Palmer Fortune and Julie Waggoner. Town Administrator Brian Domina, Administrative Assistant Jessica Murphy, and Community Development Administrator Sylvie Jensen (via Zoom) were present. Town residents Joanne Ostrowski, Andrew Ostrowski and Jeff Roussin were also present.

**1. Meeting Minutes: Review and vote whether to approve the meeting minutes from September 26, 2023**

Fred requested the line “Historical Society member Neal Abraham” be changed to “Historical Society President Neal Abraham”.

Joyce made a motion to accept minutes as amended. 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**

No Comments

**4. Scheduled Appointments:**

None

**5. COVID19:**

Tests are available at the Town Offices, Library, and Police Station for free for residents.

**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 shared that he received the draft right of first refusal document from the Town Counsel. Brian noted that he is hesitant to issue the RFP without confirmation that the milk bottle is on the Town's property, as it would require several changes to both the RFP and the historic preservation restriction. Additionally, an easement plan would need to be added. Brian noted that he reached out to Berkshire Design to schedule a survey of the property but was referred to their land surveyor who he has not heard back from. Brian plans to connect with other companies that may be more responsive.

**b. To review, discuss and vote whether to enter into agreements for snow removal for town-owned buildings and sidewalks**

Brian shared that JDR Builders has agreed to remove snow from town-owned buildings and sidewalks. Brian noted that he has yet to hear back from John Hannum who has cleared the sidewalks in the center of town years previous. Brian has asked Keith Bardwell to follow up with John.

Joyce moves to approve the agreement from JDR Builders for snow removal for town-owned buildings and sidewalks. Julie Seconds. All in Favor. Roll Call Vote: Fred-yes, Joyce-yes, Julie-yes.

**7. New Business**

**a. To discuss residents' concerns about pedestrian safety on Long Plain Road**

Resident Joanne Ostrowski shared her concerns regarding excessive traffic and speeding on Long Plain Road with no designated area for pedestrians to walk. Joanne also stated that there is not enough speed signage as well, noting that there are only two signs headed northbound, and none headed southbound. Joanne suggested short term solutions that include a traffic study, electronic speed signs, and increased police surveillance. Joanne provided the Board with a notice from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation which gives information regarding a new law that went into effect on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. This law requires motorists to pass a 'vulnerable road user' (pedestrians walking or biking, roadside workers, etc.) at a safe passing distance of 4 feet. Brian informed Joanne that signs indicating this law have been received by MassDOT and he will confirm if Long Plain Road is one of the locations that will receive signage. Joyce and Brian suggested installing electronic radar speed signs for a shorter-term solution which can record data like vehicle speed and time of day. Fred agrees with installing the radar speed signs and suggested involving Keith Bardwell to discuss further options and next steps. Brian will also reach out to FRCOG to confirm when the last traffic study took place.

**b. To discuss the FRCOG accounting program and proposed price increases by the software vendor**

Brian informed the Board that the software vendor FRCOG uses will now charge each town \$12,000 each year plus a one-time implementation fee of \$7,35 which will create a significant increase in cost. Brian noted that the Town currently pays \$750 per year to use the software under the FRCOG license and \$29k for the accountant. Brian will plan to reach out to Dara LaPlante and Amy Schrader about other options.

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

None

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

**Cannabis Regulations:**

Brian shared that the Cannabis Control Committee approved its new regulations, which are set to be effective by November 9, 2023. Brian plans to have conversations with the establishments in Town that this pertains to.

**Personnel Policies:**

Brian shared that he received the DRAFT policies from the consultant and noted that The Personnel Committee are scheduled to meet on October 18, 2023 to discuss the policies.

**Town Hall Windows:**

Brian shared that Trulite has determined the glass coating was defective and will provide glass for the replacement and remanufacture of the windows. Brian noted that while he is trying to finalize arrangements for the replacement of the windows under the warranty, warranties may only cover the cost of the materials, making it the Town's responsibility to cover labor costs to remove and reinstall the windows. Brian noted that he has reached out to Keith Bardwell to inquire if that is something we can do internally or will need to find a private company. Fred questioned if the costs associated can be covered by CPA funds which Brian will look further into.

**Water Department:**

Brian shared that the Water Department is participating in the PFAS Settlement

**Stop sign on Christian Lane:**

Brian shared that he inquired with Keith Bardwell about there ever being a stop sign where Christian Lane meets Chestnut Plain Road, going north. Keith has confirmed a stop sign was never approved by the Board. Brian suggested putting it on the agenda for the next meeting. Joyce stated that she would like to involve Police Chief, Jim Sevigne for an additional opinion.

**Fall Special Town Meeting:**

Brian noted that the Fall Special Town Meeting is targeted to be held in late November.

**10. Items Not Anticipated**

None

**11. Adjourn**

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

**Next Meetings: October 26 & November 14, 2023**

**Documents:**

*Meeting Minutes, September 26, 2023*

*Vendor and Payroll Warrants, WP24-08*

*Center School Right of First Refusal Draft*

*Email from Joanne Ostrowski regarding a "safe place to walk" for Long Plain Road neighborhood*

*Email from FRCOG regarding changes to the MIP Accounting Software Agreement*

*JDR Snow Clearing Agreement*