

**Selectboard  
Meeting Minutes  
February 27, 2024  
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 February 27, 2024, at 6:02 pm by Chairperson Fred Baron. Also present were Selectboard members Julie Waggoner and Joyce Palmer Fortune. Town Administrator Brian Domina, Administrative Assistant Jessica Murphy, Highway Superintendent Keith Bardwell, SCEMS Chief Joshua Sparks and JD Ross from JDR Builders were also present.

**1. Meeting Minutes: Review and vote whether to approve the meeting minutes from February 13, 2024, and February 22, 2024.**

Joyce made a motion to accept the minutes from February 13, 2024, and February 22, 2024. Julie 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**

Fred shared an email from Dan Denehy requesting a plan be developed for the installation of the generator at the Town Offices.

**4. Public Hearing:**

**a. (6:00 pm) Appeal Hearing on Denial of Driveway Permit: To conduct a public hearing to consider an appeal of a decision by the Highway Superintendent denying a driveway application submitted by JDR Builders for the installation of a driveway at 2 Grey Oak Lane (Assessors ID # 6-0-31-24)**

*Fred moves to open the public hearing session. Joyce Seconds. All in favor.*

Keith informed the Board that the denial for the permit was based on regulations concerning the proximity of the driveway to the property line (20ft) and its perpendicular alignment with the road. Keith noted that during the initial planning process the town accepted the layout without a cul-de-sac and changed the driveway into a hammerhead design. JD shared that he is planning to meet with the Conservation Commission and is confident that all requirements will be met. Keith further discussed the little impact on neighbors and the absence of through traffic on the road, recommending moving forward with a variance for the driveway application.

*Joyce moves to close the public hearing portion of the meeting. Fred Seconds. All in favor*

Julie moved to approve the variance for the installation of a driveway at 2 Grey Oak Lane. Joyce Seconded. All in Favor. Fred-yes, Joyce-yes, Julie-yes

## **5. Scheduled Appointments:**

### **a. (6:15 pm) Joshua Sparks (SCEMS EMS Chief) introductions with the new Chief of South County EMS LLC**

Joshua outlined plans for assessing and improving efficiency and quality in emergency services, including changes to ensure availability and responsiveness. Joshua shared that he is available for any questions or concerns.

## **6. COVID19:**

Tests continue to be available at the Town Offices, Library, and Police Station for free for residents.

## **7. Old Business:**

### **a. To review, discuss and vote on the appointment of an interim Town Administrator**

Brian shared that the Board has already discussed and voted on an Interim Town Administrator.

### **b. To discuss the transition of responsibilities from the departing Town Administrator to the interim Town Administrator and other staff**

Brian shared that he anticipates the transition to the new administrative team will be smooth.

Brian discussed job responsibilities and time allocation, with Patricia handling finance-related matters and Lynn overseeing the more day-to-day administrative tasks. Patricia will be present on Mondays, Tuesdays, and half of Wednesdays, and Lynn Wednesdays and Thursdays. Brian discussed major projects requiring attention in the short term, including Haydenville Road Reconstruction and the Center School. Brian plans to provide written updates on projects and procedures.

## **8. New Business**

### **a. To review, discuss and vote whether to continue as a member of the Upper Pioneer Valley Veteran's Services District for an additional two years**

Brian shared that he has received no complaints and would recommend that the Town continue as a member of this District.

Joyce moves to approve to continue as a member of the Upper Pioneer Valley Veteran's Services District for an additional two years. Julie Seconded. All in Favor. Fred-yes, Joyce-yes, Julie-yes

**b. To review, discuss and vote whether to request that the Board of Assessors release surplus funds contained in the overlay reserve account**

Brian shared that each fiscal year the Board of Assessors appropriates money into an overlay account to cover the expenses associated with tax abatements, exemptions, etc. At the end of each fiscal year these funds remain in an overlay account. Brian explained that the Selectboard has the authority to request the Board of Assessors to release the surplus funds, making the funds immediately available for appropriation, or they roll over to Free Cash at the close of the fiscal year. Brian shared that the overlay account is estimated to have ~100K in surplus funds, noting that the Town Accountant recommends the Selectboard to move forward with release of funds.

Julie moves to approve the request that the Board of Assessors release surplus funds contained in the overlay reserve account. Joyce Seconded. All in Favor. Fred-yes, Joyce-yes, Julie-yes

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

Fred shared that he met with the Town Administrator Hiring Committee to finalize the job description.

Joyce shared there is a another SCSC BOO meeting scheduled for this week.

Julie shared that the Water Commissioners meetings have been going well.

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

Brian shared that the Personnel Committee met last week to discuss the first draft of the Personnel Policies in which he plans on editing before his departure.

Brian shared that there was confirmation from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs regarding the Haydenville Reconstruction Project stating that the soil nail walls used would not impact article 97.

Brian shared that the Capital Improvement Committee completed their recommendations and priorities in their recent report.

**11. Items Not Anticipated**

None

## **12. Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn at pm Motion Seconded. All in Favor

## **Next Meetings:**

March 12, 2024, and March 26, 2024

## **Documents:**

*Meeting Minutes February 14, 2024 & February 22, 2024*

*Vendor and Payroll Warrants, WP24-18*

*Email from Dan Denehy Regarding the Installation of a Backup Generator at Town Offices*

*JD Ross Driveway Permit Application Letter*

*Whately Driveway Regulation*

*Driveway Sketch 2 Grey Oak*

*DLS Information Guideline Release*