

**Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2020
Town Offices
Open Session
6:00 p.m.**

The open session of the Selectboard of the Town of Whately was called to order on March 11, 2020 at 6:03 p.m. by the Chairperson, Joyce Palmer-Fortune. Also present were Selectboard Member Frederick Orloski, Town Administrator Brian Domina, and Administrative Assistant Amy Schrader.

Review and vote on the meeting minutes of February 19, 2020.

The Board voted to approve the meeting minutes of February 19, 2020.

Review past vendor and payroll warrants

The Board had no comments or questions on past vendor and payroll warrants.

Comments from the public on items not listed on the agenda

None

Scheduled Appointments:

Richard Tillberg (Resident) to request that the Selectboard send a letter in support of H935 “An Act establishing the Massachusetts infrastructure bank” – Richard Tillberg (resident) appeared before the Board to discuss his request that the Selectboard send a letter in support of H935 “An Act establishing the Massachusetts Infrastructure Bank”. Richard reviewed his request with specific attention to our current economic system, potential infrastructure benefits, the history of public banks, pros/cons of public banks, ownership rights, flexibility of public banks vs. private banks/grant programs, loan process, and the legislative timeline. The Board had a brief discussion regarding the potential timeline, Town loan amounts, staffing structure, and proposed regional formation. Richard stated that if the Town needed a loan for \$10 million or more, the Town would need a bond, but there is no minimum loan amount. There would be a Board of Directors that will hire a President and the President would hire the staff below him/her. The offices could potentially be in Boston, but a representative would be assigned to this region. Richard stated the bill isn’t going anywhere anytime soon. A motion was made to sign the letter of support. Motion was seconded. All in favor.

Old Business:

To discuss the status of the sidewalk reconstruction project on Chestnut Plain Road – Brian informed the Board that Keith and himself met with Chip Kloc (Whately Inn owner) to discuss the sidewalk reconstruction project on Chestnut Plain Road. The reconstruction of the sidewalk will enhance the Whately Inn’s current parking lot. The Town felt it was appropriate to request a cost share with the Whately Inn for these enhancements. Chip Kloc stated that he’s willing to contribute to the project. Brian informed the Board that he will contact Town Counsel to draft an agreement between the Town and the Whately Inn. Brian informed the Board that the project will be out to bid soon, reflectors for the crosswalk will be in the pavement, and the crosswalk will be painted. No decisions were made at this time.

To discuss the status of the Williamsburg Road Bridge project and vote to send letter to MassDOT requesting additional funding - Brian reviewed the spreadsheet with specific attention to the probable construction costs, work site complications, and potential project costs. The Board had a brief discussion regarding the contractor's bid, estimated project costs, in-kind service costs vs. alternate costs, and water quality monitoring costs. Fred suggested that stronger language/position should be used in the last paragraph in regards to setting up a meeting. The Board questioned if the Finance Committee was aware of the shortfall? Brian stated yes. Fred questioned if Northampton or the Commonwealth pay property taxes? Brian stated that Northampton pays a PILOT and the Commonwealth pays a very small amount for state-owned land. A motion was made to send the letter to MassDOT requesting additional funding. Motion was seconded. All in favor.

New Business:

To discuss the condition of equipment (woodchipper) at the Highway Department – Brian informed the Board that the Highway Department's woodchipper was declared a total loss. Keith is waiting for the insurance appraiser's report. The Board had a brief discussion regarding how much a new woodchipper costs, the possibility of sharing a woodchipper with one of the surrounding towns, and inquired if it would need to be included in the FY21 budget? The Capital Planning Improvement Committee was not aware of this and will probably not have a recommendation. Brian stated the Capital Improvement Project list keeps growing, but the free cash amount has remained the same since October. No decision was made at this time.

To discuss the recommendations of the Personnel Committee for FY 2021 – Brian presented the Board with a memorandum from the Personnel Committee stating their FY21 recommendations. There are four wage adjustment recommendations. The Board had a brief discussion regarding the four wage adjustments, pros/cons of the wage/salary report, and COLA calculations. Joyce made a motion to approve the recommendation from the Personnel Committee as proposed in the memorandum dated March 10, 2020. Motion was seconded. All in Favor.

Seasonal liquor license renewal - Quonquot Farm – The Board signed the seasonal liquor license for Quonquot Farm.

To discuss the location of the 2020 Annual Town Meeting – The Board discussed the two location options for the Annual Town Meeting: the Whately Elementary School gymnasium or the Town Hall auditorium. The Board had a brief discussion regarding the pros/cons of the Town Hall, coronavirus concerns, previous A/V issues, and potential crowding. Brian stated that he had a conversation with Fran Fortino, Whately Board of Health, who expressed concerns about using the Town Hall. At this time, Fred would not support the decision of holding the Annual Town Meeting at the Whately Elementary School. The Board decided to table this discussion until there is a full Board present. Brian informed the Board that this decision doesn't need to be made until the middle of April. The Board decided to keep this as an on-going discussion.

To discuss priority capital needs to be submitted to Representative Blais – Brian informed the Board that Lily Wallace (Representative Blais's Staff) sent a priority capital request form. Brian stated that the Town can request funds for two projects for an amount not to exceed \$50,000. Joyce inquired if the funds could be used towards a portion of a project? Brian stated that presumably yes. The Board had a brief discussion regarding the Town's capital improvement projects, potential future projects, the Whately Elementary School's energy improvements, culvert repairs, and the Library's handicap accessibility project. After much discussion, the Board decided to request funds for the Whately Library's accessibility improvements and Christian Lane culvert designs.

To discuss a request for additional stage lighting in the Town Hall Auditorium – Brian informed the Board that he received two requests for additional stage lighting in the Town Hall Auditorium: from Paul Newlin and the Friends of Town Hall. Brian stated that the Friends of the Town Hall are willing to make a donation to purchase

additional lighting that would shine onto the stage. After a brief discussion, the Board accepted their request and asked to review lighting proposals. Brian stated that he would coordinate this with the Friends of the Town Hall.

Town Administrator Updates:

Brian informed the Board that the Blackbirch Vineyard 10 Miler Event (03/29/20) has been postponed to September 13, 2020 due to coronavirus concerns.

Brian reminded the Board that they have a meeting scheduled with the Center School Visioning Committee on Thursday, March 19, 2020.

Town Office Contingency Plan (Covid-19) - Brian informed the Board that he spoke with Fran Fortino (Board of Health Chair) regarding the Town Offices Contingency Plan (Covid-19). The Town of Deerfield declared a state of emergency in response to the pandemic. Brian stated that multiple conversations have ensued regarding preparation, state recommendations, and rescheduling of the Annual Town Meeting (out until June 30). Fran recommended that the Town Offices go along with the state's recommendations and public areas at the Town Offices should be cleaned on a more regular basis. Brian was going to speak with Keith Bardwell (Highway and Building Superintendent) about having the custodian clean certain office areas more often. Brian stated that at some point, it may be worthwhile to declare a public health emergency which might assist the Town with recovering funds spent to combat the pandemic. The Board inquired if something should be put on our website? Brian suggested putting a link on our website to the Department of Public Health recommendations.

Brian informed the Board he will be attending a meeting for the Haydenville Road project on April 17, 2020 with the Town of Williamsburg, PVPC, FRCOG, Mass District 1 and 2, and our state representatives. The purpose of that meeting is to request that MassDOT continue funding the development of design plans beyond the 25% threshold.

Brian informed the Board that he was able to meet with the weatherization vendor regarding the Whately Elementary School Energy Efficiency Upgrades. The vendor recommended to spray foam the entire roof deck. The quote received was over \$400,000. Brian stated that estimate was provided so he could apply for a Green Communities grant. The Green Communities grant now requires that weatherization be completed first, before an applicant can apply for mechanical system upgrades. Unfortunately, the return on investment isn't there for a Green Communities grant for the spray foam project. The Town could apply for a META grant, Municipal Energy Technical Assistance grant. The grant usually comes out in the spring or summer and could give the Town up to \$10,000 to do a detailed analysis. The Board had a brief discussion regarding the cost per square foot of spray foam and local spray foam companies. Brian stated that he will continue to try to get everything together for the Green Communities grant deadline for alternative weatherization ideas or will apply for a META grant.

Brian informed the Board that Jonathan and him met with representatives from Covestro (formerly Deerfield Urethane). The representatives stated that their business is doing very well and that they are interested in possibly expanding. Brian stated that they had a preliminary discussion regarding a few possible infrastructure improvements; connecting Whately and Deerfield Industrial Parks, truck traffic on Pine Street, and traffic concerns at the intersection of Pine Street and 116. Their preliminary plan would be to request the towns, jointly, apply for a MassWorks grant to pay for the infrastructure improvements. Covestro plans to contact the Town of Deerfield to see their position on the proposed infrastructure improvements. The Board had a brief discussion regarding the potential raise in water supply and demand. No decision was made at this time.

Items Not Anticipated:

Fred inquired if the Board would be receiving any additional information from the Police Chief regarding his FY21 proposals? Joyce stated that the Board shouldn't expect more information from the Police Chief and that the Chief feels that the information already provided is sufficient. Fred questioned if an administrative assistant would be beneficial for the Police Department? Brian suggested that the Board continues this conversation at

their next Selectboard meeting on March 25, 2020.

The meeting was adjourned 7:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Domina, Town Administrator

Next Meetings: March 19, 2020 at 5:00pm (Center School Visioning Committee Presentation)

March 24, 2020 at 6:00pm (Joint Budget Meeting)

March 25, 2020 at 6:00pm & 7:00pm (Regular Meeting & STM)

Document List on File in the Selectboard Office

Selectboard Meeting Minutes dated 02/19/2020

Vendor/Payroll Warrant Reports – (03/02/2020)

Email from Richard Tillberg dated March 9, 2020

Personnel Committee Recommendations – Fiscal Year 2021 Memorandum

Consumer Price Index Overview Table – New England

FY20 Cost of Living Allowance Projections

Letter from State Representative Natalie M. Blais

Letter from HRA dated February 10, 2020

Letter (draft) to Peter Cavicchi, District Highway Director) Mass DOT District 2 – dated March 11, 2020