

**Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
August 11, 2021
Town Offices
Open Session via Zoom
6:00 p.m.**

The open session of the Selectboard of the Town of Whately was called to order on August 11, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. by the Chairperson Jonathan Edwards. Also present via Zoom were Selectboard members Joyce Palmer-Fortune and Fred Baron and Town Administrator Brian Domina.

Review and vote on the meeting minutes of July 21, 2021

Fred noted that Mieczkowski Circle was spelled incorrectly on page 1 and asked for the names of the grant programs to be included in the description of the two grants received by the Town on page 3 of the minutes. A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes as amended. Motion was seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan – yes, Joyce – yes, Fred – yes. Motion passed.

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

Chief Jim Sevigne wanted to acknowledge those who worked hard to put on the 250th Anniversary cake lighting ceremony held last Friday. Chief Sevigne mentioned that the event went extremely well and was well attended. Fred estimated that approximately 200 people were in attendance at the cake lighting event ceremony based on the number of ice cream cups handed out. The Board expressed its thanks to all those made this event happen.

Neal Abraham informed the Board that the Library Trustees have requested that the Whately Historical Society (WHS) vacate the storage room on the lower level of the library due to the upcoming construction project and code issues. Neal told the Board that this places the WHS in a difficult situation because the WHS does not have enough storage space at its other locations. Neal told the Board that he would keep them informed of the situation as he explores alternative locations for storage.

Scheduled Appointments:

Gabe Cooney (Poplar Hill Road) came before the Board to discuss his concerns about vehicles speeding on Poplar Hill Road since it was paved last year. Gabe mentioned that he has spoken with Highway & Buildings Superintendent Keith Bardwell and Chief Jim Sevigne about the issue. Chief Sevigne stated that he has placed the electronic message board/radar unit on Poplar Hill Road to collect speed data. Gabe inquired about the installation of removable speed bumps on Poplar Hill Road. The Board discussed the issue, in particular the Board discussed the current speed limit on the road, the steps necessary to post the speed limit, the purchase and installation of a pole mounted radar sign, the feasibility of removable speed bumps and other possible traffic control signs. Fran Fortino mentioned that the dead-end sign was not particularly visible for motorists driving up Poplar Hill Road.

The Board laid out six actions that will be explored to address Gabe's concerns. (1) A letter will be written to Smith College asking the College to communicate to the Smith community that motorists travel safely on Poplar Hill Road. (2) Whately police will increase speed enforcement on Poplar Hill Road. (3) Town staff will pursue the steps necessary to determine and post a legally enforceable speed limit on Poplar Hill Road. (4) Whately police will continue to collect vehicle speed data with the portable message board. (5) Town staff will consider the

installation of a “Go Slow – Children at Play” sign. (6) Town staff will relocate the “Dead-End” sign at the beginning of Poplar Hill Road to a more visible location.

Keith mentioned that the Town should pursue the posting of a speed limit on Upper Conway Road at the same time as Poplar Hill Road. The Board asked town staff to be investigating these next steps.

Neal Abraham (Whately Historical Society) came before the Board to discuss the Whately Historical Society’s (WHS) plans to hold its annual fall festival on October 3, 2021 and to request the use of the Town Hall and the Town Hall grounds for that event. The Board discussed the request and approved the use of town property for this event.

Old Business:

To discuss the recommendation from the Whately Board of Health to require face coverings for all persons in town buildings

Fran Fortino (Whately Board of Health) came before the Board to make a recommendation that due to rising case numbers in the state and local area that the Selectboard adopt a recommendation that all persons be strongly encouraged to wear a face covering while in all town buildings. Chief Sevigne asked a question about the availability of funds for additional personal protective equipment (PPE) purchases. Brian responded that several sources of funds are still available for PPE purchases, such as the CARES Act monies. A motion was made to adopt the following advisory statement “[p]er recommendation from the Whately Board of Health, all persons, regardless of vaccination status, are STRONGLY ENCOURAGED to wear a face covering when inside Town of Whately public buildings.” Motion was seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan – yes, Joyce – yes, Fred – yes. Motion passed.

To discuss and review letters of support for previously submitted special legislation on behalf of Gary Stone (fire), Bill Smith (fire) and Edwin Zaniewski (police)

Brian informed the Board that the special legislation submitted by the Town to allow the aforementioned individuals to work beyond the age of 65 has been amended by a legislative committee and thus, the amended language requires approval of the Selectboard. Brian informed the Board that the proposed changes to the legislation deal with the effective date of the legislation and retirement. Brian provided the Board with three draft letters for review.

Note: Jonathan had technical difficulties and was disconnected from the meeting. Joyce as Vice-Chairperson presided over the meeting.

A motion was made to accept the proposed language for Edwin Zaniewski as set forth in the letter. Motion was seconded. Roll call vote: Joyce – yes, Fred – yes. Motion passed.

Note: Jonathan connected back into the meeting and resumed the role of Chairperson.

A motion was made to accept the proposed language for Bill Smith as set forth in the letter. Motion was seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan – yes, Joyce – yes, Fred – yes. Motion passed.

A motion was made to accept the proposed language for Gary Stone as set forth in the letter. Motion was seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan – yes, Joyce – yes, Fred – yes. Motion passed.

To discuss the quote from Wassman Audio Video. Inc. for audio and video upgrades to the large conference room at the Town Offices

Brian discussed with the Board a quote that he and Amy had received to purchase and install video and audio equipment in the large conference room to make holding hybrid meetings easier. Brian provided the Board with a copy of the proposal. The Board discussed the specifics of the proposal, types of equipment to be purchased and the available sources of funds. A motion was made to accept the proposal from Wassman Audio and for the purchase to be made out of the PEG Access account. Motion was seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan – yes, Joyce – yes, Fred – yes. Motion passed. The Board asked Brian to look into ways to secure the conference room when it is not in use to ensure the newly purchased equipment remains safe.

New Business:

To discuss the Request for Interest, Ideas and Innovation for the Whately Center School

Brian shared with the Board a draft version of the Request for Interest, Ideas and Innovation (RFI) for the Center School. Brian mentioned that the report from the Center School Visioning Committee was tremendously helpful in preparing the RFI. The Board discussed the RFI process and decided to make the draft RFI available for public comment. The Board asked Brian to collect all public comments and to share the comments with the Board for consideration at the next Selectboard meeting.

To discuss and vote to appoint a representative to the Franklin Regional Transit Authority's Advisory Board for FY22

Brian informed the Board that the Town received a letter from the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) requesting the appointment of an advisory board member and a designee. Fred Orloski indicated that he had already been appointed. Brian re-read the requirements for the advisory board member and the advisory board member needs to be a Selectboard member or Town Administrator/Manager. The qualifications for the designee are not as restrictive. A motion was made to appoint Town Administrator Brian Domina as the advisory board member and Fred Orloski as the designee. Motion was seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan – yes, Joyce – yes, Fred – yes. Motion passed.

To discuss and vote to make an offer of employment for the Administrative Assistant position

Brian discussed with the Board his recommendation for the Board to make an offer of employment to Brianna Willis for the part-time Administrative Assistant position. Brian told the Board that he and Amy Schrader interviewed six candidates for the position and that Brianna Willis was their choice to be offered the position. Brian provided the Board with a copy of the candidate's resume for review. The Board discussed the candidate's qualifications and then a motion was made to offer Brianna Willis the Administrative Assistant position. Motion was seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan – yes, Joyce – yes, Fred – yes. Motion passed.

To discuss and vote to approve the job description for the Community Development Administrator/Assistant Town Administrator position

Brian informed the Board that the Personnel Committee met last week to review the job description that he prepared for Community Development Administrator – Assistant Town Administrator position. Brian provided the Board with a copy of the job description. Brian informed the Board that the Personnel Committee voted to recommend that the job description be approved and the hourly pay rate be set at \$23.76 per hour for the 40 hour per week position. A motion was made to approve the job description as written and to set the initial pay rate at \$23.76 per hour. Motion was seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan – yes, Joyce – yes, Fred – yes. Motion passed.

Town Administrator Updates:

Brian informed the Board that the Western Mass Foodbank will be using the lawn at the Town Offices adjacent to Long Plain Road for a water station during its Bike4Food Event on September 26, 2021.

Brian provided a reminder to any interested residents that there is one vacancy on the Whately Cultural Council and anyone interested should contact him or the Selectboard.

Brian informed the Board that the Director of the South County Senior Center resigned her position in late July. The Board of Oversight and the Town of Deerfield are expected to be posting the job advertisement very soon.

Items Not Anticipated within forty-eight (48) hours of the meeting

None

The meeting was adjourned 7:47 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Domina, Town Administrator

Document List Filed in the Selectboard Office

Selectboard Meeting Minutes dated 07.21.2021

Payroll Warrant WP22-03 dated 07/19/2021

Payroll Warrant WP22-04 dated 08/02/2021

Vendor Warrant W22-03 dated 07/19/2021

Vendor Warrant W22-04 dated 08/02/21

Whately Historical Society Town Hall Use Application

Email from Fran Fortino dated 08/05/21 re: masking in town buildings

Draft Letter re: special legislation – William Smith

Draft Letter re: special legislation – Gary Stone

Draft Letter re: special legislation – Edwin Zaniewski

Wassman A/V Conference Room AV Upgrade proposal dated 5/12/21

Center School RFI – Draft

Franklin Regional Transit Authority Letter dated July 20, 2021

Resume – Brianna Willis

Town of Whately – Job Description (Draft 08/09/21) Community Development Administrator – Assistant Town Administrator

Email from Julie Waggoner dated July 19, 2021