

**Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
October 13, 2021
Open Session via Zoom
6:00 pm**

The open session of the Selectboard of the Town of Whately was called to order on October 13, 2021 at 6:03 pm by the Chairperson Jonathan Edwards. Present via Zoom were Selectboard members Joyce Palmer-Fortune and Fred Baron, as well as, Town Administrator Brian Domina and Administrative Assistant Amy Lavallee. Also present via Zoom were Police Chief James Sevigne, Reminder reporter Doc Pruyne, Recorder reporter Chris Larabee and Whately Grange member Adelia Bardwell.

Review and vote on the meeting minutes of September 29, 2021

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes. Motion was seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes. Motion passed.

Review past vendor and payroll warrants

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

Comments from the public on items not listed on the agenda

There were no public comments on items not listed on the agenda.

Scheduled appointments

Whately police Chief James Sevigne to provide the Selectboard with an update on implementing the requirements of the Act Relative to Justice, Equity, and Accountability in Law Enforcement in the Commonwealth aka "Police reform Bill".

Jim informed the Board that there are 6 part-time Whately Police Officers who are required to undergo the bridge academy training program put in place by the State at a cost of approximately \$5,300 each officer. Some of the trainings can be done regionally and other trainings need to be done at the training academy. At the last Annual Town Meeting, the Town voted to approve \$15,000 as an initial appropriation to pay for costs to comply with the new requirements. If all six officers go through the bridge academy additional funds, beyond the initial \$15,000, will be needed. There may also be some additional costs to implement other POSTC (Peace Officer Standards and Training Committee) regulations, like the purchase of body camera editing software.

Old Business

To discuss the status of town buildings and other protective COVID19 measures.

Brian informed the Board that the Board of Health on 10/12/2021 recommended the Whately Town Hall may be open for use for in-person events and meetings provided room capacity is limited (50%), air purification is in place, participants must be masked and socially distanced except for single household groups, and fully vaccinated. Medical exemptions are allowed. Brian expressed his concern with the ability of the Town to enforce and monitor the vaccination requirement proposed by the BOH due to a lack of resources. Brian also expressed his concern about using vaccination status as a criterion to prohibit someone from attending a public meeting in-person and instead requiring them to participate remotely.

The Board discussed the BOH recommendations. A motion was made to adopt the BOH recommendations. Motion was not seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-no, Joyce, yes, Fred-no. Motion was not passed 1-2.

Fred moved to change the language of the previous motion from "required" to "strongly urged" as it pertains to the vaccine requirement. Jonathan suggested that board and committee chairs be asked to make an announcement at the beginning of each meeting that "if you're not vaccinated you are encouraged to leave and participate in the meeting remotely" Jonathan continued that if meeting chairs are not comfortable with this language, then meetings should be entirely virtual. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Fred-yes, Joyce-no. Motion passed 2-1. (**NOTE: THIS MOTION WAS LATER RESCINDED**)

A motion was made to continue Selectboard meetings via Zoom for the foreseeable future. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Fred-yes, Joyce-yes. Motion passed.

**After continuing the discussion a motion was made to rescind the previous motions regarding the BOH recommendations in Town Hall. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan -yes, Fred, yes, Joyce-yes. Motion passed; previous motion rescinded.

A new motion was made to implement all BOH recommendations for private, non-town related events and meetings at the Town Hall including the requirement that all persons attending an event be fully vaccinated; and to require that all public meetings continue remotely with the decision to be revisited every two weeks. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Fred-yes, Joyce-yes. Motion passed.

New Business

A) To discuss and vote to issue a bond anticipation note in the amount of \$22,000 to Greenfield cooperative Bank for the pumping station to be constructed off Chestnut Plain Road.

Brian informed the Board that this borrowing is for the construction of the new pumping station off Chestnut Plain Road to support the merger of the Whately Water District with the Whately Water Department. The lowest bidder was Greenfield Cooperative Bank offering 0.35% interest on the \$220,000 one-year borrowing. A motion was made to accept the terms of the loan as proposed. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes. Motion passed.

B) To discuss and vote to accept an Emergency Management Performance Grant (\$2,700)

Brian informed the Board that this is a grant application submitted every year. This year the Emergency Management Director is applying for the purchase a new portable radio to communicate on the new emergency communications system that the Town is switching to. A motion was made to accept the grant. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes. Motion passed

C) To discuss whether to adopt a fee for the change/alterations of alcohol licenses.

Brian informed the Board that the Town of Whately currently does not have a policy in place regarding a local fee to change/alter alcohol licenses. The Board discussed the matter and a motion to implement a fee of \$50 to cover the administrative costs to change/alter an alcohol license was made. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes. Motion passed.

Town Administrator Updates

Brian informed the Board that there will be a Special Town Meeting (STM) scheduled for Saturday November 6, 2021, at 1:00 pm. The STM will be outdoors at the Town Offices. Brian will be putting together a warrant for the Board to review and sign.

Brian informed the Board that the library accessibility project is out to bid. This project includes the installation of a new lift and renovations to the bathrooms in the library to make them accessible to everyone.

Brian informed the Board that the MIIA workplace safety grant will be due on 11/5/21.

Brian informed the Board that a \$30,000 Community Planning Grant was awarded to the Town. The grant will be used to hire a consultant to complete a Housing Production Plan. Jonathan would like to invite Hannah to the next Selectboard meeting on October 27, 2021, for introductions.

The grant application seeking funds to plan for economic growth around Exit 35 was not funded.

Brian informed the Board that the Town has finally launched a Facebook page.

Brian informed the Board that the 25% design hearing is going to be scheduled soon for the Haydenville Road reconstruction project. Mass DOT is covering 100% of the design costs and federal highway funds are paying for 100% of the construction. The Town may need to fund the costs of any needed right-of-way acquisitions.

Brian informed the Board that the Veterans Memorial project is almost complete. There will be a dedication November 11, 2021. Time TBD.

Brian informed the Board that the State's proposed redistricting maps are available. Brian reached out to Rep. Natalie Blais and Sen. Jo Comerford regarding how this impacts Whately. Whately is currently in and will remain in the 2nd Franklin/Hampshire District for the House of Representatives. Whately will

move to District 1 in the Senate. The State is accepting comments regarding this plan until October 18, 2021. The Board discussed potential impacts on the Town and decided to not submit comments to the Legislature.

Items not anticipated

Jonathan informed the Board that the Christian Lane bridge is now a single lane bridge as of October 12, 2021.

Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 7:24 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Brain Domina, Town Administrator