

**Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
December 1, 2021
Town Offices
Open Session via Zoom
6:00 pm**

The open session of the Selectboard of The Town of Whately was called to order on December 1, 2021 at 6:02 pm by the Chairperson, Jonathan Edwards. Also present via Zoom were Selectboard members Joyce Palmer-Fortune and Fred Baron, Town Administrator Brian Domina, Community Development Administrator and Assistant Town Administrator Hannah Davis and Administrative Assistant Amy Lavallee. Also present were Board of Assessors member Frederick Orloski, Highway & Buildings Superintendent Keith Bardwell and Finance Committee member Paul Antaya.

1. Meeting Minutes: Review and vote to approve the meeting minutes from November 10, 2021

The board voted to approve the meeting minutes of November 10, 2021. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes.

2. Vendor & Payroll Warrants: Review past vendor and payroll warrants

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

3. Public Comment: Listen to comments from the public related to items not listed on the agenda

There were no public comments or questions.

4. Public Hearings:

a. Verizon Utility Pole Hearing: to accept public comments on the proposed relocation of 3 jointly owned utility poles on Long Plain Road between 600' to 1,800' south of the Christian Lane – Long Plain Road intersection

b. Verizon Utility Pole Hearing: to accept public comments on the proposed location of a utility pole on Christian Lane approximately 2,138' east of the State Road – Christian Lane intersection

c. Eversource Utility Pole Hearing: to accept public comment on the proposed installation of a 300' underground duct bank at the River Road – Christian Lane intersection.

Due to an incorrect legal notice Jonathan moved to reschedule the pole hearings for Eversource and Verizon to December 15, 2021 at 6:05 pm so long as the utilities send the abutter notification cards to the Town in a timely manner. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes. Motion approved.

5. Scheduled Appointments:

a. Neal Abraham (Whately Historical Society) for the Board to consider renewing the lease for the Whately Historical Society at the Town Hall

Neal Abraham discussed with the Board the Historical Society's request to renew its lease at the Town Hall. Brian reviewed the proposed changes in the lease compared to the previous lease. Brian highlighted the changes in the lease which allow for the Town to accept bill credits on its electric bill as a form of payment and for the Historical Society to keep and maintain a storage shed behind the Town Hall. A motion was made to approve the lease renewal for the Whately Historical Society. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes

b. To discuss a request from the Whately Snowmobile Club to use the Dimaio lot for winter parking

Brian presented an email from Bob Sabola, President of the Greater Whately Snowmobile Club, requesting the Selectboard's permission for its club members to park at the Dimaio lot to access the snowmobile trails. A motion was made to approve the use of the Dimaio lot for winter parking for the Greater Whately Snowmobile Club. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes.

6. COVID19: a. To review, discuss and consider the latest COVID19 information and to consider any changes to the Selectboard's COVID19 policies and directives

Brian reviewed with the Selectboard the revised building protocols for Town buildings that the Board adopted at the last meeting. No motion or vote required.

7. Old Business:

a. To discuss and authorize the submission of a CPA application for Herlihy Park to pay for the local match of a PARC grant awarded to the Town for paving and other accessibility improvements

Brian discussed with the Board that he would like to submit a CPA application to cover the local match and design costs for the Herlihy Park improvement project partially funded by the PARC grant. A motion was made to authorize the submission of the CPA application. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes.

b. To provide the Board with an update on the status of projects under consideration for an MVP action grant

Hannah discussed with the Board her research regarding town projects being developed to apply for the MVP action grant. The Board discussed the possibility of projects related to solar energy generation and culverts and stormwater management. Hannah will continue to pursue developing these project ideas. No vote or motion required.

8. New Business:

a. To receive information from the Tax Rate Working Group on the question of whether to adopt a split tax rate or single tax rate for fiscal year 2022 and whether to accept any other deductions or exemptions as allowed by law (note: the Tax Classification Hearing is scheduled for December 8, 2021 at 6:00 pm)

Brian presented to the Board information from the Tax Rate Working Group whose purpose was to explore the possibility of adopting a split tax rate. Brian informed the Selectboard of the four tax policy questions that the Board will be asked to decide. Whether to adopt a split or single tax rate. Whether to adopt an open space discount. Whether to adopt a residential exemption. Whether to adopt a small commercial exemption. The working group provided the Selectboard with a number of different documents with information and data to help the Board make an informed decision. Information provided to the Board included documents showing tax rates by percent shift and the representative impact on average residential properties. Other documents provided a look at the tax rates of surrounding communities, a memo with the arguments for and against a split tax rate, assessment comparisons and representative examples of how a split tax rate would change residential and commercial/industrial tax bills. The discussion regarding tax policy decisions for fiscal year 2022 will continue at the tax classification hearing scheduled for December 8, 2021.

b. To discuss and vote to enter into an agreement with Terrence Reynolds, PE for engineering and design work for the projects to be funded with a Complete Streets grant previously awarded to the Town

Brian presented to the Board an agreement between the Town of Whately and Terry Reynolds for engineering services for projects under the Complete Streets grant. Motion was made to enter into the agreement with Terry Reynolds. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred – abstained (due to possible conflict of interest).

c. To discuss a proposal from Tighe & Bond to perform engineering and design services for the Christian Lane culvert to be funded in part by the Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant previously awarded to the Town

Brian presented the Board with a proposal from Tighe & Bond for the Christian Lane Culvert Project design work. The Board discussed the proposal and also the shortfall in funding needed to reach 100% design. Frederick Orloski questioned if future intersection work would affect the culvert design. Keith Bardwell (Highway Superintendent) replied to Fred that MassDOT has already been consulted about this issue. A motion was made to enter into the agreement with Tighe & Bond in an amount equal to the grant. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes.

d. To discuss and vote whether to enter into the settlement agreement for the opioid class action lawsuit

Brian referenced an email from the MA Attorneys General Office encouraging municipalities to join a class action lawsuit settlement with producers/manufacturers of highly addictive opioids. The settlement will provide municipalities with resources to help persons currently dealing with opioid addiction. A motion was made to join the settlement agreement. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes.

e. To appoint/re-appoint Jenny Morrison to the Whately Cultural Council f. To discuss and vote to adopt winter parking regulations for town roads and town-owned properties

A motion was made to reappoint Jenny Morrison to Cultural Council. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes.

F. To discuss and vote to adopt winter parking regulations for town roads and town –owned properties.

Brian presented to the Board 2021-2022 proposed winter parking restrictions. Motion was made to adopt the proposed winter parking regulations as written. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes.

9. Town Administrator Updates: Items likely to be discussed: Update on status of the library accessibility improvement project; RDP grant awarded; MIIA safety grant awarded; Chilson shades quote for the Town Offices; CLFRF Committee update; SCSC Director hiring update

Brian discussed with the Board that the library accessibility project has gone out to bid.

Brian presented to the Board the award letter from the Recycling Dividends Program grant for \$5,600 to further enhance and encourage recycling.

Brian presented to the Board the award letter from MIIA Safety Grant for \$4,083 that will be used to purchase workplace safety equipment, such as chainsaw safety kits, gas detectors and safety supplies for the transfer station attendants.

Brian presented the Board with a quote from Chilson's Window Coverings for new window treatments for the Town Building at 4 Sandy Lane for \$5,695 to replace most of the broken vertical blinds in the offices. A motion was made to accept the proposal. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes.

Brian informed the Board that the Senior Center Search Committee has put forward three finalist candidates for the Director position.

10. Items Not Anticipated:

None

11. Adjourn:

Motion to adjourn at 7:45 pm. Motion seconded. Meeting adjourned.

Document List

Selectboard Meeting Minutes from November 10, 2021
Warrant WP22-12
Warrant W22-12
Warrant WP22-11
Warrant W22-11
Long Plain Road – Verizon Pole Petition
Christian Lane – Verizon Pole Petition
River Road – Eversource Pole Petition
Whately – Historical Society Town Hall Lease
Email dated November 29, 2021 from MA Attorney General re: Opioid Settlement
Document – Recommended Parking Restriction Language – Winter 2021-2022
Email dated November 29, 2021 from Robert Sabola re: Dimaio lot snowmobile parking
Order Establishing Revised COVID19 Protocols for Town Buildings
Herlihy Park Parc Grant Narrative
Chapter 4 – Property Tax Classification Excerpt
Agreement between Whately and Terry Reynolds for Engineering Services
Tighe & Bond Christian Lane Culvert Proposal
Letter from Lieutenant Governor Polito re: completion of Community Compact Grant
Chilson Shop Window – Shades quote
Recycling Dividends Grant program award letter
MIAA Grant Statement