

**Selectboard  
Meeting Minutes  
December 8, 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 8, 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, Administrative Assistant Amy Lavallee, Treasurer/Collector and Assistant Town Clerk Lynn Sibley, Community Development Administrator and Assistant Town Administrator Hannah Davis, Finance Committee member Paul Antaya and Board of Assessors member Frederick Orloski.

**1. Tax Classification Public Hearing (6:00 pm):**

**a. To solicit public comment and for the Selectboard to determine the current fiscal year (2022) tax allocation between the five classes of taxable property: Residential, Open Space, Commercial, Industrial and Personal property**

Brian read the legal notice and the hearing was opened. Brian presented to the Board the Tax Rate Working Group's findings via a PowerPoint presentation. Brian informed the Board that the Town of Whately currently has a single tax rate. Brian described the four tax policy questions that the Board needs to decide upon at the meeting; whether to adopt a single or split tax rate, whether to adopt a n open space discount, whether to adopt a residential exemption, and whether to adopt a small commercial exemption. The Board solicited public comments and discussed the pros and cons of each tax scenario presented. Joyce stated that she believes the tax rate should remain a single rate as the minimal benefit to residential properties doesn't justify the burden that would be placed on commercial and industrial properties. Jonathan expressed concern about the impact of a split tax rate on economic development and small businesses. Fred expressed support for a split tax rate and considers the benefit to residential property owners, specifically those persons on fixed incomes, to be worth the increased burden on commercial and industrial properties.

Joyce made a motion to adopt a single tax rate for fiscal year 2022. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-no. Motion passed by majority vote.

Brian informed the Board that the Assessors do not use the 200-classification codes thus the open space discount is not available. The open space discount by definition only applies to open space properties classified by the Assessors with the 200 codes. Fred made a motion to not adopt the open space discount. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes.

Brian suggested to the Board that this exemption makes little sense for Whately as this exemption would shift some of the residential tax burden to rental properties and Whately has

very few rental properties. Fred made a motion to not adopt the Residential Exemption. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes. Jonathan-yes, Fred-yes, Joyce-yes.

Brian informed the Board that the small commercial exemption is only available to companies that have less than 10 employees and have less than a million dollars in total assessed values. According to information provided by the Assessors only a handful of commercial properties would qualify for the exemption, estimated to be approximately 3 to 5 properties. The Board agreed that having already adopted a single tax rate there was not a need to adopt the small commercial exemption. Jonathan made a motion to not adopt the small commercial exemption. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes.

## **2. Host Community Agreement – Whately Mustang:**

### **a. To negotiate and vote on the terms of a proposed Host Community Agreement for the previously permitted marijuana cultivation facility located at 62 Christian Lane (corner of Christian Lane & State Road)**

John Dewey from Whately Mustang discussed with the Board that they had a Community Outreach meeting earlier that day. Brian presented the Whately Cultivation Partners' (WCP) HCA contract revision with a change to #12. Kate McGrail (abutter) questioned who she would contact to address issues if they arise in the future. Joyce informed her that complaints would have to be made to the Zoning Board or Planning Board who could forward them to the Building Inspector. Joyce made a motion to approve the Host Community Agreement as presented. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes.

## **3. Calendar Year 2022 License Renewals:**

### **a. To approve license renewals for calendar year 2022**

- i. Alcohol**
- ii. Common Victualers**
- iii. Inn Holders**
- iv. Entertainment**
- v. Automatic Amusement Device**
- vi. Class I & II Used Car Sales**

Joyce made a motion to approve all licenses listed on the document "2022 License Renewals" on the condition that all paperwork is submitted to the Town of Whately by December 30, 2021. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes.

## **4. Department of Public Health - Mass in Motion Grant Program:**

### **a. To discuss a request from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments to sign onto a regional Mass in Motion grant to continue implementing and expanding age friendly living efforts in the region**

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments requested that Whately co-sign a health and wellness grant (Mass in Motion) focused on supporting age friendly initiatives in the region. Joyce made a motion to sign onto the Mass in Motion grant. Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Jonathan-yes, Joyce-yes, Fred-yes

#### **5. Adjourn**

Jonathan made a motion to adjourn. Motion seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:19 pm

#### **DOCUMENTS:**

2022 License Renewals PDF  
LA4 Comparison Report PDF  
Mass in Motion Grant  
Tax Rate Information Doc  
WCP HCA 1121PDF  
Tax Rate Working Group Power Point