

Selectboard Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2023
Town Offices
Hybrid Session via Zoom
6:00pm

The open session of the Selectboard of the Town of Whately was called to order on January 10, 2022, at 6:00 pm. Present were Selectboard members Joyce Palmer-Fortune, Fred Baron, and Julie Waggoner. Present were Town Administrator Brian Domina, Community Development Coordinator Hannah Davis via Zoom, and Administrative Assistant Amy Lavallee. Highway Superintendent Keith Bardwell, Board of Health Representatives Fran Fortino and Rebecca Jones via Zoom, State Representative Natalie Blais via Zoom, State Representative Aide Corrine Coryat via Zoom, and FRCOG Representative Jessica Atwood.

1. Meeting Minutes: Review and vote to approve the meeting minutes from December 27, 2022

Motion made to accept the Minutes from December 27, 2022. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

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

No Comments

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

No Comments

4. Scheduled Appointments:

a. (6:05 pm) Representative Natalie Blais to discuss legislative priorities for the upcoming legislative session

State Representative Natalie Blais joined the Selectboard to discuss Whately's legislative priorities. Joyce discussed with her the need for affordable housing, the hardship on small boards and committees to comply with open meeting laws after the remote option expires, the lack of yearly state level tax expenditure reviews, the lack of approved retail marijuana permits for the town, the double utility poles that have not been removed, better funding sources for special education, transportation, and charter schools, lack of incentives for municipalities to start purchasing and using electric vehicles, possible triple use for electric buses. Fred discussed the possibility of having the state set up a database for towns to use with up to date electric vehicle availability for cities and towns to use. Julie questioned if there were any state incentives available for the purpose of the Center School.

Fred discussed with Natalie two multimillion-dollar projects that the Town is looking at -the building of a new Highway Garage and the repair of the Christian Lane bridge and questioned if there was any possibility of state funding. Natalie stated that there is a lot of infrastructure money coming from the federal government to states for projects like these and an increase of Chapter 90 funding.

Brian discussed with Natalie the changes at the state level regarding social consumption of marijuana and the challenges that our police departments will face, re: OUI enforcement. He

also stated that the new state regulations on police reform are a hardship on small towns who do not have the funding for the necessary equipment upgrades

Fran Fortino discussed the need for better public transportation options for residents. Keith questioned if it would be possible to speak with the new Transportation secretary regarding issues. He also discussed the need for a new Town garage.

Natalie informed the board that the state will be implementing the Rural Schools report including \$60 million for additional school aid. She discussed that the newly elected governor recognizes the need across the state for more affordable housing. She also discussed that there are grid modernization bills on the table at the state level as well as solar bills for more rooftop solar.

5.COVID19: *Reminder – COVID19 rapid tests are available at the Town Offices*****

6. Old Business:

a. To discuss and vote on amendments to the Buy Recycled Policy from the Board of Health related to compostable products

The Board of Health recommends an amendment to the current BRP to include the utilization of compostable products at Town Buildings and Events, excluding the elementary school cafeteria. Motion made to accept the policy as amended. Motion Seconded. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

b. To discuss and vote to award the contract for the Municipal Digital Equity planning grant work

Hannah discussed with the Board that the Town has been awarded a grant through the Massachusetts Broadband initiative. Jessica shared with the Board FRCOG's draft scope of work for the implementation of options. She discussed the different options FRCOG would offer including workshops on access, device ability, and literacy or a planning effort which includes the formation of a committee to identify needs via surveys, etc. and implement which can be included in a Master Plan. It was discussed that other contractors are available for the grant implementation besides FRCOG, but the scope of work is much different. It was discussed that a response to the grant would be due on January 11, 2023.

Motion made to award the contract for the Municipal Digital Equity Planning grant to FRCOG. Motion Seconded. All in Favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

b. To discuss and vote on an agreement with FRCOG to begin work on Phase I of the Master Plan update

Hannah discussed with the Board that the Town was awarded \$25,000 for a Community Compact grant for FRCOG to start Phase I of the Master Plan update which will take two years to complete.

Motion made to accept FRCOG to work on Phase I of the Master Plan update. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

c. To hold a preliminary discussion on a feasibility study for a new highway garage

Fred and Keith discussed with the Board that they are in preliminary talks regarding the building of a new Highway Garage. Questions about how it will affect the transfer station are being discussed as well as possible sites. The Dimaio lot needs to be surveyed and a feasibility study needs to be done and where possible money to cover those costs would come from, i.e., grants.

d. To discuss a request for additional CLFRF monies related to the purchase of the new tractor for the Highway Department

Keith discussed that \$42,000 of CLFRF monies was previously approved by the Selectboard for a new tractor, however the total cost is \$44,941 leaving a balance of \$2,941 which he is requesting from the CLFRF money. Motion made to commit \$2,941 from the CLFRF to close the gap to purchase the new tractor. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

7. New Business

a. To discuss and vote to re-appoint Rick Adamcek as the Animal Control Officer

Motion made to reappoint Richard Adamcek as eth Animal Control Officer. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

b. To accept the resignation of Amy Schrader from the Assistant Treasurer-Collector position.

Motion made to accept the resignation of Amy Schrader as the Assistant Treasurer/Collector effective February 28, 2023. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

c. To appoint Montserrat Archbald to the Cultural Council

Motion made to appoint Montserrat Archbald to the Cultural Council. Motion Seconded. All in Favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

e. To set the mileage reimbursement rate for calendar year 2023

Brian shared with the Board the IRS mileage rate of 65.5¢ for 2023. Motion made to approve the IRS mileage rate of 65.5¢ per mile. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

f. To discuss and vote on whether to delay the Annual Town Meeting until May 2023

The board discussed that for budgeting purposes it would make more sense to move the 2023 Annual Town Meeting to May instead of April. Motion made to delay Annual Town Meeting until a date to be determined in May. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

8. Selectboard Liaison Updates: Timely updates from the Selectboard members serving on other boards and committees

Joyce discussed that the South County Senior Center Board of Oversight has approved their FY24 budget, they have increased the assistant's hours from 20 to 35 hours per week, and that membership has increased.

9. Town Administrator Updates: (Items likely to be discussed)

Hiring Treasurer/Collector, Hiring CDC/ATA- Brian shared that the Town is still collecting resumes for both positions.

Haydenville Road Reconstruction Project- the Town is still communicating with Northampton on the Article 97 issue and that plans should be brought to 75% design stage over the next few months.

GAP III grant award (\$67,567), – Hannah received for the Town another grant for solar panels to be installed at the main pumphouse on Chestnut Plain Road

Egypt Road water loop engineering- The Water Commissioners are looking to hire Berkshire Design group to complete the engineering work.

Town Offices solar array RFP- A draft RFP was sent out to partner organization, Umass Energy Extension, Greenfield Solar, to review and draft will likely be ready for review and for the procurement to begin in the next few months.

Center School RFP for long term lease- Only one person has even requested the RFP. Responses are due January 30th.

FY24 budget meeting schedule- Brian presented to the Board a draft schedule for the budget season.

Water meters at town buildings- The Water Commissioners had a meeting on January 10, but Brian had not heard what was discussed yet.

Town Offices storage space- Historical Society reps came and viewed the space.

10. Items not Anticipated: It was Hannah Davis' last meeting with the Town as she has accepted employment with a different municipality for increased compensation.

11. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 8:07pm. Motion Seconded, All in Favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

Documents:

Meeting Minutes, December 27, 2023

Vendor and Payroll Warrants, W23-15, 01/02/2023

Email from Corrine Coryat to Brian Domina, Selectboard Meetings with Rep. Blais, November 30, 2023

Email from Fran Fortino Amy Lavallee, Brian Domina, updating Town Purchasing Policy to include compostables, January 4, 2023

Town of Whately Recycled and Compostable Product Purchasing Policy

Franklin Regional Council of Governments, Memorandum of Agreement-The franklin Regional Council of Governments and the Town of Whately for Whately Master Plan-Phase I Services

Attachment A- Whately Master Plan Community Visioning and Scenario Planning Consultant Scope of Services

Invoice from John Deere & Company to Town of Whately, 9/15/2022

Email from Nance Rifanburg to Brian Domina, potential new member for the Whately Cultural Council, January 3, 2023

IRS, IRS Issues standard mileage rates for 2023..., December 29, 2022

Email from David Doneski to Brian Domina, Re: Quick Question About Town Meeting Dates, December 23, 2022

Department of Environmental Protection, January 3, 2023
May Town Meeting Budget Schedule-Draft, 12.27.2022