

**Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
January 31,2022
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 31, 2023, at 6:03 pm. Present were Selectboard members Joyce Palmer-Fortune, Fred Baron, and Julie Waggoner. Present were Town Administrator Brian Domina, and Administrative Assistant Amy Lavallee.

1. Meeting Minutes: Review and vote to approve the meeting minutes from January 10, 2023

Motion made to accept the Minutes from January 10, 2023. 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. none

5. COVID19:

Reminder that there are free COVID19 rapid tests available at the Town Offices.

6. Old Business:

a. To discuss the hiring process to replace the Fire Chief upon his retirement

Brian discussed with the Board that the current Fire Chief will age out according to State guidelines in June. He and Fred Baron met with several members of the Fire Department to discuss the future of the department and Chief. They agreed that no changes should be made in regards to the job description at this time. The board discussed the job posting advertising requirements and the make up of a screening committee. Fred Baron agreed to take part in the screening committee and will keep Board up to date with information.

Motion made to nominate Fred Baron for the screening committee as well as the Emergency Management Director Lynn Sibley. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

b. To discuss, review and vote on a memorandum of understanding with FRCOG to accept Mass in Motion funds for age friendly planning – South County Senior Center to take the lead (?)

Mass in Motion regional grant funding for age friendly planning. Whately's portion is \$4,230. The existing South County Senior Center outreach coordinator has agreed to do the work. Fran Fortino has agreed to be the liaison. Motion made to accept the memorandum of understanding from FRCOG to accept the Mass in Motion funds for age friendly planning with the South County Senior Center taking the lead. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

7. New Business

a. To determine the negotiation process to consider the renewal of the employment agreement with the Police Chief

Brian discussed with the Board that the Chief of Police's 3-year contract expires in June of 2023. Joyce (Police Department liaison) and Brian met with Chief Sevine and Jim expressed his willingness to continue his employment with the Town. Joyce will negotiate with Jim on a new employment agreement and present the agreement to the Board for a final vote. Motion made to authorize Joyce Palmer Fortune to start negotiations. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

b. To review, discuss and vote whether to approve an additional 2% COLA for Franklin Regional Retirement System retirees as permitted by newly enacted legislation

Board agrees to table discussion until future meeting when more information can be obtained.

c. To review, discuss and vote on prioritized DLTA requests

The Board discussed the various options presented to them for the DLTA. Brian informed the Board that the DLTA program is an offer from the FRCOG to provide free technical assistance from its staff to municipalities on issues selected by the municipalities. FRCOG receives state funds to complete this work. The Planning Board and Conservation Commission submitted their recommendations. The Selectboard had to choose and prioritize three items from the list provided.

Motion to prioritize as the Selectboard top three review of subdivisions looking at storm drains, streetlights, sidewalks etc. and their subsequent consistency with smart growth, storm water management, climate resiliency and energy saving. Number two pollinator habitat corridor as requested by the Conservation Commission and (three) a rural policy plan implementation changes to a pilot formula and getting on the waiting list for culvert assessments. The DLTA form should also indicate an interest in regional food assessments and municipal wage surveys. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

d. To review, discuss and vote on a license termination agreement at the former East Whately School

Brian informed the Board that this was for termination of use of the ball field at the Blue School that the Town no longer utilizes. Motion made to terminate the agreement with Whately Schoolhouse LLC. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

e. To review, discuss and vote on an agreement with Berkshire Design Group for a planning study around Exit 35

Brian discussed that this was a One Stop for Growth grant Hannah received to do economic development planning at Exit 35 with existing buildings and underutilized parcels that are currently in place. Motion made to accept the agreement from Berkshire Design Group for a redevelopment study of Exit 35. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

f. To review, discuss and vote on a request from the Frontier Regional School District to use Excess & Deficiency funds (\$100,000) for capital projects (tennis courts and boilers)

The board discussed a request from Frontier Regional for planned capital projects. An additional CPA funding request has been submitted. The funding will be split amongst the four towns. This will not require any additional expenditure to the Town as it is coming from Frontier's Excess and Deficiency account. Motion was made to approve reallocation of \$100,000 in Excess & Deficiency funds for Frontier Regional. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

g. To review, discuss and vote on a request from the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District to designate the Town's representative and alternate as special municipal employees

Brian discussed with the Board that small towns may designate municipal employees as special municipal employees to lessen the impacts of the conflict of interest laws where the employee is placed in more than one role for the Town. FCSWMD is requesting the designation for Town's representative and alternate to the FCSWMD.

Julie made a motion to approve the designation of the Franklin County Solid Waste District representative and alternate as Special Town Employees. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes. Motion rescinded.

Motion made to approve the designation of the Franklin County Solid Waste District representative as Special Town Employees. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

Motion made to approve the designation of the Franklin County Solid Waste District alternate representative as Special Town Employees. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

h. To review, discuss and vote to approve special event applications for the Black Birch Vineyard 10 Miler (03/26/23) and the Hatfield Road Race (04/08/23)

A Special Event Permit was submitted for two road races. These events have been approved in the past with no issues. Motion made to approve the applications for Special Permits for the Black Birch Vineyard 10 miler and the Hatfield Road Race. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

i. To discuss and vote to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the FY24 FRCOG Collective Highway Bid contracts

Brian discussed with the Board that this is for collective bidding for Highway materials. The contracts are executed through Docusign so its easiest if the Town Administrator is authorized to sign the contracts. Motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the FY24 FRCOG collective highway bid contracts. Motion seconded. All in favor. Joyce-yes, Fred-yes, Julie-yes.

j. To discuss and vote to submit a grant application to the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program

Board discussed that this is for \$200,000 to replace the SCBA equipment. This is a matching grant. Motion made to submit the grant application to the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program. 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 shared, as police department liaison, that he had a conversation with Chief Sevine regarding his upcoming contract renewal and that Chief Sevine stated he was interested in renewing.

Fred shared that he and Keith have received some ideas regarding a possible new Town Highway garage but they are still exploring options.

Julie shared that there will be a public Climate Resiliency Committee meeting on Thursday at 6:30 and that they are looking for public input, especially from local farmers.

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

Hiring Treasurer/Collector, Hiring CDC/ATA: The Town is still accepting resumes for both positions. The T/C screening committee will be meeting soon. For the Community Development position one interview was held and two more interviews are scheduled.

Center School RFP for long term lease: Responses are due by January 30th.

Notice of Land Acquisition (MA Department of Fish & Game): The town received a Land Acquisition Notice that the MA Department of Fish and Game is planning on acquiring 117 acres off Masterson Road from a resident.

National Opioid Settlement # 2: There appears to be another settlement imminent related to opioids that the Town should consider joining.

Town Hall windows – samples shipped: Two of the defective glass panes have been shipped to the manufacturer as part of the warranty claim for lab analysis.

Egypt Road water system engineering: The Water Commissioners have contracted with Berkshire Design group for the engineering work.

Town Offices solar array, Brian would like to prioritize pushing to complete the RFP and get it published to get this important project moving.

Dimaio property feasibility study; – Brian attended a scoping session with VHB and Mass Housing and agreed to a scope of work that includes a wetland delineation, and schematic plans for possible development at the site.

FY24 budgets–Brian is still working on several budgets. He added \$500 for Town Meeting costs (company who does the sound setup) and consolidated the stand alone Town Reports item into the Selectboard budget, as part of a larger consolidation of smaller budget items into relevant department budgets in an effort to streamline the budget a bit more.

10. Items not Anticipated:

None

11. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 7:41. Motion seconded. All in favor.

Next Meetings: February 16, 2023

Documents

Selectboard Meeting Minutes, January 10, 2023

Invoice Warrant Report, 1/16/2023, Warrant WP23-16

Town of Whately Position Description-Fire Chief

Interoffice Memorandum- to SCSC BOO from Jennifer Remillard, January 20, 2023

Memorandum of Understanding by and between the Town of Whately and Franklin Regional Council of Governments for Mass in Motion Age-friendly planning.

Employment Agreement between the Town of Whately and its Chief of Police, July 1, 2020

Email from Dale Kowacki to Town Selectboards, *2% addition to FY2023 retirees' COLA*, January 17, 2023

Email from Dale Kowacki to Town Administrator, *re: 2% addition to FY2023 retirees' COLA*, January 19, 2023

Letter to Franklin County Town Official from Linda Dunlavey, FRCOG Executive Director, *RE: District Local Technical Assistance Project Requests*, January 4, 2023

Email from Judy Markland to Brian Domina, *Planning Board's DLTA request*, January 26, 2023

Email from ConComm to Brian Domina, *RE: District Local Technical Assistance Project Requests for 2023*, January 22, 2023

Letter from Kevin D Parsons to Town of Whately, January 4, 2023

Letter from Berkshire Design Group to Brian Domina, *RE: Exit 35 Planning Study*, March 15, 2022

Letter from Frontier Regional and Union 38 School District to Selectboard, January 12, 2023

Email from Jan ameen to Selectboard, *FW: FCSWMD Special Municipal Employee votes-checking in*, January 18, 2023

Email from Jan Ameen to Selectboard, *Special Municipal Employee-FCSWMD Board reps/alternatives*, December 12, 2022

Email from Andrea Woods to Town Administrator, *FRCOG Highway Bid program-urgent*, January 26, 2023

Letter from Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game to Joyce Palmer-Fortune , December 23, 2023

Email from National Opioid Settlements Implementation Administrator to Brian Domina, *New National Opioid settlement notice*, January 25, 2023

Selectboard Administration Budget FY24