

**Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
May 27, 2020
Town Offices
Open Session
6:00 p.m.**

The open session of the Selectboard of the Town of Whately was called to order on May 27, 2020 at 6:05 p.m. by the Chairperson, Joyce Palmer-Fortune. Also present via Zoom were Selectboard Members Frederick Orloski and Jonathan Edwards: Town Administrator Brian Domina, and Administrative Assistant Amy Schrader.

Review and vote on the meeting minutes of May 13, 2020.

The Board voted to approve the meeting minutes of May 13, 2020.
Roll call vote: Jonathan – yes, Joyce – yes, and Fred – yes.

Review past vendor and payroll warrants

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

Comments from the public on items not listed on the agenda

none

COVID19 State of Emergency a. To discuss, review and consider modifications to the following:

Directive Limiting Work in Town Buildings to Only Essential Activities by Essential Employees & Board Members & Requiring Employees to Work from Home or Remain on Call to Perform Essential Functions; Directive on Employee Pay Through May 27, 2020; and Emergency Order Restricting Public Access to Town Buildings adopted by the Selectboard on March 24, 2020 - Brian reviewed the *Order Re-Opening Town Buildings to the Public for Limited Hours and Appointments Only* with specific attention to personal protective equipment requirements, Town Offices building hours, general public restrictions, plexiglass installation, and modified work schedules. A discussion ensued regarding the Town Administrator's schedule and restrictions on the general public entering the building. The Board recommended the following amendments;

- Page 1, bullet point one after "each week beginning on week June 1, 2020", insert, if a party (aka member of a household unit) is at the service window when a second or more parties arrive, the second party shall wait outside until the first party is finished and has left the building:
- Page 1, bullet point two after "are" and before "appointment" insert the word advanced.
- Page 1, bullet point three after "are" and before "appointment" insert the word, advanced.

Brian discussed the current challenges of holding in-person public meetings due to the State mandated limit on in-person gatherings (currently at 10). Until there is a loosening of the restrictions for public gathering, Brian recommends continuing to hold virtual meetings. After much discussion, Jonathan made a motion to adopt the Order Re-Opening Town Buildings to the Public for

Limited Hours and Appointments Only as amended. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Joyce – yes, Fred -yes, Jonathan – yes. The effect of this vote rescinds the previously adopted Emergency Order Restricting Public Access to Town Buildings.

Brian discussed the Town Directive on Employee Pay with specific attention to the Board of Health's re-opening recommendations and a modified work schedule for town employees. After a brief discussion, a motion was made to continue the Directive on Employee pay until May 31, 2020, which is the date the Town Offices will re-open. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Joyce – yes, Jonathan – yes, and Fred – yes. The Directive on Employee Pay will expire on May 31, 2020 and will not be renewed except by further action of the Board.

The Board had a brief discussion regarding the new proposed Directive on Town Employees Returning to Work During the COVID19 Pandemic. The Board discussed amendments to the Highway Department's special protocols, social distancing challenges inside the library, and PPE requirements. A motion was made to approve the new Directive on Town Employees Returning to Work During the COVID19 Pandemic. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Joyce – yes, Jonathan – yes, and Fred – yes. The effect of this vote rescinds the previously adopted Directive Limiting Work in Town Buildings to Only Essential Activities by Essential Employees & Board Members & Requiring Employees to Work from Home or Remain on Call to Perform Essential Functions.

To discuss any updates on the Annual Town Election or Annual Town Meeting.

Annual Town Election - Lynn stated that she is pleasantly surprised that she received 100-140 early voting applications which exceeds the previous voting numbers for the last two Town elections. Lynn discussed this year's Annual Town Election challenges with specific attention to fulfilling election worker positions. Lynn is looking for election workers under the age of 60 who are registered voters and/or teenagers between the ages of 16 and 18 (who need not be registered voters). Election workers are paid minimum wage. This year, Lynn is asking election workers to bring their own lunch/dinner and to comply with social distancing guidelines. Lynn needs seven election workers and would like to have a greeter at the entrance of the school. Election workers do not have to be Whately residents. Elections ballots need to be delivered to the afterhours box at the Town Offices, 4 Sandy Lane, Whately, MA by 6:00 pm on June 9, 2020.

Annual Town Meeting - Joyce informed the Board that originally the plan was to hold the Annual Town Meeting at the WES gymnasium. Towns are being encouraged to hold their Annual Town Meetings outside. Joyce stated that one of the Town's outdoor options is the Whately Elementary School's side yard. Joyce reviewed the WES side yard map and discussed the potential electricity challenges, sound system rentals, advanced rain dates, delayed start time (potentially 6:00 pm instead of 7:00 pm), and traffic flow. Fred inquired what other location options were considered? Joyce stated that the group considered Frontier Regional's track, but that location has ADA challenges and is in another town. The Board had a lengthy discussion about the WES side yard location, WES gymnasium pros/cons, the potential use of Quonquont Farms outdoor pavilion, and social distancing challenges. Fred stated that he will look into the Quonquont Farm's location and availability.

Fred suggested the Town Office's west facing side yard which has ample parking spots. Lynn Sibley inquired if the Board has thought about holding the Annual Town Meeting on a Saturday, during the day, which might help prevent mosquito problems. Lynn stated that there was a lot of resistance from

school officials to using the gymnasium. Brian stated that the BOH also recommended an outside meeting. Deerfield, Sunderland, and Conway are holding their Annual Town Meetings outside. After much discussion, the Board made no decision at this time.

To discuss whether to issue tag sale permits during the COVID19 State of Emergency.

Brian informed the Board that he requested guidance from the Board of Health on whether to issue tag sale permits during the COVID19 State of Emergency. The Board of Health recommended to delay tag sale permits until at least June. After a brief discussion, the Board decided to hold-off on issuing tag sale permits until the Governor releases Phase 2 guidance. A motion was made not to issue tag sale permits at least for the next two weeks. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Joyce – yes, Jonathan – yes, Fred -yes.

Old Business:

To discuss the options selected for the Whately municipal aggregation program and next steps – Brian informed the Board that on May 20, 2020 the 13 towns received executable pricing from Colonial Power. Colonial Power is supposed to send the Town outreach material for town residents which includes mailings, public service announcements, FAQs for the town's website, articles for the local newspapers, and social media information. Typically, Colonial Power would hold an in-person information session to answer residents' questions. Due to the COVID19 outbreak, a zoom meeting or webinar might be arranged instead. The Board had a lengthy discussion regarding the importance of proper notification to Town residents, who should be preparing the notifications, and opt-in/opt-out deadlines. The Energy Committee will be putting together a notification flyer that will be distributed at the Annual Town Meeting. Jonathan stated that he will reach-out to Colonial Power and inquire if they would monetarily contribute to the Town's outreach efforts. After much discussion, the Board tabled this discussion until their next Selectboard meeting on June 10, 2020.

New Business:

To discuss a regional CDBG application for a Regional COVID19 Recovery Microenterprise Assistance Program with Greenfield as the lead community - Brian informed the Board that the state received 9 million dollars in CDBG money for non-entitlement communities and is encouraging regional applications. The City of Greenfield is partnering with the Franklin County CDC to apply for a \$600,000 regional grant. Brian discussed the CDBG program requirements, grant pros/cons, and the Town's obligations. The Board had a brief discussion regarding the CDBG money with specific attention to public safety money. Brian stated these funds are strictly for business assistance and social services. A motion was made to join the consortium with the City of Greenfield and the Franklin County CDC to implement a microenterprise assistance program. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Joyce – yes, Jonathan – yes, Fred – yes.

To discuss and vote to enter into a Contribution and Donation Agreement with the Whately Inn for Chestnut Plain Road - Brian informed the Board that he is waiting for a response back from the Whately Inn on a few amendments to the agreement. Brian stated that the Whately Inn will be contributing \$10,000 for their portion of the project. The Board decided to table this discussion until the next Selectboard meeting.

To sign the Annual Election Warrant for June 9, 2020 to be held at the Whately Elementary School from 12 (noon) to 6:00 pm - Joyce made a motion to sign the Annual Election Warrant for June 9, 2020 to be held at the Whately Elementary School from 12 (noon) to 6:00 pm. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Jonathan – yes, Joyce – yes, Fred – yes.

To discuss whether to extend the lease with NUPRO for space at the Town Offices - Brian informed the Board that NUPRO has been leasing the space at the Town Offices for the last 3 years and their current lease is due to expire at the end of June. Brian stated that the lease is a good source of revenue for the Town and inquired if the Board would like to extend the lease. The Board had a brief discussion regarding NUPRO's current lease terms and potential term changes. Brian suggested renegotiating the lease terms since the space is no longer being used for just storage. The Board decided to table this discussion until the next Selectboard meeting. No decision was made at this time.

To discuss and vote to enter into contract negotiations with the Whately Chief of Police - Brian informed the Board that the Whately Chief of Police contract is due to expire and the Board needs to vote on entering into contract negotiations. The Board had a brief discussion regarding entering into contract negotiations with the Whately Chief of police with specific attention to the Chief's previous budget requests. After much discussion, Joyce made a motion to enter into contract negotiations with the Whately Chief of Police. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Joyce – yes, Jonathan – yes, Fred – yes. The Board authorized Joyce, as the Police Department liaison to engage in negotiations, with the final vote remaining with the Board.

Town Administrator Updates:

Williamsburg Road Bridge Replacement Project – additional \$\$ secured - Brian stated that for the Williamsburg Road Bridge project, the Town is about to issue the Notice to Proceed to the Contractor to begin work in mid-June. The Town has a signed agreement for additional funds from MassDOT.

CARES Act funding available - COVID19 Town Office Modifications (??) - Brian informed the Board that Whately's portion of the CARES Act funding is \$139,350. These funds are used for the response costs directly related to COVID19. A portion of that can be used for FY20 costs Eligible categories are anything to do with maintaining core municipal services, expanding the public health mission, and services/support. There will be a second opportunity to request reimbursements for FY21. The Board had a brief discussion regarding enhancing distance learning, South County EMS costs, and South County Senior Center COVID costs. The Board suggested reaching out to the schools for eligible costs. Brian informed the Board that he did send this out to Darius Modestow (School Superintendent) and Krissy Kirton (WES Principal) for FY20 and FY21 COVID costs. The CARES Act FY20 funding application deadline is June 5, 2020.

Electronic Messaging Boards (??), Other Costs - Brian informed the Board that he will explore whether the purchase of an electronic messaging board would be eligible for the CARES Act funds.

DMCTC Community Outreach Meeting (virtual) - Brian informed the Board that the Town's Moderator declined moderating the DMCTC Community Outreach Meeting. Brian stated that he has not heard back as to when the virtual Community Outreach meeting will be held.

Friends of Library Egg Hunt - Brian informed the Board that the Friends of the Library will be holding the Library's Egg Hunt. More information is available on the Library's social media page. Strict social distancing will be required per the Board of Health.

Proposed CPA Projects for ATM - Brian stated that he did receive a list of proposed CPA projects that will be included on the Annual Town Meeting warrant. Brian reviewed the CPA project list with specific attention to grave stone restorations, Whately Center Woods, planning assistance for updating the Town's open space plan, and paying for the local shares of APRs on Long Plain Road and River Road.

Bylaw Amendments for ATM - Brian reviewed the proposed bylaw amendments for the Annual Town Meeting with specific attention to the proposed scenic road bylaw, solar bylaw revisions, and the change to the Aquifer Protection Overlay District. The Board had a brief discussion regarding the Community Preservation Committee's conflicting meeting schedule with the Finance Committee and Selectboard. The Board requested that when possible overlapping meetings not be scheduled to allow Board members the opportunity to attend other meetings.

Annual Report - Brian informed the Board that the Annual Report is ready to go and has been sent to the printing company.

Other Updates - Brian requested that the Board sign a bid form for the Highway Bids completed by FRCOG. The Board needs to authorize FRCOG to make the awards.

Brian informed the Board that he received an email from Adelia Bardwell (Whately Historical Society) asking when they can move forward with the shed purchase at the Town Hall. Brian informed Adelia that the Whately Historical Society has received approval from all appropriate parties.

Brian informed the Board that the Whately Inn is proposing to put up a tent in part of the parking lot to provide outdoor dining options to comply with social distancing requirements. The Board had a brief discussion regarding the health and safety precautions and inquired who approves these changes? Approval from the Building Inspector and Fire department may be necessary. The Board had no concerns with the proposal so long as all approvals are received.

Items Not Anticipated within forty-eight (48) hours of the meeting:

None

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28pm

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Domina, Town Administrator

Next Meetings: June 10, 2020 & June 23, 2020 (ATM)

Document List on File in the Selectboard Office

Selectboard Meeting Minutes dated May 13, 2020

Selectboard's Directive Limiting Work in Town Buildings to Only Essential Activities by Essential Employees & Board Members & Requiring Employees to Work from Home or Remain on Call to Perform Essential Functions

Selectboard's Directive on Employee Pay Through May 27, 2020

Selectboard's Emergency Order Restricting Public Access to Town Buildings adopted by the Selectboard on March 24, 2020

Email from Denise Allard, Colonial Power, dated May 26, 2020

Letter from the Mayor of the City of Greenfield dated May 20, 2020

Contribution and Donation Agreement between the Town of Whately, Massachusetts and Stephen Kloc, Inc.

NUPRO Lease dated December 22, 2018

June 2020 CPA Town Meeting Votes

Proposed Whately Scenic Roads Bylaw