

**Selectboard  
Meeting Minutes  
June 10, 2020  
Town Offices  
Open Session via Zoom  
6:00 p.m.**

The open session of the Selectboard of the Town of Whately was called to order on June 10, 2020 at 6:02 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.

**Reorganization of Selectboard:**

**Discuss and appoint the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Clerk** – Brian informed the Board the Annual Town Election was held on June 9, 2020 and Joyce Palmer-Fortune was re-elected.

A motion was made to appoint Fred Orloski to be the Chairperson for FY2021. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Jonathan – yes, Fred – yes, Joyce – yes.

A motion was made to appoint Jonathan Edwards as Vice Chair. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Jonathan – yes, Fred – yes, Joyce – yes.

A motion was made to appoint Joyce Palmer-Fortune as Clerk. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Jonathan – yes, Fred – yes, Joyce – yes.

**Selectboard Department Liaison Assignments** – FY20 – Fred – Water and Fire Department, Jonathan – Town Offices and Highway Department, and Joyce – Police Department, Schools, and Town Administrator. FY 21 – Fred – Fire Department, Water Department, and Town Administrator, Jonathan – Town Offices and Highway Department, Joyce – Police Department and Schools. Roll call vote: Jonathan – yes, Fred – yes, Joyce – yes. All in favor.

**Review and vote on the meeting minutes of May 27, 2020.**

The Board voted to approve the meeting minutes of May 27, 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**

**To discuss, review and consider modifications to the following:**

***Order Reopening Town Buildings to the Public for Limited Hours and Appointment Only***

Brian informed the Board that the Town Offices have been open since June 1, 2020 without any issues with a low volume of visitors. Town Offices are open on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 (noon) or by advanced appointment. Brian doesn't see the need to amend any of the existing orders/directives. Chief Sevigne inquired if the town is issuing permits for outdoor dining? Brian stated that the ABCC is allowing Local Licensing Authorities to amend the description of the premises until November 1, 2020 or if the Order is lifted prior to that date. The Board had a brief discussion regarding the Town's permitting process for outdoor

dining. Currently, the Whately Inn is the only restaurant that this amendment applies too. The Whately Inn was sent the appropriate paperwork to fill out. The Board agreed that no fee would be charged to amend the license. Chief Sevigne stated that they are going to keep an eye out for traffic flow issues at the Whately Inn.

The Board had a brief discussion regarding the reopening of Herlihy Field with specific attention to social distancing guidelines, spectators, and proper signage. A few organizations have requested to hold practices at Herlihy Field before the games begin in July. New signage with social distancing guidelines will be posted at Town's ballfields. The Town Hall is to remain closed until further notice. All Town Hall events will be removed from the Town's calendar at [whately.org](http://whately.org).

**To finalize the location, date, time and other logistics for holding the Annual Town Meeting** - Brian stated that, in his opinion, the best place for the Annual Town Meeting is the side yard at the Whately Elementary School. There is enough space to meet social distancing requirements, parking, and sufficient electricity for FCAT. Nat Fortune is the new Moderator for the Town. Brian informed the Board that the Town will provide chairs; however, residents are encouraged to bring their own. FCAT will be live streaming the meeting and remote voting is not allowed. The Board had a lengthy discussion regarding remote participation pros/cons, FCAT live streaming options, potential voting numbers, and logistic challenges of the new location. After much discussion, the Board agreed that the Annual Town Meeting will not have remote participation. Rain dates for the Annual Town Meeting will be June 24, 25, and 26. The Moderator has the discretion to continue the Annual Town Meeting to the rain date.

Fred Orloski stated that he did meet with Janelle Wilkins from Quonquont Farms. Fred stated that it was a nice facility, but the space may be too small for the Annual Town Meeting. Fred appreciates and thanks Quonquont Farms for its efforts to try to help the town.

**To review and discuss the "draft" Annual Town Meeting warrant - June 23, 2020:** Brian informed the Board that they have the draft warrant articles, draft operating budgets, proposed capital projects, CPA funding proposals and bylaw amendments. The official warrant will be signed next Monday at 12:00 (noon). Brian reviewed the Annual Town Meeting draft warrant articles. A brief discussion ensued regarding the draft warrant articles with specific attention to warrant article 3, article 13, article 14, article 23, proposed capital projects appropriations and authorizations, and the warrant article needed to dissolve the Whately Water District. The town's tax rate will need to be set before December. Revisions on the budget can happen later in the year depending on the level of state aid to be provided. Details of the Community Preservation projects are listed on the Community Preservation Committee's page on the town's website. Hard copies of the warrant articles will be given out at Town Meeting along with a booklet that summarizes the warrant articles.

**CARES Act funding and reimbursement update** – Brian informed the Board that the Town received \$139,000 in funding from the CARES ACT. Brian thanked the Town of Deerfield for paying for the breakfasts that Frontier has been providing to the South County Senior Center for all residents of Deerfield, Whately, and Sunderland. The deadline for the CARES Act submission was June 5, 2020, but was extended to June 12, 2020. Right now, total estimated costs for FY20 is \$42,000. The majority of the costs thus far are from the Whately Elementary School request to purchase \$20,000 in Chromebooks for potential distance learning in the fall and \$8,000 towards the contract with the Northampton Public Nursing Program. Brian expressed concern regarding the cost of continuing with the Northampton Public Nursing Program if it's not needed and the potential financial impact for the fall school semester due to COVID19 restrictions/guidelines to be imposed by the state.

### **Old Business:**

**To discuss community outreach for the municipal aggregation program** - Brian informed the Board that since our last meeting the Town received outreach material from Colonial Power. Brian discussed the various outreach materials with specific attention to the Whately specific press release and hand-out material for the Annual Town Meeting. A discussion ensued regarding the context of the hand-out/Whately specific press release and the possibility of holding a Zoom information session. The Zoom information session would need to be held after the

Annual Town Meeting, but before the final opt-out date of July 15, 2020. Fred inquired what the terms/conditions are for opt-in/opt-out options and deadlines? The Board suggested confirming opt-in and opt-out options with Colonial Power. Jonathan stated that the Energy Committee will be meeting soon and will follow-up with Brian.

#### **New Business:**

**To discuss the need for additional storage space at the Highway Garage due to the mandated closure of the mezzanine storage area by the Department of Labor Standards** - Brian informed the Board that the Highway Garage had an inspection by the Department of Labor Standards. OSHA/DLS regulations state that the Town needs to install an OSHA approved ladder or stairs and install railings through-out the entire length of the mezzanine, or alternatively block that section off. The proposed solution is that the mezzanine be closed and the Town purchase a 40' storage/shipping container and place it behind the building. The Board had a brief discussion regarding potential storage space locations, container size, and pros/cons of storing supplies offsite. Fred inquired if the town's barn on Chestnut Plain Road could be utilized as a storage space? Chief Sevigne stated that the yellow barn is just a barn on Chestnut Plain Road and there isn't that much weather proofing or security there. The Board requested additional storage space/storage container information from Keith Bardwell (Highway and Building Superintendent) for their next Selectboard meeting.

**To discuss locations in the Town for vehicle speed studies offered by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments; speed and noise reduction efforts in center of Town.** - Brian informed the Board that the Franklin Regional Council of Governments offered to do vehicle speed studies. The following locations were suggested: Chestnut Plain Road, Christian Lane, Haydenville Road, Swamp Road, and River Road. The Board and Chief Sevigne discussed potential vehicle speed study locations. The Board decided to leave the selection of speed study locations to Chief Sevigne in coordination with Keith Bardwell (Highway and Building Superintendent) and Brian.

**To discuss and vote on a new contract for the Whately Chief of Police** – Joyce Palmer-Fortune (Police Liaison) informed the Board that two amendments were made to the Chief's last contract: salary amount and a reference to an updated community outreach plan. The community outreach plan would be revised this upcoming July. The Selectboard will work with Chief Sevigne to revise the Community Outreach Plan. The Chief's salary was 2% below the average for comparable towns based on the salary survey conducted by the Personnel Committee. Joyce made a motion to enter into the employment agreement with Chief Sevigne with the beginning salary amount of \$71,966.10. The employment agreement is a one-year agreement with the possibility of two one-year extensions as required by state law. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Jonathan – yes, Fred – yes, and Joyce – yes.

**To discuss and vote to enter into a new lease with NUPRO for space at the Town Offices** - Brian informed the Board that he has not heard back from NUPRO. Their lease expires June 30, 2020. The Board decided to table this discussion until their next Selectboard meeting.

#### **Town Administrator Updates:**

DMCTC Community Outreach Meeting (virtual) – Brian informed the Board that the virtual Community Outreach Meeting for DMCTC is Monday June 15, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. The proposed marijuana cultivation site is located at 7 River Road. DMCTC has submitted a Host Community Agreement that still needs to be reviewed.

Email from Paul Newlin re: Williamsburg Road Bridge – Brian informed the Board that Paul Newlin (former Selectboard member) received an email from a concerned Williamsburg resident that he would prefer that the Williamsburg Road Bridge remains closed. Joyce stated that she also received a letter from a concerned Williamsburg resident. The Board had a brief discussion regarding resident's concerns, public safety issues and the desire of Whately residents to have access to their property from West Whately instead of travelling around through Williamsburg.

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

Fred Orloski stated that he reached out for additional information regarding the Whately Center Woods project. Scott Jackson offered to do a Zoom presentation on the project with specific attention to funding, location, and details of the project. Fred inquired if anyone else is interested in attending the presentation? Jonathan stated that he supports this project and feels comfortable with the funds being spent. There has been a public hearing and previous information sessions regarding this project. Joyce would not object to another information session, but the necessity of the meeting might be questionable. Chief Sevigne inquired how many trails are going to be there? Joyce stated that she thinks the only addition is the parking area on Chestnut Plain Road. Fred would like to leave this request open for a couple of days. Fred asked that if any members of the public would like additional information regarding this project to contact him and he will arrange for Scott Jackson to do a presentation.

The Selectboard will hold a Zoom meeting on Monday June 15, 2020 at 12:00 (noon) to sign the Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

The meeting was adjourned 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Brian Domina, Town Administrator

Next Meetings: June 15, 2020, June 23, 2020 (ATM), and June 24, 2020 (?)

**Document List on File in the Selectboard Office**

FY20 Selectboard Liaison Assignments – Current

Selectboard Meeting Minutes dated 05.27.2020

Vendor Warrant dated 05.25.2020

Payroll Warrant dated 05.25.2020

Selectboard's Directive on Town Employees Returning to Work During the COVID19 Pandemic dated 05.27.2020

Selectboard's Order reopening Town Buildings to the Public for Limited Hours and Appointments only dated 05.27.2020

Email from Brian Domina, Town Administrator, dated 06.04.2020

Whately takes Proactive Step for Climate, Residents with its Renewable Energy Program – Colonial Power

The Town of Whately's Community Choice Power Supply Program Consumer Notification dated 06.12.2020 – Colonial Power

Town of Whately's Community Choice Power Supply Program Public Service Announcement – Colonial Power

Town of Whately's Community Choice Power Supply Program Frequently Asked Questions – Colonial Power

Town of Whately's Community Choice Power Supply Program Social Media Announce

Town of Whately's Community Choice Power Supply Program Opt-in Instructions

Email from Laurie Scarbrough, FRCOG Transportation Planning Engineer, dated 06.02.2020

2020 Traffic Count Request Form FRCOG

DMCTC, Inc. Virtual Public Hearing Notification

Email from Paul Newlin dated 05.30.2020

Annual Town Meeting "Draft" – 06.23.2020