

**Selectboard  
Meeting Minutes  
August 12, 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 August 12, 2020 at 6:02 p.m. by the Chairperson, Fred Orloski. Also present via zoom were Selectboard Members Joyce Palmer-Fortune and Jonathan Edwards: Town Administrator Brian Domina, and Administrative Assistant Amy Schrader.

**Review and vote on the meeting minutes of July 29, 2020 and August 5, 2020.**

Fred made a motion to amend the meeting minutes of July 29, 2020 to clarify that “There is no need currently for a stricter outdoor watering ban.” The Board voted to approve the meeting minutes of July 29, 2020 as amended and August 5, 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**

Brian read a public comment received from resident, Dan Denehy stating “I suggest working out all the details for the purchase and installation of a generator for the Town Office building this summer, so a warrant to fund the purchase and installation can be put on the fall Town Meeting. If monies are available, this should allow installation before winter.” Brian stated that Keith Bardwell (Highway and Building Superintendent) continues to work on this project and has been meeting with the appropriate parties to move this project forward.

**Scheduled Appointments:**

**6:05 pm (Center School Visioning Committee – Mary Stuart): To receive a presentation from the Center School Visioning Committee on the Committee’s recommendation for the future of the Center School building and property.**

Mary Stuart (Center School Visioning Committee) appeared before the Board to present the Center School Visioning Committee’s recommendation for the future of the Center School building and property. The Center School Visioning Committee held seven meetings to discuss the future of the Center School building and property. Mary discussed the Center School building and property with specific attention to the Center School’s history, site map, and mechanical systems. Marissa Hashizume (Center School Visioning Committee member) discussed the preliminary survey results from residents’ responses to the Center School building survey with specific attention to potential uses of the building (café/restaurant, art spaces, community center) and target users for the space. Judy Markland (Center School Visioning Committee Member) discussed the various financial options for the Center School building and property with specific attention to grant opportunities, renovation costs, demolition, CPA

funds, state and federal tax credits, special permit process, ADA compliance, and available CPA funds. Leslie Harris (Center School Visioning Committee) discussed the cost options with specific attention to selling the building to a private owner, town ownership, town ownership with a private lessee, and town ownership with a private lessee entity. Leslie discussed the pros/cons of long-term and short-term lease offers.

The Center School Visioning Committee recommends that the Town retain ownership of the Center School/property and begin a process to ensure its renovation. The Committee suggests putting together a Request for Information and distributing it beyond usual means to include potential interested parties outside of Western Mass as well as businesses specifically focused on developing multi-use buildings. The Committee suggests that the request should include:

REQUIRE • Town ownership • Maintenance of historical aspects and facade • Adhere to specific timelines

GIVE PREFERENCE TO PROJECTS THAT • Are usable by large segments of the community • Use Green or LEED certified construction • Offer to fund the majority of the renovation • Respect neighborhood property as well as draw people to the center of town

ASK RESPONDERS TO SPECIFY • How long of a lease the proposal would require • Parking plans

Fred stated that the Committee was organized by the Selectboard back in October 2019. The Board had a lengthy discussion regarding the Committee's efforts and cost estimates with specific attention to demolition, private use renovation costs, public use demolition costs, lease/lessee realistic terms, market demands, available CPA funds, and RFQ pros/cons. Fred suggested that the Board needs to hold a public meeting on this project and is not comfortable as a Selectboard member to decide today. Fred appreciates the time/efforts of the Committee, but would like more information about market demand in the report. Jenny Morrison stated that there is more information in the report than what was presented here. The Center School Committee requested that the Selectboard put the Center School Building and property out for a request for information then hold a town meeting. Since the Committee did not have a budget, they were not able to have a feasibility study and/or market analysis done.

Donna Wiley (resident) discussed the reuse of municipal buildings with specific attention to the sale of the Town of Sunderland's Town Hall and suggested that the Board research surrounding towns that have dealt with these types of properties. After much discussion, the Board discussed the next steps: Brian would put together the RFI with two scenarios, one for the sale of the Center School building and property and one for the Town's continued ownership. The Board requested that anyone who would like to help Brian draft an RFI to contact him. The Board appreciates and thanked the Committee for their work.

### **COVID19 State of Emergency**

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

##### **i. Directive on Town Employees Returning to Work During the COVID19 Pandemic**

Brian discussed Governor Baker's revised order with specific attention to outdoor gathering limits, face covering requirements, and enforcement challenges. After a brief discussion, the Board took no action and will revisit this on August 26, 2020.

**ii. Order Reopening Town Buildings to the Public for Limited Hours and Appointment Only – to consider amending the Order to address the changes needed to allow for early voting at the Town Offices and for in-person voting at the Town Hall in relation to the September 1, 2020 and November 3, 2020 elections.**

Fred inquired if Herlihy Field is being utilized and if so, the Town's policy should be changed? Jonathan informed the Board that currently baseball games are being played and certain fall sports will begin. Brian reviewed the Order Reopening Town Buildings with specific attention to the Commonwealth's reopening phases. Brian recommended striking the last sentence of the last bulleted paragraph that discussed Phase I re-opening. Fred inquired if the Police Department's lobby was open to the public? Brian stated that he thought the lobby was open, but he will inquire with the Police Chief. The Board requested that Brian clarify the Police Department's lobby hours. Brian reviewed the proposed changes with specific attention to early voting hours/dates at the Town Offices and the reopening of the Town Hall for in-person voting in relation to the September 1, 2020 and November 3, 2020 elections. After a brief discussion, a motion was made to accept the changes noted in red related to the primary and state elections. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Fred – yes and Joyce -yes.

**Old Business:**

**To discuss an updated Priority Project List for the remainder of calendar year 2020** - The Board tabled this discussion until their next meeting on August 26, 2020.

**To review a draft letter in response to speeding and traffic concerns on Chestnut Plain Road** - The Board discussed the draft letter in response to speeding and traffic concerns with specific attention to the Town's efforts to address concerns. Keith Bardwell (Highway and Building Superintendent) contacted MassDOT to discuss the triangle intersection, but has not heard back. Fred inquired if the Police Department has implemented new traffic enforcement efforts? Brian stated that he received a letter from a Chestnut Plain Road resident thanking the Town for the increased police presence and traffic monitoring. The Board agreed to sign the letter in response to speeding and traffic concerns on Chestnut Plain Road.

**New Business:**

**To consider an appointment to fill the vacant Operator/Laborer at the Highway Department** - Keith Bardwell (Highway and Building Superintendent) stated that Brian, Jonathan, and himself held interviews last week and recommends that the Board offer the position to Quincy Ortiz.

A motion was made to appoint/hire Quincy Ortiz pending passing of a pre-employment physical and other requirement of the Town. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Jonathan – yes, Fred - yes, and Joyce – yes.

**To discuss the Shared Streets & Spaces Grant program** - Brian informed the Board that this is a grant program through MassDOT for quick turnaround projects. They are looking at quick projects that would increase pedestrians and bicycle safety. Brian discussed the specifics of the grant program with regards to increasing safety for pedestrians and bicycle safety. There is \$1.2 million of grant funds available, there is a \$300,000 cap. The Board discuss possible ideas submitted by Brian and Fred: expanding the

sidewalk by the Whately Center Cemetery to Quonquot Farms, Library parking lot/grounds, extension of sidewalks from the WES to Long Plain Road, and Herlihy Park repaving of the parking lot. Jonathan suggested the Old State Road area. The Board and Keith Bardwell (Highway and Building Superintendent) discussed asphalt cost estimates for sidewalk installations, pros/cons of sidewalk materials, the potential installation of a bicycle lane at WES, potential bus stop locations, and project funding options. The Town could ask for assistance from FRCOG and FRTA for potential bus stop locations. Fred suggested submitting the park and ride/bus stop to FRCOG for their support. Brian informed the Board that it is a rolling application deadline. After much discussion, the Board decided to have Brian, Fred, and Keith put something together and submit the application soon rather than later.

**To review and sign the State Primary Election Warrant for September 1, 2020** - A motion was made to sign the State Primary Election Warrant for September 1, 2020. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Fred – yes and Joyce – yes.

**To review and approve the Census Final Boundary Validation Form** - A motion was made to authorize Selectboard chair, Fred Orloski, to sign the Census Final Boundary Validation Form. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Fred – yes and Joyce – yes.

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

Brian informed the Board that he sent out the notice to proceed to Taylor Davis today for the Chestnut Plain Road crosswalks and sidewalks reconstruction.

Brian informed the Board that the Williamsburg Road Bridge contractor started on-site today and has moved their equipment in. Fred inquired if the road will be open this year? Keith stated that hopefully it will be completed by Thanksgiving.

Brian informed the Board that the Planning Board has been meeting to review a location on State road that is currently being used as a home occupation/trucking business. The Planning Board is considering looking at potentially rezoning certain sections of Town or proposing other amendments to the Zoning Bylaw. The Planning Board's next meeting is August 25, 2020.

Brian informed the Board that Wayne Hutkoski (Water Superintendent), Nicholas Jones, and himself will be meeting with someone from Mass Rural Water Association to discuss the merger. They are going to try to get the Town in touch with water utility consultants.

Brian informed the Board that there are a lot more grant opportunities coming out. The MIIA Risk Mitigation Grant and Real Estate Technical Assistance Grant are available.

Brian informed the Board that the Source to Sea Clean-up group is proposing to clean-up the brook adjacent to Herlihy Park again while following social distancing guidelines. Keith Bardwell (Highway and Building Superintendent) will continue to assist with the hauling of trash collected. A motion was made to support the Source to Sea Clean-up with allowing access and taking care of the trash with town resources. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Fred – yes and Joyce – yes.

Brian informed the Board that the State has committed to funding unrestricted general government aid and chapter 70 aid at levels equal to FY20. The Board discussed the challenges of the uncertain state budget with specific attention to setting the tax rate and revisiting deferred capital projects.

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

None

The meeting was adjourned 8:01 pm

Respectfully submitted,

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Brian Domina, Town Administrator

Next Meetings: August 26, 2020 and September 9, 2020

**Document List Filed in the Selectboard Office**

Selectboard Meeting Minutes dated 07/29/2020

Payroll and Vendor Warrants dated 08/03/2020

Whately Center School Visioning Committee report dated 03/16/2020

DRAFT – Town Building Re-Opening Order Version 3

Shared Streets and Spaces Email dated 08/05/2020

State Primary Warrant