

**MEETING MINUTES**

Town of Heath  
SELECT BOARD  
Via Conference Call  
March 24, 2020

**Called to Order at 6:00 p.m.** with Brian DeVriese, Robyn Provost Carlson, Gloria Cronin Fisher and Hilma Sumner, Town Coordinator, in attendance.

**Other Attendees:** Betsy Kovacs, Douglas Mason, Janis Carr

**Review of Agenda:** Added Teleconferencing, 18 Jacobs Rd parking area, March 31 agenda items.

**Review of Minutes:** *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Robyn Provost Carlson, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of March 4, 2020 as amended.*

*On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Robyn Provost Carlson, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of March 10, 2020 as amended.*

**Declaration of Emergency:** It was noted that the Select Board had issued a Declaration of Emergency on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

**COVID-19 Municipal Protocol:** Brian, Tim Lively, Emergency Management Director (EMD), and Sheila Litchfield, Asst. EMD, have a brief phone conference every morning at 9:00 to check-in and update. The Board discussed further limiting access to Town buildings. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Robyn Provost Carlson, the Select Board unanimously voted to restrict access to town buildings to essential employees except by appointment.*

**Letter in Support of Heath Historical Society Grant Application:** Explanation was given that, on behalf of the Select Board, Brian has signed the letter to the Massachusetts State Historical Society declaring support for the Heath Historical Society's grant application to replace the Town House windows. The application deadline was Friday. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Robyn Provost Carlson, the Select Board unanimously voted to issue the letter of support for the Heath Historical Society's grant application.*

**The Branch School:** The Sampsons requested that rent for the 18 Jacobs Road space that they used be suspended for the month of April because they could not hold school. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Robyn Provost Carlson, the Select Board unanimously voted to suspend rent for the month of April for The Branch School.*

**Hill-Town Theatre:** On behalf of the theatre group, Jonathan Diamond asked if the usage schedule could be flexible due to the building closure and restriction on group activities. There remains three weeks of rehearsals and the performance days to be completed. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Robyn Provost Carlson, the Select Board unanimously voted to extend the*

*scheduling of the 18 Jacobs Road building use for the Hill-Town Theatre to a future date when group activities may be resumed on condition that the space is available.*

**Tax Collector Resignation:** The Board read a letter of resignation from Tax Collector, Elizabeth Nichols. Gloria explained that in conversation with Betty she stated that she needed to retire from all employment in order to begin collecting her Franklin County retirement. Being reappointed after her official retirement was an option she was willing to consider. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Robyn Provost Carlson, the Select Board unanimously voted to accept with regrets the resignation of Elizabeth Nichols from the position of Tax Collector effective May 1, 2020.*

**Conference Call toll charges:** For anyone not having a telephone plan with unlimited long-distance calling, there is a toll charge for the conference calls. It was discussed that there should be a distinction Gloria said she would abstain from a decision because she pays for long distance calls herself. *On a motion by Robyn Provost Carlson and a second by Brian DeVriese, the Select Board voted with two in favor and one abstention to authorize payment of long-distance telephone charges occurred by anyone required to attend a teleconference meeting.* As with other town-related expenses, individuals must provide documentation.

**Parking Lot at 18 Jacobs Road:** It was reported that the highway plow-truck driver had sunk in a soft, wet area in the parking lot and had to be towed out. It had torn up a section of pavement. Brian stated that once the area has dried out, it will be able to be repaired.

**Teleconferencing Protocol:** Gloria said she would write a draft policy for the Board to review and will also research details about using Zoom for conferences.

**March 31 Agenda:** Items to discuss at next Tuesday's meeting will include review with Finance Committee of the FY 2021 Article 3 and reviewing the CEC contract for the landfill monitoring.

**Town Coordinator's Report:**

COVID-19: Postcards prepared and mailed, reverse 911 call, website notices posted, building and safety signs posted, communications through EMT meeting, phone, email, and in-person. Communicated with accountant and treasurer to set up separate accounting numbers to track related payroll and expense spending for possible reimbursement.

Fuel Bids: Submitted heating oil amounts to FRCOG for bidding. Jeff had submitted amounts for gasoline and diesel fuel.

SDG Insurance: Met with Robert Bute of SDG Insurance, a company that offers municipal insurances. He gave Ned Wolf, Alice Wozniak and me a brief overview of the company. He would like to be provided with information re: buildings, employees, vehicle fleet, to give quotes about various policies his company would offer.

**Mail:**

**Dave Fierro email re: Minimum Wage:** The accountant asked if the Board wanted all employees who are compensated at minimum wage to have that increased to the new state minimum wage of \$12.75. This includes positions of library substitute and post office substitute. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin*

*Fisher and a second by Robyn Provost Carlson, the Select Board unanimously voted to increase the per hour wages for library substitute and post office substitute to \$12.75 retroactively to January 1, 2020.*

**Betsy Kovacs request to close town playgrounds and basketball court:** On learning that this request is from Betsy alone, the Board recommended that she take it to the entire Board of Health and get their opinion before the Board decided.

**FCSWMD:** The Board agreed that they do not need to meet in person with Jan Ameen but can be provided updates through email communications. The Board would like clarification on using the RDP grant to pay for some of the recycling fees in FY 2021.

**Essential Employee List:** The Board reviewed and approved the presented list of essential employees that will have access to town buildings for work during this emergency.

**Emergency Management Team and Local Emergency Planning Committee:** Since the Board has issued a Declaration of Emergency, Incident Command is activated, and the Emergency Management Director is in charge if there is an emergency incident.

**CDT On -site drug and alcohol testing:** The Board would like the highway superintendent to research this and contact MASS Highway for information.

**Documents to Sign:** Payroll and vendor warrants are at the town office and need to be signed. There is also an employee request for personal time.

There being no further business to come before the Board: *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and seconded by Brian DeVriese, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:24 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Hilma A. Sumner  
Town Coordinator