

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Via Conference Call
April 7, 2020

Called to Order at 6:05 p.m. with Brian DeVriese, Robyn Provost Carlson, Gloria Cronin Fisher and Hilma Sumner, Town Coordinator, in attendance.

Other Attendees: See attendance sheet.

Review of Agenda: Due date of property tax bills

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 31, 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 April 1, 2020 as read.

COVID-19 Municipal Items:

Property Tax bills: Brian reported that he had asked Ned Wolf, as Finance Committee chair, to consult with the tax collector and then discuss with the Finance Committee about whether the town should extend the due date for property taxes and/or suspend interest and penalty fees for a length of time. The Board will make a decision at their meeting tomorrow if the recommendations have come in.

Solar Feasibility Study: There was one bid received to do the study that will be paid for through the received META grant. Brian had sent the bid document to members of the Energy Advisory Committee and had received only positive comments. He will now forward the document to the other Board members for review so that a decision may be made next week. The one response was received from the Solar Store in the amount of \$8,900.00.

Highway Superintendent Update: Jeff Johnston reported that everyone on the highway department is healthy. They are working apart from each other and only one man will occupy a vehicle at a time. He is paying attention to the departments in the surrounding towns as well as reviewing what would be best for the town. Jeff would like to keep the work week as five, 8-hour days believing that the crew won't get too stressed or too tired, whereas they would be more likely to do so with a 4-day workweek.

The highway department has put out 400 tons of rock on dirt roads as they have battled the mud season. They have also been ditching on Sadoga Road and Stone Hill Road. On Monday the beaver deceiver on Swamp Road was replaced by Beaver Solutions and paid for by grant money from the MSPCA.

Jeff stated that he and his wife had not found childcare yet. They were being careful because of his wife's work and that she might bring the coronavirus home. Jeff said they did not want to spread the virus to someone providing childcare.

Rescheduling Annual Town Meeting (ATM): Moderator Eric Sumner joined the meeting and affirmed that, because the Annual Town Meeting had not been posted, the Board could freely reschedule the date. The new date needs to be prior to July 1st. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Robyn Provost Carlson, the Select Board unanimously voted that given the emergency condition existing in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts due to the coronavirus outbreak, and in accordance*

with M.G.L. c. 39, s. 9, the date of the Annual Town Meeting of Heath originally scheduled for May 9, 2020 be rescheduled to June 13, 2020; said meeting to be convened at 9:00 a.m. at 18 Jacobs Road.

Rescheduling the Annual Town Election (ATE): The Board thought that keeping a continuity of scheduling between the ATE and ATM was important. Hilma explained that the only deadline that would change would be that of voter registration. The deadline would be move to 10 days prior to the new election date. *On a motion by Robyn Provost Carlson and a second by Gloria Cronin Fisher, the Select Board unanimously voted that, Pursuant to section 1 of chapter 45 of the Acts of 2020 and because of the state of emergency declared by the governor pursuant to executive order 591, Declaration of a State of Emergency to Respond to COVID-19, the Annual Town Election of Heath scheduled for May 8, 2020 be postponed and rescheduled to June 12, 2020.*

Rescheduling the Special Town Meeting (STM): Hilma suggested that the new reschedule date be set for May 14th which is 30 days from the current date of April 14th. If it needed to be rescheduled again, it could be held on June 13 prior to the ATM. Eric agreed that this would be acceptable to him. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Robyn Provost Carlson, the Select Board unanimously voted that given the emergency condition existing in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts due to the coronavirus outbreak, and in accordance with M.G.L. c. 39, s. 10a, the date of the Special Town Meeting of Heath, originally scheduled for March 24, 2020 and rescheduled for April 14, 2020, be rescheduled to May 14, 2020; said meeting to be convened at 7:00 p.m. at 18 Jacobs Road.*

Internet Technology Services: In discussing the proposal from the Northeast IT, the Board decided that FRCOG should be contacted to see when the report about shared services would be received and also to see if they have someone to review the offer. Other funding sources such as DLTG grant money needs to be researched. Northeast IT will be asked if they could design a chart with a basic comparison between the three levels of service that they offer and what services/projects were necessary and which ones were optional. The Board also stated that in doing such a transition, the various town departments need to have understanding of the upgrades that would be done.

COLA for FY 2021: Gloria had designed a chart of employee wages and how each would be impacted with three different percentages of increase. The Board agreed that this information would be revisited in the future as budget planning continued and input was obtained from the Finance Committee. It was noted that the FRCOG salaries were currently lower than most states. They were trying to increase salary levels to be competitive and the percentage (2.5%) was particular to them.

Town Coordinator's Report:

COVID-19: Reverse 911 call, website notices, posted revised building and safety signs, communications through EMT meeting, phone, email, and in-person. Spoke with Ken Erho about transfer station user practices that he would like included on the R911 call such as breaking down cardboard at home, bringing moderate amounts of trash at one time and unloading trash at a steady pace to keep everyone moving along. This will be discussed at tomorrow's EMT meeting.

Copier: Placed second call to Baker's Office Supply and a service person came on Thursday. The copier needs a new roller that causes carbon to adhere to paper and the technician needs to order it.

ATE, ATM & STM Regulations: Prepared statements with regulations, process and recommendation for the town election and two town meetings.

Town Report: Sent out another email request to committees who had not yet submitted reports.

IT Hotspot: Emailed with MTRSD Interim Superintendent Pat Bell and technology direct Adam Suzor to inquire about having an IT Hotspot installed at 18 Jacobs Road to increase availability of high-speed internet for students. Barbara Rode is contacting families to try to assess the need. Jan Carr reported that the Governor was working with Axia to negotiate getting an increased speed of five times the current level to all MBI locations, which includes Sawyer Hall, for no additional cost.

Buy Recycled: Sent out memo and policy to departments who purchase supplies encouraging the use of recycled products. This is a required action in order for FCSWMD to apply for DEP grant funds.

Mail:

E. Lively Resignation: The Board reviewed Eileen Lively's letter of resignation from the Council on Aging. The reason given for her resignation was the lack of meetings. Before the Board accepted her resignation, Gloria will contact chairperson Margo Newton and the other members.

Sunwave Electric: An email was received from Sunwave Electric confirming that the town was overcharged on the two accounts that the town has with them. The amount will be credited to each of the electric accounts.

J. Hamilton email: Mohawk Estates President Jenny Hamilton wrote an email with the concerns about broadband studies that were being done on properties in Mohawk Estates. She had gotten the impression that members of the MLPAC had walked on private properties and had complained that owners did not have 911 addresses. Brian stated that he would follow up with the MLPAC chair, Art Schwenger.

MTRSD updates: School Committee representative Barbara Rode forwarded several letters of updates regarding the IT hotspots, status of the school district actions, and the MTRS principal's report. The Board would like a thank-you note sent to Barbara and copies to the Interim Superintendent.

April 21st Agenda: Items for the agenda will include COVID-19 updates, awarding the Solar Feasibility Study, further IT services discussion and discussion with the Finance Committee about both Article 3 and employee COLA increase for FY 2021. The Board would also like to hold a Municipal Light Plant Board meeting and will request a written update from the MLPAC which would include further information about the MLP manager position that is to be formed.

Documents to Sign: Payroll and Vendor warrants; Ch. 90 request for reimbursement forms, and an acceptance of resignation letter.

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 7:40 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Hilma A. Sumner
Town Coordinator