

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Virtual Meeting
August 27, 2020

Called to Order at 5:00 p.m. with Robyn Provost Carlson, Gloria Cronin Fisher, and Brian De Vriese in attendance. The Chair noted that the meeting was being recorded.

Other Attendees: See attendance sheet.

Review Agenda: Added contact person for Heath Broadband.

Reviewed Minutes: *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of August 18, 2020, as amended.*

Public Comment:

Betsy Kovacs: informed the Board that the Board of Health voted to require face masks whenever entering a town building. An employee may remove the mask if they are by themselves or if they have a medical condition.

Nina Marshall: Nina voiced support for a learning hub or center because she thinks it's important for kids to see each other. She is concerned that children are lonely and feeling isolated. She suggested that Community Hall would be a good place for such a hub or center and volunteered to help supervise the children.

Susan Gruen: She noted that five people have now been CORIED so that they may volunteer at a student learning center and that there are several more people interested in being volunteers.

Karen Brooks: Karen said there is WIFI at Rowe Pond and that, if Rowe approves, the location could be a hotspot for Heath kids. She will get more information.

Back to School Plans

Robyn has been hearing from residents about the potential for learning centers in Heath. She also spoke with Mohawk Supt. Stanton, who toured Sawyer Hall, Community Hall, and 18 Jacobs Rd. The Supt. does not know if there is a need for Heath students to have a learning center. She and the School Committee are still researching needs for the District. The question arose, are we looking at something District driven or community driven? Some people in town want to have a learning/study center at Community Hall with socially distanced tables. The Board of Health, the Fire Dept., the Police Dept., and the town's insurance company will all have to weigh in on this. The same issues apply to Jacobs Rd. Gloria noted that all town buildings are still closed to the public. Robyn pointed out that it is premature for the town to be making decisions. Nothing can be done until we hear from the District. We need to know what responsibility we have and how we handle this. People seem to be going in different directions and we need to bring it together. The big issue is what will this cost the town? It was determined that more time needs to be given to this, including COVID-19 requirements and waiting to hear from the Mohawk Superintendent.

Brian said that Community Hall is proposed to have a new heating system installed and insulation put in so it may not be ideal for a student learning center this fall. He also wondered if the state will

continue to pay for the hotspot at the school. If yes, perhaps we could make space for other towns' children and adults working from home. If that were to happen, the question arose how do we deal with different student age groups and adults. There would need to be some kind of separation.

Robyn noted that school starts September 16 remotely. She thanked people for their interest and caring and for volunteering their time.

Special Town Meeting (STM)

A STM needs to be held fairly soon to approve the Mohawk Regional School District FY '21 budget. That will be the only article on the warrant. Discussed holding the meeting on Thursday, September 17, at 18 Jacobs Rd. The meeting should be short, so it will be held outdoors with no tent; people will be asked to bring chairs and there will be some provided.

On a motion by Gloria Fisher and seconded by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to hold a STM on September 17 outside at 18 Jacobs Rd. at 6:00 p.m. and to approve the STM warrant as presented by the Town Coordinator.

Executive Session

It was decided to hold an executive session on September 22 at 5:00 p.m. at Sawyer Hall to finish the business from a previous executive session.

Possible Road Detail for TriWire

Police Chief John McDonough made up a list of which roads he thought might need a police detail while TriWire strings wire for Heath's broadband system. In the interest of saving money, the Municipal Light Plant Advisory Committee (MLPAC) pared down the Chief's list to the roads they thought might need a police detail. Discussed both lists and what responsibility TriWire has for warning drivers. Rte. 8A above Litchfield's and the Mountain Rd. portion of South Rd. were noted as perhaps needing a police detail. Margo said if wire was being strung in the winter, perhaps we would need a police detail on some roads. A list of questions was drawn up for the Broadband kick-off meeting tomorrow, which includes representatives from TriWire. Gloria will attend the meeting as the Select Board representative.

Gloria moved that the Select Board approve the MLPAC recommended locations for a police detail with further discussion on Rte. 8A in some places as necessary. Brian seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

A contact person is needed for the broadband construction until an MLP manager is hired.

Gloria moved that the Board appoint the chair of the MLPAC as the contact person until an MLP manager is hired. Brian seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Paper Compactor

Discussed new versus refurbished paper compactor for the Transfer Station. It was noted that we don't have enough money appropriated for a new compactor.

Gloria moved that the town purchase a refurbished compactor. Brian seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Tiny Town Exemption

There are only certain circumstances in which the same individual may simultaneously hold more than one appointed and paid position in the same municipality. According to MGL c. 268A, sec. 20, there are exemptions to this, one of which is what is referred to as the “Tiny Town” exemption:

This section shall not prohibit an employee in a town having a population of less than three thousand five hundred persons from holding more than one appointed position with said town, provided that the board of selectmen approves the exemption of this interest from this section.

According to Town Counsel, this exemption goes with the concerned employee and is not a blanket approval for the entire town and for all time. At the present time, the Town of Heath has three employees who hold more than one appointed position. These individuals are Eileen Lively, Tim Lively and Hilma Sumner.

Gloria moved that, according to the exemption in MGL c. 268A, sec. 20, the “Tiny Town” exemption, Eileen Lively, Tim Lively and Hilma Sumner are approved to hold more than one appointed and paid position with the Town of Heath. Brian seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

From the Town Coordinator

Robyn said that the STRAP Grant was submitted today and that the Police and Fire Departments were awarded the grants they applied for to put radio antennas on 18 Jacobs Rd. and to purchase a generator for 18 Jacobs Rd. It was also noted that there will be a joint meeting with the Board, the FinCom, and Ken Rocke on September 15 to discuss school finances.

Future Meetings:

September 3, Thursday: Back to school discussion with School Committee members and Board of Health. Also, with the BOH, mask requirements, general relations with all boards, and discussion on reopening town buildings.

There being no further business to come before the Board: *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and seconded by Brian De Vriese, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 6:20 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Gloria Fisher
Heath Select Board