

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
18 Jacob Road
January 3, 2023

Called to Order at 6:00 p.m. With Robyn Provost Carlson, Susan Lively, Brian De Vriese, and Hilma Sumner, Town Coordinator, in attendance.

Others in Attendance: See attendance sheet.

Hilltown Youth Performing Arts: Directors Jonathan Diamond, Laura Iverson, Zach Arfa, Larry Sampson and Allie Martin discussed their four new requests to be included in the 2023 lease. The first request was for a slop sink to be installed in the room where much of the artwork and painting is done. It was agreed that they would purchase the sink and the Town would have the installation completed. Upon the knowledge that the freezer was a large walk-in unit with usage of it carrying an additional charge, HYPAs staff dropped their request for use. The third request was to cultivate two garden areas in locations that border the sports playing field. Hilma reported that she had seen the two areas that were unused. The gardens would be planted with perennial flowers.

Lastly, staff members described their hoped-for plan of painting a section of each of the two long walls in the gymnasium a sky blue. They would also like to install a row of 2 x 4 boards across the top of the blue painted area on the wall opposite the bleachers. (There is already such a row of boards above the bleachers.) From the boards they will hang murals to provide background for the winter performance.

The Board agreed to installation of the slop sink, cultivation of two flower gardens, and the painting and board installation in the gym. *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve a 12-month lease for 2023 that is updated with changes.*

Review Minutes: *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of December 7, 2022, as presented. Susan abstained.*

On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of December 13, 2022, as amended. Susan abstained.

Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Grant: This is a joint grant that was applied for by the towns of Heath and Rowe in the amount of \$40,000. Funds will be used to engage services of FRCOG staff for the purpose of designing a through hiking trail and completing the legal agreements of private landowners for trail construction on private property. *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to accept the grant on condition that the Rowe Select Board also accept the grant and that no Town Coordinator hours be used for administration of the grant.*

FY24 Budget Planning Process: Scheduling of budget hearings for several departments will be done by Hilma. The Board is hopeful that a member of Finance Committee will be attending MTRS budget subcommittee meetings. Hilma will research Covid-19 funds that are available either held by the Town or that could be applied for.

The Other Funds Expense report does not have any of the carried forward amounts added to the accounts. Accounts that have not yet had any activity this year are not listed at all in the report.

If there is need for a Special Town Meeting, it will include an article to transfer money for legal fees and to fund the feasibility study for a new salt shed. The need has not yet been determined.

Appointment with Sheila Litchfield: Sheila read a letter she had written and addressed to the Board. She expressed dismay over the divide in town and her hopes that something can be done to bring the town back together.

Susan thanked Sheila for the respectful manner in which she wrote. Robyn stated that she agreed with portions of what Sheila wrote while Brian said he needed time to reread the letter and think about what had been expressed. The Board also voiced concern that, perhaps, not everyone will accept their own responsibility for mending the division between some residents. Sheila responded that she thought the Select Board were responsible to facilitate communication. It was noted by the Board that a public comment time was held during almost every Select Board meeting.

Other thoughts from residents attending the meeting were that the Select Board meeting was not the place for open dialogue but perhaps a community forum where one or two topics were discussed with respectful dialogue. Another comment was that others could not just depend on the Board for such a process to occur. It was agreed that further dialogue was needed.

Renaming of the Former Elementary School: The Board explained that the name chosen several weeks prior was selected from a list of suggestions. They picked a name that seemed the most suitable based on the usage of the building. There was never an intention to hurt, belittle or offend anyone in the name that was chosen. Nor was there a desire to chose a name that was pretentious. "Community Center" would be ideal except for the similarity to the Community Hall.

Letter to Residents: The Board approved the idea of sending out a letter to town residents informing everyone of work and changes that had happened during the previous year. Areas such as status of the town buildings and facilities, the AT&T lawsuit, upcoming goals, and another invitation to offer suggestions for renaming the former elementary school building will be described in the letter. If the letter is prepared by mid-January, it can be mailed with the Town Clerk's street census forms to save postage.

Rescission of Name: Because the name had been designated by Board vote, it was necessary for the Board to retract the vote of renaming the former school. *On a motion by Brian De Vriese and a second by Susan Lively, the Select Board unanimously voted to rescind the name of Heath Community Center for the former elementary school.*

Salt Shed: It is thought that the feasibility study would take a few months. The proposal will be sent to the Highway Superintendent to get his thoughts on the possible use of Ch. 90 funds. Hilma will check into the possibility of whether ARPA funds would cover such an expense.

CDBG Grant: The Board requested that Hilma reach out to Brian McHugh to ask about the possibility of applying for a grant to pay for a study of Sawyer Hall.

Public Comment: Barbara Gordon thanked the Board for their willingness to reconsider and reselect another name for the former elementary school.

Town Coordinator's Report: The Board agreed that this report no longer needed to be written providing that the oral report was also described in the minutes.

- Met with Bob Dean of FRCOG to discuss the Town's priority needs. Bob explained that FRCOG is reaching out to each town to get information about their needs to find common areas with the intent of applying for grant funding to cover similar projects for several towns.
- Hilma spent time viewing a video and researching the process of applying for a Mass. Cultural Council grant to help fund renovations in the Community Hall.
- On January 6th a preconstruction meeting was held for the Route 8A bridge. Participating in the meeting were Carl Ayers, VHB engineer, Sara Kelley and Gary Palumbo of J.H. Maxymillian, Jeff Johnston, Highway Superintendent, Will Emmet, Fire Department, Brian of the Board and the Town Coordinator. Procedural expectations were discussed and clarified.

Mail:

- M. Freeman re: name discussion
- C. Dauer re: renaming muni building
- 9 emails of support
- Power Supply Q3 2022 Status Report
- DOER re: Specialized Energy Code Adoption Process
- KP Law re: 10-year celebration
- J. Diamond re: HYPA appt. information
- Public Comment policy, code of conduct example and Heath draft
- Heath Cultural Council re: thank you & donation
- B. Gordon (HCC chair) re: change in appointment legislation
- Heath Herald re: reminder for article
- C. Rabbitt re: December Town Nurse report
- 4 emails re: Renaming of 18 Jacobs Road property

Next Meeting: January 17, 2023: letter review, DLTA survey, executive session with Finance Committee.

8:30 p.m. On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to adjourn the open session and convene in Executive Session pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, sec. 21(a)(3), To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declared.

For deliberation and strategy involving dispute over the operating assessment process between the Mohawk Trail Regional School District and the Town of Heath.

Respectfully submitted,

Hilma A. Sumner
Town Coordinator