

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Jacobs Road Municipal Center
Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Called to Order at 5:00 p.m. With Robyn Provost-Carlson, Will Emmet and Hilma Sumner, Town Coordinator. Absent: Elissa Viarengo.

This meeting was recorded.

Others in Attendance: See attendance list.

CAF II Funds Certification: A request was received from the Municipal Light Board asking the Select Board to certify that the funds received in 2024 were used for broadband expenses. *On a motion by Will Emmet and seconded by Robyn Provost Carlson, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve and sign the certification letter.*

Approval for placement of new kiosks: Pat McGahan, Parks & Recreation Committee, explained that a new Woodlands grant of \$25,000 had been received for the purpose of purchase and installation of three kiosks. These 3' by 6' kiosks will be used for trail maps similar to the kiosk at the entrance of the Burnt Hill Catamount Trail. One will be placed in the town center, one at JRMC, and one near the H.O. Cook State Forest. The Highway Superintendent will be consulted for exact placement of each kiosk. *On a motion by Will Emmet and seconded by Robyn Provost Carlson, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve placement of three trial kiosks to be placed in the town center, at JRMC, and near the H. O. Cook State Forest.*

National Grid Pole Hearing Information: The Board discussed the five-page document sent by National Grid officials answering questions from the previous pole hearing. They also reviewed a list of questions from Municipal Light Plant Manager Sheila Litchfield regarding a statement on page five about Heath Broadband. These questions will be sent to the company officials ahead of the pole hearing. Ned Wolf, Municipal Light Board member, reiterated one of Sheila's points, that the 3-phase poles are not related to Heath Broadband.

Will remarked that the difference in cost between the Burrington Road option and the Avery Brook Road option is not much different (\$71,000 more for Avery Brook Rd.). He also questioned the apparent time crunch and wondered why National Grid appeared to consider this project as urgent. It is unclear how the cost of burying the cable was calculated. Details about the differential of the number of pole relocations for each option were also unclear.

Resident Barbara Gordon questioned National Grid's outage rates, while Wanda Mooney asked if the cost for relocation of the broadband cable was a cost to the entire town. The cost will be paid by all towns who are members of the WiredWest collaborative. The cost will reduce the amount of income that is returned to the towns.

If poles are installed on the roadway in front of Mooney's house, they would need to be placed four to five feet up the embankment to be out of the roadside drainage ditch. The Highway Superintendent is concerned that all pole placement does not obstruct water runoff.

When power outages are evaluated, proper tree care and vegetation control will be effective. National Grid does pay for all the tree removal done on their behalf. The report indicates that approximately 75 percent of outages are vegetation related.

It was agreed that the first public hearing went well; National Grid listened and answered questions. Robyn is hopeful for a similar meeting on Thursday, after which the Board might take a vote.

Pole Hearing with National Grid is Thursday, January 15, 2025 @ 6:00 in the JRMC.

HYP A License Comments: No discussion took place as there was no written information from Jonathan Diamond. He is also unavailable on January 21. Hilma will arrange another meeting.

Appraisal of Rental Space: Kitchell Lee, real estate appraiser, came today to see rental areas in town buildings.

Mail:

- L. Perry re: thank you for pickleball
- P. McGahan re: concerned about damage to gym floor
- Free Cash Report: Robyn is doing a 5-year look-back with Dave (accountant). Some trends changed this year. There will be a conversation (Dave will be invited) at next Tues. meeting about why we have no free cash. We need to look at how we construct the budget - if no wiggle room, free cash gets hit. FinCom will also be in attendance.
- A. Schwenger re: request for CAF II certification
- BoH re: air sensors have been installed in JRMC and Sawyer Hall
- C. Rabbitt: December Town Nurse report
- M. Smith re: email to Highway Superintendent

Next Meetings: Tuesday, January 21 at 5:00 p.m.

Beginning February 4 meetings will be held every week to include time for budget planning with the Finance Committee.

5:50 p.m. *On a motion by Will Emmet and seconded by Robyn Provost Carlson, the Select Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.*

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Thane
Office Assistant