

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Jacobs Road Municipal Center
Tuesday, February 4, 2025

Called to Order at 5:05 p.m. With Robyn Provost-Carlson, Elissa Viarengo, Will Emmet and Hilma Sumner, Town Coordinator.

This meeting was recorded.

Others in Attendance: See attendance list.

Appointment: Tyson Howard, Highway Superintendent—The Board reviewed Tyson’s 90-performance review with the recommendation from Will and Hilma to increase his hourly wage by \$1.00. Tyson’s objectives for the coming year include evaluating whether there is a more efficient way to do tasks, looking for tasks which Tyson could take responsibility for to take off someone else’s workload, and utilizing continuing education courses. *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and a second by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to increase Tyson Howard’s wage by \$1.00 per hour beginning February 2, 2025.*

The Highway Department budget hearing will be held on February 18th. Tyson will have an updated Ch. 90 schedule as well as his list of capital requests. The Board also asked him to prepare a list of the complete status of the condition of all the town vehicles and motorized equipment.

Review of Minutes: *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of January 7, 2025, as amended.*

On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of January 21, 2025, as presented.

Appointment: Planning Board—Members Doug Mason, Bill Fontes, Steve Thane as well as Will Emmet, briefed the Select Board about their plans for proposing changes to the Zoning Bylaws. These changes will include an update to the solar bylaws, personal wireless regulations that would include 5G, road frontage requirement for backlot development, accessory dwelling units update, and an updated definition of public roadways as it pertains to zoning.

The Planning Board members are working to draft the proposed changes with the understanding that the changes need to be almost complete more than 45 days before the Annual Town Meeting. Town counsel will be consulted to gain information about how roadways should be defined more precisely and asked if this discussion needs to be held in an executive session. Hilma will contact Atty. Robin Stein to get more information to be shared with the Planning Board.

Salt Shed Project: The deadline for bid submission has been extended until Monday, February 10, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. Bids will be opened at that time. Plans for the salt shed demolition and site preparation are still being planned.

Community Hall Windows Project: Restorer Don Hayward has submitted a proposal to renovate the ten upstairs windows for \$29,050.00. The definite date of project completion needs to be known. Since Don’s proposal did not include storm windows, Robyn will contact another company to get pricing for the combination storm/screen windows. *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and a second by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to accept the proposal dated February 2, 2025, submitted by Don Hayward, with the assumption that the work will be finished before the grant deadline.*

Appointment: Finance Committee—Members Dena Briggs, Wendy Whalen, Ned Wolf, and Bob McGahan, joined the meeting. There was a discussion about salary planning and analysis. It was explained that cost of living adjustment (COLA) is determined in budget planning and given to employees equally. There are also merit raises given, if warranted, or other wage adjustments based on factors like averages on the FRCOG Wage and Salary Survey.

The committee will join the Select Board every other week for budget hearings. On February 18th there will be a budget hearing for the Highway Department and other departments. The Accountant will attend the meeting, and department chairpeople will be invited so that the Accountant can explain the new expense reports. For FY2026 budget planning purposes, the building maintenance coordinator will be asked to update his list of building projects and prioritize the tasks on the list.

Future budget meetings will include March 4th with the Library, Police Department and Municipal Light Board invited. On March 18th MTRSD officials will meet with Select Boards from both Heath and Colrain to discuss the report of the 2D8T sustainability study.

Rental Space RFP/Appraisal Update: The Board reviewed a proposal from a licensed appraiser to determine what the market value price would be for spaces available to rent in town buildings. After discussion, the Board agreed that they wanted to issue an RFP to seek tenants for surplus spaces in both Sawyer Hall and Jacobs Road Municipal Center. Suitable uses of tenants were determined to be cultural, arts, office space, educational, technology, and storage. An RFP document will be prepared.

Hilltown Youth Performing Arts (HYPA): The Board discussed the various ‘talking points’ that had been emailed prior to their February 11th meeting with the Select Board. Concern was expressed that anyone using an area of town property does so with conscious thought for the overall care of the space and gauges use of any equipment with this in mind. There was also discussion that, although the Board would like to continue to work with the group, however, a proper license or lease needs to be in place and followed. The Select Board believes that they owe it to the Town to broaden the search for tenants.

The final update to the rental license will name the rent at \$2,000 per month. Acceptance of any earmarked gifts in lieu of rent must be evaluated as to the actual building needs at the time of an offer and when the offer is obtained. The term will be either 12 months from January 1, 2025, or the award of an RFP, whichever is less. After the final changes are made, the license will be sent to HYPA.

Mail:

- M. Thurber re: appointment of a school committee member
- J. McDonough re: Nov. & Dec. police reports
- N. Anzuoni re: Dec. fire department report
- S. Stanton re: 2D8T analysis report to Select Boards schedule.

- M. Nash re: 2D8T January report
- FCSWMD re: recycling market values
- Sen. Mark re: Feb. office hours
- Rep. McGovern re: congressional update
- KP Law re: update of SJC ruling on flavored tobacco ban.
- J. Diamond re: several emails regarding 2025 rental license.
- K. Lee re: agreement for valuation assignment service
- S. Litchfield re: CAF II money deposit
- K. Rocke re: comments on MTRSD FY26 budget
- C. Rabbitt re: January town nurse report
- KP Law re: Federal Executive Orders and Memoranda

Next Meetings: Tuesday, February 11 at 6:00 p.m.

8:40 p.m. *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.*

Respectfully submitted,

Hilma A. Sumner
Town Coordinator