

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Jacobs Road Municipal Center
Tuesday, April 15, 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.

Review Agenda: Added Police Department, COA food sale, propane tanks, excise tax late fees.

Review of Minutes: *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of April 8, 2025, as amended.*

Public Comment: Pat McGahan commented that the theatre group used some of the wooden spools in the winter performance without any felt or other covering over the rough edges or protruding nails.

Highway Road Signs: The final list of signs has been compiled, reviewed by all five participants, and compared against the road list in the General Bylaws. Signs will be green with white lettering and the town logo imprinted on each sign.

National Grid Updates: After discussing the response of National Grid, company officials met with town officials, numerous officials from emergency-related state departments, Representative Natalie Blais, Jon Gould from Senator Mark's office, and a member of the Governor's western office, the Board stated that they would like to have the company put in writing the steps that they are going to take in the future to prevent the absence of accurate and clear information. Rep. Blais asked for totals of extraordinary expenses that each of the five towns incurred during the three-day power outage. Hilma has gotten information from some of the town officials involved but needs to get information from the Fire Chief. The Board also asked that a letter be drafted to Rep. Blais giving her details of the experience in Heath. It will also be suggested that there be a subsequent meeting with officials from the five towns, FRCOG officials, Rep. Blais, and Senator Mark.

Salt Shed Update: Construction drawings for the structure have been received. Foundation design will be prepared by the Iron Horse engineers. The structure design is 72 feet in length to make the foundation blocks fit more smoothly. *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the proposed salt shed design by Calhoun pending the Highway Superintendent's approval.*

Cudohofsky & Associates did a quick review of the plans but stated that structures are not within the scope of their expertise. They will return the retainer, minus any fees that have been deducted.

The Board reviewed the one quote that had been received for demolition of the current salt shed. The work will include removal of the materials. ***On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to accept the bid from Hillman Construction, LLC, for \$23,900 for demolition, \$6,650 for base preparation, and \$500 for a tri-axle load of base material.***

Hoosac Environmental took samples of materials from the former EOC office on April 10th to test for asbestos. Test results will be returned in about ten days, and a report will be written and sent shortly afterwards.

Sawyer Hall Repair Update: Carpet has been chosen for the entry and hallway. ***On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the carpet quote of \$2,318.96 dated April 10, 2025, from Booska Flooring.***

A contractor is needed to repair the ceiling in the women's bathroom, the ceiling outside the men's bathroom, and a place in the stairway wall where the plumbers needed to expose the water pipes and make repairs. Elissa will speak to a local carpenter who handles small-scale jobs such as this.

Proposed Changes to Zoning Bylaws: The proposed bylaw changes have been revised and the structure of the changes arranged in the order necessary. The content has been added to the ATM warrant.

ATM Warrant Discussion: The Board reviewed the latest draft of the warrant. ***On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the ATM draft warrant to be reviewed by town counsel.***

FY 2026 Budget Discussion: Ten percent will be added to the maintenance/utility account for each of the four town buildings to allow for inflation costs and minor repairs that may be needed during the fiscal year. The Board agreed to enter the Finance Committee recommended amount of \$100,000 for the principal payment of the broadband loan. The account for health insurance will be increased to include another family plan rate in case it is necessary for the next town coordinator.

Town Meeting: Means of providing childcare during the meeting were discussed. It was mentioned last year to allow for voters with young children to attend the meeting. Elissa will speak to Lyra Johnson Fuller who leads the children's story hour.

Building Maintenance Report: The Board discussed the recent report from the Building Maintenance Coordinator on the condition of town buildings. Robyn will make an updated spreadsheet with the findings of this report and information compiled in 2020 by the Building Facilities Committee. Some more immediate projects that quotes need to be obtained include furnace parts for Sawyer Hall and masonry work for the porch brick work.

MTRSD FY 2026 Budget Discussion: Following an inquiry from a resident, the Board decided that people could address any questions directly to School Committee Representative Budge Litchfield or resident Ken Rocke who has given extensive study to the educational finances.

Propane Tanks: Sizes of the propane tanks at different buildings were outlined. At the highway garage and fire station there is a 1000-gallon tank and a 500-gallon tank. At both the Community Hall and Sawyer Hall there are 120-gallon tanks.

Police Department: The Board discussed their concerns about speeding drivers in town. It is an increasingly significant issue with drivers passing other cars and school buses, and close tailgating. There needs to be more police presence at appropriate commuting hours. It is thought that there may need to be a restructuring of the department's use of office hours. The Board would like to see the amount of time spent on activities recorded in the monthly reports. The police chief's annual performance evaluation is scheduled to be conducted by Will on Thursday.

Council on Aging (COA) Bake Sale: The COA would like to hold a donation-only bake sale at the annual town meeting. The Board agreed that offering nourishment during town meeting is helpful to the voters.

Excise Tax Demand Fee: Following the Finance Committee's recommendation that the demand fee for delinquent payment of excise tax fees. Hilma will speak with the Tax Collector to determine her opinion and knowledge about the process of increasing the fee. The Board also suggested that both the Treasurer and the Tax Collector attend a meeting to discuss a time calendar for delinquent tax payments.

Mail:

- J. Proujansky re: Mass-Care proposal
- FCSWMD re: "Spring Clean" Sweep Bulky Waste Recycling Day
- FCSWMD re: Regional Repair Event
- FCTS re: Legislative breakfast & Building ribbon cutting

Next Meeting: April 22nd

7:56 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