

TOWN OF HEATH
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Franklin, SS.
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES
of Voted Actions

May 9, 2026

The Annual Town Meeting, held at the Jacobs Road Municipal Center, 18 Jacobs Road, Heath, was called to order at 9:07 a.m. by Moderator Eric Sumner with a quorum present. There were 77 registered voters, or 8 percent of the total 571 voters present.

Before reviewing the articles, the Moderator reviewed town meeting protocol, the use of microphone for speaking, and the seating location for non-voters attending the meeting.

Article 1: The reports of the Town Officers as published in the 2025 Annual Town Report were accepted as presented by majority vote. Robyn Provost of the Selectboard spoke to the dedication of the Annual Report to Tim Lively for his years of commitment to Heath; a standing ovation was observed.

Article 2: The Town Clerk read the results of the Annual Town Election held on May 8, 2026. Elections of officers not elected by ballot were taken up. The following offices were elected on the Town Meeting floor for the ensuing year:

Fence Viewers (3 members)	Michael Cucchiara Anne Emmet (Assessor) Karen Brooks
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Tree Warden (1 position)	Steven Thane
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Measurers of Wood & Bark (2 members)	Nathan Clark Daniel Clark
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Field Drivers (4 members)	Karen Brooks Nina Marshall Michael Freeman Jeff Peck
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Sexton (1 position)	Matthew Lively
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A motion was made, seconded and approved by majority declared by the Moderator to move up articles 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 and to act on them in that order.

Sheryl Stanton, Superintendent of the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont regional school districts spoke to articles 4, 5 and 6; she thanked the Selectboard and Finance Committee members for their work in the budget process noting the rising cost of fixed services, health insurance and special education:

Article 4: The Town voted unanimously to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$995,297.00** for payment of the Mohawk Trail Regional School District Operating Assessment.

Article 5: The Town voted unanimously to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$15,730.00** for payment of the Mohawk Trail Regional School District Capital Assessment, which includes the Colrain Central School Capital Assessment.

Article 6: The Town voted unanimously to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$1,307.93** for payment of the Mohawk Trail Regional School District Capital Expense for the replacement of a fire alarm control panel at the Colrain Central School.

Rick Martin, Superintendent of the Franklin County Technical School (FCTS) spoke to Articles 7 and 8, noting there will be 19 Heath students attending FCTS next fall; he also noted a difficult budget process with rising health insurance and transportation costs. Superintendent Martin also noted the Technical School receives no rural aid.

Article 7: The Town voted unanimously to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$175,613.00** for payment of the Franklin County Technical School Operating Assessment.

Article 8: The Town voted unanimously to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$2,398.27** for payment of the Franklin County Technical School Capital Assessment.

Article 3: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate, or otherwise provide, a sum or sums in accordance with the proposed budget to defray the operating expenses of the Town for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, as presented in the posted warrant.

The Finance Committee shared a few remarks about the budget and the process. Alice Wozniak proposed voting on the budget as several blocks instead of reviewing each line item in an effort to save time. The Moderator suggested that for next budget season a discussion of this idea be included during the budget process.

The Moderator read the budget line by line as he has done in the past. All non-questioned items were voted as a block and passed unanimously.

The questioned line items 10, 12, 20, 26, 34, 38, 49, 63, 67, 70, 75, 91, and 95 were taken up individually. All questioned line items passed by majority declared by the Moderator for the amounts requested.

Article 3 - Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget

	FY26 Budget	FY27 APPROVED	% Change
General Government			
1 Moderator Stipend	100.00	100.00	0.00%
2 Select Board	3,500.00	3,500.00	0.00%
3 Select Board & Office Expenses	7,100.00	8,100.00	14.08%

4	Salary Town Coordinator	81,848.00	79,329.00	-3.08%
5	Salary Office Assistant	10,244.00	10,531.00	2.80%
6	Boards Clerk	8,196.00	8,425.00	2.79%
7	Finance Committee Expense	150.00	150.00	0.00%
8	Reserve Fund	3,500.00	3,500.00	0.00%
9	Town Accountant Expense	30,000.00	30,900.00	3.00%
10	Accountant's Support	500.00	4,500.00	800.00%
11	Assessors Stipends	3,500.00	3,500.00	0.00%
12	Assessor's Expenses	17,000.00	22,250.00	30.88%
13	Salary Assistant Assessor	19,542.00	20,089.00	2.80%
14	Treasurer's Salary	15,960.00	16,407.00	2.80%
15	Treasurer's Expense	4,000.00	4,000.00	0.00%
16	Salary Tax Collector	21,996.00	22,612.00	2.80%
17	Tax Collector Expense	7,300.00	7,575.00	3.77%
18	Tax Taking/Liens	10,000.00	5,000.00	-50.00%
19	Legal Fees	35,000.00	30,000.00	-14.29%
20	Salary Post Office Manage	30,086.00	30,928.00	2.80%
21	Salary Post Office Substitute	2,788.00	2,866.00	2.80%
22	Salary Town Clerk	20,007.00	20,567.00	2.80%
23	Town Clerk's Expense	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00%
24	Election Workers Stipend	1,500.00	1,200.00	-20.00%
25	Con Com Expense	2,350.00	2,350.00	0.00%
26	Planning Board Expenses	500.00	1,000.00	100.00%
27	Plan. Bd. Chair Stipend	375.00	275.00	-26.67%
28	Plan. Bd. Member Stip.	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00%
29	Technical Support Town Buildings	26,000.00	32,932.00	26.66%
30	Build. Maint. Coord. Salary	40,170.00	44,047.00	9.65%
31	Sawyer Hall-Maint./Util.	20,500.00	25,000.00	21.95%
32	Town Garages-Maint./Util.	22,000.00	25,000.00	13.64%
33	Comm. Hall-Maint./Util.	13,500.00	16,000.00	18.52%
34	Lawn Mowing, Ctr. & Ceme.	10,500.00	18,000.00	71.43%
35	JRMC Maint & Utilities	73,000.00	83,000.00	13.70%

36	Ins/Prop/Casualty/Workers	64,000.00	73,448.00	14.76%
37	FRCOG Assessment	20,505.00	21,510.00	4.90%
Total General Government:		631,217.00	682,591.00	8.14%
Public Safety				0.00%
38	Salaries-Police Department	30,245.00	32,023.00	5.88%
39	Constables Stipend	300.00	200.00	-33.33%
40	Police Expenses	7,050.00	7,050.00	0.00%
41	Fire Chief Stipend	6,870.00	6,870.00	0.00%
42	Firemen's Incentive Award	12,500.00	12,500.00	0.00%
43	Fire Department Clerk	-	729.00	100.00%
44	Fire Department Expenses	32,500.00	32,500.00	0.00%
45	Emergency Medical Service	2,500.00	2,500.00	0.00%
46	Emergency Personnel Stipends	1,600.00	-	-100.00%
47	Emergency Mgmt. Stipends	-	1,100.00	100.00%
48	E911 Coordinator Stipend	-	250.00	100.00%
49	Emer. Mgmt. Expenses	350.00	350.00	0.00%
50	Colrain Medical Emergency Service	22,000.00	22,000.00	0.00%
51	Code RED	2,164.00	1,955.00	-9.66%
52	An. Cont. Officer's Stipend	2,987.00	3,046.00	1.98%
53	Regional Dog Kennel Assmt	385.00	462.00	20.00%
54	Animal Inspector's Exp.	250.00	250.00	0.00%
55	Animal Inspector Stipend	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00%
56	Wildlife Damage Control Exp.	950.00	1,000.00	5.26%
57	Tree Removal Expense	5,350.00	5,350.00	0.00%
Total Public Safety:		129,001.00	131,135.00	1.65%
Education				0.00%
58	School Comm. Stipend	3,000.00	-	-100.00%
59	FCTS School Comm. Stipend	-	800.00	100.00%
60	MTRSD School Comm. Stipends	-	2,000.00	100.00%
Total Education:		3,000.00	2,800.00	-6.67%
Public Works and Facilities				0.00%
61	Salary Highway Dept. Wage	186,160.00	189,622.00	1.86%

62	Highway Materials/Supplies/Utilities	102,630.00	105,195.00	2.50%
63	Vehicle Gas & Oil	42,000.00	42,000.00	0.00%
64	Hired Equipment/Services	4,500.00	4,500.00	0.00%
65	Salary Winter Hwy. Wages	23,000.00	24,150.00	5.00%
66	Winter Equip. Maint/Repr	10,000.00	10,500.00	5.00%
67	Winter Salt/Sand & Other	105,000.00	118,000.00	12.38%
68	Salary Winter Temp. Help	10,000.00	12,000.00	20.00%
69	Salary Summer Temp. Help	2,000.00	3,500.00	75.00%
70	Salary Summer Hwy. Wages	-	3,000.00	100.00%
71	Franklin County Solid Waste	3,428.00	3,824.00	11.55%
72	Salary Transfer Station Attendant	15,747.00	16,188.00	2.80%
73	Dump Transportation/Tipping	39,590.00	39,590.00	0.00%
74	Hazardous Waste Disposal Day	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00%
75	Landfill Expense Account	5,600.00	8,700.00	55.36%
Total Public Works and Facilities:		550,855.00	581,969.00	5.65%
Human Services				0.00%
76	Bd of Health Stipends	1,375.00	1,375.00	
77	Bd of Health Expenses	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00%
78	Salary Town Nurse	12,647.00	13,001.00	2.80%
79	Town Nurse's Expense	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00%
80	Foot Care Clinic	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00%
81	Senior Ctr. Coordinator Stipend	1,750.00	1,500.00	-14.29%
82	Senior Center Oper. Acct.	500.00	-	-100.00%
83	COA Expense	250.00	800.00	220.00%
84	Veterans Service Center	2,110.00	2,400.00	13.74%
85	Veterans Benefit	4,410.00	11,340.00	157.14%
Total Human Services:		27,042.00	34,416.00	27.27%
Culture and Recreation				0.00%
86	Salary Library Personnel	44,645.00	46,043.27	3.13%
87	Lib. Trustee Stipends	875.00	475.00	-45.71%
88	Library Operating Expense	11,268.00	12,205.00	8.32%
89	CW Mars Library Annual	1,841.00	1,934.00	5.05%

90	Parks & Rec. Comm. Expense	250.00	250.00	0.00%
91	MLP Stipends	2,750.00	1,275.00	-53.64%
92	Historical Comm. Expense	250.00	250.00	0.00%
Total Culture and Recreation:		61,879.00	62,432.27	0.89%
Debt Service				0.00%
93	Int.Temp. Loans/Rev. Anti	500.00	500.00	0.00%
94	Broadband	100,000.00	100,000.00	0.00%
95	Broadband Note 1 Interest	45,717.00	31,279.56	-31.58%
96	Truck Note	-	25,000.00	100.00%
97	Truck Note Interest	-	5,456.25	100.00%
Total Debt Service:		146,217.00	162,235.81	10.96%
Miscellaneous				0.00%
98	Fran. Regional Retirement System	95,327.00	95,407.00	0.08%
99	Unemployment Compensation	500.00	500.00	0.00%
100	Health Insurance	116,990.00	146,432.00	25.17%
101	Life Insurance	150.00	150.00	0.00%
102	FICA/Medicare Empl. Match	19,000.00	20,000.00	5.26%
103	Special Projects Current FY	10,000.00	-	-100.00%
Total Miscellaneous:		241,967.00	262,489.00	8.48%
Totals:		FY26	FY 27	
Approved:		1,791,178.00	1,920,068.08	7.20%

Article 9: The Town voted unanimously to transfer the sum of **\$30,500.00** from Free Cash for the replacement of the overhead doors in the Fire Station and Highway Garage, including any incidental and related costs and expenses.

Article 10: The Town voted unanimously to transfer the sum of **\$3,709.00** from Free Cash for the purchase of one set of Firefighting Turnout Gear, including any incidental and related costs and expenses.

Article 11: The Town voted unanimously to transfer the sum of **\$60,000.00** from Free Cash to the Broadband Note account.

Article 12: The Town voted unanimously to transfer the sum of **\$7,500.00** from the Assessors Stabilization account for the purchase of upgraded assessment software to meet current industry standards.

Article 13: The Town voted unanimously to transfer the sum of **\$145,000.00** from Free Cash to the following accounts and with the designated amounts:

<i>General Stabilization</i>	\$55,000.00
<i>Audit Stabilization</i>	\$10,000.00
<i>IT Stabilization</i>	\$10,000.00
<i>Equipment/Vehicle Stabilization</i>	\$70,000.00

Article 14: The Town voted unanimously to accept a sum of money under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 90 to be expended for roadway improvements and to authorize the Select Board to enter into a contract with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Transportation for such purposes.

Article 15: The Town voted unanimously to transfer during FY '26 the sum of **\$794.08** from the Animal Control Revolving Fund for the use of the Heath Free Public Library.

Article 16: The Town voted unanimously to amend the General Bylaws, Section 7, Town Licensing, Fees and Taxation, Subsection 7.3.6, Authorized Revolving Funds, and Subsection 7.3.7, Procedures and Reports, to read as follows, with strike-through text to be deleted therefrom, and bold underlined text to be inserted therein:

7.3.6 Authorized Revolving Funds (Amended July 11, 2020; May 6, 2023)

REVOLVING FUND PROGRAM OR PURPOSE	DEPARTMENT RECEIPTS TO BE CREDITED TO FUND	REPRESENTATIVE OR BOARD ENTITY AUTHORIZED TO SPEND
<i>Hearings Revolving Fund – Costs associated with hearings</i>	Application Fees for Hearings	Conservation Comm., Planning Board, ZBA, or BOS
<i>Animal Control Revolving Fund – Animal Control Costs and Expenses</i>	Receipts and Fines in connection with animal control	Animal Control Officer, Town Clerk, or Select Board
<i>Board of Health Revolving Fund – Costs associated with inspections and to aid clean-up</i>	BOH inspections and permits	Board of Health or Select Board
<i>Council on Aging Meals Revolving Fund – Costs associated with preparation of senior meals</i>	Receipts from donations, or senior meals	Council on Aging Chair or Select Board
<i>Board of Health Vaccine Program Revolving Fund – Vaccine services, and expenditures</i>	Vaccine services, and expenditures	Board of Health, Town Nurse, or Select Board
<i>Recycling Program Revolving Fund – Operation of Town’s solid waste and recycling programs, membership in and services of FC Solid Waste Mgmt. District</i>	Receipts related to the Town’s recycling program	Select Board
<i>Senior Center Revolving Fund – Costs associated with normal operations of the Senior Center</i>	Receipts received from donations or generated by Senior Center activities	Select Board or Senior Center Coordinator

<i>Jacobs Road Municipal Center Use Revolving Fund costs associated with building maintenance and use</i>	Payments related to school building use	Select Board
<i>Treasurer Tax Taking Revolving Fund costs associated with tax taking</i>	Payments related to tax taking	Treasurer or Select Board
<i>Community Hall Use Revolving Fund costs associated with building use and maintenance</i>	Payments related to community Hall use	Select Board

7.3.7 Procedures and Reports. Except as provided in General Laws Chapter 44, §53E½ and this by-law, all applicable state and local laws and regulations that govern the receipt, custody, expenditure and payment of town funds shall apply to the use of revolving funds established and authorized by this by-law.

And further, fiscal year spending limits for such funds shall be established annually by vote of Town Meeting.

And, further, to establish the following fiscal year spending limit for such funds: (Amended July 11, 2020; May 6, 2023)

Authorized Revolving Funds	Fiscal Year Expenditure Limit
<i>Hearings Revolving Fund</i>	\$ 1,000
<i>Animal Control Revolving Fund</i>	\$ 2,000
<i>Board of Health Revolving Fund</i>	\$ 5,000
<i>Council on Aging Meals Revolving Fund</i>	\$10,000
<i>Board of Health Vaccine Program Revolving Fund</i>	\$ 3,000
<i>Recycling Program Revolving Fund</i>	\$10,000
<i>Senior Center Revolving Fund</i>	\$ 1,000
<i>Jacobs Road Municipal Center Use Revolving Fund</i>	\$30,000
<i>Treasurer Tax Taking Revolving Fund</i>	\$15,000
<i>Community Hall Use Revolving Fund</i>	\$15,000

Article 17: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town would vote pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 44, § 53E½, as most recently amended, to establish FY '27 spending limits as set forth below for the revolving funds established in Section 7, subsection 7.3 of the General Bylaw entitled, "Revolving Funds", with such limits to be applicable from fiscal year to fiscal year until revised by Town Meeting prior to July 1 for the ensuing fiscal year:

Authorized Revolving Funds	Fiscal Year Expenditure Limit
<i>Hearings Revolving Fund</i>	\$ 1,000
<i>Animal Control Revolving Fund</i>	\$ 2,000
<i>Board of Health Revolving Fund</i>	\$ 5,000

<i>Council on Aging Meals Revolving Fund</i>	\$10,000
<i>Board of Health Vaccine Program Revolving Fund</i>	\$ 3,000
<i>Recycling Program Revolving Fund</i>	\$10,000
<i>Senior Center Revolving Fund</i>	\$ 1,000
<i>Jacobs Road Municipal Center Use Revolving Fund</i>	\$30,000
<i>Treasurer Tax Taking Revolving Fund</i>	\$15,000
<i>Community Hall Use Revolving Fund</i>	\$3,000

Selectboard Chair Robyn Provost moved to amend Article 17 as written in the warrant with the deletion of the lines referencing the "Jacobs Road Municipal Center Use Revolving Fund" and the "Community Hall Use Revolving Fund" and deletion of the fiscal year expenditure limits associated with those funds. The amendment was seconded on the floor and passed unanimously.

The amended article was discussed and passed unanimously as follows:

Authorized Revolving Funds	Fiscal Year Expenditure Limit
<i>Hearings Revolving Fund</i>	\$ 1,000
<i>Animal Control Revolving Fund</i>	\$ 2,000
<i>Board of Health Revolving Fund</i>	\$ 5,000
<i>Council on Aging Meals Revolving Fund</i>	\$10,000
<i>Board of Health Vaccine Program Revolving Fund</i>	\$ 3,000
<i>Recycling Program Revolving Fund</i>	\$10,000
<i>Senior Center Revolving Fund</i>	\$ 1,000
<i>Treasurer Tax Taking Revolving Fund</i>	\$15,000

Article 18: The Town voted unanimously to authorize all Town departments, boards, and committees to apply for any new State or federal grants without prior permission from the Select Board, and to authorize the Select Board to accept such grant awards, provided that no matching funds or other costs are required of the Town.

Article 19: The Town voted unanimously to authorize the Select Board to acquire, by purchase, gift and/or eminent domain, the fee to and/or permanent and/or temporary easements, for public way purposes, including, without limitation, for the construction, alteration, installation, maintenance, improvement, repair, replacement and/or relocation of a culvert, rights of way, sidewalks, bridges, drainage, utilities, driveways, guardrails, slopes, grading, rounding, construction, landscaping, wetlands replication, and other appurtenances and/or facilities, to enable the Town to undertake the Jacksonville Stage Road Culvert Project and for any and all purposes incidental or related thereto, in, on and under certain parcels of land located on or near Jacksonville Stage Road and approximately shown on a plan entitled “Heath Route 8A (Jacksonville Stage Road) Property Plan,” dated February 3, 2026, on file with the Town Clerk, as said plans may be amended and/or incorporated into an easement plan, and land within 200 feet of said parcels; and further, to authorize the Select Board to enter into all agreements and take any and all actions as may be necessary or appropriate to effectuate the foregoing purposes.

Article 20: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town would vote to amend the General Bylaws of the Town of Heath Section 1, Conduct of Town Election, Subsection 1.2, Preparation and Posting of the Town Election Warrant, to read as follows, with strike-through text to be deleted therefrom:

1.2 Preparation and Posting of the Town Election Warrant: The warrant for the Annual Town Election and any Special Town Election will be prepared by either the Select Board or the Town Clerk and posted by the Constables at least seven days prior to the election date. Posting of all elections in the Town shall be done ~~at Sawyer Hall and~~ at the Jacobs Road Municipal Center, with posting on the Town website, if possible.

And further, to amend Section 2, Conduct of Town Meetings, Subsection 2.2, Preparation and Posting of the Town Meeting warrant, to read as follows, with strike-through text to be deleted therefrom:

2.2 Preparation and Posting of the Town Meeting warrant:

The warrant for any Town Meeting shall be prepared by the Select Board, in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 39, Section 10. The warrant shall state the date, time and place of the meeting, as well as all of the articles to be considered. The warrant shall be signed by a majority of the members of the Select Board and posted by the Constables at least seven days prior to the date set for the Annual Town Meeting and at least fourteen days prior to the date set for a Special Town Meeting. Posting of all town meetings in the Town shall be done ~~at Sawyer Hall and~~ at the Jacobs Road Municipal Center, with posting on the Town website, if possible.

Following discussion, the question was called and seconded. A voice vote to call the question was too close to determine. The moderator appointed and swore in Bill Fontes and June Peckingham as counters. A hand vote was taken. Calling the question passed.

A voice vote was then taken on the motion which did not achieve a majority vote as declared by the Moderator, therefor the motion failed.

Article 21: The Town voted by majority vote (Ayes- 41, Nays – 14) to accept and approve the petitioned article to acknowledge the following declaration:

Resolution in Support of “Act Establishing Medicare for All”

Whereas access to health care has become one of the biggest political issues of the day and is of great concern to ourselves and our neighbors; and

Whereas: Seventy-two countries provide universal publicly funded health care, but the United States does not; and

Whereas: the cost of health care keeps increasing thereby creating a burden and a concern to us all; and

Whereas: the number of people who do not have affordable access to quality health care increases, the health of our communities decreases, and

Whereas: the cost of health insurance increases and the policies include up-front costs of co-pays and deductibles that are a burden for employers and employees.

Whereas: in particular, the money spent by Cities and Towns to cover their employees is a large cost to both the employer and the employees; and

Whereas the Town of Heath would save \$251,276 (FY 2025 costs) per year in insurance costs under the “Act Establishing Medicare for All”, and

Whereas these funds could be better spent by Towns to improve the overall quality of life, and for employees to increase wages and salaries and other benefits; and

Whereas: 98% of households would have reduced healthcare costs under the “Act Establishing Medicare for All”, and

Whereas Massachusetts has been a leader in providing coverage for quality health care for its people; and

Whereas there is an alternative means of providing health care for all that also provides better coverage, without co-pays and deductibles, and includes medical, dental, vision, mental health, long term, and preventative care as provided for in the “Act Establishing Medicare for All”, House Bill – H1405, Senate Bill S860

Therefore be it Resolved:

That the Town of Heath endorses the House and Senate Bills, “Act Establishing Medicare for All” (H1405 & S860) and will communicate its support to the State Representative and State Senator.

Article 22: The Moderator asked for if there was any other business for discussion to come before the Town Meeting:

- the Town Clerk asked those newly elected to come forth to be sworn into office;
- Bob Gruen made a plea to citizens to come forward and join the school committee;
- Devon Clark noted an upcoming square dance to be held June 13 at the Fairgrounds;
- It was noted that Claire Rabbitt will be retiring from the Town Nurse position at the end of the fiscal year, she was thanked for her years of service to Heath residents.

The meeting was dissolved at 11:55 a.m.

Attest: A True Record

Mary Sumner
Town Clerk