

**MEETING MINUTES**

Town of Heath  
SELECT BOARD  
Virtual Meeting  
November 10, 2020

**Called to Order at 6:00 p.m.** with Robyn Provost-Carlson, Gloria Cronin Fisher, Brian De Vriese and Hilma Sumner, Town Coordinator, in attendance.

**Other Attendees:** See attendance sheet.

**Review Agenda:** No changes.

**Public Comment:**

Robert Dane commented that, to him, the time spent last week by the Select Board discussing the janitorial fee for Triwire shows the need for a professional commercial realtor for rental/sale of any building. He also asked what the Select Board intends to do.

Doug Mason inquired about the Community Hall internet and said that at least 20 people want to use Wi-Fi in the center of town.

Susan Gruen stated that there were nine people CORIed and 26 people interested in using Wi-Fi in the center.

Susan Lively stated that she would like to see one Building Use Committee and that it would be an opportunity to work together and launch a joint effort.

Chris Luis-Schultz said she had volunteered for the Community Hall Committee but had not been informed of the change.

Betsy Kovacs stated that Jim Hawkins, Building Commissioner, was going to evaluate what would be needed to secure the shed at 3 Ledges Road.

**Northeast IT:** Technicians Doug Sudnick and Shawn Weaver joined the Select Board meeting. They stated that the town network backbone, the switches and firewall, were outdated. Public Wi-Fi needs to be segregated from the town internet for security purposes. With the current equipment, the two cannot be segregated to a reasonable level of security. They could help reset the Community Hall Wi-Fi with the installation proposed in their August 21<sup>st</sup> upgrade proposal. It was noted that, even if the Select Board signed an agreement tomorrow, it would still be mid-December before the work could be done because the equipment needed to be ordered and the work scheduled. The technicians stated that the equipment offered for use by Doug Mason was not of industry standard to be secure and should not be used. One option to consider as the town plans for broadband is to have a town-only account go to Sawyer Hall and a public access/Wi-Fi account go to Community Hall. That would eliminate the need for a separate firewall (est. \$1,000) for the Community Hall.

The Assessors' office was provided with a loaner laptop for use while a new laptop was being shipped. It has arrived and a technician will be meeting with the Assistant Assessor tomorrow to install the software and transfer files. The Town Hall does not have the internet speed to be able to do cloud back-up of the tax collector files. That will be remedied once broadband is installed. Due to COVID concerns, Northeast IT is aware that some employees may need to work remotely and a VPN can be set up. The one caveat is that there needs to be sufficient internet speed for someone working remotely.

**Review Minutes:** *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of October 27, 2020 with amendments.*

**Mohawk Trail Entrepreneur Challenge:** Jade Schnauber of LEVER joined the meeting to introduce the challenge that is being offered for small woodland businesses to compete to win one \$25,000 grant for their young enterprise. A company must have been in existence for less than two years with income of less than \$100,000. It must also be a woodland-related business. It is being offered in association with the Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership. Hilma will post the information on the town website and send it to the Parks & Recreation Committee for distribution.

**Heath Town Finances Review:** Gloria is continuing to research and had no new information.

**Ch. 70 Minimum Contribution Letter:** A letter, drafted by New Wolf, Finance Committee chairman, was reviewed and a few additions were made. Ken Rocke had reviewed the draft. Hilma will send it to the two Heath school committee members for their review and comments. It was agreed that the message of the letter needs to be clear that it is being sent on behalf of Heath that, of all the MTRSD towns, is least able to fiscally accommodate an elimination or reduction in the Hold-Harmless policy. The letter also shows how a change will impact the capacity to educate MTRSD students. When finalized, the letter will be mailed to Senator Hinds and Representative Mark on behalf of the town.

**MLP Manager/Police Communications:** The Board agreed that with day-to-day matters the two offices would direct communication to each other and copy the Select Board in any emails. If there were questions involving more long-term situations or invoices, the matter would come to the Select Board. It was noted that police detail work is billed in 4-hour blocks even if the officer does not work for the entire time.

**Municipal Buildings Committees:**

Building Facilities Committee: Hilma reported that two appointees have been sworn in and two others have not been. She will contact the latter two to get sworn in so that the committee may begin meeting. The Board reviewed an email of interest from Mike Cucchiara to serve on the committee. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint Mike Cucchiara to the Building Facilities Committee.*

Since Dave Travers has a Zoom account Brian suggested that he be appointed temporary chairman to initiate a first meeting. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted appoint David Travers as temporary chairman of the Building Facilities Committee.*

Robyn and Brian will each work on compiling a list of immediate needs for the buildings. Robyn has contacted a metal fabricator who will do an estimate immediately for Sawyer Hall railings. Brian will take measurements for the length and grade and provide them for the estimate.

Building Use Committee(s): Positions were discussed by each Board member. Gloria stated that she was in favor of two committees because those who had volunteered each had their favorite building. Brian commented that he would like to see one committee and have the volunteers work together. Agreeing with the idea of one committee, Robyn remarked that it would create the most opportunity for people to work together. She also stated that even with a committee, it does not eliminate the opportunity for anyone to volunteer and help. Everyone is trying to reach a common goal of how to effectively use two town-owned buildings and, thus, people should be able to work

together. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board voted 2—1 in favor of forming one Building Use Committee replacing both the Community Hall Committee and the School Building Use Committee and that said committee would begin December 2, 2020.*

*On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to accept the Building Use Committee Overview with noted changes.* Hilma will update the document and include a copy with each appointment letter.

*On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint the following people as members of the Building Use Committee: Susan Gruen, Robin Jenkins, Lyra Johnson-Fuller, Kara Leistyna, Chris Luis-Schultz, Pat McGahan, Pam Porter, Mary Sumner, and Barbara Travers with Eileen Lively, Senior Center Coordinator, appointed as an ex-officio member and Barbara Travers appointed as a temporary chairperson.*

### **COVID-19 Municipal Protocol, Concerns, Updates:**

**Building Updates:** At the present time both Sawyer Hall and Community Hall remain closed to the public. Exceptions are town nurse appointments or an appointment made with an essential employee in Town Hall. The former school building is open for educational purposes for internet access and other use as approved by the Select Board. Betsy Kovacs comment that the Board of Health has put together protocol for use focusing on Community Hall. The Board requested that this document be provided to the Board as more information needs to be collected to develop a process for reopening buildings. It was also requested that people interested in using Community Hall send an email with their general intentions regarding purpose, hours and days of the week.

**Remote Meeting Protocol:** The possibility of getting a municipal account through Zoom or another entity was discussed. More information needs to be obtained. Hilma will contact Northeast IT to see if they have any suggestions or preferences.

**Meeting for Listening:** Brian reported that he had contacted three facilitators and none of them are able to assist with a meeting. Gloria stated that she did not know what the purpose would be of just hearing people's comments without a back and forth discussion. The Board agreed that sending out a survey is still something they would like to do. An executive summary of the report will be written and sent out with a survey. There will be no date set for a listening meeting at this time.

**Green Communities Grant Update:** Engineer Roger Harris of RISE will begin doing an analysis of the Community Hall for planning of a heat pump system. The Community Hall insulation project has been approved by DOER. Brian has a list of expeditors and will be calling an Energy Advisory Committee meeting to select one expeditor who can do the insulation work. The Supplemental Energy Reduction Plan draft has been completed. The Plan now includes the former school building, as well as Community Hall insulation and heat pumps. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the 2020 Supplemental Energy Reduction Plan.*

### **Town Coordinator's Report:**

- Northeast IT: Assisted with getting a loaned computer for the Assessors' office and ordering a new computer for the same office. Current computer is too obsolete and will not run updates thus disabling software.

- Green Communities Grant: Provided data to Alyssa LaRose for completion of the annual report which was submitted on Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>. Many thanks to Alyssa for doing the bulk of the work to get this prepared and accomplished.
- FEMA Application: Provided additional information as requested by the MEMA Contact Coordinator including brief description of duties performed by personnel involved.
- Equipment Disposal: In searching for storage space, I came across the office phones from the old system, old electronic equipment and other items. May I use my discretion as to what is kept and what is disposed of? The space it occupies is coveted.
- Police Detail: I have contacted three towns to inquire about the amount that was paid for police detail work during the final construction phase. Leyden (Triwire) \$40,000 for 35 road miles; Colrain (Sertex contract includes detail) est. \$35,000 for 86 road miles. Shutesbury-left message.
- Town Hall Ramp: Spoke with post masters of Charlemont and Shelburne to request that mail carriers park far enough forward in front of the building so as not to block the access ramp. Jeff will be ordering a “No Parking” sign to install at the end of the ramp.
- CARES Act: Began working on report of spending for the July-September quarter.
- Treasurer Report: Spoke with the town treasurer who said that there were 5 unemployment claims made against Heath town employees that she believed were fraudulent. She will be contacting each person and providing them with the phone number to report fraudulent activity.
- Town Clerk News: The Town Clerk’s office received a \$5,000 grant from the Center for Technology and Civic Life to offset expenses incurred due to extraordinary measures that need to be taken for elections to ensure COVID-19 safety protocol may be observed. For those who voted in person on Nov. 3, they would have noticed new individual stand-up voting booths, social distancing tape lines on the floor and a UV light disinfection wand being used. That equipment was all purchased with the grant money.
- Audit: Spoke with Tom Scanlon who suggested that the Board consider an FY21 audit next year due to the fact that, account-wise, this is a more challenging and complex accounting year. There are many more non-routine transactions due to COVID grant factors. Also, the treasurer was not hired until after FY21 began so that there would be no study of her procedures. The Board will consider his suggestion. If they have any questions for Tom, they may be sent to Hilma who will pass them on and request further information.

**Mail:**

- D. Purington re: library sign. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the installation of a removable “Library Open” flag for Sawyer Hall.*
- M. Cucchiara re: interest in serving on a buildings committee
- M. Reich re: remote meetings
- R. Viarengo re: use committee(s)
- D. Mason re: use committee(s)
- M. Medon re: October timesheet
- C. Rabbitt re: October report

- C. Curtis re: letter of support for Deerfield River Watershed Assoc. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to send a letter of support.*
- Gov. Baker re: Recycling Dividends Program grant
- Hawlemont News
- R. Dane re: buildings committees
- J. Gran re: buildings committees
- J. Gran re: internet access
- R. Dane re: rental
- E. Lively re: request to use 18 Jacobs Rd for foot clinic. Addition of last-minute revision to allow seniors to enter and exit through the front door. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve using the cafeteria at 18 Jacobs Road for a two-day foot clinic for senior citizens.*
- J. Ameen re: hazardous waste day invoice
- BDV re: GC Annual Report
- S. Litchfield re: MLP Manager report
- Office of the Attorney General re: Articles 10 & 13
- M. Thurber re: Business Manager plans
- S. Stanton re: Return to Learn revisions
- Hawlemont News, Nov. 6
- S. Litchfield re: COVID—19 stats update
- KP-Law re: COVID-19 New Executive Orders
- NE IT re: Oct. 22 email about Wi-Fi router to Comm. Hall
- NE IT re: Wi-Fi upgrade proposal
- S. Litchfield re: Internet, phone, NE IT services
- J. Schnauber re: Mohawk Trail Entrepreneur Challenge

**Future Meeting: November 17<sup>th</sup>**

Agenda Items: Northeast IT proposal, town finances review, Sawyer Hall railing, TFTF summary and survey.

*On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:36 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Hilma A. Sumner  
Town Coordinator