

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Virtual Meeting
December 29, 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.

Public Comment:

Bob Gruen said that he appreciated the new railings that had been installed on the Sawyer Hall front steps. He suggested that the doors to the second-floor offices could remain locked while employees are working and that appointments could be done over the phone, not in person.

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 December 8, 2020 as amended.*

On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of December 15, 2020 as amended.

Building Maintenance:

Salt Shed: Brian reported that Carson Ovitt said he was almost finished with his estimate and should have it finished in a couple of days.

3 Ledge Road shed: Carson Ovitt told Brian that he will speak with the Building Commissioner regarding the time schedule for demolition and what is required.

Sawyer Hall Railings: The railings, installed today, are not to be used for two days while the cement hardens around the pipe.

Air Ventilation: Jamrog was at 18 Jacobs Road today repairing the air exchange in the classroom wing of the building.

COVID-19 Concerns:

Employee List: The Board reviewed the list of essential employees who are allowed access to some or all town buildings. Several positions were added to the list. Also, language will be added about employee expectations while occupying an area of a building. Once updated, the document will be emailed to everyone holding a position on the list.

Sawyer Hall Concerns/Relocation of Offices: Ideas were discussed about reducing traffic flow in the entryway of the town hall. Some options mentioned included scheduling appointments when the post office is closed, installing an intercom system with a doorbell, installing new handles on the bathroom doors to keep them locked. The possibility of instituting non-criminal ticketing with fines was discussed. It was suggested that the assessors' office could be relocated to 18 Jacobs Road and the office mailboxes could then be placed in that room so that employees getting their mail would not enter the town coordinator area. Documents that needed to be signed could also be left in that room. Gloria expressed concern about entering the room because of the small space with no ventilation and warm air knowing that many different people were accessing the room. Other possible ideas were discussed. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to move the office mailboxes to the counter, and keep the town office door and both bathroom doors locked.*

Brian said his principle concern was employee safety and that each employee should make a decision that was right for them without feeling any pressure from the Select Board. At the former school building there are few people present at one time and each group is in their own space. There is also mechanical ventilation. Robyn encouraged making a site visit to form an accurate mental picture of the occupancy and traffic flow. She had had a conversation with Betsy Kovacs, Board of Health chairman, and Randy Crochier, County Health Agent, to hear their concerns with multiple uses of the building.

It was agreed that Gloria will look at other area post offices and speak with staff to see how traffic flow is handled. She will be going to Charlemont, Colrain and Shelburne Falls.

Hilma will speak with the Building Maintenance Coordinator to have him determine if he has adequate work time to complete proper cleaning of buildings.

Robyn reported that she has spoken with the Fire Chief about a possible barrier in the first-floor hallway in Sawyer Hall. Many options would not be allowed by code. He said the best option would be to build a wall with a door opened with a crash bar. She also spoke with the Police Chief who expressed concerns about the lack of space in his office. Several months ago, he had to confiscate some firearms and the limited secure storage space was filled to capacity.

Budget Discussion and Memo: A majority of the Finance Committee are able to meet with the Board on January 12th for an initial FY22 budget discussion. Next week the Board will develop a list of topics to discuss at this joint meeting. Hilma will send the Board a copy of the final expense report for FY20 and a copy of the FY21 final operating budget.

The Finance Committee had met and approved the Budget Memo as it had been drafted. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the Budget Memo as written.*

Heath Historical Society Request: No update.

Green Communities Update: The Community Hall insulation RFQ is posted and will remain open for responses until mid-January. Brian will call the engineer working on the Community Hall heating analysis to ask how that report is progressing.

Town Coordinator's Report:

- Northeast IT: Technician came Dec. 16 to complete email transition of most offices. Nurse and Fire Department are not done because computers could not be accessed. Follow-up conversations with technician to work out a few glitches in the transition. Dec. 23rd the two primary technicians came to view equipment set-up in town hall offices and to tour the former school building and analyze the feasibility of both a temporary move and a long-term move of offices. For a temporary move, what is currently installed is sufficient. When broadband is connected, there will need to be new cable run to the hook-ups to avoid a slowdown of internet speed.
- Landfill Inspection: Sent Jan Ameen information about having inspection done by analysis of drone photography. Her response is that it is not her decision and DEP would need to be given the information and request.
- Sawyer Hall Railings: Installed today!

- CDBG Grant: Received notice today that Heath had been awarded a grant with the town of Hawley for low-moderate income housing renovations.
- FRCOG Wage Salary Survey: Finished updating the survey sent from FRCOG with FY 2021 wage and salary information and returned.
- Budget Worksheets: Updated all department worksheets so they are ready to email when the memo has been approved.
- Sawyer Hall Concerns: Put new signs in the hall. Relocated desk with contact log in hopes that the public will not read through it. Tim put red 'x's on floor in front of mailboxes and in front of P.O. service window. Tape is already getting scuffed up. Two individuals (at separate times) went passed the 'Building Closed' sign. Both refused to comply with Charlene's directive to not go past the sign. One picked up the sign and carried it with her saying that she was then staying in front of the sign. The other just walked around it to get what she wanted. Tim has installed new door handles on the bathroom doors and the doors are now locked. Only employees will have access.
- Medical Leave: Hilma will not have confirmation until tomorrow or Thursday that the procedure will occur next week. Assuming it will proceed as scheduled, she will be meeting with Mary Sumner tomorrow to orient her to Town Coordinator tasks. Board members will send Hilma questions about coverage that they have thought of. Hilma has asked Nancy Thane to take care of some Town Clerk duties while she is out which means that Nancy will be coming into the building to work.

Mail:

- GCF & D. Fierro re: spending Special Projects money
- C. Robinson re: indoor hotspot
- R. Viarengo re: response to 12/15 meeting
- R. McGahan re: Sawyer Hall office concerns
- P. Porter re: clarification of learning hub
- P. McGahan re: thanks & support to move town offices
- M. Freeman re: situation of building space
- S. Gruen re: opposition to town office move, possible suggestions
- B. & S. Litchfield re: meeting suggestions
- RPC & B. Kovacs re: meeting follow-up
- D. Mason re: drone mapping
- RFQ for cellulose thermal/acoustical insulation
- S. Stanton re: school community positive case
- KP Law re: labor & employment issues of vaccine
- S. & S. Kinsman, G. Singley, K. Inman, E. Viarengo, B. Fontes, D. Wilkins, H. Godek, J. Palmer, C. Luis-Schultz, S. Hannay, B. & A. Fitzpatrick, R. Grabelsky, C. Rabbitt, J. Gran, T. Rabbitt, D. & M. Peterson, N. Wolf, A. Nichols, L. Berger—opposition to town office move
- R. Dane, J. Dane, N. Holland, J. Gran, L. Holdsworth, J. Travis, M. Smith, B. den Ouden, D. Stowe, B. Phillips, P. Dabrody, W. Gran, N. Marshall, D. Grinnell, K. Brooks, K. Peppard, B. Bourke, D. Dekker, D. Schnelle, R. Hesselbart—opposition to town office move
- H. Hathwell re: resignation from assessor position— *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to accept with regrets Heather Hathwell's resignation from the position of Assessor.*

An email had also been received from Anne Emmet expressing interest in serving as an Assessor *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint Anne Emmet to the position of Assessor until the next Annual Town Election.*

- J. Diamond & D. Blackburn re: support town office move
- M. Freeman re: request for careful examination of public arguments & rational
- B. Johnson re: support town office move
- H. Hathwell re: Community Hall window restoration
- RPC & J. Hawkins re: 3 Ledges Rd.
- RPC & B. Kovacs re: phone conversation with building use concerns
- RPC re: response to public health concerns
- RPC re: response to Mike Freeman email
- S. Stanton re: positive case (duplicate to 12/22)
- S. Stanton re: MTRSD update
- Hawlemont News Dec. 18
- L. Rodriguez re: winter break/Hawlemont school committee meeting
- FRCOG re: status of vaccinations for FC first responders
- MA Dept. Public Health re: COVID-19 statistics & relief update
- Heath Herald re: reminder to submit article
- S. Lively re: observations and call for a decision
- Th. Lively re: support town office move
- P. Porter re: thoughts about the 'Save the Center' campaign
- R. & D. Viarengo re: 1985 calendar sentiment
- RPC & B. Kovacs re: Sawyer Hall/Jacobs Road concerns
- N. Anzuoni re: email chain received at Fire Dept.
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Brian stated that the comments in the emails inadvertently sent to, and forwarded by, N. Anzuoni had an offensive tone. He also gave the opinion that, as long as some people were holding such views, the town would not be able to return to normal. Gloria expressed sadness that the tone was opposite to that of the 1985 Heath Historical Society calendar sentiment sent by the Viarengos. She also commented that when such thoughts are put in writing, they are there for posterity. Robyn added that respect needs to be shown for everyone.

Future Meetings:

January 5th: Agenda Items: Budget discussion agenda, building maintenance, COVID-19 & town offices concerns.

January 12th: Discussion with Finance Committee

On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hilma A. Sumner