

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Virtual Meeting
January 26, 2021

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: Items added: Indoor Hotspot, CPHS contract, minimum wage.
Items removed: Review of 1/19/21 minutes.

Public Comment:

Pam Porter made a statement that the cafeteria had been approved by the Board for use by the foot clinic. She also said she thought that one senior citizen who brought his granddaughter with him did so because of mobility problems.

Betsy Kovacs responded to Pam's second statement that she did not believe that was the correct explanation for that individual being accompanied by the granddaughter.

Building Maintenance

Salt Shed: Brian reported that he sent drawings to a structural engineer for review and determination of the work that was needed for the repairs.

3 Ledge Road shed: Following receipt of an invoice from Carson Ovitt for demolition and removal of the debris, Hilma suggested that the Board ask the Board of Health to pay \$4,500 from their Revolving Fund toward the total expense of \$6,600. The Select Board directed Hilma to make a written request to the Board of Health asking them to consider this at their next meeting.

Community Hall doors: A quote of \$4,200 was received from Carson Ovitt for replacing the double doors. Any decision will be postponed for now.

Jacobs Road boiler repair: White Heating has submitted a quote of \$2,755 to complete the necessary work. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the repair work for the boiler at 18 Jacobs Road to be completed by White Heating.*

Sawyer Hall doors: Brian suggested that the doors could remain as is, but new hardware could be installed so that the locking mechanism would work correctly. Robyn said she would ask John Lively for a cost for the door hardware that would need to be replaced.

COVID-19 Concerns:

Sawyer Hall Concerns/Relocation of Offices: Robyn has contacted various employees who have offices in the town hall. The Assistant Assessor is waiting on availability of phone service. The Board of Health clerk, has a laptop that can be used for remote work but has limited internet availability at her home. Presently, much of the Town Coordinator and Town Clerk work is being done by Hilma at her home although she is being assisted with work that must be done in the office. The Tax Collector is working from her home. The Accountant and Treasurer work mostly weekends and evenings when the Post Office is closed. Hilma will check to see if everyone who needs access to their office mailbox has a key for entrance at 18 Jacobs Road. Contact had been made with a Crocker Communications technician who stated that the phones would need a second power line besides

being connected to the internet. Hilma will speak with Tim to explain this and have him make another attempt at getting the phones to work at 18 Jacobs Road.

The Board reviewed the procedural list that Robyn had drafted. She will alert both the Building Maintenance Coordinator and the Building Use Committee that this is being written and a final version will be forthcoming.

Hawlemont-Heath Regionalization: Committee members Robert Gruen and Budge Litchfield were present for the discussion. It was explained that the grant application that was submitted was to pay for costs to explore regionalization. Although the application is coming from Heath, funds can be used to evaluate the aspects of regionalizing for all three towns: Heath, Hawley and Charlemont. If the grant is received, they would like to have funds split between legal expenses (\$20,000) and financial analysis (\$15,000). Since the conversations about regionalization have been ongoing for three years, facts and data need to be updated and upgraded to accurately reflect the current scenario. The work would include OPEB cost projection. Thank you was extended to Ken Rocke for alerting the committee members to this grant possibility.

The current responses to regionalization are that Hawley is eager and wants to move forward quickly while Charlemont has expressed a position of wanting to proceed carefully and examine the financial implications. The largest hurdles for Heath in the regionalization process are finding a way to responsibly handle OPEB costs which means a reworking of the financial analysis. The numbers would be reviewed by both The Management Solution (MTRSD business management) and MARS. Although it would be ideal to have the information for town meeting votes to be taken this spring, it is more realistic that it would not occur until sometime prior to the 2022 Annual Town Meetings.

Indoor Hotspot: Discussion of whether to have an indoor hotspot installed at 18 Jacobs Road centered around the level of safety of individuals in the building. Gloria voiced concerns about the increased number of people who might be in the building simultaneously. It was noted by Brian that the building has much more space, multiple entrances, mechanical ventilation and state occupancy guidelines would be followed. It was also mentioned that, if necessary, the gym door could be used as the access point. Also, it is possible to regulate the schedule for availability to pick the days and times when there is less usage in the remainder of the building. Robyn asked Hilma to find out what other towns have such hotspots and get information about how the process was working.

SB “Meeting” Discussion: Mail items that warrant discussion will be listed as separate agenda items. Any mail that has been received by Thursday afternoon will be sent out that day so that Board members can review for possible addition to the agenda. The deadline for correspondence to be included in the meeting mail will remain at noon on Mondays.

Budget Discussion: Finance Committee will be joining next Tuesday’s meeting to discuss ideas that they have for building the FY22 budget that will be presented at town meeting.

Green Communities Update: The Community Hall insulation projects bids are due on February 2nd. Brian said he did not know if they would be sent before the Select Board meeting.

Community Public Health Service (CPHS): Determination of agreement to this three-year contract will be delayed until the following meeting because not all Board members have reviewed the contract.

Minimum Wage: The state minimum wage increased to \$13.50 per hour as of January 1st. There are two employee positions that are paid at the 2020 minimum wage. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin*

Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to increase the minimum wage of all relevant employee positions to \$13.50 per hour retroactive to January 1, 2021.

Broadband Borrowing: The possibility of borrowing was briefly discussed at the last Municipal Light Board meeting but was set aside because money from True-up was expected to arrive. Now it is thought that this money has been spent. The Board agreed that they need spreadsheets to review the spending and income. It was agreed that the Municipal Light Plant Advisory Committee and MLP Manager would be asked to join an MLB meeting to be held next Tuesday evening for the one purpose of determining when to borrow the remainder of the authorized amount: \$450,000.

Treasurer: Hilma reported that the treasurer is required to be COVID tested tomorrow. If the results are positive, she will have to quarantine for two weeks. Kris Nartowicz said she would fill in on an emergency basis, if needed. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to authorize Kris Nartowicz to substitute as treasurer on an emergency basis if needed.*

Mail Items:

BoH Email Re: Use of Buildings—tabled until Feb. 2nd.

Building Use Committee Re: Use of Building—Robyn will send an email informing them that the Board is working on policy.

Learning Hub Volunteers Re: Guidance on Building Admittance—it will be clarified that only students, essential employees with designated tasks and those with appointments will be admitted.

Resident Re: Safety, Building Use, and Email Response—Hilma will provide an email response.

Resident Re: Ventilation and Use of Jacobs Road—Brian will send an email of explanation.

Senior Center Coordinator Re: Foot Clinic Report—Gloria volunteered to call and speak directly to the Manager to address concerns.

New Mail:

- D. Mason, P. McGahan, S. Lively, J. Weigand re: email policy
- R. Gruen, BDV, RPC re: Hawlemont regionalization
- J. Dane re: Heath Historical Commission changes
- C. Rabbitt re: 2021 DLTA forms and information—Hilma will prepare for next week.
- L. Johnson re: Unexpected entrance of people to learning hub
- P. Porter re: 18 Jacobs Road information
- M. Baldino, C. Robinson re: indoor hot spot
- A. Hinds re: 191st session of MA general court
- S. Litchfield re: Broadband borrowing
- M. Freeman re: Mail process and COVID concerns
- J. Weigand re: questions
- S. Litchfield re: Broadband borrowing
- B. Kovacs re: DLTA project and COVID
- Hawlemont Newsletter
- MTRSD Superintendent update

Next Meeting:

Meet with Finance Committee—budget planning and FRCOG Wage and Salary Survey
CPHS contract

DLTA project
Building Maintenance items
COVID and Building Use, Indoor Hotspot

On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hilma A. Sumner
Town Coordinator