

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Virtual Meeting
March 16, 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.

Public Comment:

Amy Krane expressed her appreciation for the work that the Planning Board had done in researching and preparing for the recent Special Permit hearings.

Review Minutes: *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the second draft minutes of March 2, 2021 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 March 9, 2021 as amended.

Building Maintenance:

Salt Shed: Brian reported that he was having difficulties working with the engineers in coming up with a solution that would work to repair the broken truss. What seemed likely to both Brian and the engineers is that a two-piece truss would need to be erected alongside the existing broken truss and the two secured together.

The question was raised as to whether the Highway Superintendent had obtained any information from other towns that had recently replaced their salt sheds. Brian replied that he thought the Building Facilities Committee might have information.

Community Hall doors and Sawyer Hall doors: Locksmith John Lively came and looked at the hardware on both Sawyer Hall and Community Hall doors. He will provide Robyn with quotes to replace the hardware.

18 Jacobs Road: The electrician has begun repair work on the Ansul system but needs to return to finish the work.

Planning Board Special Permit Report: Calvin Carr and Doug Mason, Planning Board members, joined the meeting to report that the Planning Board had voted unanimously to deny the WiValley application for a special permit to erect a wireless communication pole and equipment on Schoolhouse Road. Calvin cited the Zoning Bylaws sections 6.10.1 and 6.10.2b stating that the application did not meet the parameters of the allowances in these sections. The location in Heath is not essential to the company as it is possible for them to erect poles within the Town of Hawley that would allow broadband service to the same area of that town. Calvin also said that WiValley had requested to withdraw their application without prejudice but the Planning Board voted not to allow the withdrawal.

Doug Mason stated that he had sent the Board a letter with his thoughts but also wanted to point out that WiValley wanted to be exempt from annual reporting that is required of public utilities.

Gloria commented that she had attended the public hearing and that it had been noted that the location of a pole in Heath had been included on their original application to receive a state grant for broadband.

Mike Cucchiara was permitted to speak to this issue. He felt that there were different standards for a company like WiValley that is privately owned by OTELCO. His understanding was that WiValley acquires property that OTELCO will then sell in the future. He also stated that this was not a regulated public utility and does not have a right to install anything without a lease on the particular property. He suggested that the Board require WiValley to bring forth a business proposal because they were not a public utility. Brian responded that the situation involved not only business concerns but also aesthetic and health concerns.

Budget Hearing:

Broadband Concerns: With Finance Committee members Ned Wolf, Alice Wozniak, Janis Carr, Will Emmet, and Ken Gilbert, MLP Manager Sheila Litchfield, and Municipal Light Plant Advisory Committee members Art Schwenger, Anne Emmet, Paul Dabrody (as well as Ned Wolf and Janis Carr).

It was reported that the Cabot Risk Insurance of \$6,000 will be paid by WiredWest beginning in the next fiscal year but the \$1,000 membership dues needs to remain on the town budget for another year. Other accounts that will need to be continued through the town are: MLP Manager Salary, Loan Principal, Loan Interest, State Grant account, Broadband Borrowing account and the Drop Assistance account. Some of the budgetary considerations do not have to be dealt with at this time but will be future discussions when the elected Municipal Light Board is in place. Robyn remarked that it will be important to have communication between the elected MLB, the Finance Committee and the Select Board so that there is awareness as to what will be needed on the town budget moving forward.

Broadband Borrowing Options: The current borrowing method is through three BANs (Borrowing in Anticipation Notes). These are short-term loans with lower interest however, each time they are rolled over into a new loan, there is a \$550 fee. On the third year, at least one-eighteenth (1/18) of the principal must be paid alongside the interest that is due. The other option is to get a serial loan with fixed interest and principal. These loans are available in five, seven or possibly 10 year notes. The Board asked that the MLPAC and Finance Committee consult with the Unibank representative to request comparison figures: with each option, how much will the town end up paying and what would a payment schedule look like for each option. It was also noted that, if the town were to continue with the BANs for the next couple of years, then the town should have a better idea of the entire broadband status for the town and what income was being generated.

FY22 Budget Worksheet Review: The Board and Finance Committee reviewed a proposed layout for combining some accounts. The overall consensus was that Article 3 would be less confusing to voters if there was more information about what accounts were being combined.

Finance Committee will be drafting worksheets with salary/COLA possibilities for the next joint meeting on March 23rd. This meeting will also have a budget hearing with school committee members and regionalization committee members.

COVID-19 Concerns: Hilma reported that the large tent that was rented for town meeting last year cost \$1,700 and the charge for the public address system had been \$500. She also reported that there should be enough, or more, CARES Act funds to cover these expenses.

Representative to FCSO Animal Control: *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint Gloria Cronin Fisher as the representative and Brian De Vriese as the alternate to the FCSO Animal Control Advisory Board.*

Animal Inspector: Hilma was asked to research what the duties of the town animal inspector are before anyone is appointed to this position.

FRCOG Elevator Bid: *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint FRCOG to solicit bids for a three-year service contract for the Sawyer Hall elevator and the Community Hall lift.*

Green Communities Update: The Board requested Hilma to contact Energia and ask if there was a start date for the Community Hall insulation work, and if not, request that Heath be put on their schedule.

Sawyer Hall Sign Repair: Tim Lively was able to temporarily mount the announcement part of the sign onto the building railing. The Board issued a word of thanks to Tim for coming up with a creative solution.

Town Coordinator's Report:

- Annual Town Report: Continue to submit office and board/committee reports to Liz Canali.
- FY22 Budget Worksheet: Updated budget worksheet with all amounts that are currently known. Combined accounts as recommended.
- Orchard Valley Air Filtration: Met with Senior Center Director, Building Maintenance Coordinator and Jim Patterson, company owner on Friday. Jim had brought one of his filtration and purification units to demonstrate and describe. The unit has an ionization unit which allows air passing through to become sterile to bacteria and viruses. Further information in the mail and on their website. Unit purchased for Senior Center with COA funds.
- Fuel Bids: The Highway Superintendent and I compiled figures and submitted the FY22 fuel bids to Andrea Woods at FRCOG.
- CARES Act: Submitted the CARES Act report of expenses for Oct-Dec. 2020.
- Pole Hearing Protocol: Researched MGLs for Select Board process of pole placement request decision-making process. Emailed town counsel with process questions and sent signed Determination and Consent form to them.

New Mail:

- FRCOG Elevator Maintenance Service Bid
- N. Wolf re: BB borrowing
- J. Johnston re: money for stone (resolved, sort of)—Board agreed that this material would be part of the Winter Sand, Salt and Other materials account.
- C. Carr re: increase in filing fees for Special Permit app.
- Planning Board re: proposed zoning bylaw changes
- K. Roche, et al re: regionalization grant work
- D. Mason re: WiValley pole

- S. Litchfield re: Hut repair
- MassDOT re: Ch. 90 funding for FY21
- M. Freeman re: accuracy of meeting minutes
- J. McDonough re: information about police reform training
- A. Schwenger re: The American Rescue Act
- Future Air Filters re: air filtration unit purchased by COA
- BUC re: final letter to Jack Gougeon
- FCSWMD re: mandatory OSHA training for transfer station attendants
- Supt. Stanton re: MTRSD staff vaccination clinic
- Hawlemont News, March 12, 2021

Next Meeting:

6:15 Budget Hearing for MTRSD accounts
Regionalization research
Town salary & COLA review
FRCOG wage & salary review

On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hilma A. Sumner
Town Coordinator