

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Virtual Meeting
March 30, 2021

Called to Order at 6:02 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: Added reschedule the MLB meeting.

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 23, 2021 as amended.*

Building Maintenance:

Salt Shed: Robyn stated that the truss company that works with Leader Home Center will do a site visit. Brian will be able to meet them at the shed.

Community Hall doors and Sawyer Hall doors: Robyn was waiting on an estimate from the locksmith.

COVID-19 Concerns: Nothing to add.

Heath-Hawlemont Regionalization: Committee members Budge Litchfield and Robert Gruen, School Committee member Barbara Rode and guest Ken Rocke joined the meeting for this discussion.

Bob Gruen talked about the history of the regionalization discussion group stating that it was formed out of the discussions about closing the Heath Elementary School. Five years ago, the task force determined that Hawlemont was the best place to send Heath's children for elementary education. The regionalization group was established with two members from each of the three towns: Charlemont, Hawley and Heath. Hawley chose to send only one person. Budge reported that the group's meetings are legally posted and minutes have been taken since the inception of the three-town group.

The grant application was submitted this winter by Heath to cover all pieces of the regionalization process including legal expenses of all three towns. At this time the regionalization group does not have a next meeting scheduled as they are waiting on information from The Management Solution.

There was discussion about the need to form a Heath regionalization study group now that the work has become more involved and time-concentrated. Ken commented that it will be important for the town to research all options because of educational changes that have occurred during the previous years at the state level including the new Ch. 70 legislation. Part of the change is that the current trend is moving from a town-based point of view to a region-based point of view because of economic shifts within the state.

Ken raised the concern that the likelihood of spending the grant monies by the June 30th deadline is unlikely and recommended that the Board write a letter to the town's state legislators asking for an

extension for spending. The optimum extension date would be June 30, 2022 with a second option of December 30, 2021. ***On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to write and send letters to Senator Adam Hinds and Representative Paul Mark requesting an extension for spending of the 191 Grant funds to June 30, 2022.***

The discussion then turned to the process of securing financial and legal companies with whom to do consultation. It is not certain if an RFP will have to be issued or if necessary work can be separated with the cost of each task costing less than \$15,000 so that everything would fall under the procurement limits of MGL Ch. 30b.

It was agreed that Heath would form a regionalization study group of five members who would participate in background research and analysis while Budge and Bob would continue as the Heath members of the three-town regionalization group. ***On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to form a five-member Heath regionalization study group and appoint Budge Litchfield, Bob Gruen, Ken Roche and Barbara Rode as members.*** At their first meeting they will discuss a possible fifth person to be recommended to the Board. It was suggested that a parent with Hawlemont students may be an appropriate group member.

The Board requested that meeting postings be received and a copy of all meeting minutes be sent. Budge said he will contact Karen Totman at MTRSD to request this. Hilma will send Barbara the idea list that Ken had written. The first Heath study group meeting will be coordinated by Budge to get the group active.

FY22 Budget Review: Finance Committee members Ned Wolf, Janis Carr, Alice Wozniak, Ken Gilbert and Will Emmet joined the Board for this discussion.

The updated Art. 3 worksheet was reviewed line-by-line. It was agreed that this year's salary amounts should be inserted so that everyone will have a starting budget amount before determining employee COLAs. Dollar amounts of sub-categories will be italicized while the new account totals to be voted this year will be put in bold type for clarification. The title of the Animal Control Officer account will be changed from "Stipend" to "Assessment" to more accurately reflect that this is an amount determined from another entity. Hilma will get the amount of income that has been generated from the rental of 18 Jacobs Road and deposited in the revolving account.

FY22 Salary & COLA: An updated salary chart with various COLA rates was briefly reviewed but needs an adjustment to accurately reflect the 2022 minimum wage.

FRCOG Wage and Salary Survey: Finance Committee members had sent remarks and comparisons which had been compiled and sent to the Board. Those comments will be referred to as salaries are further analyzed.

Office Assistant: Robyn began a discussion of the possibility of increasing the office assistant position to be a permanently employed part-time position who would do some of the clerical work of the office. This would also allow an assistant to become familiar with the daily operations of the Select Board office so the person would be more adept in assisting when the Town Coordinator is absent for a period of time.

Other Budgetary Concerns: Items that will need to be included as separate warrant articles for monetary appropriations are the funds for rebuilding the highway loader and money to be added to the Tax Taking Revolving Fund.

Public Comment:

Barbara Rode shared that Jack Gougeon was scheduled to arrive home on Friday. The Heath and Colrain Fire Departments are sponsoring a drive-by homecoming parade on Saturday. Anyone interested in participating is asked to assemble at the Heath Fire Station at 12:30 p.m.

Jesse Wiegand asked if the Board was aware of the national news accounts of changes in Georgia voting laws which he considers stripping the voters of their constitutional right. Jesse then stated he had a list of questions about constitutional rights that he wanted to send the Board and was asking them to answer. Robyn responded that he could send the questions but there would be no commitment of answering his questions.

Pam Porter commented that she was in awe of the Board for going through the budget and doing all the work that had to be put into the development.

Status of Town Building Use: All three Board members expressed thoughts about town building use and reopening. Brian thought that they could begin to look at building reopening with restrictions. However, he is concerned about the recent reports of an uptick in COVID cases in different areas. Gloria noted that some municipal offices in other towns were beginning to open but with restrictions and fewer hours than usual. Robyn stated she had mixed feelings because she does not want to put the town in a position where there might be more issues if they did not proceed with caution. Community Hall still remains without a ventilation system and opening the upstairs windows poses a serious danger due to the weight and instability of the windows.

It was agreed that the conditions and restrictions at Sawyer Hall are to remain the same. The Board also discussed the possibility of committees that do not have many in attendance at their meetings would like to meet at an appropriate location such as 18 Jacobs Road or in a public outside location, they may do so as long as the people present adhere to the current state guidelines. It was decided that this will be discussed further at a future meeting.

Tim Lively, Building Maintenance Coordinator, sent a work list and tentative time schedule for completing the work at Community Hall. He stated that he would need almost the entire month of April to complete the work. Because of this, the Board agreed that the Community Hall would remain closed at least until May 1st. A date for any use would be contingent on the work completion and readiness of the facility.

Requests for Use of 18 Jacobs Road: After acknowledgement that the building has proper ventilation, the Board confirmed that with cautionary procedure and limitations, use of the building would be considered on an individual application basis. The following action was taken on the two applications for use that were presented at the last meeting.

On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve use of the cafeteria area on April 10 for a small family party sponsored by Mary Sumner.

On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the application for use by Jonathan Diamond for a Hilltown Recovery Theatre spring workshop for various dates as specified.

ATM Citizens' Petition Articles: The Board reviewed two separate citizens' petition articles that had been delivered to the office before the deadline to submit ATM warrant articles on March 25th. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to accept the two petitions and pass them to the Town Clerk for certification of the signatures.*

FCTS Heath Student Assessment: The Board reviewed documentation from the Franklin County Technical School business manager and from Heath School Committee member, Art Schwenger, that showed the Town of Colrain being assessed for one student who actually lives in Heath. The Colrain Town Administrator and a Colrain Selectman have requested to meet with Hilma and Robyn to discuss this situation. The meeting will take place in Colrain on Wednesday.

WiValley Application for Pole Placement: Robyn requested that Hilma email town counsel to see if they have received the signed release from the Town of Florida and also to ask if there are any time constraints on scheduling the pole hearing.

Green Communities Update: Brian reported that he got a response from Alyssa LaRose in regards to preparing an RFP for the heating system design work for Community Hall. She sent a revised narrative for the building's proposed HVAC replacement and also sent questions for the engineer which Brian forwarded to him. In order to have the design work paid under the grant, DOER has to approve the engineering proposal.

Governor Baker has signed the climate bill and Brian anticipates that the Solar Store will now be finalizing the feasibility study for solar installation and be sending their report.

Sawyer Hall Sign Repair: No development.

Town Coordinator's Report:

- Salary Grades & COLAs: Prepared updated worksheets for both salary grade pay scale and scenarios for COLA-increase salary rates.
- FY22 Budget Worksheet: Updated budget worksheet with all amounts that are currently known. Combined accounts as recommended and showed combined lines under the new account.
- Reopening Standards: Researched state guidelines for reopening public venues and workplaces according to Phase IV, step 1 regulations. Compiled into two separate outlines for the Board.
- Resident Call: Received a phone call from a resident living on a dirt road in town who wanted to congratulate the town highway crew for the hard work they have been doing at fight the mud. Hilma passed this message on to the Highway Superintendent.
- Northeast IT: Technician came Thursday and began upgrades of town computers. The new pcs came in to the company and were not as ordered so NEIT had to return them and request others. He set up the new laptop for Highway Dept. Jeff spoke to me today because he realized it has no camera. Hilma contacted NEIT to inform them that this was unacceptable and is waiting for a call back to resolve this.
- Animal Inspector: Emailed FRCOG to ask if they were aware of any regional animal inspector program or any towns in West County sharing an animal inspector.

- Annual Town Report: Continue to submit office and board/committee reports to Liz Canali. Sent out email to delinquent departments requesting their reports.

New Mail:

- B. Litchfield re: letter to TMS for regional study analysis
- MTRSD re: certification of operating and capital assessments
- N. Wolf re: cab & chassis amounts
- J. Johnston re: grader replacement quotes
- P. Porter re: current use of 18 Jacobs Rd
- J. Diamond/B. Kovacs re: information regarding Recovery Theatre use
- Citizens' Petition #1 re: require town municipal offices remain in town center
- Citizens' Petition #2 re: make town offices, services, buildings ADA compliant
- C & J Carr re: highway response to mud
- C. Carr re: PB synopsis of WiValley Special Permit application
- G. C. Fisher/S. Litchfield re: WG&E meeting and invitations
- FCSWMD re: March recycling market value/net processing fees
- D. Allard re: power supply RFP—The Board agreed that the 2-wk. time schedule proposed will be adequate response time.
- P. Porter re: request to use CH made to BUC
- BUC re: report of work—To be discussed at next meeting.
- FCTS, A Schwenger re: student tuition confusion—To be discussed at next meeting.
- KP Law re; public bodies meetings
- B. Rode re: Senator Hinds presentation to rural schools
- Hawlemont News March 26, 2021

Next Meeting:

6:15 Building Facilities Committee
 Town salary & COLA review
 BUC report
 FCTS student tuition
 ATM warrant
 Regionalization study group update

On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hilma A. Sumner
 Town Coordinator