

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Virtual Meeting
December 21, 2021

Called to Order at 6:16 p.m. with Susan Lively, Brian De Vriese and Hilma Sumner, Town Coordinator, in attendance.

Others in Attendance: See attendance sheet.

Review of Agenda: Remains as posted.

Public Comment: None.

Review of Minutes: *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of November 9, 2021, as submitted*

Northeast IT: The Board reviewed a quote for upgrading the central server to add data storage capacity to the central server for the purpose of allowing Patriot to install AssessPro onto this server. *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the Northeast IT quote pending the identification of the funding source.*

Covid Concerns:

It was reported that the Board of Health received 90 free home test kits. There was protocol developed that was used to distribute the kits to families with young children and those with vulnerable physical health conditions.

FY23 Budget Planning: Finance Committee members Tom Lively, Will Emmet, Ned Wolf, Alice Wozniak and Bob McGahan joined the meeting. It was explained that they had drafted a letter that was to go out with the emails the Town Coordinator will send to the departments. The letter includes a deadline of January 28 by which to submit budget requests. Budget requests will come back to the Town Coordinator who will update the master worksheet. The information will then be redistributed to the Select Board and Finance Committee.

The following points were agreed upon:

- Budget hearings would be held jointly.
- Sources of available funds for possible use, such as ARPA and Free Cash, need to be identified.
- Priority needs to be given to getting quotes for replacing the Salt Shed and then identifying source(s) of funding.
- Finance Committee will have liaisons for each department.
- Account numbers will be rounded up in hopes of avoiding slight overspending at the end of the year.
- Accounts will be consolidated as they were for this fiscal year for ease in comparison.
- Municipal Light Plant finances and how they interact with the Town will be analyzed.

It was discussed that amounts for Special Projects be pulled together earlier in the budget planning and look at the sources of revenue for possible funding options. It was mentioned that both Special

Projects and Preschool Support be presented in separate articles at town meeting and not as lines in the operating budget.

Assistant Assessor Alice Wozniak announced that the FY2022 tax rate is \$21.51 and is down \$1.01 from the previous year.

Broadband: Upon recommendation from the Municipal Light Board and review of the documentation the Board passed the following motions:

On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve adding an additional MIA policy to cover the fiber hut and its contents for \$8,384.00 to be paid from the Broadband accounts.

On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the letter requesting reimbursement of the dropline expense as outlined by state guidelines and to approve the Select Board chairman to sign on behalf of the Board.

Hawlemont Regionalization Study Team: Team members Budge Litchfield, Barbara Rodes and Bob Gruen met with the Board to discuss next steps in the elementary education changes for Heath. The Colrain and Heath Select Boards will need to meet and decide on what is acceptable language to put into the regional agreement for capital cost sharing. The ongoing share for the other elementary schools is determined by a five-year average of enrollment which then is the percentage of cost sharing. During the first five years it has historically been set by the enrollment numbers of each year. Agreement on the terms is needed by the end of February at the latest so that the MTRSD's legal counsel can write the language.

At the present time, Colrain has no outstanding debts although it is known that the parking lot will need to be repaved. This will also need to include an expense for engineering to redesign the drainage. The debt would begin in FY24 but be voted on this year. Both towns must approve for a project to move forward.

The Colrain Central School will hold an open house on January 25 to welcome Heath families. It will be held 6:00—7:00 p.m. A letter will be mailed out to Heath families with children in grades five and lower. The Select Board are also invited to attend.

Bob stated that he will be writing the final report for the regionalization grant.

Green Communities Update: The Town's new FRCOG contact, Allison Gage, is working on the quarterly report to submit to DOER. Brian reported that the RISE engineer had provided a quote for the HVAC work in Community Hall. The price was in the mid-\$200,000. It is much higher than the amount left in the grant which means that the project cannot go forward. Allison told Brian that she will be reviewing the remainder of the designated grant projects with Mark Rabinsky, DOER District Supervisor. There was also discussion whether it would be better to replace the Community Hall windows rather than to rebuild what is there and then to add storm windows.

Christmas Holiday: *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to allow benefitted employees to be dismissed for the holiday weekend at noon on Thursday, December 23, with pay.*

Town Coordinator's Report:

- Jacobs Road Generator: Highway Department has lifted generator in place. Electrician has completed electrical hookup work. In process of finalizing installation of propane tanks and getting that hookup.
- Hilltown Youth Performing Arts: Had communications with Jonathan Diamond regarding terms of the lease. Updated lease with proposed changes and sent to town counsel. Discussion with Building Maintenance Coordinator about bathroom and furniture use and painting line in equip. closet. He has requested a quote from a plumber to replace the preschool toilet and raise the sink. Got acceptance from Jonathan for final draft of the lease.
- KP Law: Correspondence and other communication with town counsel in regards to legal situations that the Town is presently having to address.
- Highway Incident: The Highway Superintendent received notification that MIIA is sending the town a payment of \$3,383.96 for damage incurred.
- Northeast IT: Shawn Weaver and Douglas Sudnick met with Hilma on December 16th for the first annual review with the company. Primarily it was to review the work that had occurred over the previous 12 months including the work that was enabled under the \$45,000 CCC grant. That work is now completed. Part of the discussion included the transfer of Patriot Software for assessing work. The Board of Assessors will incur an \$1,800 charge for installation on their computer. In order to carry the program and store the files on the Town's central server, there will be additional charges to the Town in the amount of \$1,301 if acted on before Jan. 1. (MS price only guaranteed until then.)

Secondly, a conversation was held about budgeting for future needs. Due to MS plans to release a new version of windows and not support the current version, and the rapid aging that occurs with electronics, all computers will need to be replaced by 2025. Their recommendation is to set aside a minimum \$5,000 per year to prepare for future needs.

Mail:

- Northeast IT re: quote for server upgrade
- H. Sumner re: questions regarding budget planning
- A. Wozniak re: request for change of position title—referred to Board of Assessors for recommendation.
- COA re: request for Room 135
- K. Barrows re: library state aid status

Next Meetings:

January 4: Robyn absent.

January 18: Municipal Light Board and MLP Manager; invite Finance Committee

8:31 p.m. *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to move to Executive Session pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, sec. 21(a)(6), To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property and the chair declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body; and to reconvene in open session.*

For deliberation and strategy for entering a long-term lease of space at the 18 Jacobs Road municipal building with Hilltown Youth Recovery Theatre.

Susan Lively Aye Brian De Vriese Aye

8:37 p.m. On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to adjourn executive session and to reconvene in open session.

Susan Lively Aye Brian De Vriese Aye

It was announced that the Board had approved a one-year lease with Hilltown Youth Performing Arts for space at the municipal building located at 18 Jacobs Road.

Acting Chairman De Vriese clarified with the Town Coordinator that the Select Board would not be reconvening in open session following the second executive session meeting.

8:39 p.m. On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to convene Executive Session pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, sec. 21(a)(3), To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declared. For deliberation and strategy in New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC d/b/a AT&T Mobility v. Town of Heath, Town of Heath Planning Board

Susan Lively Aye Brian De Vriese Aye

Respectfully submitted,

Hilma A. Sumner
Town Coordinator