

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Virtual Meeting
January 18, 2022

Called to Order at 6:01 p.m. with Robyn Provost Carlson, Susan Lively, Brian De Vriese and Hilma Sumner, Town Coordinator, in attendance.

Others in Attendance: See attendance sheet.

Public Comment:

Bob Gruen commented that he attended the last Finance Committee meeting and was pleased with it. He asked questions about why the Town did not get new Green Community funds and why questions he has asked in previous meetings have not been answered.

Jesse Weigand stated that today he had filed an Open Meeting Law complaint against the Select Board for several reasons regarding their executive session meeting on December 21, 2021. Kristin Weigand read her husband's complaint narrative.

Kevin Maloney introduced himself as a neighbor on Rowe Road who lives close to Knott Road and the site of the proposed cell tower. He said that he thought the Planning Board did a careful review in their process of evaluating the application for a special permit by AT&T.

Tara Mason asked why the negotiation and litigation process in the lawsuit is not left to the Planning Board.

Brian responded to Tara by informing her and the rest of the meeting attendees that the Select Board is the executive body of the Town and, as such, is the municipal entity that manages legal matters.

Robyn made a statement thanking everyone for their comments.

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 amended.*

On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of November 22, 2021, as amended.

On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of November 23, 2021, as amended.

On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of November 30, 2021, as amended.

Covid Concerns:

On a motion by Brian De Vriese and a second by Robyn Provost Carlson, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint Susan Lively as the Select Board member to the Covid Coalition.

An update from the Library Director reported that, upon consultation with the Board of Health, services have been returned to window service only due to the increase in Covid infection numbers in the area.

Board of Health member Susan Gruen reported that, beginning January 19, people will be able to order free test kits online.

DLTA Survey: After reviewing the suggestions from the Board of Health, the Board selected three choices for possible assistance from FRCOG, pending receipt of funding. The three areas were age-friendly communities and senior services, survey and assistance for deserted housing, and a shared conservation commission agent. Hilma will complete the survey form and send it back to FRCOG.

Green Communities Update: Brian reported that he had been trying to hold a conversation with the Town's new contact person, Allison Gage, but has not been able to hold a conversation with her yet.

COA Room Request: The Board reviewed a letter from the COA requesting use of Room 135 at Jacobs Road. The Board decided they would like a proposal of what activities would take place in the room and what other groups would be able to use the space. Sue will bring it back to the next meeting and Hilma will confirm by email.

Municipal Light Board (MLB): Members Art Schwenger, Ned Wolf, David Gordon, Anne Emmet and Bill Fontes along with MLP Manager Sheila Litchfield joined the meeting to discuss several concerns.

The letter of request for the subsidy payment has been signed and mailed.
The agreement for fiber hut insurance has been signed and mailed to MIIA with the payment.
Kinsley Company has done the generator maintenance and an invoice has been received.

Construction of the fiber network is finished although there remains a lot of installations to be done. There are a few repairs that are needed but those may have to wait until the snow melts. The company will be replacing a section of fiber on Taylor Brook Road between Avery Brook Road and Swamp Road that has been damaged. This will involve a scheduled outage that is likely not to exceed six hours.

The MLB is meeting with Rowe, Charlemont, Colrain and Leyden to form an agreement to work with WG&E to develop a design for a cooperative plan for backhaul of providers. It is expected to take a couple of months of continued conversation to finish the agreement.

The MLP Manager reviewed the provided financial summary. It was pointed out that there will be enough money to finish the project. One of the significant reasons is because the actual installation costs are less than estimated.

The MLB explained their request for office space stating that they had concerns about record storage which should occur on town property. There would need to be secure lockable space and suggested that perhaps the former assessors' office in Sawyer Hall could be used. Robyn responded that their request would be included in the consideration of planning the next steps for town buildings.

The Town will need to establish a Depreciation Reserve Fund for replacements and upgrades of equipment that will need to be done in the future. WG&E sent a value of assets to the MLB who anticipates that the account can be funded by revenue by the next year.

On February 21, a new security system will be installed. It is a three-day project. Access will be by key card. It was determined that cards will be held by the Police Department, Fire Department, Building Maintenance Coordinator, MLP Manager and two MLB members.

The MLB recommended approval of payment for two DocuSign invoices.

On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve payment of DocuSign invoices SERV #10 for \$23,350.20 and CNST #19 for \$14,730.25.

Community Hall Interests: Sue suggested that the Board host a joint meeting with the Historical Society and the Historical Commission to discuss their ideas about the building and its future use.

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.
- Building Maintenance Updates: Toilet was replaced in the former preschool room and the sink raised to adult level.
- KP Law: Correspondence and other communication with town counsel in regards to legal situations that the Town is presently having to address.
- Backhoe Repair: The Backhoe has been repaired from the accident. Total cost was only \$146 over amount of insurance check so the Town did not have to pay the entire deductible.
- Rte 8A/Branch Brook Bridge: Sent letter requesting immediate assistance to MassDOT district officials with Senator Hinds & Rep. Mark copied. Response received this morning that, following coordination with the school district and emergency services, the district will send a crew to make emergency repairs. The bridge will need to be closed for 36-48 hours while repair is made.
- Budget Worksheets: Emailed budget worksheets with Finance Committee letter to all town departments who manage one or more accounts in the operating budget.
- Move of Offices: Organized and oversaw move of the following offices to the municipal building at Jacobs Road: Tax Collector, Treasurer, Accountant, Board of Health. Police Dept. has the initial stage of the CJIS transfer completed; there is a final step. Police Dept. is gradually moving equipment and furniture. He has also secured two locking cabinets for additional secure storage that has been desperately needed.

Mail:

- A. Doster (FRCOG) re: DLTA request form
 - S. Litchfield re: discussion points for MLB appt.
 - A. Schwenger (MLB) re: request for office
 - K. Barrows (Library) re: update in service policy
 - K. Peppard re: Parks & Rec appointees
 - G. Garland re: COVID_19 home test update
 - C. Rabbitt re: Town Nurse report for December 2021
 - K. Nartowicz re: Treasurer's report for November 2021
 - FCRHRA re: program activities for fall quarter
 - K. Peppard (P&R) re: email & agreement for forest stewardship plan grant
 - R. Crochier re: CPHS update & DLTA recommendation
 - HRST re: Letter sent to Heath elementary families
 - W. Ennen re: MLB call notes
- AT&T-related letters--

- E. Whitaker re: email to BDV
- K. Peppard re: letter
- M&D Knott re: email
- J. Weigand re: email to Board
- K. Maloney & B. Adams re: letter
- J. Weigand re: letter to neighbors
- J. Weigand re: email to neighbors

Next Meetings:

January 25: Possible joint meeting with Colrain Select Board

February 1: Discuss building use, fire garage and the salt shed.

Parks & Recreation charge

Library Trustees appointment

February 8 & 22: Budget hearings

8:20 p.m. *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.*

Respectfully submitted,

Hilma A. Sumner
Town Coordinator