

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Virtual Meeting
February 15, 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.

Review Agenda: Added CDBG revised contract.

Public Comment:

Bob Gruen asked questions related to the need for professional assessment for buildings when there was the report done by the Building Facilities Committee. He asked what the cost would be for such a service and why the BFC report was not posted on the website.

Kevin Maloney stated that it is not just the height of the proposed cell tower that is objectionable but the industrial size roadway that will be built, the noise of weekly testing of generators. He stated that he believes it is the wrong location and the cost to the Town is more because the Select Board is not agreeing with the Planning Board.

Bill Fontes asked which Town buildings had work done that was paid for by the Green Communities Grant money and was it true that a building could not be abandoned or sold for five years after work had been funded by a grant. Brian responded that that was accurate and grant money had been used for work at Sawyer Hall, Community Hall and Highway/Fire Departments.

Jesse Weigand commented that he understood the law to read that the Select Board may enter executive session, not that they had to do so. He also stated that the Board did not reach out to the abutters' group, and they did not feel part of the neighborhood.

Review Minutes: *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of February 1, 2022, 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 February 8, 2022, as amended.

Review of February 8 meeting with Finance Committee: Before deciding on holding an STM, Finance Committee will discuss and give their recommendation following their Feb. 17th meeting. Hilma will ask Town Counsel for an estimate of the January invoice. Next week the Historical Society will meet with the Board and Finance Committee. The Municipal Light Board will have their budget hearing. The Highway Superintendent will be asked to contact the companies that had provided building estimates for a new salt shed and have them update their cost estimates.

Town Buildings: Robyn proposed that a professional assessment be done of all town buildings to compile an analysis of what renovations and repairs are needed at each location and give estimates of the various project costs. This will serve to pull together information in recent reports prepared by the Facilities Task Force and Buildings Facilities Committee. Such an assessment will also bring in any building needs that are new or have been overlooked. Sue remarked that she did not want just a 'band aid' approach but wanted something that would give a bigger picture of the status of the facilities and what would best serve the Town in the future. Such a feasibility study would also analyze what was the most appropriate to be housed at each location, stated Brian.

The Board asked Hilma to pull out the Building Facilities Committee charge and that possibly members could be given specific actions to research and ask them to research grant possibilities.

Communication: Robyn reported that Town Counsel had filed the Town's response to the Open Meeting Law complaint. This was sent directly to the Attorney General's office and Jesse Weigand who filed the complaint.

Robyn also gave an update on the AT&T v. Town of Heath lawsuit saying that she has recently been in communication with Town Counsel about the current documents that were filed with the court and are now available on the town website. She is writing a summary from the public documents and wants Brian and Sue to review what she has written and send any comments to Hilma.

Job Classification Overview: The Board decided that an overall review of job descriptions needs to be done. Part of the review would include updated classification grading. Hilma will send the three versions of the Board of Health Clerk job description to the present clerk for review. The possibility of a Boards clerk as an expanded position was raised. This clerk would work for the Board of Health, the Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, and the Planning Board. The Select Board requested that Hilma seek job descriptions from other small towns.

The Assistant Assessor has asked for a change of job title that would more accurately reflect the work. A recommendation will be sought from the Board of Assessors. Robyn also stated that the Assistant Assessor would like to run for a seat on the Board of Assessors. Hilma will research as to whether an election can happen before the needed ATM vote allowing the Assessors to appoint one of their own or if the ATM vote needs to precede an election.

It was decided to discuss employee wages at the March 8th joint meeting with the Finance Committee.

COVID Update: Numbers of new positive cases continues to decline. Test results of Monday testing at the Mohawk High School revealed only one positive results.

Green Communities Update: Brian said that the Energy Advisory Committee will meet this Thursday.

Town Coordinator's Report:

- Minutes: Prepared draft minutes of 2/1, and 2/8/2022 and finalized the draft minutes of executive session meetings and sent to Town Counsel for final review.
- KP Law: Correspondence and other communication with town counsel in regards to legal situations that the Town is presently having to address.
- Rte. 8A/Branch Brook Bridge: MassDOT will be doing an emergency repair of the bridge. The bridge will be completely closed to all traffic February 21—25. The detour will involve driving on Number Nine Road into Vermont or south into Colrain. Emergency Dispatch, the Post Office, UPS, FedEx, the town of Whitingham, VT, the MTRSD transportation office have all been notified. This is school vacation week so the closure should not impact bus routes. One email notice has been distributed and another will go out at the end of the week.
- Annual Report: Began preparation work for the 2021 Annual Report. Liz Canali has agreed to do the formatting again this year.

- Fax Lines: Bill Fontes volunteered to work with Tim in running cable line and connecting the two fax lines that are now at Jacobs Road. One is for the main office and the other is for the police department.
- Time Off: Both Tim Lively and John McDonough will be away next week. Lee Lively will be filling in for the Police Department. Hilma is working to engage someone to do basic cleaning in Tim's absence. There will also be someone on stand-by to clean the steps and sidewalks if it snows.

Mail:

- S. Litchfield re: Jan Carr commendation for BB work—Board will send letter also.
- A. Schwenger re: MLB Statement of Priorities
- K. Peppard re: Recorder letter about cell tower
- J. Clark re: communication concerns
- N. Thane re: cell tower support
- R. Sampson re: cell tower concerns
- M. Freeman re: charitable contributions of cannabis farmers
- FCSWMD re: hauling rates
- FCSWMD re: CY21 waste tonnage
- FCRHRA re: annual report on loan
- COA re: request to use Room 135 & documentation (redacted)
- FCRHRA re: CDBG contract amendment-- *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the contract amendment with the new date of expiration.*
- M. Thurber (MTSC) re: Special Commission on Rural School Districts
- J. Gran re: cell tower concerns

Next Meetings:

February 22: Budget hearings with Finance Committee, meet with Historical Society

March 1; Employee wages, job classification grading, Building Facilities Committee discussion

7:52 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