

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Virtual Meeting
March 1, 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:

Jesse Weigand commented that he and his neighbors do not want a cell tower constructed on Rowe Road. He asked if it was okay for the Select Board to make decisions without reaching out to the Knott Road abutters.

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 15, 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 16, 2022, as presented.

On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of February 22, 2022, as amended.

Board of Health COVID Policy Update: Gene Garland presented an update and summary of the latest health reports about state and local case numbers. He noted that, although the numbers are declining, the decrease in new cases is slower to reach the western end of the state. This is why Franklin County towns have relatively high percentages of new cases compared with the eastern areas. Percentage wise, Heath had the third highest rate of new cases for the week ending February 18th. Gene said the Board of Health (BoH) will meet on March 14th and analyze whether to rescind the mask mandate in town.

Gene also reported that the CDC issued an update that students did not have to wear masks on school buses and vans. On March 7th MTRSD will review the school district's mask-wearing policy. As the Town moves to an updated policy of optional mask wearing, the BoH will consult with FRCOG to see if they will be supplying any new educational posters.

Employee Testing: Town Nurse Claire Rabbitt and BoH member Susan Gruen worked with FRCOG and were able to obtain COVID-19 test kits for use with employees. They were both trained to administer the tests and how to read test results. The BoH is developing a policy for administering the test and will present it to the Select Board for approval. Employees will need to make an appointment with the Town Nurse in order to have the test administered.

COVID Collaboration meeting: Gene stated that the original meeting was postponed due to a conflict and a new meeting date had not yet been set.

Town Report Dedication: The Board agreed that they would send their ideas to Hilma who would compile them and then send a complete list out to the Board members for review and final thoughts.

2021 Annual Town Report: Robyn will write this year's report and asked that the 2020 Select Board report be sent to her.

Review of February 22 Meeting with Finance Committee: The Board discussed the need to update construction expenses for building a new salt shed. The cost estimates that had been obtained were about two years ago. The Board briefly discussed the repayment options for the broadband loan. The decision was made to wait until further review and consult further with the Finance Committee.

Town Buildings: The Board discussed the possibility of obtaining an evaluation from a professional analyst who would compile a report of all town buildings for repairs and renovations that would need to be done for ADA compliance and accessibility. Hilma will research whether an accessibility evaluation can be obtained free of charge.

Job Classification Overview: There was discussion about the need for the Select Board to evaluate all employee positions within the Town system and compare the positions as much as can be done with the FRCOG Wage and Salary Survey. Further research needs to be done about the possibility of developing a new position of a Boards Clerk. Hilma will obtain some job descriptions from other towns where a Boards Clerk already exists.

Robyn noted that evaluation of employee positions and classification grading and compensation raises questions about how does an employee move up within a particular pay grade. It may happen as a result of training or education that an employee has received. There was also discussion as to when it is appropriate to give a merit raise to an employee. In general discussion about wages, it was noted that Social Security has listed a 5.9 percent COLA increase.

Special Town Meeting: It was decided that a special town meeting would not need to be held this spring after receiving a response from town counsel that they would be willing to receive payment on any outstanding invoices after the Annual Town Meeting.

Green Communities Update: Brian reported that Allison Gage (FRCOG) is working on other proposals for possible projects.

Animal Control District: Susan reported that there will be a meeting Thursday of the Board to decide whether to allow New Salem to join. Because there has been an expression of interest from several other towns in Franklin County, the District will be looking for a part-time assistant.

Town Coordinator's Report:

- **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:** The contractor from the state has completed the bridge repair. It is now open to two lanes of traffic although the patched side has bumps. The bridge is scheduled to be replaced either in 2024 or 2025.
- **ARPA Final Rule:** Compiled summary of guidelines pertaining to how funds may be spent, the timeline for using funds and the four categories under which spending can be done.
- **Substitute Workers:** Engaged two substitute workers for the Building Maintenance Coordinator last week. One worker did essential cleaning at Sawyer Hall and Jacobs Road. The other worker did snow shoveling and snow blowing on Friday at the same two locations.

Mail:

- S. Litchfield re: DocuSign invoices to vote— *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve payment of broadband construction invoices in the amounts of \$10,343.62 and \$45,139.84.*
- G. Garland re: BoH cost of office relocation—The Board directed Hilma to reach out to other offices to inquire as to whether they had experienced additional expenses.
- G. Garland re: BoH request for space
- G. Garland re: communications with BoH
- B. Rode re: MTRSD School Committee email exchange
- S. Stanton re: email exchange concerning FY22 assessment
- T. Watt re: request for road improvement—A cost estimate will be requested from the Highway Superintendent.
- M. Reich re: AG’s response to OML complaint
- M. Freeman re: town purchase of Zoom account
- C. Rabbitt re: town nurse February report
- M. McCutchen re: cell tower comment
- C. Dauer re: library location comment
- FCSWMD re: recycling fund and RDP fund
- G. Garland re: BoH COVID update
- B. Rode re: vote against FY23 MTRSD operating budget
- B. Litchfield re: possible school-related expenses

Next Meeting:

March 8: joint with Finance Committee, ARPA funds, broadband repayment plan, Flagg Hill Road improvement, Salt Shed construction, School Committee representatives hearing regarding FY22 assessment error and FY23 proposed budget, review of executive session minutes.

7:30 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