

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Virtual Meeting
June 21, 2022

Called to Order at 6:00 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: None.

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 June 7, 2022, as amended.*

Covid and Mask Mandate: Robyn reported that she had talked with Gene Garland, Board of Health chairman, who conveyed that on June 10th the CDC advisory was for people to use masks as they wished. A motion was made by Susan Lively and seconded by Brian De Vriese to adopt the CDC recommendation contingent on the Board of Health review of standings at their next meeting. Further discussion among the Select Board members left unanswered questions such as, if the mask mandate is dropped, can an individual committee require masks for attendance at their meetings. Further research will be done to determine the answer to this. *On the motion to change the mask mandate to an advisory made by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to table the motion until more information was known on July 5th.*

Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (MTWP): Lisa Hayden, MTWP Director, Art Schwenger, MTWP Board of Directors member, and Mike Cucchiara, Parks and Recreation Committee chairman, joined the meeting to provide an update of the work that the partnership has been doing and changes made in administrative structuring. New England Forestry Foundation has now taken on the management role. The MTWP board and standing committees continue to meet on a regularly basis.

The partnership with Heath ends in 2032. Currently new agreement policies are being written. The draft policies can be viewed at the MTWP website and feedback can be given. There is no cost to the towns for participating in the partnership; it is a locally created and controlled organization. It also provides a partnership with state and local governments.

Heath has received three MTWP grants. The first was to develop trails throughout the Shapiro Land including the purchase of benches, picnic tables, signage and fencing. The second grant was used to purchase a 9-acre parcel of land that abuts the Shapiro Land to the east. A third grant was received to build an extension of the trail into the Catamount State Forest. This year there was a joint application submitted with the Town of Rowe. If received the funds will be used to complete a conceptual study for the development of a continuous route of trails and to plan the necessary work.

There will be a forestry walk on July 10th at 10:00 a.m. in the Shapiro Land for the purpose of updating the forest management plan.

FY23 Appointments: *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to make all appointments to individual positions with the exception of Animal Inspector and Senior Program Coordinator.*

As the list of town boards and committees was reviewed, it was agreed to hold almost all those appointments until the following week after Hilma had an opportunity to contact present members about their willingness to continue. Chairpersons of the Building Use Committee and the Council on Aging had presented reappointment recommendations to the Select Board.

Because many tasks had been reduced or eliminated, the Building Use Committee recommended that the membership be reduced to five people. *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to reduce the membership of the Building Use Committee from seven members to five members.* Members Victoria Burrington, Robin Jenkins and Mary Summer did not seek reappointments which left one vacancy. *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint Pat McGahan, Pam Porter, Lyra Johnson-Fuller, Susan Gruen and Elissa Viarengo to the Building Use Committee.*

On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint Margaret Freeman, Susan Lively, Victoria Burring, Cathy Tallen and Donna Hyytinen to the Council on Aging.

Town Buildings and Offices, Public Information Recap: Sue remarked that she thought some residents who commented during the meeting were confused in the difference between the Office on Disabilities and what their role is and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The latter is the law which outlines what accommodations are to be in place for full access to public buildings and facilities while the former entity assists with identifying problems and functions as an advisory office to help resolve noncompliant situations. Brian stated that the code for access regulations is 521 CMR.

The Board also noted that there was confusion about the fact that they reached out for assistance. Sawyer Hall was the first building evaluated for accessibility because it has the most challenging situations and also gets the most use. Emphasis was placed on the fact that ADA laws state that accessibility is needed for all persons wanting to enter a building.

Sue stated that she got mixed messages from those people who spoke during the meeting. They wanted meetings to discuss these issues but, even though the assessment is at the beginning stages, these same people expected answers. There also appeared to be trust issues in that the Board called an outside agency for an objective evaluation but then were questioned for doing that. Brian reported that he had contacted Jeff Dougan, Office on Disabilities, about doing an in-person visit to the three public town buildings. Mr. Dougan is scheduled to visit on June 30th.

Robyn iterated that it is the Board's responsibility to use the skills that each member has. She witnessed anger, mistrust and confusion on the part of various speakers. There was a desire to move plans forward and determine what to do after the assessment by Mr. Dougan.

Follow-up from a question asked the prior week, Robyn consulted the Fire Chief about what would be required in the Jacobs Road library space if used on a regular basis when the number of egresses were determined. The Chief stated that he considered it safe to use that library as is and that the space did not require an additional egress.

Shared Space Policy: Hilma presented the Shared Space Policy that addresses space reservation protocol while a long-term lessee has more active hours in Jacobs Road. *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the Shared Space Policy as written.* Hilma will share this policy with the Building Use Committee. The

Select Board agreed that outside space and the atrium were public spaces. If not in use by a scheduled group, both areas were available for occasional public use.

Salt Shed: A possible funding source for planning and construction would be grant opportunities through the Municipal Vulnerability Plan.

Boards Clerk: Robyn stated that she was proposing three names of persons who all would have direct interaction with the person who would be hired. *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint Elissa Viarengo, Brian De Vriese and Hilma Sumner to the interview team for the Boards Clerk position.* Hilma will send out information and coordinate a meeting for interviews.

Highway Employee: *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint Jeff Johnston, Will Emmet and Hilma Sumner to the interview team for the Highway Employee position.*

After review of the Job Position description and the advertisement, *on a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the job position description with changes and to approve the advertisement.* The ad will be posted on the town website, at town buildings and in The Recorder for two Saturdays.

MTRSD FY22 Assessment Error: The Board reviewed an email from the Finance Committee describing their consensus from their last meeting. They asked that the Board draft a letter to MTRSD requesting that they show how the business office arrived at the \$44,000 excess in the FY22 operating assessment. Brian will speak to a resident who, he stated, will help provide the correct terminology for what needs to be requested.

Green Communities Update: Brian spoke with Chris Collins of ECI who will send a contract for the Jacobs Road weatherization project. Franklin County Technical School electrical students have switched out the light fixtures on all the shorter exterior light poles. They will return in the fall to finish outside replacement of the tall light poles and under the portico. They will also be able to replace inside light fixtures.

In-Person Meetings: The first in-person Select Board meeting will be held on July 19th at the Jacobs Road municipal building. The Governor's order to allow remote-participation meetings ends on July 15th. Hilma will send an email to the chairpersons of all town boards and committees informing them of this change, providing a copy of the town's remote participation policy and the need to schedule meeting space. Hilma will also consult with the town's IT technicians to ask what would be needed to do remote broadcasting and continue recording meetings.

Mail:

- FinCom re: recommendation for letter of request to MTRSD
- Shared Use Policy
- H. Hallman re: request to close South Road in front of Comm. Hall on Sept. 4. *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the closure of South Road in front of Community Hall on Sept. 4th.*
- B. Rode re: MTRSD policies and procedures complaint
- W. Emmet: note of thanks
- R. & D. Viarengo re: letter of thanks for June 7th open discussion
- C. Dauer re: concerns and suggestions for library accessibility

- Boards Clerk job application

Next Meeting: July 5—Community Hall 150th anniversary, continuation of FY23 appointments, in-person meetings; office space requests.

9:46 p.m. *On a motion by Susan Lively and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted adjourn the meeting.*

Respectfully submitted,

Hilma A. Sumner