

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
18 Jacob Road
April 7, 2023

Called to Order at 8:02 a.m. With Robyn Provost Carlson, Susan Lively, Brian De Vriese, and Hilma Sumner, Town Coordinator.

Others in Attendance: See attendance sheet.

Review Agenda: It was agreed that the actual vote for the building name would occur on Tuesday evening, April 11, 2023, and that a vote on the Finance Committee's recommendation would be postponed until Tuesday as well. An agenda item about phone service was tabled.

Review of Minutes: *On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of March 21, 2023, as amended. Robyn Provost Carlson abstained since she was absent from that meeting.*

On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of March 28, 2023, as amended.

Age- and Dementia-Friendly Communities: The Board reviewed a recommendation from the Council on Aging to send a letter expressing interest in becoming one of the Communities. *On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to take part in the Age- and Dementia-Friendly Communities program and send a letter informing LifePath of this decision.*

Renaming Jacobs Road Building: The Board discussed several final options for a new name for the former elementary school. One name was found to be acceptable to the three Select Board members. The vote to affirm this name will occur at their meeting on April 11, 2023.

Highway Department Budgetary Items: The Board reviewed the recommendation of the Finance Committee to reduce the department employees from four people down to three as part of an effort to hold the increase of the FY24 general budget expenses to a minimum. The Board reviewed statistics of highway departments from other small towns in the area. Analysis showed that, of six small towns, Heath had the second highest cost-per-mile for highway expenses.

A separate meeting will be called to address action and a decision of the recommendation. Because of a possible appearance of a conflict of interest, Robyn will recuse herself from the decision and any actions that will follow.

Avery Brook Road Tree Removal: The Board decided that the warrant article would be a transfer of funds only from the Flagg Hill Road account. Ch. 90 funds cannot be used for this type of work because it is maintenance. In response to a question of using the town crew, the Highway Superintendent responded that many of the trees need to be taken down using a bucket truck, some are more dangerous work because of proximity to power lines or wetlands, and others are unstable because they are dead.

Leaf Blower: Will Emmet has ordered a kit to rebuild the carburetor on the existing leaf blower. A new gas tank may need to be purchased as well. If the work can be accomplished so that the machine

will operate, it will need to be used for now although purchase of a new leaf blower will remain on the list for a future purchase.

On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to accept the recommendations of the Finance Committee by not purchasing a new leaf blower or using more than the funds in the Flagg Hill Road account for the Avery Brook Road Tree Removal work.

New Truck: After transfers from the Equipment/Vehicle Stabilization account and Free Cash, there will be a remaining balance of approximately \$60,000 needed. Both the Board and the Highway Superintendent are reluctant to use Ch. 90 monies because those are the only funds the town has by which to improve the roads. Borrowing the balance was discussed.

Town Nurse Position: It was agreed that the Board needs to confer with the Board of Health after the Town Meeting to further analyze the need for this position. The position will remain as is for now. One concern raised was the continuation of vaccinations and payment of the serum, some of which is not covered by the health insurance. This is one service that can be received from the nurses of the Community Public Health Services. ***On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to send a letter to the Board of Health suggesting that the town nurse not purchase serum nor offer flu vaccine.***

Building Maintenance Coordinator: Robyn reported that she had requested this position be level-funded for hours due to what looks like lack of room in the overall FY24 budget for an increase of five hours that was originally proposed.

Broadband Extra Funds: In their recent letter, the Municipal Light Board (MLB) stated that they anticipate receiving, and being able to turn over to the town, at least \$39,000. After discussion it was determined that Hilma will speak with the accountant to find out if the MLB would be able to pay a town-related expense directly, such as the interest on the broadband loan. It will also be important to know whether the funds could be deposited into a revolving fund so that they can be used immediately.

Mail:

- Tom Lively re: FinCom vote on employee reduction
- Tom Lively re: FinCom suggestions on free cash
- M. Freeman (COA) re: recommendation to participate in Age-Friendly program
- M Reich re: authorization of revolving funds
- C. Rabbitt re: March town nurse report
- P. Walker re: FRCOG legislative support for passage of public health bill— ***On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to sign the online letter of support.***
- MEMA re: March 13-15 storm determination of not meeting disaster threshold
- G. Recorder re: Hawley Highway Dept damages & disputes
- P. Porter re: BUC request to purchase drinking glasses— ***On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to authorize the \$157 purchase of drinking glasses for the Jacobs Road kitchen.***
- S. Stanton re: invitation to attend a SB meeting
- B. Dean (FRCOG) re: accounting services
- S. Cronin (DLS) re: Schedule A data accuracy

Next Meetings: April 11, 2023, 11:00 a.m.—to make decision and take any necessary action on the Finance Committee’s recommendation for the Highway personnel.

April 11, 2023, 6:00 p.m.—regularly scheduled to discuss budget planning and warrant articles.

9:40 a.m. *On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.*

Respectfully submitted,

Hilma A. Sumner
Town Coordinator