

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Jacobs Road Municipal Center
June 13, 2023

Called to Order at 6:00 p.m. With Robyn Provost Carlson, Susan Lively, Elissa Viarengo, and Hilma Sumner, Town Coordinator.

Others in Attendance: See attendance sheet.

Review of Agenda: No changes.

Review of Minutes: *On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of May 30, 2023, as amended.*

Appointment: Brian McHugh, Franklin Regional Housing Authority, presented a basic review of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and the Fiscal Year 2020 housing rehabilitation loans grant that was awarded to the towns of Heath and Hawley. The loans are for low-to moderate-income homeowners who need to make essential renovations to their houses. A homeowner may receive up to a \$50,000 loan. There is a declining balance over a fifteen-year term with the original owner.

With this grant there have been 13 units in Heath and three units in Hawley that have had renovations completed. The town was asked to request a final six-month extension for spending the remainder of the grant and completing the final additional renovation projects.

The next opportunity to apply for a housing rehabilitation grant could be in approximately five to six years. By then there will be an accumulated list of homeowners who have need of a loan. Municipal renovation grants can also be applied for. This is done either to pay for design work for an accessibility project or to have the actual construction work completed. If it is for construction work, the town needs to have bid-ready plans with estimated pricing for construction. The Board expressed that they would like to invite Brian back to a future meeting to talk more about the program and possibilities for the town.

On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to request extension of the FY20 CDBG grant to December 31, 2023.

Public Comment: Tom Lively read a statement addressing the upcoming board/committee appointments and expressed his concern about the actions of a couple of possible appointee/current board members at an April 13, 2023 Selectboard meeting.

Will Emmet stated that one of the most important areas in the scope of long-range fiscal planning is in education and expressed concern that the town needs another MTRSD school committee representative.

Barbara Rode wondered if the Board would send out an email that they are looking for someone to appoint to the school committee.

Community Hall: Robyn presented additional information that flooring for the two bathrooms would cost approximately \$1,500 for the VCT or \$2,000 for sheet vinyl. Epoxy flooring would cost

approximately \$6.00 per square foot for two coats of a one-color epoxy. The total of which would be \$14,000. There will be a follow-up conversation with Dennis Booska to find out his schedule.

11 Bellor LLC and True Cannabis: Greg Rode announced that he was recording this part of the meeting.

The eight shipping containers had been removed and only the construction trailer remained.

Robyn recapped the research and discussions that had taken place since the last Board meeting. The fence around the perimeter of the True Cannabis farm does not appear to have been installed in compliance with the zoning bylaws. There was no building permit sought for construction of the fence. Robyn said she saw three possible options: 1) the fence could be removed or relocated to meet the zoning bylaws; 2) a building permit could be applied for to get approval to leave the fence where it is, which would get denied; 3) after denial, a building variance could be applied for. It was also noted that if the farm wants to construct a barn that, since it was not in the original application, a new application for a special permit would need to be submitted. Robyn will follow up with Building Commissioner Jim Hawkins to assist with the fence issue.

A response to True Cannabis will be drafted to thank them for removing the containers, and the various options for the fencing to bring that into compliance. A separate letter will be drafted to their attorney with information about the legal charges and the need for complete payment of same. Inquiries will also be sent to the three other cannabis farms asking for updates about their plans.

Joint Meeting of Select Board, Planning Board, and Board of Health: It was agreed that a future meeting should be held for the three boards to discuss the bylaws and regulations of various types of trailers and unregistered vehicles. The discussion would include review of existing bylaws and any need for updates, enforcement of violations and an approach for a town-wide reach out to inform property owners.

Telephone System: Hilma reviewed the latest progress of planning with Granite Communications for the new telephone system. It is expected that the new phones will be delivered the beginning of July. They will arrive pre-programmed and will just need to be plugged in where offices have their current phones.

Review of Committee Charges: Three committee charges were looked at.

Agricultural Commission: This charge has not been updated since 2004 and will need to be revised. It was decided to get the word out with a basic history and find out if there is interest in reviving the Commission.

Building Facilities Committee: Two members of the committee, Tom Lively and Will Emmet, were present. They both agreed that there were needs that the committee could attend to and the committee should continue.

Building Use Committee: Elissa, currently a member of the committee, expressed that the committee fulfills a worthwhile role and is very involved with rentals and general use of town buildings.

Review of Appointed Boards and Committees: It was decided that all appointments that were ready to be done on June 20th would occur at that time.

Sue stated that as she considers appointments, she takes her position on the Board seriously and she also takes her personal beliefs seriously. Because of this, she is concerned that she may not keep her personal bias out of some appointment decisions and would recuse herself in those situations.

In reviewing an email from Bob Dane asking about a possible appointment to Parks & Recreation Committee following his expression of interest last year, Sue recused herself. Both Robyn and Elissa agreed that the committee charge should be re-sent to both Bob and Chelsea Makely-Jordan with an explanation that they were to read and agree to the charge before an appointment was made.

Board of Health Appointment: Sue recused herself from this discussion. In acknowledgement of the representation that was needed during the remainder of the month, the Select Board decided to make an appointment to fill the remainder of the term from which Elissa Viarengo had resigned. ***On a motion by Robyn Provost Carlson and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint Sheila Litchfield to fill the vacant position through June 30, 2023. Susan Lively abstained.***

Highway Department Liaison: The Board discussed that, although the need for this position remains, it will not be as intense and involved as it has been in the recent past. The Superintendent will be reporting to the Board once a month and the entire Board can discuss issues and review work during the monthly meetings.

Municipal Light Plant Update: Robyn and Hilma had met with the Municipal Light Plant Manager, the Accountant, and the Director of Assessing to discuss whether broadband revenue received for a particular year could be used in that year without having a year's delay by being processed as Free Cash. During that meeting it was worked out that, if the Municipal Light Board knew and notified the Select Board during August-September time frame of the amount of income that was received, that amount could be declared on the report to the Department of Revenue as anticipated revenue. This would allow the funds to be used immediately.

Mail:

- FCRHA re: draft letter to EOHLC
- L. Berger re: resignation from BoH
- Attorney General's Office re: letter to J. Weigand
- FRCOG re: MOU for regional energy planning assistance
- RP re: 11 Bellor Road update
- J. Sieving re: True Cannabis notifications
- D. Mason re: emails with RP regarding True Cannabis
- D. Booska re: pricing for CH bathroom flooring
- R. Dane re: inquiry about appointment to Parks & Rec.
- S. Litchfield re: BoH appointment
- P. Walker re: Age and Dementia-Friendly planning meeting
- KP Law re: ruling on tax title foreclosure sales

Next Meeting: June 20th

9:30 p.m. *On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.*

Respectfully submitted,

Hilma A. Sumner
Town Coordinator