

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Jacobs Road Municipal Center
July 11, 2023

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

Others in Attendance: See attendance sheet.

Review of Agenda: Added Franklin County Solid Waste Management District—approve Memorandum of Understanding.

Special Town Meeting: After review of documents and information submitted by the Highway Superintendent, the Select Board agreed that they should move forward with a Special Town Meeting to ask voters to transfer funds for purchase of a possible used truck for the highway department. *On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve and sign the warrant for the Special Town Meeting dated July 25, 2023.*

Immediately following the signing of the warrant, Constable Steven Thane signed the three original warrants and left to post in the two designated locations. Hilma will research whether Article 2 on the warrant can be voted at a Special Town Meeting or must wait until the annual meeting.

Review of Minutes: *On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Robyn Provost Carlson, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of June 20, 2023, as presented.*

On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Robyn Provost Carlson, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of June 27, 2023, as presented.

Hauling Contract: After reviewing the Memorandum of Understanding from the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District, *on a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve and sign the Memorandum of Understanding.*

Department Reports: The Board discussed the idea of requesting that both the Police Department and the Fire Department provide monthly written reports briefly outlining the work and responses each department has been involved in for that particular month. Hilma will notify each Chief with the Board's request for reports.

Community Hall Floor Repair: The Board was in agreement that the floor color sample called "Ginger Spice" was what would be installed as new tile flooring in the lower level of the Community Hall. Hilma will contact Booska Flooring to inform the owner and ask when the work could be done.

Public Comment: Barbara Gordon was granted permission to postpone her comment until after the Tree Warden had met with the Board.

Bob Viarengo asked if the Board had plans to paint the Community Hall and Sawyer Hall. (Yes, that is presently being arranged with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office and money budgeted through Special Projects.)

Heath Historical Society: Ned Wolf and Bob Viarengo, officers of the Society, reviewed the lease document with the Board. They requested that this be written for a 10-year occupancy so that they would be assured of long-term residency in one location. There were several other deletions and changes to be made to the document, including renewal procedure. The document will be updated and distributed for further review before the final approval.

Telephone System: Due to the fact that the executive phone did not work, porting of the phone lines and new system is rescheduled for July 20th. According to Bill Fontes, who has been helping to set up the new phones in each location, the phones can work either hardwired to the internet or through wifi. Because of the location of equipment at the highway department, that phone will be on wifi. Granite Telecommunications will also be asked if they have cordless handset phones for portable use at the highway garage and at JRMC.

Municipal Light Plant: David Gordon of the Municipal Light Board reported that the redundancy network for broadband was finished and operating. This insures a greater ability to have uninterrupted service through a multi-town network.

11 Bellor LLC and True Cannabis: Due to the fact that the containers had been removed from the property, Robyn had sent the company an email thanking them for the removal of the containers. The Board reviewed a letter that the Building Commissioner had sent to True Cannabis in regard to the fence and the options to bring that structure into compliance with the Town's zoning bylaws.

Highway Department: Highway Superintendent Jeff Johnston met with the Board to discuss information about the condition of the trucks, work scheduling and meeting with the Board. Jeff will meet with the Board approximately once per month to discuss his concerns, assessment of work progress, future planning and any other matters that may arise. There was a recap of directives that had already been issued and are being put in place or being used. These include reports of work that has been done in the previous four weeks, future planning, descriptive timecards, written schedules on the white boards and continuing the culvert assessment that was begun by BETA. Jeff is also developing preliminary plans for next winter's snow removal.

Fiscal Year 2024 Ch. 90 funds have not been announced yet. Last year the town received \$184,000. Jeff will be submitting a request for \$22,000 to do a fog seal on Dell Road. The department needs to purchase gravel and other materials. Jeff estimated that the cost to put overlay pavement on South Road from the town center to the Burrington Road fork will cost approximately \$190,000.

Information about the department's fleet of trucks was provided. Robyn offered to draft a document to be used as an information paper that would be made available before the Special Town Meeting (STM) to educate voters about the need for purchase of a different truck. The information will be sent to Hilma who will consult with Jeff to organize and fact-check the document before it is publicly distributed. Both Sue and Elissa were in agreement with this procedure since the Board does not meet again until the evening of the STM.

Jeff stated that during the past five years the town has put about \$50,000 in repairs through one vendor alone for the 2012 International. Recently it sat idle for two months because it would not start. Once it was able to start, it ran for two hours and then the engine light came on. The Board reiterated what they had stated at the Annual Town Meeting; that the intention for snow removal this coming winter was to hire a fourth driver for part-time plowing. For that purpose, the town needs to have four trucks that are operational.

Tree Warden: Steve Thane, newly elected Tree Warden, gave a presentation to the Board. The Town owns a total of 27 separate parcels of land. Between six and eight tracts of land were obtained through tax taking. Steve reported that he had joined the Massachusetts Tree Wardens and Foresters Association. Through this organization he obtained a manual containing information about tree warden duties and pertaining state laws. He said he had deputized the highway employees as deputy tree wardens, as authorized under MGL ch. 87, s. 2. They are often put in the position of dealing with trees that are in intersections in dangerous places or are hazardous to road traffic. Steve plans to next work on a survey of trees on town property, starting with the Town Common.

Avery Brook Road is scheduled for a removal project that will involve clearing brush, and dead and dangerous limbs and trees along the road. The objective is to raise the canopy to create safer travel conditions on that road. Steve and Jeff will identify and mark the trees to be removed. Any vegetation with a trunk diameter of less than 1.5 inches or is deemed hazardous can be removed without a public meeting. Before work begins a letter of notice will be sent to the landowners on the road. Notice will be posted on the town website as well.

Public Comment: Barbara Gordon remarked that she and David were very happy with the knowledge and the approach that Steve Thane lent to the tree warden position. She also said that residents are in need of communication regarding any tree-cutting plans by the Town.

July 10th Rainstorm Status: Jeff reported that Matt Lively had been engaged to help repair the washout on Brunelle Road. There are culverts at the end of Mohawk Estates' roads that parallel the town roads. The positioning of those culverts impacts the path of storm water and whether that water has a sufficient path for runoff that does not erode the town roads. Background research will be done to determine whether the town can replace these culverts. Many town culverts need to be flushed and it is hoped that the Fire Department will assist with that work.

Jacobs Road Municipal Center Backstop: There are a couple of either bent or broken pipes in the overhead frame in the backstop. Brian DeVriese will be asked to assess the damage and determine if a repair can be done without a large expense.

Review of Appointed Boards and Committees: *On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint Pam Porter to the Building Use Committee.*

On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint Karen Brooks, Molly Lane, and Lorena Loubksy to the Agricultural Commission. Two more members are needed for the commission seats to be filled. When there is a full commission, they will be asked to meet with the Board to discuss their work.

Unfinished Business: The Board reviewed the draft list of unfinished business items and gave a few more subjects that need to be addressed.

Mail:

- Finance Committee re: 7/5/23 draft minutes
- Tom Lively re: vote to recommend STM
- Tim Lively re: pictures of bent backstop at JRMC
- EV re: draft SB report for Heath Herald
- S. O'Neill re: Agricultural Society license to pour— *On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the Heath*

Agricultural Society's application for a license to pour alcoholic beverages on August 18-20.

- C. Rabbitt re: June Town Nurse report
- S. Thane re: appointment of deputy tree wardens
- HAS re: MVP Program Yearly Progress Report
- Inspector General re: free procurement training—The Board asked that the Town Coordinator register for this training.
- J. Carr re: request for live stream of meetings
- Senator P. Mark re: July district office hours
- J. McNay re: Beaver dam on Swamp Rd.
- J. Hawkins re: letter to True Cannabis
- RPC re: email with True Cannabis attorney
- M. Thurber re: grant award
- KP Law re: equity in marijuana industry update

Next Meeting: July 25th for planning for the STM, updates on projects and end-of-year transfers, if prepared.

9:58 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