

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Jacobs Road Municipal Center
December 19, 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.

The meeting was recorded.

Review Agenda: Added: Hilma's schedule, EMPG grant, Finance Committee letter, Route 8A trailer, and Age-Friendly Communities.

Review of Minutes: *On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of December 5, 2023, as amended. Robyn Provost Carlson abstained.*

Public Comment: None.

Mr. Gutter Quote: The Board reviewed the revised quote that included additional hangers for the gutter repair on the north side of Community Hall. The quote was amended from the original \$1,607 to the revised amount of \$1,755. *On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the revised quote from Mr. Gutter, originally dated October 4, 2023, and updated December 7, 2023.*

Resignation of Susan Gruen from Building Use Committee: After review of a letter of resignation, *on a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to accept with regrets the resignation of Susan Gruen from the Building Use Committee.*

Web Administrator: Given the level of volunteer service that Pat McGahan is doing on behalf of the Town, it was agreed to create a new appointed position. *On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the creation of a volunteer Web Administrator position.*

On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint Pat McGahan to the position of Web Administrator.

On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the charge for the Web Administrator position.

Community Hall Window Fundraising: Elissa reported that the committee chose Bob Gruen as chairman and Gloria Cronin Fisher as vice-chairman. Plans thus far include inclusion of a letter with the annual street list mailing, doing an independent mailing, articles in the Greenfield

Recorder and the Heath Herald. All donations to the Town must be made without conditions attached to the funds given.

Discussion with Board of Health and Town Nurse: Board of Health (BoH) members Gene Garland, Susan Gruen, and Sheila Litchfield, and Town Nurse Claire Rabbitt joined the meeting.

The Town Nurse Job Description as proposed by the BoH was reviewed. The BoH's position is that the nurse services provide continuity and strength in the community and support wellness with older residents. Questions were raised as to whether the list of duties was practical for eight hours per week. After several amendments were made, the BoH voted to recommend the amended position description. Sheila will update and send to Hilma.

Boards Clerk position was discussed. The BoH needs someone to take accurate minutes. With only three members, they must try to keep up with Temporary Occupancy Permits in addition to the other duties of the Board. They need five members but have not found anyone who has expressed interest in becoming a member.

A list of property updates was provided. The list included those properties whose septic systems are not in compliance with state regulations. One of the concerns involves a trailer located at 594 Route 8A which is a safety hazard for the owners and is parked on the town's right-of-way. The police chief will continue to work with the owner to have the trailer removed.

MA Workforce Training is now a requirement for all BoH members as it regards public health performance standards. The current members are to complete the training by March 2024.

CodeRED services and who needs to have access to relay messages to the community was discussed. Hilma explained how the town is charged for usage and what is included in the annual fee. The BoH will continue to discuss potential needs they may have.

Discussion with Highway Superintendent: Highway Superintendent Jeff Johnston and Foreman Kyle Jarvis joined the meeting at 7:30 p.m. to update the Board about winter plans. Insurance coverage for Saladino Landscaping remains unsettled. His insurance company has responded that the contract, as it stands, would make him responsible if anything happened during sanding. The Select Board and Jeff agreed that, if an incident resulted from his failure to do the assigned work, then he needs to be liable.

Jeff has a list of call-in relief drivers that includes Steve Thane, Lee Lively, Jason Clark (after 2:00 p.m.) and Nathan Clark. It was decided that there needed to be a set hourly rate for relief drivers. ***On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve a rate of \$30.00 per hour for winter relief drivers.*** The Personnel Policy will be referred to in terms of the minimum number of hours that will be paid for a single call-in.

If the plowing is done with a three-man crew, Jeff stated that the order of priority will be the paved roads, the dirt roads that are on school bus routes and then the other dirt roads.

Shoveling responsibilities will be divided between the Highway Dept. and Building Maintenance. Highway will take care of the areas around its garage, the Fire garage, and Transfer Station. Tim Lively will shovel on the steps and walkways to Sawyer Hall, Community

Hall, and Jacobs Road Municipal Center. Jeff said there is a snowblower at the garage that is not used; he will talk with Tim about where it should be stored.

The newly acquired truck is paid for but the dealer still has a little work to complete. Jeff needs to put in the registration. The Dodge truck needs extensive repair including the turbo system and exhaust replacement. The total estimate for the repairs is \$12,000. After those repairs are paid, it will leave about \$28,000 in the Maintenance budget. On the previous Monday with the heavy rainstorm, the crew was out trying to open blocked culverts with the backhoe. The Serpentine belt exploded and caused some other damage. The crew was able to complete repairs.

There has been no word as a result of the state officials' viewing of the Route 8A washout in August. The town was notified a few weeks ago of a grant received that would do the preliminary work of permitting and design to replace the bridge where the washout occurred. Sue requested that she be provided with specific information about the situation so that she can develop a timeline and then make some contact to state officials.

The tree work on Avery Brook Road is done with approximately \$4,000 left in the account. The utility company is beginning its own tree/brush removal work. The Municipal Light Board will wait until that work is completed before determining if there is other work to be done to remove what may be endangering the internet cable.

Salt Shed: An estimate had been received from Iron Horse for \$219,000 for construction of the building only. It is thought that the total cost would be in the approximate amount of \$600,000-\$700,000. There needs to be a final plan in place for the final cost to be determined. Jeff thought that some parts of the sitework could be done by the Highway Department itself.

11 Bellor, LLC: Elissa stated that she had spoken with Doug Mason about his conversation with personnel from the company. They expressed concern that keeping the same name, True Cannabis, may have future impact on approvals and were deliberating about what action they should take.

Community Hall and Sawyer Hall Mold Remediation: Gem Company will be doing the work. They have put Heath on their schedule but will not be available until mid-January.

MTRSD Proposed Agreement Changes: Ken Rocke is prepared to hold four workshops for the purpose of teaching Heath Finance Committee and Select Board members about the various aspects that go into educational formula calculations. Ken will be asked about the possibility of recording each session.

Parks & Recreation Committee: The Board reviewed a report on recent activities of the committee. The Conservation Commission needs to be consulted and give approval of any work that is done on the Shapiro Land. It was agreed that both the committee and the Conservation Commission will be invited to a future meeting to clarify the different areas of responsibility.

EMPG Grant: The Town has received a \$2,500 grant to be used for emergency equipment. There is a new signing process that means the chairman will sign the agreement through DocuSign.

Assistant Animal Inspector: Following an email from the state office that Heath needs to have an assistant, it was suggested that the Animal Control Officer would complete the duties when there was a conflict of interest. It was also suggested that Colrain's Animal Inspector would agree to assist.

Finance Committee Annual Letter: The Board reviewed a draft of the annual budget planning letter. Dates in the letter need to be changed. *On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the Finance Committee annual budget planning letter with its amendments.*

Age-Friendly Community: Sue requested that the Town apply to become an Age- and Dementia-Friendly Community. She will check with Margaret Freeman about what is necessary to apply.

Town Coordinator Schedule: Hilma will be out of the office from December 23rd through January 2nd.

Next Meeting: Friday, January 5, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. The focus of the meeting will be on the responsibilities, hours, and position descriptions for both the Town Coordinator and the Office Assistant. It was requested that Hilma determine what duties in the descriptions both she and the Assistant are doing or not doing as well as how much time is spent doing work for various departments. The Board will also deliberate on the differences between a Town Coordinator versus a Town Administrator.

Future Meetings: Thursday, January 11, Tuesdays January 23, February 6 & 13. Finance Committee will be invited to the last meeting to develop a plan for the FY25 budget meetings.

Mail:

- RPC re: Highway topics for discussion
- W. Emmet re: Highway Dept. commendation
- C. Rabbitt re: wood removed from property
- Mr. Gutter re: revised estimate of CH work
- S. Gruen re: resignation from BUC
- P. McGahan re: Web Administrator charge
- Iron Horse re: salt shed estimate
- M. Cucchiara re: Parks & Rec. Committee update
- L. Johnson-Fuller re: new front doors at JRMC—yes, this is to be researched.
- H. Hathwell re: CH windows donation
- IRS re: 2024 mileage rate increase-- *On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the 2024 mileage reimbursement rate to the IRS standard of 67 cents per mile.*
- DCR re: Forest Products Trust Fund payment for FY23
- FCSWMD re: DEP Grant for FY24
- FCSWMD re: November MRF Processing, Recycling Revenue and Expense
- S. Shaw re: W. MA Veterans' Service Officers' Assoc.

10:18 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