

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Jacobs Road Municipal Center
Tuesday, April 29, 2024

Called to Order at 4:00 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.

Article 3, Operating Budget: The Board did a final review of the proposed account funding for FY2025. *On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve Article 3, Operating Budget as it currently reads.*

Warrant Articles Review:

Article 4: Discussion included acknowledgment of understanding why the Finance Committee voted to not recommend the amount of the MTRSD operating assessment when it is compared with amounts of previous years. Robyn stated that she agreed with the philosophy, however, there are many issues to study off-season. This analysis would be part of a much larger conversation. It is hoped that the other district towns would be interested in studying various aspects of the cost of education. *On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to recommend Article 4.*

Article 11: After consulting with the bus driver of the late bus, it is reported that there are approximately the same number of children from each of the three towns that ride the bus throughout the year. *On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to not to recommend Article 11.*

On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to not give an opinion on Article 11.

Article 13: The Board reviewed the documents that had been written prior to the 2023 ATM that were written to the MTRSD Superintendent and written to the Heath voters. Both documents stated that the town would repay the amount of the FY22 assessment error over a two-year period. Minutes from the Finance Committee's meeting when they voted to support this repayment plan were summarized also. *On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to recommend Article 13.*

Article 15: Robyn reported that she had met with the Highway Superintendent at the site of the present salt shed and laid out the size of a new building. Brian DeVriese agreed to help with getting the final information to the landscape architect. The Board asked that town counsel be consulted as to whether the account could only be established with the entire amount of the project.

New Article: Since there is still several thousand dollars remaining in Free Cash, the Board decided to use that amount plus a little more that would have gone into General Stabilization, to

pay for the FY25 Cab & Chassis Note payment and Interest payment. ***On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to establish a new article for the purpose of paying the FY25 Cab & Chassis Note & Interest payments and to reduce the amount of Free Cash to be transferred to General Stabilization.***

MTRSD Agreement Articles: On April 24th, the Select Board, Finance Committee, MTRSD Budget Subcommittee, Business Manager Bill Lataille, and Heath resident Ken Rocke, met to discuss the proposed articles to change the district agreement and the basis on which the towns' assessments are calculated. The position of Heath officials is that the timing to initiate change is not advantageous due to the ongoing sustainability study. These changes do not fix the significant issues and may cause more of a division as comparison is made between who wins and who loses. The proposed changes will create more imbalances between towns. Ken spoke about different ways to look at the assessment calculations at the meeting.

It was noted that Heath needs a bigger representation on the School Committee and needs a second representative. The Select Board discussed the idea to form a Heath educational committee to assess what the Town's various issues are. Part of the task would include surveying town families to learn what the sentiments are towards educational opportunities available to Heath children.

The Board stated that voting these articles down does not mean the Town is against funding education. DESE approves of either method to calculate assessments: the present method and the proposed approach.

On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to not recommend the three articles proposed by the MTRSD School Committee and written to amend the district agreement.

Next Meetings:

Tuesday, April 30, 6:00 p.m.

5:33 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