

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Jacobs Road Municipal Center
Tuesday, May 21, 2024

Called to Order at 6:00 p.m. With Robyn Provost-Carlson, Susan Lively, Elissa Viarengo (joined at 6:15 p.m.) and Hilma Sumner, Town Coordinator.

Others in Attendance: See attendance sheet.

The meeting was recorded.

Review Agenda: Added: Fuel bids, Colrain library letter, Ken Rocke's information meetings.
Tabled: minutes and center fence.

Public Comment: There was a moment of silence in memory of Victoria Burrington.

Welcome to New Select Board Member: Robyn and Elissa welcomed new Select Board member, Will Emmet, to his first meeting after the election.

Office of Accountant: After further consideration, the Accountant decided that it is more advantageous for the Town to purchase the VADAR software now. New accounting officer, Ben Gelb, has begun transitioning into the position previously held by Dave Fierro.

Annual Town Meeting (ATM) Wrap-Up: It was noted that the ATM will continue Monday, June 17th, at 7:00 p.m. so that voters can address Articles 29, 30 and 31. These three articles address possible changes to the MTRSD agreement.

Considerations for ATM 2025 include using a different approach for dealing with Article 3, general operating account amounts. Hilma will talk with the Moderator and Building Maintenance Coordinator to discuss the possibility of a different room formation so that the Select Board and Finance Committee are not seated behind the Moderator. Two other areas that will be considered are having a portable microphone to use in the meeting and providing childcare.

The consensus of the Board was that, overall, the meeting went well although the critical comments that were made were disappointing.

Informational Meetings: The Board reviewed the request from Ken Rocke asking permission to use available space in JRMC for a series of informational meetings that he would like to hold to share information about the educational formula and process of determining town assessments. If there was space available, he may proceed with the meetings which would be in the public's interest for information in preparation for the ATM continuation. Dates of the meetings would be May 29, June 5 and 12.

ATM Continuation: The Board noted that the required quorum will be the same number as the initial quorum on May 11th. Robyn requested that town counsel be asked what the options would be if a quorum is not attained.

Finance Committee Vacancy: The need for another Finance Committee member due to Will's resignation had been posted on the Town website to seek volunteers. There were emails from two individuals, Karen Brooks and Wendy Whalen, who each shared their finance experience and background. Since both people had varied experiences, Elissa stated that she wanted to see a new volunteer encouraged to participate as had been brought up in the ATM. It was noted that Karen has provided a lot of service to the Town and knows how important it is to have volunteers working in the Town. *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint Wendy Whalen as a Finance Committee member to the vacant seat.*

Application for Age- and Dementia Friendly Community: The Board reviewed a letter to accompany the application that the Council on Aging has compiled to be approved as such a community. The advantage will be that Heath will become eligible for additional grant funding. *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the letter and application as amended.*

Boards Clerk: Before the next meeting, the Board members will review the current job description and comments that have been made by the previous Boards Clerk. Any suggestions for changes will be sent to Hilma who will revise the document.

Community Hall Windows Fundraising: Plans for the benefit concert to be held on July 26 are being firmed up. A few more donations have been received since the previous meeting.

Project Schedule: The Board reviewed the project list for FY2024 and noted several items that had been completed. There was discussion about remaining projects including approaches for seeking funds to build a garage for the Fire Department. Letters of support will be requested from the Fire Department, Police Department and others. Will said he has obtained an estimate for construction of the building that did not include site preparation or a foundation.

Colrain Public Library Award: The Griswold Memorial Library in Colrain has received the National Medal for Museum and Library Service. They were one of five library recipients. The Board signed a letter of congratulations that will be sent to the library staff.

Fuel Bids: Hilma reported that fuel bids had come in from FRCOG's bid solicitation. Dennis K. Burke had the lowest prices for both gasoline and diesel fuels. Sandri's bid price for heating oil came in 4.4 cents higher than Mirabito, however, the latter company would not provide burner service. Based on that fact, and inconvenience if repairs were needed, Hilma had chosen to award the heating oil bid to A. R. Sandri.

Lawn Mowing Bids: There have been no bids submitted for the FY2025 lawn mowing service. It was recommended that the Highway Superintendent call the companies he had sent a bid sheet to and ask if they would submit a bid if the contract extended for three years rather than one year.

Summer Meeting Schedule: The Board decided on meeting dates for the summer months. They will resume an every other week routine. Meeting dates are set for: June 4 and 18, July 2, 16, and 30, August 27, and September 10 and 24. Dates will be altered and/or added, as necessary.

Mail:

- Emmet, W. re: resignation letter from Finance Committee—*On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to accept the resignation of Will Emmet from the Finance Committee.*
- Whalen, W. re: interest in Finance Committee seat
- Freeman, M. re: information & application letter for Age- and Dementia-Friendly Communities
- “Fallen Heroes Memorial Month” article & resolution—*On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to send a letter encouraging support of this resolution to Heath’s state Senator and Representative.*
- KP Law re: Equity Theft Law court ruling
- Sieving, J. re: True cannabis update
- FCSWMD re: May recycling processing fees
- Brooks, K. re: interest in Finance Committee seat
- Phillips, B. re: Route 8A trailer complaint—The Police Chief gave a brief update about his conversation with the property owner. The Board requested that he return in the next few days to inform them that there needs to be a considerable effort to remove the remainder of the trailer soon, so the Town did not have to take further action.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, June 4, 6:00 p.m.

8:30 p.m. *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.*

Respectfully submitted,

Hilma A. Sumner
Town Coordinator