

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Jacobs Road Municipal Center
Tuesday, July 16, 2024

Called to Order at 6:00 p.m. With Robyn Provost-Carlson, Elissa Viarengo, Will Emmet and Hilma Sumner, Town Coordinator, present.

Others in Attendance: See attendance sheet.

The meeting was recorded.

Review Agenda: Added: Clean-up votes. Tabled 7,2,24 minutes.

Clean-up Votes: *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board voted by majority to approve the minutes June 18, 2024, as amended on July 2, 2024. Robyn Provost Carlson abstained.*

On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board voted by majority to approve the order of taking of two easement properties for the bridge repair work on Route 8A over West Branch 'brook that was approved at the Annual Town Meeting 2023, Article 29. Robyn Provost Carlson abstained.

On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board voted by majority to approve three contracts from the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District regarding the Hazardous Waste Collection Day in September, a third-party inspection of the Transfer Station, and the Hauling Contract for trash, recycling, and scrap metal. Robyn Provost Carlson abstained.

On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board voted by majority to appoint Steve Thane as the temporary acting Highway Superintendent, not to exceed 20 hours per week, barring emergencies, at a pay rate of \$33.50 per hour, for a period of three months to be reviewed as necessary. Robyn Provost Carlson abstained.

On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board voted by majority to temporarily increase the wage of the Highway Department Foreman/Mechanic by a \$2.00 per hour wage increase for three months or until the additional duties are assumed by a new superintendent. Robyn Provost Carlson recused herself.

Public Comment: None.

Highway Department Update: Acting Superintendent Steve Thane and Foreman Kyle Jarvis joined the meeting. Steve reported that the crew knows their work. Currently they are ditching on Avery Brook Road since the backhoe is repaired. The order of on-call personnel in emergency situations is Steve, Will Emmet, and then Kyle.

Robyn explained that she would like to see written weekly schedules with the work tasks laid out ahead of time. Any deviations from the schedule would be noted and time would be estimated

for the various tasks. It was recommended that the Department begin developing such a routine schedule.

Discussion continued about the files for Ch. 90 and grant accounts. Robyn said she would like to organize each account in a way that makes it easier to determine the status of each account. The fiscal year 2025 portion of Ch. 90 funds is \$206,383.93 and has been loaded into the Town's account at the state. Steve and Kyle explained that they are hoping to use some of the funds to do crack sealing on a few of the roads that are in better condition but have some cracking.

The Department will be purchasing some signs for the roadway either side of the town garages and either side of the materials pit to warn motorists that trucks are entering the road at those locations. There had been a couple of close calls with traffic driving too rapidly in both locations. A recommendation was also made that a speed limit sign be purchased and installed wherever the Police Department monitor is so that motorists would be able to compare their own speed to the posted speed limit.

Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District: Susan Gruen of the Board of Health and John Briggs joined the meeting to discuss the current status of mosquito testing and control. John explained that the south shore area of the state has more positive tests because of the habitat in that area which is conducive to breeding. He is also monitoring areas with an acid environment; sphagnum moss and red maple wetland areas tend to have higher populations of mosquitos.

In Heath there are two mobile mosquito traps placed close to the fairgrounds that are used for trapping and testing. The Board of Health is putting out information about personal safety. They would like to collaborate with the Select Board on protocol for safety. It was noted that people who are either younger than fifteen or older than 65 are at elevated risk of becoming seriously ill if bitten by an infected mosquito.

Highway Superintendent Position: The interview committee of Will, Steve Thane and Hilma will review the three resumes that have been received and determine if there are candidates who have appropriate qualifications to call for an interview.

Insurance for Subcontractors: The Board requested that the Town's insurance company, MIIA, be contacted and asked what their recommendations were for levels of coverage for subcontracting companies, such as a snow-plowing company.

Salt Shed Progress Update: Recently constructed salt sheds in the towns of Montague and Templeton are similar in style and size to what would be useful in Heath. It was recommended that the Department see the Montague shed in person to view the design and construction. Steve asked that demolition of the old Emergency Operations Center be added to the project of demolishing the salt shed.

Review of Minutes: *On motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to accept the minutes of June 20, 2024, as amended.*

Select Board Appointments: *On a motion by motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint Susan Draxler to the Conservation Commission.*

On a motion by motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint Maris Findlay and Amy Webb to the Building Use Committee.

Conflict of Interest Exemption: The Board reviewed an email from David Conlon who was requesting that the Town approve a waiver to the Conflict of Interest law so that he could hold two jobs within the Mohawk Trail Regional School District. ***On a motion by motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to waive the Conflict of Interest law, G.L. c. 268A, s.20, for David Conlon.***

FY 2024 End-of-Year Transfer Discussion: According to the Town Accountant, because Heath votes the accounts in the operating budget as a whole, no line transfers need to occur. The numbers that will be reported to the Dept. of Revenue will be the final totals of the overall budget. The expense report for Other Funds will be further reviewed.

Hilltown Youth Performing Arts: Hilma reported that, to date, there has been no signed lease agreement, insurance certificate, nor rent paid. The Board requested that they have a copy of the 2023 and 2024 leases for comparison.

Vincent Road Update: The Zoning Board of Appeals had the appeals hearing on July 10th. The hearing was closed, however, the ZBA will convene a business meeting to determine a final decision. On July 25th Robyn, Alice Wozniak, and Hilma will hold an electronic meeting with town counsel, Robin Stein, to discuss various aspects of both the ZBA appeal and the Town's situation.

Community Hall Windows Fundraising: The upcoming benefit concert on July 26th was announced with special thanks to both Jean Gran and Barbara Gordon for the volunteer donation of time and resources to insure the success of the concert. Since the last report, there has been an additional \$800 given in donations.

Community Hall Update: The building has been entirely cleaned. Batteries replaced in the burnt-out exit lights. The firm that repairs commercial equipment has repaired the dish sanitizer. ***On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to reopen both floors and kitchen area of the Community Hall for use.***

Town Building Appraisal Project: The Board reviewed a letter from the Heath Historical Society asking for an update. Robyn stated that she had tried to engage one appraiser who was not available for an extended period of time. She also clarified that she did not contact a broker of her choice but one fully experienced in commercial properties.

Municipal Light Board Communications/Meetings: After receipt of a letter from chairperson Art Schwenger, the Board decided they would like to propose a set meeting schedule, to occur quarterly, that would give opportunity for updates. The Town should receive a check for approximately \$2,700 from Westfield Gas & Electric for the sale of the fiber cable spools.

Heath Agricultural Society Letter of Support: Elissa brought a request from the Society asking for a letter of support for a grant application. The funding would be used to replace the well house cover which is urgently needed.

Mail:

- D. Conlon re: request for exemption
- A. Schwenger re: MLB communications & fiber wire
- HAS re: email to Hilltown Youth, J. Diamond
- N. Wolf re: HHS rental of Sawyer Hall Room
- G. Garland re: Age-Friendly steering committee presentation—Hilma will contact Lynn Feldman for more information.
- N. Anzuoni re: May & June monthly reports
- H. Sumner re: MIIA seminar, certificate of completion
- KP Law re: Fair Labor Standards Acts
- S. Draxler re: ConCom volunteer
- Heath Ag. Society re: Application for pouring license— *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to issue the pouring license for the Heath Agricultural Society, contingent on presentation of the insurance certificate, and to waive the license fee.*
- J. McDonough re: May & June monthly reports
- EANE article: Paid Time Off Considerations & Pitfalls

Next Meetings:

Tuesday, July 30th, and August 13th

9:36 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