

**MEETING MINUTES**  
Town of Heath  
**SELECT BOARD**  
Jacobs Road Municipal Center  
Tuesday, August 27, 2024

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

**Others in Attendance:** See attendance sheet.

**National Grid--Presentation and Discussion of 1109W1 Project:**

National Grid Officials: Patrick Shea, Senior Project Manager, New England Complex Project Management .

Katelyn Davenport, Manager of New England Complex Project Management.

Riordan Hoffman, Design Engineer.

Jean Charles, Senior Specialist, Stakeholder Management.

James King, Senior Specialist, Stakeholder Management.

Danielle Aretz, Manager of Stakeholder Management.

Robert P. Ide, Senior Manager, Community Management.

Heath Town Officials: John McDonough, Police Chief

Doug Mason, Peter Charow, Planning Board

Sheila Litchfield, Municipal Light Plant Manager

Art Schwenger, Ned Wolf, David Gordon, Municipal Light Board

Steve Thane, Tree Warden & Acting Highway Superintendent

Kyle Jarvis, Highway Department

Nick Anzuoni, Fire Chief

Brian De Vriese, Bill Lattrell, Conservation Commission

Susan Gruen, Board of Health

National Grid officials gave a brief slide presentation to present an overview of the project to construct a new utility line with a 3-phase electric cable. The new line, with taller poles would traverse Burrington Road, to South Road into the Town Center. It is planned to install some poles in new locations (south end of Burrington Road).

The rationale for the project is due to the analysis results that Heath is one of the least served towns for electric service. Records have identified twenty separate “brownouts,” area losses of power during the previous five years. The feeder to Heath is rated as one of the worst feeders in the Commonwealth. One of the differences between a 3-phase network and a 1-phase network is the length of time for each outage. With a 3-phase network there would be a much shorter time before the electricity was restored.

The pole height that is needed is based on safety factors and OSHA regulations for clearance between each utility cable and distance to the ground. Even if there is not a 3-phase cable in front of a particular residence, there will be a benefit in a shorter outage time and more continuity of service.

When Bob Ide met with Heath officials in March it was announced that this project was scheduled for 2026. Officials explained that the entire project has two phases, and this segment is the first half of the project and has an earlier expected completion date.

Concerns were raised about the cost to the Town to have the broadband fiber cable transferred from existing poles to the new poles. National Grid has no means by which to determine the timing of the entire work that needs to be done. They will install the poles and transfer their lines; however, Verizon will have its own timeline for transferring their lines and removing the old poles. Sheila Litchfield requested that she receive as many of the exact plans as possible to attempt to solicit a cost estimate for relocation of the broadband cable. She stated that a rough estimate may be \$20,000 to \$25,000. This is money that the Town did not budget for, and it takes away significantly from the profits that are used to pay the debt each year.

Questions were asked concerning vegetation management. Primarily the control will be managed by hand cutting of brush, branches, or trees. Some mowing is done of undergrowth. If an herbicide is scheduled to be used, both the Town and the property owner are notified. For removal of trees, there is a forestry consultant plan that will be followed. The general guide is that any vegetation is removed from 7.5 feet of the pole.

When information was requested about burying lines, it was explained that there would be scheduling problems and would involve a cost about twelve times as high. If there are any repairs needed, the closest crew is located in Worcester. There is a benefit if the entire cable is underground. Cable is not partially buried for most of the distance and then goes underground at certain places.

The Highway Department stated concern that there were no poles installed in ditches nor too close to the road. The Fire Chief stated that well-maintained lines reduced risks of failure and possible fire. Above-ground 3-phase cables provide for stronger protection from falling trees and limbs due to the increased size.

Residents expressed concern about losing some of the rural aesthetic of the area. Comments and questions were also stated about particular trees and property values. The sentiment expressed was that property values would decrease where new poles were installed or existing poles were replaced with higher poles with more visible cables strung from pole to pole. Some people asked if visual renderings could be provided so that people could get a concept of what the completed project would look like. There were other concerns such as the purpose of the 3-phase cable was to transmit any solar energy produced in town out to other locations and the purpose of the higher poles was to install 5G transmitters for Wi-Fi internet service. Company officials stated that they knew of no plans for either event to occur.

The next step in the project will be for the Select Board to hold a pole hearing at the request of National Grid. This hearing will include any new poles that are to be installed further than three feet from an existing pole. No date has been set for this hearing. Select Board chair, Robyn Provost Carlson, concluded by stating that there would be at least a couple of emails from the Town with follow-up

questions. National Grid affirmed that they would provide more information for the unanswered questions that had been asked.

**Community Hall Windows Fundraising:** The Board reviewed and approved a final ‘thank you’ letter that was drafted by the committee and will be published on the Town website, The Recorder, The Heath Herald, and on the All About Heath Facebook page. Since work is almost complete and there are two vacant seats, *on a motion by Elissa Viarengo and a second by Will Emmet the Select Board voted unanimously to decrease the total number of members on the committee to three, thus decreasing the number of members needed to achieve the quorum for a meeting.*

In the enthusiasm of following the fundraising, the Select Board neglected to commit the donated funds to the project, which is required under the terms of the grant. *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and a second by Will Emmet the Select Board voted unanimously to commit all funds raised for the Community Hall Windows Renovation Project to be used for that purpose.*

**Highway Department:** Steve Thane reported that they were obtaining prices to upgrade the suspension on the pick-up truck and on a larger plow for the truck. If both of these items are affordable, that would allow the pick-up truck to be equipped for snow removal. The driver of this truck would not be required to hold a CDL due to the size of the vehicle.

**Salt Shed Preparation & Emergency Operations Center Demolition:** Part of the preparation for construction of a new salt shed is the relocation of the fuel tanks. Since the EOC office is slated to be torn down, the highway department would like to have that completed and move the fuel tanks to that area. The Board agreed that work could begin on the removal of the EOC office. The first steps would be to have all internet and phone equipment relocated as well as having the Fire Department remove any equipment that is still usable. Steve also said they would like to purchase blocks to build a retaining wall on the embankment in front of the salt shed so that there would still be room for a row of parking. Blocks would cost \$4,500 and delivery trucking would be \$1,600.

**Highway Superintendent Candidate:** Interview will be held on Tuesday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 p.m. The department, including the transfer station attendant, will be invited to attend.

**Landfill Mowing Bids:** The Board decided to extend the bidding process until September 10<sup>th</sup> since only one bid had been received. Hilma will send out RFB forms to other businesses in hopes of receiving additional bids.

**Quote to Repair Single Unit Refrigerator:** *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and a second by Will Emmet the Select Board voted unanimously to accept the quote from Arctic Refrigeration in the amount of \$1,300 to repair the single unit refrigerator at Jacobs Road Municipal Center.*

**Town Owned Buildings, Appraisal Project:** Robyn will contact a realtor she has worked with in the past to ask about a Letter of Opinion for rental value of the available spaces. Hilma will update the rental license form for Hilltown Youth Performing Arts and send it to Robyn for review. She will also be in contact with the Library personnel to work out details and answer questions about moving the remainder of the collection to Jacobs Road. *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and a second by Will Emmet the*

*Select Board voted unanimously to declare four rooms at Sawyer Hall and three rooms at Jacobs Road Municipal Center as surplus property for the purpose of use as rental property.*

*Review of Minutes: On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and a second by Will Emmet the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of August 13, 2024, as presented.*

*On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and a second by Will Emmet the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of August 21, 2024, as presented.*

**Mail:**

- Arctic Refrigeration re: quote for repair
- WRHSAC Equity Data Project re: Heath data for population characteristics—will be sent to COA
- RPC & Cudnohufsky re: email exchange
- J. Gran re: request to reconsider email policy—The Board agreed that they could not make an exception because then they would need to allow any other group that had funding from the Cultural Council.
- D. Clark re: further transfer station comment
- B. Hoyerman (CEC) re: test reports for landfill
- KPLaw re: Affordable Homes Act
- KPLaw re: Salary Range Transparency
- R. Grabelsky re: resignation from Cultural Council— *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and a second by Will Emmet the Select Board voted unanimously to accept with regrets Rachel Grabelsky's resignation from the Heath Cultural Council.*
- C. Davidson re: interest in appointment to Cultural Council— *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and a second by Will Emmet the Select Board voted unanimously to appoint Cindy Davidson as a member to the Heath Cultural Council.*
- B. Gordon re: recommendation for appointment
- N. Anzuoni re: July Fire Chief's report

**Next Meetings:** Tuesday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 p.m.—interview of candidate for Highway Superintendent position.

Tuesday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 4:30 p.m.—meeting for ongoing business

**9:11 p.m. *On a motion by Will Emmet and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.***

Respectfully submitted,

Hilma A. Sumner  
Town Coordinator