

**MEETING MINUTES**  
Town of Heath  
**SELECT BOARD**  
Jacobs Road Municipal Center  
Tuesday, October 8, 2024

**Called to Order at 5:00 p.m.** With Robyn Provost-Carlson, Elissa Viarengo, Will Emmet and Hilma Sumner, Town Coordinator.

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

**School Committee Update:** Representative Budge Litchfield presented information about the various measures that are being taken to enhance safety at all the district schools. Added security at all buildings include locked external doors, and video cameras. All classroom doors are lockable and there are shades on the windows. In the middle/high school building there is also video surveillance in all unsupervised areas. Students and staff participate in safety lockdown drills. There are evacuation drills that are observed by the school resource officer and sheriff's department personnel which is followed by debriefing.

School personnel focus on threat awareness that includes encouraging social/emotional awareness to build community and to encourage students to communicate concerns with school personnel and law enforcement. All critical staff carry walkie talkies, and every room has the enhanced phone systems by which a call can be made directly to emergency services. There is also a call-out system by which parents can be notified automatically.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Review Minutes:** *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of September 24, 2024, as presented.*

**Appliance Disposal Permits:** Transfer Station attendant Lee Lively has requested that he be authorized to sell permits for disposal of appliances or large metal objects to make it more convenient for residents. *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to authorize Lee Lively to sell metal disposal permits at the Transfer Station.*

**Rental License:** Hilma explained that she has negotiated a rental agreement with C. D. Davenport Trucking to rent a room in Sawyer Hall to be used as an office. The license will begin retroactively on October 1<sup>st</sup> for \$400 per month. It is anticipated that they will continue to rent the room for at least 24 months or until a construction project is finished. *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve and sign the rental license with C. D. Davenport Trucking.*

**State Election Warrant:** *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve and sign the State Election warrant for November 5, 2024.*

**Opioid Prevention Payment:** Police Chief John McDonough reported that the Franklin County Sheriff's Office had sent a payment of \$1,016 to be used for training and supplies.

**Municipal Cost of Fiber Cable Relocation:** Representatives of the Charlemont Selectboard and Municipal Light Board along with members of the Heath Municipal Light Board joined in a discussion about the National Grid 3 Phase cable project that is being planned to run through a section of both Charlemont and Heath. One of the serious concerns about the project is the cost of transferring the fiber cable to the new poles that will be installed on the project route. The estimate for the Heath work is \$23,981 and the estimate for Charlemont is about \$100,000.

Some new poles were installed along Bray Road for another project and Heath Broad Band was charged to have the fiber transferred to the new poles without advance notice.

After a lengthy discussion, officials from both towns agreed that the Department of Public Utilities and Department of Telecommunications will be contacted as well as State Senator Paul Mark and State Representative Natalie Blais. It was agreed that different officials would discuss the dilemma that the two towns have been placed in with the unplanned expense that is forthcoming.

**Community Hall Painting:** The Board noted that painting of the building exterior has commenced. It is anticipated that the work will take two to three weeks to complete, pending the weather. The Board issued a deep 'thank you' to the painting team of the Franklin County House of Corrections for their work. Thanks were also issued to the Municipal Building Coordinator and the Highway Department for the assistance they are giving for the project.

**Highway Department Update:** Acting Superintendent Steve Thane and Foreman Kyle Jarvis were present to update the Board about the department's work. The grading of dirt roads is done for the year and ditching is almost finished. The new plow for the pickup truck arrived. The truck will get heavier shocks in the front end to allow it to work with the new, eight-foot plow. The blue truck is getting equipped for the new plow and plow wing and to have new hydraulics installed.

Will and Jason inventoried the culverts on Number Nine Road. Robyn spoke of the culvert inventory that had been done on some of the culverts in town. Steve will send the report to Will for review. It was discussed that an inventory of both the culverts as well as the roads would be invaluable. This would be followed by suggested treatment for anything that was deemed in poor condition.

In preparation for winter, there will be a road map developed with the plow routes clearly marked.

The three-month period of Steve Thane acting as part-time superintendent is ending. Steve stated he is willing to continue working and will orient the new superintendent when someone is hired. ***On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to extend the time of Steve Thane's employment as acting Highway Superintendent for three months or when training of a new superintendent has been completed, whichever comes first.***

**Highway Superintendent Position:** Applicant Tyson Howard was interviewed by the Board after recommendation from the interview team. Tyson stated that he was interested in the position because he wants to be involved in the immediate community and would like a new challenge. His approach to

learning about the Heath roads will be time and travel, and by listening to what the crew already knows about each road. He stated that, after he returns from his upcoming trip, he will pursue getting his hoister's license.

***On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to offer the position of Highway Superintendent to Tyson Howard.***

***On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to offer a starting wage of \$30.00 per hour to Tyson Howard for the first 90 days of employment.***

It was explained that the first 90 days of employment will be a trial period with a review at the end. This would be followed by a 6-month review. At each review consideration will be given as to appropriate compensation. Tyson accepted the position and stated that he would contact the Town Coordinator about October 23<sup>rd</sup>, after he had returned home.

In preparation for construction of the new salt shed, internet and Verizon phone equipment will be moved and the Fire Department will be asked to move the remainder of their equipment from the former EOC office.

**Mail:**

- A. Schwenger, MLB re: \$100,000 transfer to the Town
- H. Hamdan re: regional ambulance service interest meeting
- L. Cregan re: agreement to develop trail
- C. Rabbitt re: September town nurse report
- W. Mooney re: NGrid communications
- R. Ide re: NGrid consultant's work
- R. Stoler re: age- and dementia-friendly regional efforts
- A. Gobi re: CARB regulations
- FCSWMD re: September recycling expense
- Sen. Mark re: October office hours

**Next Meetings:** Tuesday, October 22, at 4:30 p.m. at the Colrain Town Hall and continued at 6:00 p.m. in Heath.

**8:10 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