

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Jacobs Road Municipal Center
Tuesday, March 18, 2025

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

This meeting was recorded.

Others in Attendance: See attendance list.

MTRSD 2D8T Sustainability Study Report: School Committee Chairperson Martha Thurber and Superintendent Sheryl Stanton presented a recap of the charge given for the study and the challenges that became apparent as the research continued. Results of the study led to five models that are the highest rated and deemed possible to achieve. For each model there are projected differences in fiscal outcomes for the eight towns. The fiscal pressures faced by towns in the district will continue to increase unless changes are made within the school district.

Transportation differences in cost and length of routes are some of the factors that would need further, in-depth, analysis when a model is selected. The steps involved in making the transition would also need to be planned in detail as the district moves forward. Detailed information and a survey of interests can be found on the MTRSD website or the Town of Heath website. Steering Committee meetings are open to the public with the next meeting scheduled for April 3rd.

The district will be able to submit an expression of interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) in April. It will be a general description of an intention to either build or renovate for a change of venue for elementary-age children. If changes are proposed, the tentative time schedule would include votes by all District towns in October 2026 with implementation during 2027-2028. Although no decision has been made, if this option is chosen by the towns, the possible opening of a new elementary building would be 2030.

Proposed Changes to Zoning Bylaws: Planning Board members Doug Mason, Steve Thane, Bill Fontes and Will Emmet joined the meeting to present the revised changes to the proposed changes. These changes involve sections pertaining to definitions of frontage, front lot lines, and streets. Some details will be revised to the accessory dwelling units' section to comply with the recent changes in state law. Section 6 that covers wireless service facilities has significant changes and additions proposed to it. After a few more corrections are made to the draft documents, the draft wording will be sent to town counsel for review.

Review of Minutes: *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of March 11, 2025, as amended.*

Public Comment: None.

FY 2026 Budget Discussion: Robyn explained the updated salary spreadsheet that she had prepared for discussion purposes. It reflects a 3 percent increase in wages for this year's levels. Robyn will also prepare a spreadsheet for the various Highway Department financial requests and expenses for planned projects. Calculation of stipends was discussed. It was explained that committee and board positions that receive stipends were evaluated according to the level of training required and average time spent in meetings and other work. These positions may need to be re-evaluated after the town meeting.

Board of Health Appointment: The Board reviewed the recommendation from the Board of Health and the expression of interest from Jason Erali to be appointed as a member. *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint Jason Erali to the Board of Health for the remainder of the term for the vacant seat.*

Additional Town Emails: Due to the nature and level of work and emails received, it has become necessary for the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals to have town email addresses. There are two addresses that are not used and can be reassigned. Another email account will need to be obtained.

Mail:

- Board of Health re: appointment of J. Erali
- Sen. Mark re: upcoming public forum

Next Meetings: March 25

8:38 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