

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Jacobs Road Municipal Center
Tuesday, May 20, 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.

Review Agenda: Add transfer station attendant\

Public Comment: None.

Annual Town Meeting Review: The Board reviewed the overall meeting attendance and the need to find ways to engage younger voters. Somehow communication with residents needs to convey the necessity for multi-generational voters to be willing to be involved. It was agreed to plan childcare earlier in the process to inform young parents of the service. Streamlining Article 3, the operating budget, helps to expedite the meeting process. It was helpful to have the table placement for the Finance Committee set at an angle relative to the Select Board and Moderator. The Moderator and Town Clerk will be invited to a future meeting to discuss the meeting and possible ideas for the future. It was also suggested that a questionnaire be drafted and distributed to ask residents about their knowledge of town government.

Highway Department Updates: Highway Superintendent Tyson Howard joined the meeting to discuss various updates within the department. A new company will need to be engaged after July 1st to provide lawn mowing services. One quote has been obtained but Tyson would like to seek more quotes for the work.

The new one-ton Ford truck will be delivered at the beginning of June. The dealership will invoice the town with payment due in 30 days. The Treasurer will be informed and asked to begin the process to borrow funding for the payment.

New employee Jason Boutwell is scheduled for his 90-day performance review on July 1st. Thus far Tyson is pleased with the progress of Jason's orientation to the job and reports that he is not afraid to work on something new.

Tyson hopes to switch to the summer schedule and have the department work week be Monday through Thursday, 6:00 am.--4:30 pm. in order to have more productive workdays.

The Route 8A bridge work is progressing. Although it is a MassDOT supervised project, Tyson reported that he checks on the work periodically.

Salt Shed Update: All the documents have been received for construction and applying for the building permit. Robyn reported that she reviewed the documents and asked Brian De Vriese to review the plans. Both determined that the drawings looked good. The size of the pad will need to be increased by a few feet in both directions. It has not been decided whether the pad paving will occur pre- or post-construction.

Representative Natalie Blais: The Representative announced that she has been appointed as the chairperson of the Agricultural Commission. The Ch 90 bill that is before the legislature is proposing that an additional \$100 million be added to the usual \$200 million that is in the bill each year. If it passes, the distribution will be based on mileage and not economic development of a municipality. There are also \$3 billion additional funds proposed that could only be used on education or transportation.

Changes are being proposed for the PILOT (Payment In Lieu of Taxes) program to work toward equitable payments. Towns in western Mass. are at a disadvantage since acreage is valued at a lesser amount than other areas of the state.

Following Rep. Blais' suggestion from last year's visit about having a specific request, Robyn stated that the Town needed \$50,000 to purchase replacement generators for four town buildings. Rep. Blais stated that the House will take up a supplemental budget and there will be add-ons to it for funding.

Rep. Blais continues to talk to the Department of Public Utilities to see if there is any assistance with the extraordinary expenses that occurred during the February snowstorm and three-day power outage.

The problem the Fire Fighters Association (FFA) is having is getting the new-to-town brush truck registered. There are inconsistencies in the requirements between the Registry of Motor Vehicles, DOR, and the IRS. Will stated that they are trying to make certain that the FFA does not have to pay taxes. Rep. Blais stated that her assistant, Kelly, will reach out to the Fire Chief to clear up the situation.

Sawyer Hall Generator: The Board reviewed information from the various generator quotes. Kohler generators are considered more user friendly. Kinsley Generator has the lowest quote but there are some aspects of installation that need to be clarified. Hilma will send the company an email asking if the price includes the electrical and plumbing hookups, disposal of the old generator, and installation of a remote alarm. *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the quote of \$10,326.08 from Kinsley Generator with the assumption that there are no other large expenses.*

RFP for Rental Spaces: The Board reviewed the RFP document and concluded that it contained the necessary information for advertising. Possible places to publicize the rental space availability are: STAM email group, Commbuys, Heath Connects, town website, The Greenfield Recorder, postings at Sawyer Hall and JRMC, Facebook, Craigslist, and various area realtors. *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the RFP for Rental Spaces with amendments.*

Transfer Station Attendant: Following review of a letter from Lee Lively, *on a motion by Will Emmet and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to accept with regrets the resignation of Lee Lively, effective July 1, 2025.* Posting for the position will be done immediately.
Review of Minutes: *On a motion by Will Emmet and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of May 6, 2025, as amended.*

On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of May 10, 2025, as amended.

Proclamation of the Governor: Governor Healey has issued a proclamation declaring Memorial Day 2025. The proclamation included statements acknowledging the United States history that led to the national designation of the holiday.

Mail:

- N. Stetson re: thank you for use
- D. Hayward re: CH windows update
- M. Cucchiara re: update on grant funds
- M. Thurber re: 2D8T update & recommendation
- N. Marshall re: grant funding references
- NGrid re: 1019W1 project information for residents
- FCSWMD re: recycling costs and market value
- DLS re: how property taxes affect free cash
- MMA re: Senate supplemental budget
- MMA re: Senate budget to boost local accounts
- MMA re: BRIC aid canceled
- L. Lively re: resignation as transfer station attendant
- K. Nartowicz re: potential borrowing scenario for truck

Next Meeting: June 3rd

7:54 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