

**MEETING MINUTES**  
Town of Heath  
**SELECT BOARD**  
Jacobs Road Municipal Center  
Tuesday, September 2, 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:** Added: Harry Hallman request for storage, fall meeting schedule.

**Fire Chief Mid-Year Report:** Chief Nick Anzuoni gave a report on recent activity in the Fire Department. He stated that the Heath Fair chicken barbeque went smoothly this year. The Firefighters Association members are adopting ways to make preparation more streamlined and efficient.

The Chief's vehicle has many repairs that need to be done. Nick stated that the mechanic who fixed some oil leaks looked at the additional work that is needed and stated that, to attempt to do further repairs might mean other breakage and further necessary repairs. The total cost of repair work would cost thousands of dollars, and the vehicle was not worth that much. As it stands, the vehicle is expected to last for four to six months without more work.

The recent forest fire in the H.O. Cook State Forest presented challenges and called for mutual aid from many different departments and state resources. The command center of operations was set up at the end of A.L. Stetson Road which overlooks that section of the state forest. The fire itself was located in the center of an old logging area. The exact location was found about 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 17<sup>th</sup>. The crew was pulled out until Monday morning for safety reasons. By Wednesday the blaze, which had spread over about five acres, had been extinguished. The area continued to be monitored for several days to locate and extinguish any underground hot spots. There were no homes or private properties at risk during the fire.

Several fire chiefs in larger municipalities in the area are developing a cadet program for young fire fighters. This program will include skill-relevant training and resume writing so that the cadets will be prepared to be hired full-time when they turn 18 years of age.

Word has just been received that the Town has received a Woodlands Partnership grant in the amount of \$25,000 for the purpose of purchasing a UTV for use in off-road situations. Another \$5,000 will be needed to equip the vehicle. This money may be obtained from either the Fire Department and/or the Fire Fighters Association. The primary purpose of the UTV will be to shuttle injured people or workers in off-road areas.

**Police Chief Mid-Year Report:** Chief John McDonough reported that a large amount of his office time is spent in processing firearms permits. He described the process of the application, background checks

done through several state data banks and the finish work of delivering cards once they arrive at his office. The length of process time at the state level varies from five to six weeks up to three months.

The chief states that the level of hours for the department personnel is adequate for now. All officers will have in-service training in the fall, which is 40 hours for each person. The co-responder, who is shared among several towns, works 19.5 hours per week. The position is funded through a grant and is considered employment through the Town of Ashfield. The towns of Charlemont and Heath are considered the “hot spots” for the clinician, in other words, there are more frequent requests for services from these two towns.

When asked about the possibility of sharing police services with another town(s) the chief responded that he was not certain how that would work since each town has separate uniforms and town identification. He is open to conversation as it becomes increasingly more difficult to find part-time workers.

**Review Minutes:** *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of August 5, 2025, as amended.*

**Public Comment:** Barbara Gordon announced that the application period for local cultural council grants was open. The applications must be in by October 17<sup>th</sup>.

Pat McGahan asked what the timeline was for completing the necessary work on the backstop to make it useable for softball. September 15<sup>th</sup> was agreed upon. It is uncertain what condition the soccer goal frames are in. *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to declare the soccer goal frames as surplus property to be disposed of.* The Building Maintenance Coordinator will be consulted to determine what is best for disposal.

Pat McGahan asked if a working group could be formed to improve the interior of the Community Hall, including painting the upstairs walls, cleaning the floor, and getting new window treatments. They would also investigate what funding sources are available. *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve formation of a working group who would develop plans for beautification of the interior Community Hall.*

Devon Clark stated that her children who attend Franklin County Technical School are picked up at the bus stop at 6:10 a.m. and arrive at the school at 7:45 a.m. Students from other towns are picked up as well, which makes the bus ride as long as it is. Devon wondered if it would be possible to have a Heath-Student-only bus so that the ride was not as lengthy.

Bob McGahan inquired if there were any definite plans for building up the shoulder of West Main Street across from the Danes’ house.

**Transfer Station Update:** When the new attendant began, he started bringing his dog to work and allowed her to run loose. Following complaints from residents, a compromise was allowed in that the dog could remain inside the attendant’s vehicle. There had also been a complaint that the gate was closed at 3:50 pm. on a recent Saturday which was being addressed by the Highway Superintendent. Disposal of textiles remains a problem since Salvation Army is not emptying their box on a regular

basis. Elissa will follow up with Jan Ameen at the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District to see if progress has been made in attaining a different company to manage textile disposal.

**Salt Shed Update:** Approval has been obtained for \$220,000 for payment of expenses related to the new salt shed from Chapter 90. At this time, the final grading of the area needs to be completed by Hillman Trucking. Then the inside base and an apron around the outside will be paved.

**Highway Department Position and Wage Evaluations:** The Board discussed their decision in the spring to reevaluate all the highway positions with job descriptions and assigned grades. Because this would entail a lengthy process, it was agreed that there would be wages adjustments, but the position/job description evaluation would take place later. With much appreciation for their hard work, the Board took the following action.

*On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to increase Jason Lively's hourly wage to \$28.40, commencing September 1<sup>st</sup>, based on the additional responsibilities he has assumed in his work.*

*On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to increase Jason Boutwell's hourly wage to \$27.28, commencing September 1<sup>st</sup>, based on his 90-day performance review and fulfillment of obtaining the required hoister's license.*

**MLP Manager Hourly Wage:** Hilma reported that Bailey Cole, the new MLP Manager, had sat for his 90-day performance review. This was done with two members of the Municipal Light Board who reported that Bailey has been doing excellent work of learning the job. The entire MLB were recommending that Bailey receive a 5-percent increase in his hourly wage. *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve Bailey Cole's hourly wage increase to \$27.50 per hour.*

**FY 2025 Special Fund Review:** It was agreed that a list would be compiled of the special fund accounts that are no longer needed because a project was completed so that the remaining funds could be moved to the general fund and the accounts be eliminated.

**General Town Building Use Policy:** Robyn stated that she would combine information in the various documents that had been found and would send out a compiled list.

**Town Coordinator Transition Plan & Preliminary Interview Committee:** The Board discussed a slate of various names that were proposed by each Board member for inclusion on a preliminary interview committee. After deliberation, it was agreed that time was needed to weigh the merits of each suggested person, and a subsequent short meeting would be held on September 8<sup>th</sup> to make a final decision.

**Harry Hallman Request for Storage:** The Board reviewed a request to store the wooden panels used in the art show on the Community Hall stage. It was agreed that the panels would take up a great deal of space on the stage, however, they could be stored in one of the dry sheds at Jacobs Road.

**Fall Meeting Schedule:** The Board agreed that they would continue the bi-weekly meeting schedule through the fall.

**Mail:**

- HAS re: Highway Department Wage Analysis
- B. Kovacs re: parking request
- BoH re: regulations for in and around town buildings
- FCSWMD re: notice of no assessment increase for FY26
- HCGIT re: health insurance claims
- Rep. N. Blais re: advocate work for additional PILOT funding
- C. Freeman re: continued use of JRMC Room 124— *On a motion by Elissa Viarengo and seconded by Will Emmet, the Select Board unanimously voted to continue renting an area of Room 124 for the months of September and October for \$25 per week.*
- CEC,Inc. re: Landfill well water sampling results
- B. Cordeiro re: Support for House Bill 2432—The Board agreed to sign a letter of support.
- MTRSD re: 2D8T steering committee update
- DESE re: Rethinking Discipline Initiative grant awardees
- M. Veno (GIC) re: health insurance
- Mass-Care re: health care crisis
- FCSWMD re: August recycling processing fee

**Next Meetings:** September 8, 7:00 p.m. Virtual meeting  
September 16, 5:00 p.m.

**9:00 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 Sumner  
Town Coordinator