

TOWN OF HEATH

MASSACHUSETTS



SELECT BOARD

MEETING MINUTES - TOWN OF HEATH SELECT BOARD

This meeting was held on Tuesday, June 2, 2026, at 5:30PM.

JACOBS ROAD MUNICIPAL CENTER – CAFETERIA - 18 JACOBS ROAD HEATH, MA 01346

Called to order at 5:30PM with Robyn Provost (Chair), Elissa Viarengo (Member), William Emmet (Member), and Mia Francesconi (Town Coordinator) present.

Others present included Barbara Gordon, Kenneth Gilbert (E911 Coordinator), Johnny Depin (Greenfield Recorder) and Ned Wolf (Finance Committee).

R. Provost announced that the meeting was being audio recorded.

Review Agenda: Added: MassDOT Upcoming Grant Application; Heath Historical Society Lease; Community Hall Chairs

Meeting Minutes: 05/19/2026

A motion was made by E. Viarengo and seconded by W. Emmet to approve the meeting minutes from May 19, 2026, as presented.

Vote: Unanimous

Motion Carries: 3-0

Route 8A (Jacksonville Stage Road) Over Underwood Brook Culvert/Small Bridge – Continue Discussion on Easements, Funding, and Project Status

M. Francesconi explained that she had applied for a grant through the Small Town Rural Assistance Program (STRAP) for the additional funding over \$1,000,000 that the culvert project was expected to cost. She would be applying for a grant through the Municipal Small Bridge Program for the remaining \$1,000,000. The Municipal Small Bridge Program had funded the design phase of the project, so it was very likely that the program would also fund the construction phase. She would continue working with Counsel on obtaining the necessary easements for the project.

Tri-Town Landfill – Review Invasive Species Mgmt. Quote & Award Contract

M. Francesconi explained that she had only received one proposal for the control of invasive plants at the Tri-Town Landfill. Given this, she recommended that the Select Board accept the quote so that services could be rendered as soon as possible to prevent the continued spread of the invasive plants.

A motion was made by E. Viarengo and seconded by W. Emmet to accept the proposal from Matthew Verson Vegetation Management for the control of invasive plants at the Tri-Town Landfill on Burrington Road, for one year, for a total of \$3,600 to be paid in three equal parts by each of the three towns: Heath, Charlemont, and Hawley.

Vote: Unanimous

Motion Carries: 3-0

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5:45PM Kenneth Gilbert, E911 Coordinator – Annual Discussion re. E911 & Permitting

K. Gilbert stated that he would like to come up with a more streamlined process for obtaining E911 addresses. He explained that he had run into an issue with a property on Rowe Road where a driveway had been installed and he had not been informed. He was only asked to issue an E911 address when a company working on the project reached out to the Town Coordinator and asked for one. He wondered whether any of the primary permitting avenues could include a requirement for an E911 address at the time an application for that permit was submitted. R. Provost noted that new construction should require a sign-off from the Highway Department when an application for a building permit is submitted. M. Francesconi will follow up with the Franklin County Cooperative Inspection Program (FCCIP) regarding this issue.

Behl-Amter Conservation Restriction – General Discussion; Review/Discuss Information from Franklin Land Trust & Director of Assessing – Vote Possible

R. Provost had spoken with the Director of Assessing and explained that since the property in question was already under an agricultural preservation restriction, the tax revenue from this property would only minimally change by putting it into a conservation restriction. The cabin on the property and approximately three acres of land surrounding it was left out of the proposed conservation restriction to allow the property owners to make improvements to the cabin and surrounding area. If the property owners follow through with these improvements, the tax revenue would increase over what it currently is under the agricultural preservation restriction. Given the Conservation Commission's certification that putting this property into a conservation restriction is in the best interest of the environment, the existing topography that is unsuitable for development, and the property owners' good faith in accounting for any possible tax revenue implications to the Town, R. Provost recommended that the Board approve this conservation restriction. Members discussed.

A motion was made by E. Viarengo and seconded by W. Emmet to approve the Behl-Amter Conservation Restriction as presented by the Franklin Land Trust.

Vote: Unanimous

Motion Carries: 3-0

Town Nurse Position – Review/Approve Job Description; Review Recommendation from Board of Health; Vote to Offer Position – Vote Anticipated

M. Francesconi received an application for the Town Nurse position. The applicant was interviewed prior to the Select Board meeting, and the Board of Health recommended the applicant to the Select Board for appointment. E. Viarengo was present for the interview and noted that the applicant was very qualified and had decades of relevant experience. The applicant was informed during the interview that both the Board of Health and Select Board were looking to reimagine the position, over the course of the next year, with the help of whoever was hired and the boards were amenable to lowering the number of hours the Town Nurse works per week, temporarily, to increase the hourly wage as the budget for the coming fiscal year had already been approved. The applicant had requested that the position's hours be lowered to five hours per week, rather than eight hours per week, for an hourly wage of approximately \$50.00 per hour, as opposed to the \$31.25 per hour that the position was allotted in FY '27. Members

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discussed and expressed concerns with this request, noting that even if the Town Nurse position was regraded, the hourly wage would not reach \$50.00 per hour, and they did not feel comfortable lowering the position's salary after the first year. Members suggested that M. Francesconi have an informal discussion with the applicant, prior to the Select Board making an offer, to further discuss the applicant's request. M. Francesconi asked that a member of the Select Board follow up with the Board of Health prior to that discussion to be sure that everyone was on the same page, then she would be willing to have a discussion with the applicant. R. Provost will follow up with the Chair of the Board of Health.

FY '27 Appointments – Continue General Discussion; Review/Discuss Vacant Positions & How to Advertise; Review/Discuss Vacant Elected Positions & Next Steps

Members reviewed the FY '27 appointment list supplied by M. Francesconi. M. Francesconi explained that the General Bylaws would need to be updated at a future Town Meeting to remove positions that were no longer relevant and add positions that had been created since the General Bylaws were last updated. M. Francesconi would continue to update the FY '27 appointment list as necessary.

ADA Self-Evaluation & Transition Plan – Continue Review/Discussion on Priorities, Next Steps, and Funding Opportunities

R. Provost explained that she and M. Francesconi were working on an application for an accessibility improvement grant through the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) for the replacement of the sidewalks, curb ramps, and front entry doors at the Jacobs Road Municipal Center. They were also working with the elevator maintenance company to determine how the part in the Community Hall lift was damaged. M. Francesconi would submit a claim for the lift to the insurance company. The remaining issues at Community Hall identified in the Transition Plan were minimal compared to the issues identified at Sawyer Hall. As a temporary fix, the Highway Superintendent would be reaching out to a mason to see if it was possible to grind down the spots where the slate slabs that make up the Sawyer Hall ramp had shifted and settled over the years. R. Provost and M. Francesconi had looked at the center of Town in totality with Brian DeVriese and the Highway Superintendent and determined that it was necessary to reach out to an engineering firm to get a proposal for the creation of a feasibility study and phased plan to make the necessary accessibility improvements to the center of Town as a whole. This plan would address the drainage issues, the entrances to both Sawyer Hall and Community Hall, the accessible parking situation, the roadways, and how all these things could be brought into compliance. R. Provost will reach out to the engineering firm who created the Sawyer Hall Site Accessibility Study to see if they would be interested in creating this plan and conducting a feasibility study. She and M. Francesconi would continue to look for funding opportunities.

MTRSD Enrollment Calculation Error – Continue Discussion re. Request from Charlemont Select Board; Updates on Hawley's Involvement – Vote Possible

M. Francesconi explained that the Charlemont Select Board had reached out to the Town of Hawley to see if they'd be interested in participating in their request for a legislative earmark to compensate the Towns for their overpayment due to an error made by the MTRSD. While Hawley was appreciative of

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this offer, they declined to participate, noting that their overpayment was significantly less than Charlemont's.

A motion was made by E. Viarengo and seconded by W. Emmet to sign the letter of support for the Town of Charlemont's request for a legislative earmark for compensation for their overpayment in FY '21 due to an enrollment calculation error made by the Mohawk Trail Regional School District (MTRSD).

Vote: Unanimous

Motion Carries: 3-0

Highway Department – Continue General Discussion; Updates on Taylor Brook Road Bridge; Number Nine Road, Sumner Stetson Road, Colrain Stage Road, & Roller; Salt Shed Retaining Wall – Vote Possible

M. Francesconi had no updates on the Taylor Brook Road Bridge. She explained that Number Nine Road was set to be paved in late August, though the exact dates had not been finalized. The Highway Superintendent had informed her that he expected the cost of paving Number Nine Road to exceed his initial projections, so it was no longer possible to pave Sumner Stetson Road this year, but he would revisit the project next year. The Town was awarded a grant in the amount of \$170,093 for the purchase of a roller to be used on unpaved roadways in Town. M. Francesconi was awaiting correspondence to begin the process of executing a grant contract. R. Provost explained that the Town had received an updated quote for the Heath Salt Shed Retaining Wall project that pushed the cost above the threshold for a more extensive procurement process. M. Francesconi would work on this and keep the Board updated on her progress.

Town Center Kiosk – Continue Discussion on Possible Locations

M. Francesconi had received correspondence from a member of the Planning Board that expressed their concerns about moving the kiosk outside of the Planning Boards' proposed location. E. Viarengo will discuss these concerns with the member and report back to the Select Board.

Deerfield River Watershed Association – Continue Discussion re. Wild & Scenic Initiative – Vote Possible

M. Francesconi had received correspondence from a member of the Deerfield River Watershed Association that explained that a designation through the Wild & Scenic Initiative could trigger an extensive review process when applying for and/or receiving certain kinds of federal funding. E. Viarengo will follow up regarding this correspondence.

Town Buildings – Elevator & Storm Windows (Community Hall); Heating System (Sawyer Hall); Heating System, Roofing, Signage, Heat Pumps/Mini Splits (Jacobs Road Municipal Center)

M. Francesconi had no updates on the heating system in Sawyer Hall or the signage at the Jacobs Road Municipal Center and noted that the updates regarding the Community Hall lift ("Elevator") were discussed under the "ADA Self-Evaluation & Transition Plan" agenda item. She explained that the roofing at the Jacobs Road Municipal Center was complete and the company would be working on filling and seeding the ruts in the grass made by some of the machinery that was used. The heat

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pump/mini split project had begun and would be completed in the coming weeks. R. Provost stated that she expected a quote for the storm windows at Community Hall very soon.

End of Fiscal Year

M. Francesconi explained that she was continuing to work with department heads and the financial team in preparation for the transition into FY '27.

Boards Clerk Position

This agenda item was tabled for discussion at a future Select Board meeting.

Carpenter Award

E. Viarengo will be presenting the Frank E. Carpenter Award to a student of Colrain Elementary School on June 16th at the 6th grade graduation ceremony.

Town of Colrain Surplus Police Cruiser

M. Francesconi had no updates on this agenda item.

MassDOT Upcoming Grant Application

M. Francesconi explained that there was an opportunity coming up to apply for a grant to continue the design phase of the culvert reconstruction under Burrington Road. She asked if the Select Board would like her to pursue this. The Select Board asked that she hold off on applying for this grant, citing the number of ongoing projects in Town and the need to finish those before beginning a new one.

Heath Historical Society Lease

N. Wolf asked when the Select Board would have a new lease/license agreement ready for the Heath Historical Society to review. M. Francesconi stated that she would have it ready prior to the start of the new fiscal year.

Community Hall Chairs

P. McGahan had discovered that the Colrain Community Church was going to be giving away padded chairs that she believed could be used in the Community Hall. She asked if the Select Board would grant her permission to pick up these chairs and deliver them to the Community Hall for use at future events. E. Viarengo will follow up with P. McGahan.

Public Comment

E. Viarengo stated that P. McGahan had retired from taking notes at Select Board meetings. Members expressed their gratitude to P. McGahan for this service.

Mail

- Franklin Land Trust re. Behl-Amter Conservation Restriction Documents
- DRAFT Town Nurse Job Description for Review/Approval
- W. Lataille & W. Sparks re. MTRSD Enrollment Calculation Error

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- M. Verson re. Proposal to Control Invasive Plants at Tri-Town Landfill
 - A. Sparks re. DRWA Wild & Scenic Initiative in Charlemont
 - C. Curtis re. DRWA Wild & Scenic Initiative
 - W. Lataille re. MTRSD School Choice Vote Information
 - J. Eberwein re. 2D8T May Update
 - R. Boyd (FRCOG) re. Rural Policy Plan Public Engagement Sessions
 - J. Ameen (FCSWMD) re. May Recycling Costs

Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 16, 2026, 5:00PM

Meeting Adjournment

A motion was made by E. Viarengo and seconded by W. Emmet to adjourn the meeting of the Select Board at 8:34PM.

Vote: Unanimous

Motion Carries: 3-0

Respectfully submitted,



Mia Francesconi, Town Coordinator
Town of Heath