

Town of Colrain  
Select Board/MLP Board Meeting  
Colrain Central School  
22 Jacksonville Road  
5:30 PM

**MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD  
February 14, 2023**

**Present** Mike Slowinski, Chair; Thom Griffin; Ben Eastman

**Others Present** Natalie Blais, State Representative; Corinne Coryat, Legislative Aide; Kate Barrows, MTRSD School Committee; Marybeth Chichester, Planning Board; Betty Ringwood; Chris Pelletier; Kevin Worden Sr.; Jane Johnson; Roger Williams; Jonathan Lagreze; Lee Wheeler; Nate Gilbert; Debbie Rosiensi; Alan Staley; Steve Daby, Highway Superintendent; Paula Harrison, Treasurer/Collector; Betsy Shuipis, Administrative Assistant; Kevin Fox, Town Administrator

Chair Mike Slowinski called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**Appointments:**

**State Representative Natalie Blais and Legislative Aide Corinne Coryat – Priorities/Legislation and Budget Requests for the Upcoming Year**

Rep. Blais introduced herself and what she is working on: rural schooling funding, transportation - roads, bridges and culverts, rail, maintain disproportionate number of unpaved roads and direct funds to these roads that are not included in Ch. 90, additional funding for municipal buildings and public safety complexes. She also explained the process for how funding is granted to municipalities. Corinne Coryat also introduced herself and her job in constituent services.

Board and Resident concerns expressed to Rep. Blais:

- Kate Barrows and John Chivers thanked Rep. Blais for all her work and expressed the needs of the Mohawk Trail Regional School District, particularly rural school funding.
- Chair Slowinski spoke about Chap. 90 being the same amount for the last 11 years, yet costs have gone up. MassWorks is out of money and Colrain is looking for money to fund the bridge on Adamsville Rd and cost-share with Heath.
- Sewer district: Pat Geary explained some of the history of the sewer district and there are 20 houses affected by the closure of Barnhardt. Barnhardt is handling the waste for now, but that will end and holding tanks will need to be pumped at \$20,000- \$30,000/month and a permanent solution needs to be found. Rep. Blais commented she will continue to help find a solution for the sewer district.
- Commissioners from Colrain Fire District reps explained they are working with RCAP to remove a dam through an ecological mitigation plan. They are in the process of applying for a grant and asked for Rep. Blais's support.
- Chair Slowinski went through a list of projects that need funding: school transportation funding reimbursement, Charlemont Rd culvert, Historical Commission request for sign at Lyonsville Rd for Arthur A. Smith Covered Bridge, Adamsville Rd bridge, Frankton Rd/Rte. 112 intersection (joint project with Shelburne), truck escape ramp on Greenfield Rd, Jacksonville Rd washout, Broadband issues/projects
- Kevin Worden, I – Jacksonville Rd washout and making the Greenfield Rd intersection safer for trucks

### **Highway Superintendent Steve Daby – Select Board Questions/Concerns**

Ben Eastman concerns:

- Washout on Riels Lane and Archambo Rd – Steve will look at both
- Adamsville Road near Maxam Rd many trees have been taken down and seems like a precarious stretch of road and nothing blocking cars from the river – will look into a guardrail
- Radios are being worked on
- East side of Lyonsville Road is in much better shape
- Kevin received a letter from Stowe Farm Community after posting the agenda, which will be addressed at a future meeting

### **Debbie Rosiensi – South Green River Road Closure**

Deb Rosiensi questioned the closure of South Green River Rd and when it can be opened. There is only one way in and out and emergency vehicles will have a hard time getting to them should the need arise. Safety is the concern of those who live on this road. The Board asked Steve Daby to evaluate the road and if he thinks it's safe, he will tell Kevin Fox.

**MOVED:** Thom Griffin moved to provisionally open South Green River Road.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

### **Screening Committee – Recommendations Regarding Administrative Assistant Position**

Paula Harrison updated the Board regarding the Administrative Assistant position and as of today, there are three applicants. To get more applicants the job description was listed on the MMA site, Small Town Administrators website, Mohawk and Colrain Central School newsletter, the Colrain Clarion and Greenfield Community College career board. The screening committee will begin the interview process and bring their recommendation to a future meeting.

### **New Business:**

#### **Request to Approve Change Order #732 from Bourgeois Wrecking and Excavation for the Demolition of 102 Main Road**

The amount of the change is a \$5,000 increase and Shelburne already rejected the request.

**MOVED:** Thom Griffin moved to reject the request for additional funding.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

#### **Approve Select Board Meeting Minutes – 12/1/2022, 12/20/2022, 1/10/2023, 1/24/2023**

**MOVED:** Ben Eastman moved to approve the Select Board minutes of 12/1/2022, 12/20/2022, 1/10/2023, and 1/24/2023.

Thom Griffin seconded. **Approved unanimously. Mike Slowinski abstained from approving the 1/10/2023 minutes.**

#### **Approve Complete Street Prioritization Plan**

The Board requested this be moved to the next meeting 2/28/2023.

### **Old Business:**

#### **Cost of Living Wage Adjustment Recommendation**

The Board received the information regarding health insurance costs and town-by-town salary comparison, and all agreed to recommend a 4% COLA increase.

**MOVED:** Thom Griffin moved to recommend a 4% COLA increase for the employees of town for FY2024.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

**Unanticipated:**

**Resident Comments and Questions – Answered by Mike Slowinski**

- Patience Lowe – concerned with liability to the Town regarding many of the dangerous situations, specifically the intersection of Greenfield Rd and Jacksonville Rd
- Kevin Worden I – what is the priority of the Jacksonville Rd washout and a timeframe for fixing? – it is being designed now and the project has to go before the Conservation Commission before anything can happen. There has been talk should the washout worsen.
- Jonathan Lagreze – why was Bourgeois Wrecking requesting an extra \$5,000? – There were reasons listed in the letter that were discussed at the preconstruction meetings.
- Jane Johnson – voiced her concern that waiting until the end of the meeting to ask questions leads to people not asking questions and they want people to be involved. Could questions be limited to one minute during the discussion of the agenda item? –The meeting tends to get off track as questions are asked and it is hard to keep people on topic.
- Howard Phelps – why was it decided to hold questions until the end because once the topic is voted on, the questions don't matter anymore. –The agenda is posted ahead of time and residents can contact the Board in advance to have their questions answered.
- Jade Mortimer – Agrees that timing is important for the questions be asked at the time of the agenda item. Questioned who is responsible for the town line signs and volunteered to restore them. Discussion on other signs in town.
- Julio Dejesus – when will the vote be taken to move his house out of condemnation? He will need to speak to the Board of Health about the issue.

**Town Administrator Updates:**

**Massworks Grant**

He has the Expression of Interest for the Massworks grant in for Adamsville Rd over Sanders Brook which will be joint with the Town of Heath.

**Library Support Request**

The Library Director has requested a letter of support from the Board for a grant application to the Mass Board of Library Commissioners for digitalizing historical records at the library.

**MOVED:** Ben Eastman moved to sign the letter of support for the library for the digitalization grant. Thom Griffin seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

**MOVED:** Thom Griffin moved to dissolve the meeting at 7:30 pm. Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Shuipis  
Administrative Assistant

Accepted by the Select Board

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Mike Slowinski - Chair

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Thom Griffin

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Ben Eastman

Minutes originally taken by Betsy Shuipis and typed by Marjorie Smith for approval by the current Select Board members. The current Board members accept the minutes as written on 2/13/2024, for the purpose of putting the minutes on record, as they were not accepted around the time of the original meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

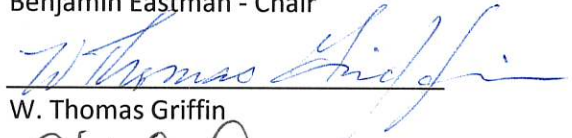


Marjorie Smith  
Administrative Assistant

Accepted by the Select Board



Benjamin Eastman - Chair



W. Thomas Griffin



Emily Thurber

**Documents:**

Select Board Meeting Notes

Email from Corinne Coryat to Town Administrator dated 1/3/2023 re: Select Board meeting with Rep. Blais

Email from Debbie Rosiensi to the Town Administrator re: South Green River Rd Closure

Complete Streets Prioritization Plan

Draft Select Board Meeting Minutes dated 12/1/2022, 12/20/2022, 1/10/2023, 1/24/2023