

Town of Colrain
Select Board/MLP Board Meeting
Highway Garage
9 Jacksonville Road
4:30 PM

**MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD
July 11, 2023**

Present: Benjamin Eastman, Chair; Emily Thurber

Absent: W. Thomas Griffin

Others Present: Howard Phelps; Peter Brooks, Energy Committee; Roger Williams; Marjorie Smith, Administrative Assistant; Kevin Fox, Town Administrator

Chair, Benjamin Eastman called the meeting to order at 4:33pm.

Appointments: None

New Business: Establishment of Ad-Hoc Pollinator Planning Committee

Kevin Fox explained that every year the Select Board prioritizes DLTA funding from FRCOG. Two years ago, the Pollination Corridor was prioritized, and the project is now being worked on. Kevin posted on the website on June 5th to have people send a letter of interest to join the ad-hoc committee. Three people sent in letters, Jocelyn Demuth, Martin Dagoberto Driggs and Elizabeth Erickson. The representatives from Colrain would meet with other towns and FRCOG would facilitate. Then the committee would come to the Town with a presentation of their work. Ben asked if the interested parties were invited to the meeting and if any showed more interest than the others. Kevin explained that Jocelyn just opened a farm store up the street next to the school, and Elizabeth and Marty have been going to the meetings with FRCOG since the beginning.

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to establish an Ad-Hoc Pollinator Planning Committee.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Requests to be appointed to Ad-Hoc Pollinator Committee; Elizabeth Erickson, Martin Dagoberto Driggs, Jocelyn Demuth

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to appoint Martin Dagoberto Driggs, Elizabeth Erickson, and Jocelyn Demuth as members of the Pollinator Planning Committee.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Request to be Appointed to Personnel Committee – Joe Kurland

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to appoint Joe Kurland to the Personnel Committee for a term ending 6/30/2027.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Request to make the appointment of Mike Slowinski as MLP Manager a two-year term (expiring on 6/30/25)

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to amend the appointment of Mike Slowinski as MLP Manager to a two-year term expiring 6/30/2025.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Request to Approve Project Narrative to the Green Communities Grant Program for Fire Department Heat Pump Replacement (Submitted by Peter Brooks Representing the Energy Committee)

Kevin Fox explained that a number of years ago the Town was established as a Green Community and was awarded a \$129,000 grant. The Town has spent \$52,000 so far on the heat pumps at Town Hall and window inserts at the library. The Energy Committee is proposing heat pumps at the Fire Station as the next project. The first step is to send a project narrative to the Department of Energy Resources (DOER). Then DOER will approve or deny the project. Heat pumps were installed previously at the Fire Station, however, were not installed properly and have never worked quite right. The main panel also needs to be replaced.

Ben Eastman asked about the possibility of a new fire house. Kevin responded that the current building is old and too small and a committee was formed five years ago for that purpose. Emily Thurber commented that a mill (Barnhardt) employee mentioned that they were hoping to sell it to the Town and could that property be a possible location. Ben offered that since there is no immediate solution for a new fire station, the updates should be made to the current building.

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to approve the Project Narrative to the Green Communities Grant Program for Fire Department Heat Pump Replacement.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Approval of MGL Ch. 44 Section 33B End of Year Transfers

Kevin explained to the Board that the Town has until 7/15 to square-up the appropriations that were overspent and can transfer funds from one line item to fund the deficit. Kevin is proposing the funds come from Employer Contribution to Group Health Insurance which had an underrun of \$46,000 because of unfilled positions or budgeting for health insurance for employees that didn't take the insurance. He prepared a spreadsheet outlining the deficits totaling \$7,578.15 from seven accounts and suggested the funds come from the Group Health Insurance account. Discussion regarding the specific line items.

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to transfer funds as listed on the spreadsheet in accordance with MGL Ch. 44 Section 33B and we transfer from Employer Contribution to Group Health Insurance.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Ben Eastman and Emily Thurber signed the spreadsheet.

Old Business: None

Unanticipated: Approve Select Board Meeting Minutes – 3/2/2023

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to approve the minutes of 3/2/2023 as written.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Approve Select Board Meeting Minutes – 3/21/2023

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to approve the minutes of 3/21/2023 as written.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Approve Select Board Executive Session Meeting Minutes – 3/17/2023

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to approve the minutes of 3/17/2023 as written.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Town Administrator Updates:

Greenfield Rd Update:

The milling on Greenfield Rd is to start next week and if all goes as planned the project should be done by the end of August. Emily asked about the detailing and if the Fire Department is a possibility to help. She offered to help facilitate if it is. Kevin has spoken with Chris Lannon about detail options.

Storm Updates:

- Jacksonville Rd took a little bit of a hit. Kevin sent pictures to the engineering firm and State Rep. The road isn't undercutting but the washout is getting longer.
- The culvert running from the bottom of Coburn St to between Carl Herrett's and the telecommunications hut. The catch basin has blown out, created a cavern and took trees down. Kevin called MassDOT and they came and looked at it today (7/11/2023) and agreed it needs work.

Highway Dept. Equipment Operator/Laborer Position:

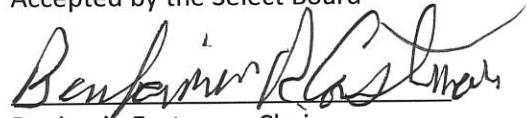
Kevin informed the Board there has been one application for the Highway Dept position that doesn't meet the qualifications. He suggested to the Board to think about lowering the standards by possibly hiring at a lower rate and then give incentives to get a raise when they obtain licenses. The hiring rate is not advertised as it is the Select Board that sets the rate during the hiring process. Kevin included a projected rate in the budget to establish the appropriations. Ben suggested including a starting pay with a clause regarding the starting pay varies dependent upon licenses. Kevin responded that he can do that, however it is up to the Board to tell him to. Ben asked Howard Phelps his opinion on using a high and a low rate. Howard responded that every position should have a starting rate and a maximum rate in the Town, and they don't. Emily asked about the process of setting the rate. Kevin suggested not setting it now but waiting until the interview process and may need to consider starting at a lower rate and offering to increase it as licenses are obtained. Steve is reaching out to contractors for winter help as a backup. The Select Board decided to hold-off on an interview of the candidate for the time being.

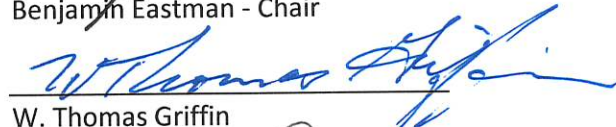
MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to dissolve the meeting at 5:16 pm.
Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

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 Tasmin Flanders, FRCOG, dated 6/1/2023 re: Ad Hoc "Pollinator Planning" Committee

Email from Elizabeth Erickson dated 6/7/2023 re: Interest in Ad Hoc "Pollinator Planning" Committee

Email from Martin Dagoberto Driggs dated 6/30/2023 re: Interest in Ad Hoc "Pollinator Planning" Committee

Email from Jocelyn Demuth dated 7/4/2023 re: Interest in Ad Hoc "Pollinator Planning" Committee

Email from Joe Kurland dated 6/28/2023 re: Interest in Serving on Personnel Committee

Spreadsheet re: Green Communities Grant Activity to Date

Town of Colrain Green Communities Designation Grant Project Narrative – Fire Dept. Heat Pump Replacement

Request for Line-Item Transfer of Funds Estimate Spreadsheet

Request for Line-Item Transfer of Funds Final Spreadsheet

DLS Informational Guideline Release re: Appropriation Transfers (MGL Ch. 44 Section 33B)