

Town of Colrain
Select Board/MLP Board Meeting
Colrain Highway Garage
9 Jacksonville Road
5:00 PM

**MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD
May 7, 2024**

Present: Benjamin Eastman, Chair; W. Thomas Griffin; Emily Thurber

Others Present: Nancy Turkle, Library Trustee; Chelsea Jordan-Makely, Library Director; Marjorie Smith, Administrative Assistant; Kevin Fox, Town Administrator

Chair Ben Eastman called the meeting to order at 4:30pm.

Appointments:

Approve/Sign FY2025 Annual Town Meeting Warrant

The Board agreed to put their recommendations on the warrant, which will be discussed at next week's meeting. Discussion on proposed FY2025 budget including police equipment versus cruiser expense line items, highway machinery maintenance, removal of highway laborer position, contracted snow removal line item decreased by \$20,000, and the snow removal equipment and trailer capital expense. Discussion on making an amendment at Town Meeting.

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to approve the Town Meeting Warrant as submitted.
Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Kevin explained the process for making the warrant available to the public.

New Business:

None

Old Business:

None

Unanticipated:

Nancy Turkle, Library Trustee, and Chelsea Jordan-Makely, Library Director

Kevin Fox explained that he received a request from Nancy Turkle to have Town Counsel attend the annual town meeting and brought the request before the Board. Chelsea Jordan-Makely read a statement to the Board regarding her thoughts and perspective as an information professional regarding asking the library trustees to deaccession the eight plaster busts. She stated that there is a difference between deaccessioning and censorship, however, this was not her main point, which was requesting Town Counsel be present at the Town Meeting.

Discussion on reasons to have Town Counsel attend the meeting to share the facts, provide an opinion on whether Town Meeting can overrule the Library Trustees authority and keep the meeting within the scope of the law. Chelsea further explained that it is important to many individuals that the busts remain in Colrain, and she is working with museum curators to safely package the busts which will be stored in the school basement. Discussion on informing Town Counsel of the question, but not render an opinion until Town Meeting.

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to have Town Counsel at the Town Meeting for advice on the library bust question.
Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

FRCOG Regional Brownfields Program

FRCOG has asked Colrain to identify potential sites to be considered for assessment in the Brownfields Program. Kevin met with the sewer district, and they are in favor of including Barnhardt in the program. Barnhardt would have to agree, but the Select Board can approve including the site in the program.

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to involve ourselves in the FRCOG Regional Brownfields Program Site Analysis and that the Barnhardt site is our selected site.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Ben Eastman signed the agreement.

Request for Letter of Support for a Grant for Deerfield River Watershed

The 2020 Select Board supported the initiative by the Deerfield River Watershed Association to seek a National Wild and Scenic River designation for the Deerfield River and is now looking to apply for a grant to complete a feasibility study. In order to apply, they need a letter of support from the Town.

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to provide a letter of support for the application process for the Deerfield River Watershed Association.

Thom Griffin seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Police Officer Position

Ben Eastman would like to have the applicant come in for the 5/14/2024 meeting for a final interview. Kevin will set it up for the next meeting.

Executive Session Scheduling

The Board requested scheduling an executive session for the 5/14/2024 meeting to start contract negotiations for the new Town Administrator. Kevin recommended the Board appoint one member to be the point of contact for the candidate. Discussion on who can be appointed to be the lead in negotiations and process for negotiations. The Board agreed that Emily will be the lead and will reach out to the candidate to discuss next steps. Kevin provided the Board with a copy of his current 1-year contract and his most recent 3-year contract and explained that the contract has been reviewed by Town Counsel. He further recommended bringing any new contact before Town Counsel.

Ad-Hoc Town Administrator Search Committee Dissolution

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to formally thank the Ad-Hoc Town Administrator Search Committee for their service and look forward to working with them in the future on some other projects.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Pollinator Garden

Thom Griffin stated that he has given the pollinator garden more thought and he acted hastily in endorsing the pollinator garden and given the reaction of the veterans in town, we should honor their wishes, and a more sensible place is the ball field.

Jacksonville Road Washout Update

The documents from both engineering firms have gone to FRCOG to begin the procurement process.

Bridge on Adamsville Rd

Discussion on timing of bridge construction on Adamsville Rd over Vincent Brook, and other bridges in Town.

Barn on Greenfield Road

Kevin has had no response from the Building Inspector regarding the standing order to demolish the barn.

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to instruct the Building Inspector to enforce the standing order.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Ben Eastman will speak to the Building Inspector.

Thom Griffin Final Meeting

Emily and Ben thanked Thom for his service and are sad to see him leave. Thom said it was a pleasure serving with the two other members.

Brick Meeting House

Jane Johnson questioned what is going on at the Brick Meeting House regarding the boats and the owners' intentions. The Board doesn't know her plans.

Approve Select Board Minutes

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to approve the minutes of the Select Board as submitted for 4/23/2024 and 4/30/2024.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Town Administrator Updates:

None

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to dissolve the meeting at 5:52pm.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,



Marjorie Smith
Administrative Assistant

Accepted by the Select Board on 5/14/2024



Benjamin Eastman - ~~Chair~~



Emily Thurber



Katie Korby

Documents Distributed to the Select Board Before the Meeting in a Packet or at the Meeting:

Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Email dated 4/9/2024 from Jessica Atwood, FRCOG, to Kevin Fox, Town Administrator, re: FRCOG Regional Brownfields Program Site Request

FRCOG Regional Brownfields Program Site Request Form

Draft Letter of Support to Vanessa Farny, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, re: Deerfield River Watershed Association Grant Application

Contract Between Town of Colrain and Town Administrator dated 4/13/2020

Contract Between Town of Colrain and Town Administrator dated 4/11/20223