

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

**MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD
May 28, 2024**

Present Emily Thurber, Chair; Benjamin Eastman; Katie Korby

Others Present: Paula Harrison, Tax Collector/Treasurer; Elizabeth Erickson, Ad-Hoc Pollinator Planning Committee; Marjorie Smith, Administrative Assistant; Kevin Fox, Town Administrator

Chair, Emily Thurber called the meeting to order at 4:31pm.

Appointments:

Paula Harrison – Treasurer/Collector Department Update

Paula Harrison presented three handouts, one outlining the Stabilization Account balances as of March 2024, and the proposed outgoing and incoming transfers in FY2025. The second outlined the tax possessions and the third summarized Real Estate and Personal Property Collections as of 5/28/2024. The current collection rates are 94% for Real Estate and 99% for Personal Property and there are 20 properties in Tax Title.

Kevin Fox further explained that when Paula started in 2013, the collection rate was 80% and has worked hard to bring that rate to where it is today, free cash is now healthy, and the Select Board has done well keeping the tax rate affordable.

New Business:

Request to be Appointed to ZBA – Alec Jillson

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to appoint Alec Jillson to the Colrain Zoning Board for a three-year term starting 7/1/2024.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Approve Select Board Meeting Minutes – (5/14/2024, 5/14/2024 [Executive Session], 5/17/2024 [Executive Session])

MOVED: Katie Korby moved to approve the minutes from the Select Board meeting 5/14/2024, minutes from the Executive Session from 5/14/2024 and the Executive Session minutes from 5/17/2024.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Unanticipated:

Pay Rate for Full-time Officer Position

Discussion on start date being 7/1/2024 and FY24/FY25 budgeted pay rates.

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved that Derek Worden pay rate is \$25.31 for the full-time officer starting 7/1/2024.

Katie Korby seconded.

Discussion on other terms of employment.

Approved unanimously.

Appointments:

Elizabeth Erickson – Continuation of Pollinator Garden Discussion

Elizabeth updated the Board that the proposed location of the garden in the initial plan presented on 4/23/2024 has been moved to the slope and base of the slope north of the Veteran's Memorial and requested permission to move forward with the new plan and with the landscaper. She further explained that planting may need to be delayed until the fall due to lack of water and the heat going into the summer.

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to make 4 Jacksonville Rd the site for the pollinator garden. Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Old Business:

None

Town Administrator Updates:

- Heath Rd culvert replacement bid opens 6/21
- Jacksonville Rd procurement in progress and still waiting on Army Corp
- Adamsville Rd bridge replacement over Vincent Brook scheduled for FY2027 with TIP – Town has to do right of way work and acquisition of right of ways
- Adamsville Rd bridge over Sanders Brook, in danger of being closed. Town applied for a grant for the design work and received \$100M; the State contracted with an engineering firm. The Town will have to pay for the bridge replacement, which could be upwards of \$3-4MM. Recommended applying for a MassWorks grant and other earmark money.
- Oil and diesel locked in for next year – higher by pennies
- New tractor for the highway department was delivered last week

Unanticipated:

Jane Johnson – Flags

Jane requested that the flag brackets on the telephone poles be moved down on the pole so the flags don't wrap around the wires. Ben Eastman instructed Kevin to ask Nate about moving the brackets down approx. 24 inches.

Jade Mortimer – Sewer District

Jade invited a member of the Select Board to attend the next sewer district meeting and Emily will attend.

Broadband Update

Mike Slowinski updated the board that Whip City will be doing the annual drive through checking the infrastructure starting as early as tomorrow and driveways that have had issues (trees down/bushes in the way). He also requested guidance from the Board on how to educate people on the difference between the Broadband line and phone line because every time a Whip City truck comes out, it costs the Town money. He explained that the Verizon phone line is the lowest on the pole. A resident suggested creating a flier with a visual of the poles and explaining the cost on the rate-payers.

Executive Session:

MOVED: At 5:28pm, Vice-Chair Ben Eastman moved to enter into Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(2): To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel. Emily Thurber seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Emily Thurber Aye
Benjamin Eastman Aye
Katie Korby Aye
Approved unanimously.

Returned to open session at 5:47pm.

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to dissolve the meeting at 5:47pm. Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

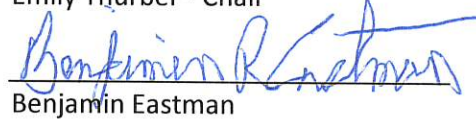
Respectfully submitted,

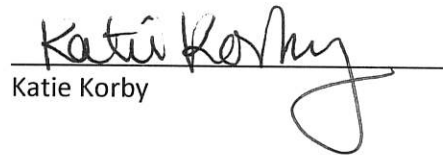


Marjorie Smith
Administrative Assistant

Accepted by the Select Board on 6/11/2024



Emily Thurber - Chair

Benjamin Eastman

Katie Korby

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

Select Board Meeting Notes

Proposed Free Cash Plan for FY24/FY25

Stabilization Balance as of 3/31/2024

FY24 Tax Possessions

Real Estate and Personal Property Collections as of 5/28/2024

Tax Title Account as of 5/28/2024

Minutes of Select Board dated 4/23/2024

Town of Colrain Property Map showing Town Owned Parcels at Main Rd/Jacksonville Rd Intersection

Satellite Image of Town Owned Parcels at Main Rd/Jacksonville Rd Intersection

Email from Alec Jillson to Kevin Fox, Town Administrator, dated 5/20/2024 re: Appointment to ZBA