

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

**MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD
July 9, 2024**

Present Emily Thurber, Chair; Benjamin Eastman; Katie Korby

Others Present: Marjorie Smith, Administrative Assistant; Diana Parsons, Town Administrator

Chair Emily Thurber called the meeting to order at 4:34pm.

Consent Items:

Review/Approve Warrants and Meeting Minutes

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to approve Warrant AP2454, Warrant AP2502, Warrant PR2427, and approve the minutes of 6/25/2024.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Appointments and Resignations:

Annual Reappointments

Diana Parsons explained that all the Select Board appointments are complete and there are a few left that the Moderator needs to do.

New Business:

Discussion and Vote re: Hiring Process for Highway Superintendent

Diana Parsons explained that she met with Lee and Nate and spoke to them about their willingness to one of them stepping into a leadership position and their thoughts/concerns about a new person in the role. Nate has shown some interest in the role, however, would need support with administrative duties. On a temporary basis, she and Maggie could provide the support. Ben Eastman agreed and suggested the position be presented to Nate that in the short-term Diana and Maggie could do the administrative duties and as others are hired, those duties would move back to the Superintendent. Discussion on stabilizing the department, posting immediately for an operator/laborer and license requirements, FY2025 budget and possibility of moving funds for clearing sidewalks to highway wages.

Diana will draft the advertisement and review the job description for the operator/laborer position.

Vote Updated FY25 Highway Signatory

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to have Diana M. Parsons as the Administrative DocuSign for the Franklin Regional Council of Governments Collective Highway Products and Services Contracts.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

All three members of the Board signed the form.

Address and Finalize Vote for Employment Terms for Officer Derek Worden

Diana Parsons explained that the last meeting in June had a vote about his employment which needs clarification. Officer Worden is on the job as a full-time officer and while it isn't ideal to do this after the fact, it is important to make the terms of employment clearer. Diana summarized that Officer Worden had asked to have all his time up front and not accrue it this year, which would be against the personnel policy. In her opinion, the Board can go outside of the policy, but can't do so in a discriminatory way. She recommended being consistent with what his expectation was, all benefits in a lump sum with no accrual this year and make it a one-time thing. Discussion on weekly schedule and recommended following what the Chief and Officer Worden worked out. Should issues arise, they should be discussed with the Chief first.

Ben Eastman added that as a young Board they didn't want to go against policy and open a can of worms, however, with good reasons and writing out the exceptions makes sense.

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to approve Derek's three weeks' vacation and 60 hours of paid sick time for FY2025 year as a lump sum and a one-time benefit, provided July 1, 2024.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Discuss Dates, Location and Structure of All-Board Meeting

Diana Parsons expressed that an all-Board/Committee meeting would be a great idea and asked for the Boards input. Ben suggested having one person from each Board go to a Select Board meeting and give an update and go through the list of all the Boards. The Board decided to discuss the idea further at a future meeting.

Vote FY24 End of Year Budget Transfers

Diana updated the Board that there is \$53,382.48 available in the Employer Contr. Group Health Insurance account, which is where the \$14,994.27 will be moved from. Discussion on the warrant article regarding the vacation time pay-out and paying an item in FY2025 that was owed in FY2024.

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to transfer \$12,094.00 to the Town Coordinator, \$1,800.00 for Town Counsel, \$1,100.00 for Public Street Lighting and \$0.27 for Veterans Services District Assessment.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously**

All three members of the Board signed the FY2024 Year-End Transfer Form.

Old Business:

Finalize Priorities, Goals and Objectives

Diana Parsons has been communicating with the Accountant and wanted to be sure the Board was in agreement with the priorities, goals and objectives discussed at the last meeting. The Board was in agreement and offered no further comment.

Status of Securing and Addressing Stairs behind Veterans Memorial

Diana Parsons spoke with Nate and Lee on concerns about the stairs and has gotten some resident feedback. She will speak to MIIA to get a sense of the liability to the Town.

Appoint Board Liaison to Master Planning Committee

Diana Parsons revisited that the Planning Board is taking on the Master Plan and the importance of involvement by the Select Board. Discussion on the process, committee make-up and that the Select Board appoints the Master Planning Steering Committee as a subcommittee. Diana will reach out to Bobby Slowinski and will put the item on the next agenda.

Administrator Updates:

Administrative Office Reconfiguration

Diana Parsons updated the Board that rehabbing the kitchen into an office space doesn't seem as reasonable, but rather possibly reconfigure the current administrative office space. The first step will be to have the Lexington Group come out and look at the space and reconfiguration ideas.

Community Survey

Diana Parsons proposed the idea of putting a community survey on the website regarding different items, including the town meeting. Discussion on general website upkeep.

Department Head & Other Internal Meetings Scheduled

Diana Parsons updated the Board that she is moving forward with scheduling the All-Department meeting. She mentioned some confusion with the FY2025 Budget line items, specifically breaking out Police and Fire wage lines.

Planning/Funding for Hybrid/Zoom Set-up

Diana Parsons explained that many towns used ARPA money to set up hybrid meetings and pandemic operations, whereas Colrain used it for Broadband, which has put a significant amount of money in the Enterprise fund. She spoke with Mike Slowinski, MLP Manager, about using money in the Broadband Enterprise fund for setting up the meeting room at the Highway Department for hybrid meetings. She will speak to Northeast IT about the project, get a quote and bring it to a future meeting.

Public and Board Member Comments:

Phil Sherburne – Historical Society

Phil Sherburne, President of the Historical Society, explained that the Society is not a town entity, however, would like to create a working relationship with the Select Board regarding preserving Colrain history. He also discussed the drainage issues and requested help in determining who owns and is responsible for cleaning the drain in front of the Pitt House, the Historical Society or the State. Discussion on the Brick Meetinghouse and ownership history of the Pitt House.

Jade Mortimer – Pantermehl Contract

Jade Mortimer questioned why the contractor wouldn't want to come back this year. Ben Eastman answered that one driver was retiring and to dedicate a truck and have it sit isn't profitable.

Diana Parsons – Pre-Bid Meeting for Jacksonville Rd

Diana Parsons updated the Board on the pre-bid meeting held today, which had a few bidders attend. The contract will be awarded at the end of the month. Discussion on the project, general bid specifications, and construction administration.

Diana Parsons – Meet and Greet at the Library

There is a Meet and Greet at the Library at 5:00pm on Wednesday 7/10/2024.

Requests for Future Agenda Items:

Comprehensive Town Project Update

Diana Parsons explained that this is something that she will take all the binders and create one project workbook and will present to the Board and post online.

Emily Thurber – Intersection Safety

Emily Thurber explained that at the Annual Town Meeting it was voted to have the Select Board look at options with the Police and Highway Departments for the intersection in the center of town and would like to put it on a future agenda. Ben Eastman spoke about MADOT involvement and the history of the project. Diana will check with Chris Lannon on inconsistencies with speed limit signage.

Jane Johnson – Mowing at 1 Greenfield Rd

Jane Johnson commented on the piece of ground that was added to 1 Greenfield Rd when the intersection was reconfigured, and that the owner doesn't mow that section and the grass grows so high it is hard to see up the road. Ben Eastman suggested that we find out who is responsible for the added-on section, which Diana will look into.

Correspondence and Select Board Informational Items:

DOT Rating Report Letter for Bridge Maxam Road over the West Branch of the North River

Diana Parsons presented the DOT Rating Report Letter that was received regarding a waiver allowing trucks to cross the bridge on Maxam Rd.

Executive Session:

None

Dissolve Meeting:

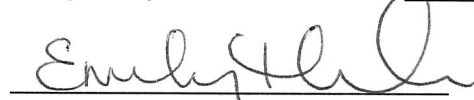
MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to dissolve the meeting at 6:30pm.
Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

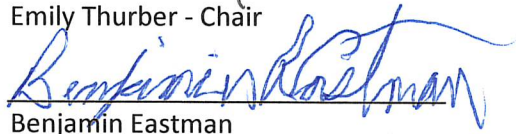


Marjorie Smith
Administrative Assistant

Accepted by the Select Board on 7/23/2024



Emily Thurber - Chair



Benjamin Eastman



Katie Korby

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

Warrants – AP2454, AP2502, PR2427

Draft Select Board Minutes of 6/25/2024

FRCOG Collective Purchasing Program FY25 Fee Schedule & Permission/Authorization Form

FY2024 Request for Appropriation Transfers between Departments

FY2024 Expense Ledger

Letter from MassDOT to the Town of Colrain dated 7/2/2024 re: Maxam Rd/West Branch North River Bridge Rating and Posting