

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

**MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD
October 22, 2024**

Present Emily Thurber, Chair; Benjamin Eastman; Katie Korby

Others Present: Sheryl Stanton, Superintendent; Robin Provost, Chair Heath Select Board; Elissa Viarengo, Will Emmet Heath Select Board; Hilma Sumner, Heath Town Coordinator; Martha Thurber, School Committee Chair; Joseph Slowinski (remote); Marjorie Smith, Administrative Assistant; Diana Parsons, Town Administrator

Chair Emily Thurber called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

Robin Provost called the Heath Select Board meeting to order at 4:30pm.

Consent Items:

Meeting Minutes of September 24 and October 8, 2024 – Not presented

Warrant AP2516 in the amount of \$185,449.93

Warrant PR2507 in the amount of \$45,105.90

Warrant AP2517 in the amount of \$167,167.93

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to approve and sign Warrant AP2516 in the amount of \$185,449.93, Warrant PR2507 in the amount of \$45,105.90 and Warrant AP2517 in the amount of \$167,167.93.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

New Business:

Sheryl Stanton, MTRSD Superintendent and Joint Meeting with Heath Select Board; MTRSD/HRSD Sustainability Project Progress Update – October 2024

Sheryl Stanton introduced herself and Martha Thurber explained the history of the Sustainability Study. Sheryl outlined the challenges the school districts are facing, the five steps of the Study's process (Study, Plan, Engage, Act and Sustain), and explained the Steering Committee and Advisory Teams. She further explained they are currently working on step 3, Engage, which meant meeting with Town Select Boards and Finance Committees and a community town hall to gain input to move forward. Sheryl commented that in the early meetings with community members, they asked if consolidation and/or school closures would be a non-starter, and no one said either would be.

Martha listed the reports that have been completed and listed on the website, <https://www.2districts8towns.org/>.

Sheryl summarized the main themes from the reports: Tradition and Pride, Enrollment, Finance, Efficiency, Education (doing important and good work with the curriculum in both elementary and high school levels), and Perception/Identity (MTRS doesn't have rigor and out-migration of students). Martha further outlined each of the reports: History and Literature, Enrollment, Community Outreach, Facilities, Finance, Personnel, Education, Regional Agreement, Transportation, and Early Childhood.

Sheryl and Martha explained the process for narrowing down to the five most promising options/ideas and summarized each; no changes, Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Districts merge, move 6th grade to MTRS, move 6th to MTRS and close one or more schools, have a single campus at MTRS.

Sheryl explained the next steps which will be to explore specific questions to each model. She also explained that nothing will happen next year, there will be another year of modeling and gathering feedback and there will be a process to go through to do the capital planning. It will take a few years to make a final decision. Martha followed up that there is no preferred solution and will be up to the voters to decide and that the topic won't come to the town meeting until 2027 at the earliest.

Discussion on other locations doing a single campus, continuation of the enrollment trend, real estate market, lack of low-income housing, school choice, how to compete with Tech regarding offering shops, factors for kids leaving the district in 9th grade and STEM programs.

Appointments and Resignations:

Board of Registrar Appointment – Joe Slowinski (Previously Tabled)

Joe Slowinski explained his reasons for wanting to serve on the Board of Registrars; important job to make sure elections are run the right way, an area where he could do his civic duty and has an understanding of being neutral and has the ability to do so. Discussion between the Board and Joe regarding asking another member of the Registrars to change their political affiliation, how he will work collaboratively with others, his ability to separate between working in a personal capacity and a professional capacity and acting within the code of conduct.

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to appoint Joe Slowinski to the Board of Registrars in the open position. No second.

Emily explained to Joe that he was not being appointed at this time and encouraged him to do more with the Town and show more of his professional side. Joe stated that he felt the decision was based on his political viewpoints and was appalled and profoundly disappointed.

Anna Lavarreda, Town Clerk, offered that he could work at the election because the Board of Registrars doesn't work the elections, as he is concerned with election safety.

New Business:

Sign Election Warrant for 2024 State Primary

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to approve and sign the election warrant as written. Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Old Business:

Approve Change Order for ET&L re: Jacksonville Road Slope Stabilization Project; Project Updates

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to approve the change order for the Jacksonville Rd Slope Stabilization Project with ET&L. Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Administrator Updates:

Heath Road Culvert Replacement Project Updates

The project is moving along and the submittals were approved. They are behind three weeks, but not looking to adjust the schedule at this point.

Colrain Wood Bank Survey & Regionalization Meeting

Maggie sent out a survey and shared the responses with the Board which are being used only as a point of information at this time. Diana attended a regional meeting put on by the Woodlands Partnership. Diana and Heather the Buckland Town Administrator will look into a shared grant next year.

Fee Schedules & Policy Under Review

At the last meeting the electrical inspector fees were raised and Diana apologized for not doing research beforehand on the behind-the-scenes process of the fees. The new electrical fees will stay in place, but she needs to look at the whole process and have consistency with each of the inspectors. Discussion on increasing other department fees and properly explaining the reasons for making any changes and advertising them.

Tech Inventory & Upgrades in Progress

The upgrades were discussed at the department head meeting and Diana asked each to do an inventory on their Town IT equipment. She is also looking at board emails and other staff/officials that need emails.

Public and Board Member Comments:

Lynn DiTullio – Fire Station and MVP Grant

Lynn DiTullio questioned what is happening with a new fire station, the possibility of an MVP grant and what it would take to get it moving. Emily explained that the first step would be to get the Fire Station Building Committee together. Diana went to a meeting about an MVP grant, and we are required to apply for a grant. She will propose to form a core MVP 2.0 planning committee and piggyback on hazard mitigation planning and a new fire station is in the current MVP plan.

Nina Martin-Anzuoni – Boards/Committees

Blows her away that the Town doesn't do things in a unified way; many people are doing great things, but the Boards don't all work together. Discussion on planning.

Requests for Future Agenda Items:

Updates from Interim Highway Superintendent, Nate Gilbert – tentative for November 12

No discussion.

Tax Classification Hearing with Board of Assessors – tentative for November 26

No discussion.

Annual Licensing

No discussion.

Correspondence and Select Board Informational Items:

Trunk or Treat, Colrain Central School Parking Lot, Sunday, October 27, 2024, 1 pm-4 pm

No discussion.

Road Closures on October 25 and October 28 for Filming

There is signage out now and will be intermittent closures

Crafts of Colrain Open Studio Tour, November 9-10, 2024, 10 am-4 pm

No discussion.

Katie Korby – FRCOG Update

Katie Korby shared updates from the last FRCOG meeting including:

- OPEB being fully funded
- Accounting program is not going to keep going after this year
- MVP grant to study water runoff on dirt roads and storm water plans
- Working on changes to the Charter to bring to the Towns in the next year
- Currently no plan if a Town leaves FRCOG, so looking into that

- Regional Planning Board is a large organization and looking to tighten it up
- 5th Wednesday Series, open discussion on big issues and would like more people involved
- Serious staffing issues in municipalities, particularly hiring part-time people

Ben Eastman – FCSWMD

The FCSWMD is hosting a tour of the Municipal Recycling Facility (MRF) for Board members, and he is looking to attend.

Diana Parsons – Transfer Station Meeting

Met with Jan Ameen (FCSWMD), Nate Gilbert, John Tynan and George Billiel at the Transfer Station and they are working on possible changes to the Transfer Station.

Executive Session:

None

Dissolve Meeting:

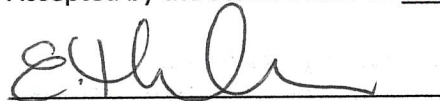
MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to dissolve the meeting at 6:55pm.
Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

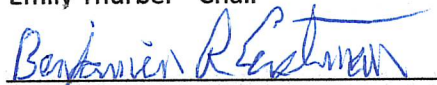


Marjorie Smith
Administrative Assistant

Accepted by the Select Board on 12/10/2024



Emily Thurber - Chair



Benjamin Eastman



Katie Korby

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

2Districts8Towns MTRSD/HRSD Sustainability Project Progress Update October 2024

Email correspondence dated 10/3-10/15/2024 between Diana Parsons, Town Administrator, and Micah Morrison, BSC Group, Shane Ruddy, ET&L Corp, Dan Gilgun, ET&L Corp, RE: Jacksonville Rd Slope Failure and Change Order

Extra Work Order Trench Box Filled with Gravel as Support of Excavation Report from ET&L dated 10/11/2024

Wood Bank Survey Results as of 10/22/2024

Warrant for State Election for 11/5/2024