

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

**MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD  
January 14, 2025**

**Present** Emily Thurber, Chair; Benjamin Eastman; Katie Korby

**Others Present:** David Greenberg, Sarah Wik, Greg Olchowski, Loren Feinstein (remote), Robert Slowinski (remote), Laurie Francis (remote), Planning Board; John Tynan, Transfer Station Attendant; Jonathan Lagreze; Anna Lavarreda, Town Clerk (remote); Jan Ameen, FCSWMD; Mike Slowinski; Madison Schofield (Greenfield Recorder); Jade Mortimer; Marjorie Smith, Administrative Assistant; Diana Parsons, Town Administrator

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

**Joint Meeting with *Planning Board*:**

**Address Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's) New Laws, Regulations, and Amendments to the Town's Zoning Bylaw**

Diana Parsons explained the background of the ADU changes taking effect in February. Bobby Slowinski explained the Planning Board spoke briefly at their most recent meeting and there isn't much they can do from a zoning perspective. There is limited reference in the current zoning bylaws and the preliminary strategy will be to remove reference of ADU's from the current zoning, however, will add verbiage in places if it makes sense.

**Master Planning & Initiating Community Engagement**

The Planning Board did some outreach to all the boards and haven't received much response. They are excited that the Select Board is behind them and pushing to get more involvement. Discussion on the current Master Plan (MP), the Planning Board's involvement in other plans, and other updates to zoning bylaws. Further discussion on the makeup of a committee for the MP rather than just the Planning Board, the focus for the MP, and ideas for engaging the community.

Further discussion on ADU's and items the Planning Board can require.

**Other Zoning Bylaw Changes for Annual Town Meeting**

Bobby Slowinski explained that FRCOG recommended updates that could be made to support pollinator gardens.

**Misc. Updates**

Bobby Slowinski updated the Board on the potential application for cell tower off Call Rd. The Planning Board received a map of the location and there will be a possible public hearing in March. Discussion on the balloon test showing how tall the tower will be, and examples of requirements added to past cell tower special permits. Discussion on Town Hall building and capital planning.

**Transfer Station Operations & Adoption of Updated Rules and Regulations; John Tynan, Transfer Station Attendant & Jan Ameen, Director, FC Solid Waste Management District**

Diana Parsons explained the primary change is to sell stickers in bulk, rather than singles effective February 1<sup>st</sup>. Transfer Station attendants shouldn't have to use discernment; make decisions around the bag disposal. The Board needs to make the rules, and the attendants then enforce the rules. Diana proposed a list of rules to be posted on a large sign from recommendations from John Tynan, Nate Gilbert and Jan Ameen. Further, Jan Ameen has discovered some of the price sheets are not aligned and has created a one-page sheet for the attendants to use based on the bulky waste sheets used at Bulk Collection Days. Discussion on electronics recycling, bulky waste, and scrap metal.

Emily Thurber read the list of eight general rules to the audience with a brief discussion on each item. Further discussion on bags versus stickers, reasons for discouraging loose trash, how/who enforces the rules.

Diana Parsons also created a notice for the changes in the sticker packets to post at the Transfer Station and the website.

**MOVED:** Ben Eastman moved to adopt the rules as written with the few changes and bundling of the bag stickers starting Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

**Consent Items:**

Approve Minutes of 11/12/2024 and 11/26/2024

Warrant AP2525 in the amount of \$28,777.54

Warrant AP2526 in the amount of \$73,826.04

Warrant AP2527 in the amount of \$105,251.37

Warrant PR2511 in the amount of \$26,158.23

Warrant PR2512 in the amount of \$51,703.49

Warrant PR2513 in the amount of \$24,459.38

**MOVED:** Emily Thurber moved to approve the minutes of the Select Board for 11/12/2024 and 11/26/2024 as written.

Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

**MOVED:** Emily Thurber moved to Warrant AP2525 in the amount of \$28,777.54, Warrant AP2526 in the amount of \$73,826.04, Warrant AP2527 in the amount of \$105,251.37, Warrant PR2511 in the amount of \$26,158.23, Warrant PR2512 in the amount of \$51,703.49, and Warrant PR2513 in the amount of \$24,459.38.

Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

**Appointments and Resignations:**

None

**New Business:**

**MLP Board – Review and Approve Broadband Subscriber Service Charge Summary**

Mike Slowinski explained the proposed summary which formalizes what repair and maintenance charges the Town is responsible for versus the owners' responsibilities. The summary will be sent to Whip City to reference should a resident question the charges. Discussion on temporary services and each of the items on the list.

**MOVED:** Emily Thurber moved to not cover any of the charges on the Subscriber Service Charge Fee Sheet as written.

Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

### **Other Broadband Updates**

Saturday had latency and speed problems due to a problem in the Leyden hut. There is a meeting tomorrow morning with LocalLinx to figure out the issue.

Discussion on the number of people who use credit cards vs bank accounts to pay their monthly broadband bill, and the differences between the two payment types. Discussion on passing the credit card fees onto the subscriber.

Mike is looking at the broadband expenses and will have a recommendation on adjusting rates in the next month.

### **Accept \$5,600 in Recycling Dividends Program Funds from Sustainable Materials Recovery Program (SMRP)**

This is an annual allotment for recycling and we send out an annual notice to all department heads.

**MOVED:** Ben Eastman moved to accept the Recycling Dividends Program Funds from the Sustainable Materials Recovery Program.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

### **Accept Anonymous Donation per MGL c 44, 53A½ in the amount of \$10,000 for 'Taxpayer In Need Relief Fund'**

**MOVED:** Ben Eastman moved to accept the \$10,000 for Taxpayer In Need Relief Fund per MGL c44, 53A½  
Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

### **Discuss Sidewalk Snow Removal Policy**

Diana Parsons explained we don't currently have a policy on sidewalk snow removal. Most municipalities have a bylaw that requires abutters to care for the sidewalk and can assign fines. There are some that the Town maintains the sidewalks. Nate Gilbert has been asked to put together a list of all the sidewalks in town. Discussion on reorganization of the Town Center and new sidewalks added and possible resident apprehension to clearing their sidewalks and providing guidance for the highway department. Diana will send a draft policy, and the Board will discuss it at the next meeting.

### **Address Bylaws/Votes re ATM and Election Dates; Annual Town Meeting Day Proposal**

Diana Parsons explained that currently we have an ATM vote for when ATM is supposed to be. Diana and the Town Clerk propose the election should be the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday after 1<sup>st</sup> Monday in May and Diana proposed ATM be the last Tuesday in April. Discussion on Town Meeting logistics. Discussion with Town Clerk on the dates.

**MOVED:** Emily Thurber moved to have the Annual Town Meeting on May 6<sup>th</sup> this year and election on May 13<sup>th</sup> of this year.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Discussion on holding it outside.

### **Churchill School Update & Next Steps**

The Town has taken ownership and has had a company come out for a quote for demolition. Next steps are to let the abutters know and draft a letter regarding the location of the driveway to the property owner.

**Old Business:**

**Updates regarding Highway Department Staffing & Discussion of Hiring**

Diana Parsons updated the Board that Nate Gilbert would like to take the permanent Highway Superintendent position as of 2/1 and would like to put out an ad to hire another person. Discussion on funds remaining in the budget in order to hire another person, the title of the new employee, Nate continuing the mechanic position and apprehension on the administrative piece. Discussion on current administrative support to the Highway Department and the need to continue the support.

**MOVED:** Ben Eastman moved to appoint Nate as head of the highway department and allow Diana to put out a job description for another employee on the highway department.

Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

**FRCOG FY26 Budget Notice and Signatory Form re: Highway Collective Bids**

This is to authorize FRCOG to do the cooperative bidding and contract on the Town's behalf.

**MOVED:** Ben Eastman moved to have Emily sign.

Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

**Administrator Updates:**

**Rte. 112 Jacksonville Road Project (MassWorks 2023) Approved Amendment**

Diana Parsons updated the Board that there was \$143M left over from the project and has filed an amendment to keep the money and use on Thompson Rd. paving. The project will remain open until 6/30 with a plan to do the work in the spring.

**Heath Road Culvert Replacement Project Updates**

The project was delayed a couple times, however, will temporarily open the road using jersey barriers. The work will be completed in the spring.

**FY26 Budget Kickoff & Review of Schedule**

There is a dept head meeting on Thursday and department budgets are coming in. The Finance Committee is meeting on 1/27.

**Misc. Updates (Cultural Council Meeting, RCAP Mapping, Lifepath Grant Application)**

- The next Select Board meeting will be held jointly with the Sewer District to discuss their project
- Need to schedule a pole hearing for East Colrain Rd
- The Cultural Council is looking for new members
- Working on a Lifepath grant to include an outreach component
- Flags are at half-staff due to mourning of President Carter, and a new one has been ordered for Veteran's Memorial as it is tattered.

**Public and Board Member Comments:**

**Update from Chair Thurber re: MTRSD Budget Subcommittee Meeting with Towns**

- The District is looking at a 3% increase
- Enrollment went up for all schools, except Colrain and Sanderson
- At Mohawk Trail, school-choice in to out is evening out
- State revenue report came in above the benchmark, however, is still below for the year
- Unanticipated increases were Out-of-District Transportation, Support Services, Out-of-District Tuition, and maintenance costs. They will be using additional school choice funds and rural aid to help fund these expenses.

Discussion on Sustainability Study and Budget Subcommittee communications.

**Requests for Future Agenda Items:**

**Joint Meeting with the Colrain Sewer Commission (Review Sewer System Evaluation Survey presented by Wright-Pierce) – Scheduled for 1/28/2025**

Brief discussion on current issues between Sewer District and Barnhardt, history of the collection system, the future of the collection system and the Town’s involvement.

**Review and Approve Age & Dementia Friendly Community Grant – Scheduled for 1/28/2025**

No discussion

**Review and Approve Amended Building Department Fee Schedule**

No discussion

**Review General Bylaws Changes for Annual Town Meeting**

No discussion

**Correspondence and Select Board Informational Items:**

**Closure of Atlantic Farms Cannabis Cultivation**

Atlantic Farms ceased cultivation as of 12/31/2024. All the product has left the property and working on the assets.

**December Update for School Sustainability Study**

No discussion

**Woodlands Partnership of Northwestern Massachusetts Board Meeting, December 2, 2024**

Jonathan Lagreze emailed an update from the meeting and the Board thanked him. Jonathan added that there are two surveys out looking for municipal and resident input.

**Executive Session:**

**None**

**Dissolve Meeting:**

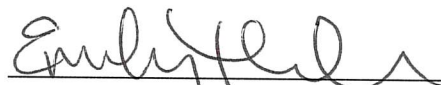
**MOVED:** Emily Thurber moved to dissolve the meeting at 7:52pm  
Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,



Marjorie Smith  
Administrative Assistant

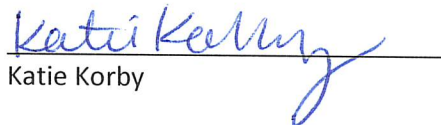
Accepted by the Select Board on 2/11/2025



Emily Thurber - Chair



Benjamin Eastman



Katie Korby

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

Draft Colrain Transfer Station/Recycling Center General Rules

Draft Colrain Transfer Station Operation Policy

Whip City Fiber Subscriber Service Charges

Colrain Transfer Station FY2023 and FY2024 Expenses versus Revenue

Letter from MA DEP to Town of Colrain dated 12/17/2024 re: Sustainable Materials Recovery Program Award

Grant Scope of Work Between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the Town of Colrain

Letter to Colrain Select Board from Anonymous Colrain Resident dated 12/17/2024 re: Taxpayer in Need Relief Fund Donation

FRCOG FY2026 Budget Notice and Signatory Authorization Form

Contract Amendment between Town of Colrain and Executive Office of Economic Development re: Jacksonville Rd Washout Project Grant

MTRSD FY2026 Budget Presentation Slides dated 12/18/2024

Letter from Lewis Barnhardt, Barnhardt Manufacturing Company, to Pat Geary, Chair of Colrain Sewer District dated 1/10/2025

Email from Jonathan Lagreze to Diana Parsons, Town Administrator, dated 12/8/2024 re: Woodlands Partnership Board Meeting Update

Email from Mary Nash, Community Outreach for BERK12, to Town of Colrain Administrative Assistant dated 12/27/2024 re: 2D8T December Update for School Sustainability Study

Email from Diana Parsons, Town Administrator, to Chris Lannon, Police Chief, dated 12/30/2024 re: Closure of Atlantic Farms