

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

**MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD
June 10, 2025**

Present Emily Thurber, Chair; Katie Korby; Benjamin Eastman

Others Present: Mia Francesconi; Liam Cregan, Alain Peteroy – Franklin Land Trust; Judson DeCew; Gary Ponce – Colrain Volunteer Ambulance Association; Elizabeth Erikson, David Greenberg, Betsy Browning – Pollinator Garden Committee; Marjorie Smith, Administrative Assistant; Diana Parsons, Town Administrator

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

Reorganize Select Board:

Vote Following Slate: Emily Thurber, Chair; Katie Korby, Vice-Chair; and Ben Eastman, Clerk

Emily explained the history of how the chair was chosen; the member in their third year is the chair and second year is vice-chair, and would like to

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to have Emily Thurber as chair, Ben Eastman as Vice Chair and Katie Korby as clerk.

Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Review and Adopt FY26 Select Board Meeting Schedule

Diana recommended keeping the schedule the same and start doing office hours, which the Board agree would be a good idea.

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to adopt the Select Board meeting schedule as printed for the next year in 2026.

Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Consent Items:

Warrant AP2549 in the amount of \$81,733.88

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to approve Warrant AP2549 as presented.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Appointments and Resignations:

Request for Appointment to the Conservation Commission; Mia Francesconi, 2 Griswoldville St.

Mia Francesconi introduced herself, her involvement in local government and her interest in serving on the Conservation Commission.

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to approve Mia Francesconi to the Conservation Commission for a term of three years expiring 2028.

Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

New Business:

Conservation Restriction (CR) Located at 413 Adamsville Rd donated to Franklin Land Trust by landowner Judson DeCew, to be Reviewed and Signed by Colrain Select Board, Liam Cregan, Land Conservation Specialist, Franklin Land Trust

Liam Cregan explained that they will be requesting signatures in the next couple of months regarding 413

Adamsville Rd and the land being donated to the Franklin Land Trust. The Trust is interested because of the hay ground and the Tisdale Brook. The owner would like to be sure the land is preserved. Liam briefly explained the process of entering the CR and Alain commented that the land would stay in Chapter 61.

Request for Support for Grant Application for Studying Regional Ambulance Operation; Gary Ponce, Director, Colrain Volunteer Ambulance Association (CVAA)

Gary Ponce introduced himself and briefly summarized the history of the CVAA. They recently held a meeting with eight surrounding towns to discuss the future of the ambulance services in the area and to support a grant for the regional ambulance study. Gary is requesting the Board sign a support letter for the grant and Colrain be the lead Town; Colrain would apply for the grant in conjunction with the eight other towns. Gary explained the different levels of ambulance services, how they bill for services, and other revenue streams. Emily questioned how they calculate the assessment for Heath and Leyden, which Gary explained; Leyden pays a fee every time they leave the door, and Heath pays a yearly assessment fee.

Review and Approve Signage Location for Pollinator Garden provided by Franklin Conservation District; Elizabeth Erikson, Chair; Vote to Dissolve Pollinator Committee as formed by Select Board

Elizabeth Erikson explained that one of the requirements of the grant is to put up a sign, which she presented a draft copy. Discussion on the orientation of the sign and the QR code. Elizabeth questioned if the Board would like to address the stairs. She has spoken with the Fire Chief about a controlled burn of the Japanese Knotweed and possibly the stairs. The Board requested Diana reach out to Nick regarding the controlled burn and the possibility of burning the stairs.

Diana explained the nature of the committee and part of their charge was to implement the pollinator plan in the Franklin County Pollinator Plan and language to be included in the zoning bylaws. FRCOG met with the Planning Board regarding the bylaws. Discussion on whether to keep the committee formed. The Board agreed to keep the committee going for at least six months. Diana will follow up with Matt Gilbert regarding mowing around the garden. Elizabeth also mentioned an educational opportunity coming up in July at the Daniels Barn on Cal Coombs Rd.

Discussion on the sign dimensions and location. The Board would like to table the vote for the location of the sign until the next meeting.

Vote for Additional Contract Amount Requested by Gill Engineering for Health Road Culvert Replacement Project in the amount of \$9,852; Final Project Total = \$524,387.45 (Barnhardt Donations; \$304,822.06, Fair Share (DOT) Funding \$219,565.39)

There was an additional request from Gill Engineering due to the amount of work done on the project. Nate Gilbert stated they did great work, were easy to work with, and agreed with paying the additional cost.

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to approve the additional contract amount requested by Gill Engineering for the Health Road Culvert Replacement Project in the amount of \$9,852.

Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Review Draft Highway Superintendent Job Description & Proposed Hiring Committee Formation, Process and Timing

Diana Parsons recommended the Police Chief, Fire Chief, Nate Gilbert, a member of the Personnel Committee and another person be on the hiring committee and explained her reasoning behind including the Police and Fire Chiefs. Diana summarized some of the tasks in the job description, updated the verbiage regarding oversight of the Tree Warden and Transfer Station and included public building maintenance.

Ben Eastman raised concerns from other residents about paying a high salary for a mainly administrative role, while Diana clarified that tasks like grant writing and planning should fall under the Highway Superintendent. Resident Tim Hartnett suggested training a current department member instead, but Ben noted that Nate prefers fieldwork and cannot take on all duties.

Joe Sacco questioned the need for a “desk jockey,” proposing a clerk instead. Thom Griffin recommended hiring a grant writer, while Katie Korby emphasized that the role involves more than desk work and grants.

Diana envisions someone who builds strong team relationships, manages paperwork and grants, spends time on the roads, and attends regional meetings and training. The Board decided to seek further feedback and tabled the discussion until the next meeting.

Old Business:

Revisit request for Location for Wood Bank, Laurie Francis, Representative

Diana reached out to the insurance company, and they responded that if it is only stacking, loading, distributing of wood, then there is no risk. Emily expressed that the administrative piece needs to be minimal from the Town Office side, the site needs to be locked when not attended, signed waivers for volunteers, open Saturday's only with limited hours, clear signage, and hardwood only. Emily further suggested that a Select Board member be present the first few weeks the wood bank is open.

Diana will reach out to Laurie regarding providing specs and drawings for the fence and Emily's requests. The Board thanked the volunteers for their work and will continue discussions at a future meeting.

Vote to Sign Amended Lease Agreement Through June 2035, with MTRSD for CCS

Brief discussion on changes made to the lease.

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to sign the amended lease agreement through June 2035 with MTRSD for CCS.

Katie Korby seconded.

Discussion: Ben would like to start figuring out the maintenance costs on the building should the Town take over the building in the future. The other Board members agreed that information would be important. Ben further expressed he would like a written agreement requesting the costs. Diana will request the information when she sends the signed lease to Martha Thurber.

Approved unanimously.

Written Update re: Colrain Sewer District Treatment Solution/Rural Development Grant from Jessica Atwood, Director of Planning, FRCOG; Support Letters for Earmark & Rural Development Grant

Jessica Atwood, FRCOG, provided a written update that included the grant extension, and they are closer to a treatment option. They have applied for a congressional ear mark, which Diana has written a support letter and a One Stop Grant, which Diana also wrote a letter of support for. Diana explained a brief history of the project and that the Town previously voted down the expansion of the district to the center of Town. Discussion on communication with the Sewer District and between the Commissioners and the residents in the district. Emily will reach out to Pat Geary about informing the residents about water saving tips and what is happening within the district. Discussion on location options, the Board meeting with the Sewer District Commissioners, and MassDEP.

Administrator Updates:**15 Main Rd**

When septic was put in, shrubs were removed which exposed the sump pump pipes that run onto the Town property and towards the Broadband hut. Diana has reached out to the owner.

Public Records Request

Diana received a public records request from an attorney to find out if East Catamount Hill and North Catamount Hill are public ways. She provided information from FRCOG County Roads Records to the requester.

Public and Board Member Comments:**Howard Phelps**

Howard Phelps shared that he doesn't agree that the additional funds should be paid. The contractor bid on the project and that was all that should be paid. Diana explained that the project is still under budget and is a small amount of money and the reasons for paying the extra costs. Ben reiterated his reason for asking Nate's opinion on paying the cost.

Natalie Blais Upcoming Meeting

The Board and Diana made the following suggestions: Sewer District, rural school funding, and town building funds.

Ben Eastman – Concerns from Matt Slowinski

Matt Slowinski is considering moving the pallet factory to the new building on Foundry Village Rd. There is a culvert under Foundry Village Rd and carries water off Route 112 that may not be big enough to handle today's storms and Matt is afraid of the water runoff and the culvert not handling the water and flooding his buildings. Discussion on other culverts.

Grate on Main Rd

The grate on Main Rd near the Pitt House and MassDOT knows there is a pipe that is too small under the road, so they ordered the grate be removed so the water will back up so there is an actual problem that MassDOT can do something about.

Emily Thurber – Meals Tax

Catamount Country Store received the letter from the State regarding the meals tax and their instructions.

Requests for Future Agenda Items:

One-Day Liquor License Application from Pine Hill Orchards – June 24th

Annual Select Board Reappointments

Annual Meeting with Representative Blais, June 24

Personnel Policy Changes re: O/T Calculation & Reimbursement for Call-In, Other Misc., June 24

Performance Appraisal for Town Administrator; Set Goals & Objectives for FY26

End of Year Transfers

Correspondence and Select Board Informational Items:
Eversource Electric Smart Meter Program

Executive Session:
None

Dissolve Meeting:

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to dissolve the meeting at 7:14pm.
Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,



Marjorie Smith
Administrative Assistant

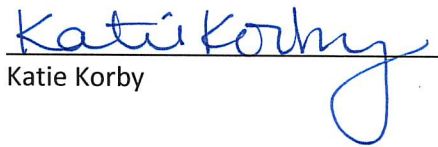
Accepted by the Select Board on 9/23/2025



Emily Thurber - Chair



Benjamin Eastman



Katie Korby

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

FY2026 Select Board Meeting Schedule

Email dated 5/5/2025 from Mia Francesconi to Diana Parsons, Town Administrator, re: Conservation Commission Appointment

Email dated 5/22/2025 from Liam Cregan, Franklin Land Trust, to Diana Parsons, Town Administrator, re: DeCew Conservation Restriction

7/2/2024 Conservation Commission Meeting Agenda

7/2/2024 Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

DeCew Sketch of House Lot

Plan of Land in Colrain prepared for Jedson DeCew recorded 3/28/2024 Bk. 154 Pg. 9.

Draft Grant of Conservation Restriction for between Judson M. DeCew Jr. Trust and Franklin Land Trust, Inc.

Emergency Medical Services Study Invitation Dated 5/25/2025

Pollinator Garden Sign

Fee Proposal for Professional Engineering Services from Gill Engineering to Town of Colrain dated 5/14/2025

Draft Highway Superintendent Job Description

Revised Colrain Central School Lease

Email dated 6/4/2025 from Jessica Atwood, FRCOG, to Diana Parsons, Town Administrator, re: Colrain Sewer District Update

Letter of Support to Congressman McGovern dated 4/18/2025 re: Support for Long-Term Wastewater Solution in Colrain

Letter of Support to Rural Development Fund Application Reviewers dated 6/2/2025 re: Support for CSD Site Development Project Grant Application

Smart Meter Handout