

Town of Colrain
Select Board/MLP Board Meeting
Colrain Highway Garage
9 Jacksonville Road
3:00 PM

**MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD
August 12, 2025**

Present Emily Thurber, Chair; Benjamin Eastman; Katie Korby

Others Present: Nate Gilbert – Interim Highway Superintendent; Mike Slowinski – MLP Manager; Chris Curtiss – Wild and Scenic River Committee (remote); Ellen Weeks (remote); Elissa Viarengo – Heath Agricultural Society (remote); Paula Harrison – Treasurer/Collector; Marjorie Smith – Administrative Assistant; Diana Parsons – Town Administrator

Chair Emily Thurber called the meeting to order at 3:17pm.

Highway Department Updates, Nate Gilbert, Interim Highway Superintendent:

Adamsville Road Paving Update

The paving has been moved to end of September and Nate is working on getting a quote. The area being paved is from the Foundry Village Rd/Adamsville Rd intersection to Heath Rd and then up Heath Rd to the Maxam Rd intersection. Discussion on Thompson Rd paving.

CDL License Update for Eli Guerin

Eli has his Class A permit and will start school on Monday for three weeks with a Monday to Friday schedule. Discussion on transportation to and from the class. Diana Parsons said that Eli should track his hours from his home to school and back, anything over 40 hours overtime will be paid, and submit for mileage reimbursement.

Transition of Interim Superintendent and Next Steps

Diana added a supplemental task list in the Highway Superintendent job description and explained that she added the list because of some hesitancy moving forward from the Board and questions raised by Nate and the public regarding who does what and the timing of different tasks.

Diana summarized the list of items needing to be done daily, weekly, monthly/quarterly and seasonally. Depending on what happens moving forward with Nate as Interim Highway Superintendent, Diana would like to figure out who is responsible for which tasks. Brief discussion on the Transfer Station operations.

Next Steps:

Nate expressed his hesitancy about being on the hiring committee. Ben explained why he would like Nate on the committee. Discussion on the working dynamics between Nate and Diana, dynamics between a possible new Highway Superintendent, and Diana's current workload including what she is doing for the Highway Department. Discussion on the hiring process.

Diana outlined some of the upcoming planning tasks for the Highway Department. Mike Slowinski added that in FY2027 the TIP bridge will be completed by others. The only item the Town obtains is the easements and the Town can't control the money from the State. Diana disagreed, saying we should attend TIP meetings and monitor engineering, which is the Highway Superintendent's responsibility. Discussion on grant opportunities and small bridges.

The Board agreed to table the discussion regarding the interim superintendent position until the next meeting. Diana will put together a "to-do" list of what needs to be done prior to December for grant opportunities.

New Business:

Request from David Donovan, Owner, 15 Main Road for Easement for Septic Drainpipe on Town Property

Mike Slowinski, MLP Manager, explained the issues regarding the work completed at 15 Main Rd, the boundary lines with Town property and his thoughts on what needs to be investigated. Diana communicated with the owner and provided a Notice of Trespass. They need to move the pipe or secure an easement from the Town, which will need to go to a Special Town Meeting. Mike further explained an asbestos pipe that was removed during the septic installation, and he hasn't seen the manifest to ensure that all asbestos was removed from the ground.

Deerfield River Wild and Scenic Study Report; Request for Town Endorsement of Study and Support for Deerfield River and its tributaries to be Designated as a National Wild and Scenic River, Chris Curtiss and Bill Dornbusch, Wild and Scenic River Committee Members

While waiting for Chris Curtiss to join the meeting, Emily Thurber informed the other Board members that she received an email from a Charlemont Select Board member stating that the National Park Service (NPS) will have a "say" over what happens near the water, like a bridge. She also questioned the NPS review process and concerns that it could hold up a project and effect grants.

Chris Curtiss presented the Deerfield River Wild and Scenic Study Report. The study was funded by a grant as part of the Woodlands Partnership. Emily questioned needing the NPS to review any projects and their timeline. Chris replied reviews are only for water resources projects (dams, bridge, culvert) and would happen simultaneously with other reviews and he will get further information from NPS.

Ben Eastman questioned the 200' buffer from the river and vehicles on a residents' property in that buffer. Chris responded that they would work with the Town and the existing zoning by-laws, but the designation wouldn't regulate anything related to vehicles.

Paula Harrison questioned the presentation regarding the non-public swimming areas, which are annoyances to the property owners and more work for police and other authorities and how this designation would affect those property owners both positively and negatively. Chris responded that the designation would open federal funding which can help with river management and recreational use demands and they aren't trying to promote access that is on private property.

Katie Korby clarified that this meeting is to request endorsement of the designation and questioned how many towns have approved the request. Five of the seven towns have approved the request.

The Board requested answers to their questions and decided to table the topic until the 8/26 meeting.

New Business:

Request for Heath Fair Banner on the Town Common, Elissa Viarengo, Heath Agricultural Society

Elissa Viarengo explained a banner advertising the Heath Fair has been placed on the Town Common and was unsure if anyone from the Fair had ever asked for permission to place the banner. The Board agreed that if the sign parameters stay the same and is taken down as soon as possible after the fair ends there is no issue with placing the sign for the upcoming or future fairs.

Update re: Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust and Health Insurance Increases

Paula Harrison summarized the recent history of the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust in relation to the use of GLP-1's and how it affects the insurance costs, as well as the recent insurance claim filed and the need to do a mid-year increase to the premiums. With the increase it will keep the Trust viable, and Diana recommended the Town stay with the Trust. The committee is beginning to look at adding another plan and other small plan changes.

For Colrain, we budgeted two full family plans and another change in the health insurance, which will help offset the increased costs. Paula will be bringing options to the Board in the future for possible changes.

Discussion on the Trusts timing for stopping coverage of the GLP-1's for weight loss as of 10/1. Paula reiterated that the increase shouldn't affect the Town in a budgetary capacity, however, it does affect the employees.

Consent Items:

Approve Minutes of 4/8, 4/15, 4/22 and 4/29/2025

Warrant AP2605 in the amount of \$325,531.27

Warrant AP2606 in the amount of \$39,539.75

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to approve the minutes of the Select Board of 4/8, 4/15, 4/22 and 4/29/2025 as presented.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to approve the warrants as written.

Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Appointments and Resignations:

Accept Resignation from Kate Minifie from Board of Health

MOVED: Emily moved to accept the resignation from Kate Minifie from the Board of Health.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

New Business:

To Place Three (3) posters and Muster Roll on the Veterans Mall for Veterans Day, 11/11/25, Sarah Hollister, Shearer Rd

Sarah would like to put three posters and a muster list on Veteran's Day at the Veteran's Memorial Park.

MOVED: Katie Korby moved to permit Sarah Hollister to place three posters and the muster roll on the Veterans Mall for Veteran's Day.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Request to be Colrain Representative on the MTRSD 2D8T Steering Committee, Kennedy Strakose-Hagen

Diana Parsons recommended tabling the discussion because Kennedy wasn't at the meeting and she wanted to come in and speak to the Board. The Board agreed.

Determine and Vote Fee for Transfer of Liquor License

Discussion on the costs associated with transferring the license.

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to implement a fee for a transfer of liquor license of \$150.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Notice of Outstanding Host Community Municipal Equity Submission; Vote to Adopt Model Bylaw at Fall Town Meeting

Diana received notification from the Cannabis Control Commission that the Town is in default about actions needing to be taken to pass a by-law about social consumption and an equity component in the host community agreements. Diana recommended the model by-law be presented at town meeting. The one cultivator operating in Town needs a revised HCA to comply with the new laws, which Diana will work on and bring to a future meeting.

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to adopt the model bylaw for cannabis at the fall town meeting. Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Old Business:

Final Review of Highway Superintendent Job Description; Hiring Committee Formation, Process and Timing, Review Draft Ad

Diana will incorporate the finalized job description, formalize the advertisement, and compile a list of action items she believes should be addressed with the appropriate leadership through December. These topics will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Administrator Updates:

Received Eight (8) Qualified Responses to Towns' MVP 2.0 RFP for Planning Vendor; Contract to be Awarded by September

The MVP Committee (Diana, Charlemont Town Administrator, and Equity Partner) met yesterday. They chose a vendor, however, didn't get the award letter out to them yet. She will notify them tomorrow and then let the Board know.

Update on Hiring Process re: Library Director

There was an issue with the posting of their meeting choosing a screening committee, which was redone on Monday. They have scheduled prescreening meetings to be held in Executive Session. Once they have the final candidates, a Final committee will be formed, and interviews will be held in open session.

Household Hazardous Waste Day, Registration Required by September 10th. Flyer on Website

No discussion.

Public and Board Member Comments:

21-day National Grid Notice of Vegetative Plan in Town ROW – Pesticides will be used from August 28 - December 31, 2025 in select areas (Map Linked)

Diana explained the notification received from National Grid.

Requests for Future Agenda Items:

Transfer of Liquor License; Catamount Country Store – Public Hearing, 8/18, 8:30 am

No discussion.

Unregistered Motor Vehicle; 24 Heath Road & 69 Adamsville Road – Public Hearing, 8/26, 5:00 and 5:15 pm

Diana explained that Ben will need to physically remove himself from the table and explained the process should Emily and Kate split vote. Diana will investigate whether the hearing for 24 Heath Rd can happen because Emily is a tenant at the property and will proceed with the 69 Adamsville Rd hearing.

Complete Performance Appraisal for Town Administrator

Diana requested that the salary for the third year in her salary be brought to a future meeting outside of the performance review.

Address General Bylaws Enforcement w/ Non-Criminal Disposition; Schedule Fall Special Town Meeting for 11/4/25

Chris Lannon expressed interest to Diana about the Non-Criminal Disposition by-law and pursue using it to generate revenue for the Town. A special town meeting is tentatively set for 11/4/2025.

Schedule Joint Meeting with Council on Aging Re: COA Formation, Services & Facilities

Discussion on scheduling a meeting on a different day than a normal meeting for the Council on Aging topic.

Police Department Staffing

Katie Korby requested this be put on a future meeting.

Correspondence and Select Board Informational Items:

None

Executive Session:

None

Dissolve Meeting:

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to dissolve the meeting at 6:53pm.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,



Marjorie Smith
Administrative Assistant

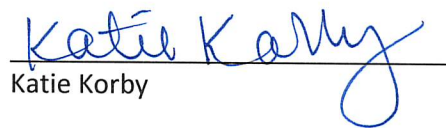
Accepted by the Select Board on 9/23/2025



Emily Thurber - Chair



Benjamin Eastman



Katie Korby

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

Draft Highway Superintendent Job Description

Letter of Support re: National Wild and Scenic River Designation for the Deerfield River

Deerfield River Wild and Scenic Study and Management Plan, Adopted 6/25/2025

Posters to be displayed at Veteran's Park on 11/11/2025

1775 Muster Roll to be displayed at Veteran's Park on 11/11/2025

Notice of Outstanding Host Community Municipal Equity Submission dated 7/28/2025

Model Municipal Equity By-Law or Ordinance Template

Hazardous Waste Collection Day Flyer

Letter from National Grid dated 8/5/2025 re: Herbicide Treatment for Right-of-Ways

Health Insurance Premiums Spreadsheet