

Town of Colrain  
Select Board/MLP Board Meeting  
Colrain Highway Garage  
9 Jacksonville Road  
4:30PM  
**MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD**  
**April 14, 2026**

**Present:** Emily Thurber (Chair); Katie Korby; Ben Eastman

**Others Present:** Liam Cregan, Alain Peteroy (Franklin Land Trust); Janice Barnes, Betty Johnson, Elaine Stanley, Michelle Hillman, Kathy Phelps (COA Members); Nate Gilbert (Highway Superintendent); Nick Anzuoni (Fire Chief); Chris Lannon (Police Chief); Abby Gilbert (Colrain PTO); Gail Sinistore; Doris Farrington; Pat Geary; Deb Menard; Joe Slowinski (remote); Diana Parsons (Town Administrator); Marjorie Smith (Administrative Assistant)

### **Call to Order**

Chair Emily Thurber called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. All three Select Board members were present, and the meeting was being recorded as it was hybrid.

### **Land Trust Landscape Scale Colrain and Heath Conservation Effort**

Liam Cregan from Franklin Land Trust presented a landscape-scale conservation project involving land on the border of Heath and Colrain. The project would conserve 805 acres through grant funding and totals 1,200 acres overall. The initiative includes partnerships with Department of Fish and Game, Department of Conservation Recreation, and Franklin Land Trust.

Cregan explained that conserved lands would continue to be taxed at current levels, typically remaining in Chapter 61A or 61B status. State-acquired lands would pay PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes), which represents a decrease in revenue. The Board discussed concerns about maintaining sustainable tax revenue while supporting conservation efforts.

The project includes conservation restrictions on four properties, three in Colrain, and state acquisition of additional parcels. Fish and Game lands would be opened for public access as wildlife management areas with fishing and hunting opportunities.

Emily Thurber moved to provide a letter of support for the Stone Mountain Landscape Conservation Project and have Diana sign on behalf of the Board. Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

### **Consent Items**

Emily Thurber moved to approve warrants AP2638, 2639, and 2640, and PR2619 and 2620 as presented. Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Emily Thurber moved to approve meeting minutes of the Select Board for March 10, 2026 and March 24, 2026 as written. Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

### **Address Council on Aging Membership and Request for Disclosures, COA Members**

The Board discussed upcoming COA appointments, with all current terms expiring in June. The Board plans to make all 15 appointments simultaneously and stagger terms appropriately in June. They will

conduct recruitment efforts to fill the Council fully and require letters of interest from all applicants, including current members, due by June 1st.

The Board will schedule a separate joint meeting in early May to discuss meal programs and other COA initiatives. They also addressed outstanding disclosure forms that need to be completed by COA members for state requirements.

## **New Business**

### **Approve One Day Liquor License Request from Colrain Central School PTO**

Emily Thurber moved to approve the one-day liquor license for the Colrain Central School PTO. Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

## **FY27 Budget, Discussion of Operations and Surplus Property Disposal re: Public Safety & Public Works**

### **Highway Department**

Nate Gilbert discussed the proposed conversion of a 2001 International fire truck into a highway vehicle. The truck is currently listed for auction at \$56,000-\$58,000 with minimal interest. Converting it would cost approximately \$90,000 from highway vehicle stabilization funds and could replace a planned truck purchase worth \$460,000.

The Board discussed storage challenges and timeline concerns. Gilbert estimated 3-5 weeks of full-time work to complete the conversion, which would provide valuable training opportunities for younger staff members.

The Board agreed to change the warrant article amount to \$90,000 to cover additional materials needed for the conversion, including dump body, plow frame, hydraulic hoses and electrical components.

### **Fire Department**

Fire Chief Nick Anzuoni presented comprehensive department statistics showing 44 pages of data from their software system. The report detailed response times, incident types, mutual aid activities, maintenance records, and training hours.

Key statistics included various call types from fire explosions to service calls, with detailed breakdowns by category. The department maintains strong ISO ratings, with most of the town rated 6-7 due to hydrant access, while outlying areas are rated 9.

The Board discussed training requirements and budget concerns. The Chief explained extensive training requirements including basic firefighter skills, RIT training, and ongoing certifications. Budget discussions focused on maintaining adequate funding for training and equipment needs while managing cost pressures.

### **Police Department**

Police Chief Chris Lannon reported the department is in good shape equipment-wise. He discussed ongoing recruitment challenges, noting difficulty attracting candidates due to distance and limited hours.

Lannon highlighted various projects including records management, library safety assessments, and development of an informed response program for senior residents. The program would create a database of residents over 64 with special needs to assist first responders during emergencies.

The Chief also reported on regional collaboration efforts and river safety initiatives with state agencies.

## **New Business**

### **Renew Intermunicipal Agreement for the Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans' Services District from July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2026**

The Board discussed renewing the three-year agreement for the 21-town veterans' services district. The town now has at least one veteran receiving benefits through the program.

Emily Thurber moved to renew the intermunicipal agreement for the Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans Services District from July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2028. Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

### **Discuss Woodlands Partnership Grant Application**

The Board discussed potential applications to the Woodlands Partnership Grant, including trail development around Catamount and Cook State Forest areas. Emily Thurber explored possibilities for wood processing equipment partnerships with other towns, while the Board considered signage, trail development, and rescue equipment as potential projects.

The grant deadline is approaching in May, and the Board will continue discussions next week to finalize their application strategy.

## **Old Business**

### **Finalize FY27 Budget & ATM Handout**

The Board reviewed the final budget incorporating all discussed reductions and adjustments. The total appropriation balances to the levy limit using stabilization funds and other revenue sources. The average tax bill increase is estimated at \$325 annually.

The Board reviewed draft informational materials for Annual Town Meeting explaining budget pressures including education costs, aging population needs, limited new growth, and inflation impacts. The Finance Committee recommended all articles except the Mohawk operating budget.

### **Review Final Draft of Annual Town Meeting Warrant**

The Board reviewed the 24-article warrant including budget articles, capital purchases, and policy changes. Notable articles include the grader purchase, technology server conversion, and facilities stabilization fund creation. The warrant requires final approval at next week's meeting.

## **New Business**

### **Amend Personnel Policy to Include 50% Health Coverage for Retiree Spouses**

Town Administrator Diana Parsons explained that the current policy only covers retiree health insurance at 50% but excludes dependents. This puts Colrain out of compliance with standard practices, as 99.9% of towns cover dependents. The budget includes approximately \$10,000 for three current retiree spouses.

Katie Korby moved to change the personnel policy for retiree benefits to pay 50 percent of retirees' and their dependents' health insurance. Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

## **Old Business**

### **Review Memo from MTRSD re: FY27 Capital Assessment Request**

No discussion.

## **Readdress Community One Stop Grant Application**

The Board discussed submitting expressions of interest for both master planning and school reuse feasibility studies. Diana emphasized the importance of developing options for Colrain Central School before any transition occurs, focusing on economic development potential and mixed-use possibilities.

## **MTTA Grant Award Announcement for Hazardous Mitigation Planning**

The Town received a \$32,000 grant for hazardous mitigation planning. The Board will need to form a committee to oversee the planning process in the coming fiscal year.

## **Administrator Updates**

Updates included budget finalization details, technology server replacement needs, and ongoing grant applications. The administrator noted the need to establish better cost recovery for inspection services and district administrative work.

## **Public and Board Member Comments (votes will not be taken)**

No discussion

## **Requests for Future Agenda Items**

### **Appointment of Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee**

No discussion

### **New Host Community Agreement (HCA) for NE Craft Cultivators**

No discussion

### **Response to Colrain Sewer District regarding Proposed Collection System Options**

No discussion

## **Correspondence and Select Board Informational Items**

### **Community Meeting Scheduled by NE Craft Cultivators: On May 19th at 6:00 pm at the Highway Garage Meeting Room**

No discussion

### **Massachusetts Select Board Association Conference: The Western and Rural Massachusetts Conference will be held on Saturday, May 2, 2026, at Delaney House in Holyoke, MA, and registration is open**

No discussion

### **FRCOG 2025 Annual Report: Distributed to Board members for informational purposes**

No discussion

## **Dissolve Meeting**

Emily Thurber moved to dissolve tonight's meeting at 7:49pm. Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

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

Email dated 3/2/2026 from Liam Cregan, Franklin Land Trust, to Diana Parsons, Town Administrator  
re: Colrain and Heath Conservation Effort

Stone Mountain Landscape Partnership Parcels Map

Draft Letter of Support re: Stone Mountain Landscape Conservation Project

List of Current Council on Aging Members

Disclosure by Non-Elected Municipal Employee of Financial Interest and Determination by  
Appointing Authority for Betty Johnson, Michelle Hillman, and Kathy Steinem

FY2025 and FY2026 Foot Clinic Statistics

Colrain Council on Aging Minutes for March 30, 2026

Colrain Police Department Informed Response Program Draft Initiative and Sign Up Form

Draft FY2027 Annual Town Meeting Warrant

One Day Liquor License Application for Abby Gilbert

Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans' Services District Renewal

FY2027 Woodlands Partnership Implementation Grant

Email dated 3/25/2026 from Jonathan Lagreze to Diana Parsons, Town Administrator, re: Woodland  
Partnership Grant Use

Draft FY2027 Omnibus Budget and Pie Chart

MTRSD Memo dated 3/27/2026 re: Additional Capital Assessment

Email from William Lataille, MTRSD, dated 4/10/2026 re: Additional Capital Assessment

Draft Statement for Annual Town Meeting from the Colrain Finance Committee re: Annual Town  
Meeting Budget Pressures and Use of Levy Capacity

2025 FRCOG Annual Report for Colrain

FY2027 Budget Overview

Email dated 4/8/2026 from Raffi Freedman-Gurspan, Federal Funds and Infrastructure Office, to  
Diana Parsons, Town Administrator, re: Hazard Mitigation Plan Grant Award

Letter dated 4/7/2026 from MA Craft Cultivation LLC to Colrain Town Clerk re: Community  
Outreach Meeting





Accepted on 4/28/2024