

Town of Colrain
Select Board/MLP Board Meeting
Colrain Highway Garage
9 Jacksonville Road
4:30PM
MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD
May 26, 2026

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

Others Present: Robbie Murphy (Friends of the Colrain Historic District); Mike Slowinski; Paula Harrison (Treasurer/Collector); Jane Johnson; Diana Parsons (Town Administrator); Marjorie Smith (Administrative Assistant)

Call to Order

Chair Emily Thurber called the meeting to order at 4:31 PM. All three Select Board members were present and the meeting was noted as being recorded.

Introduction to Friends of the Colrain Historic District and Discussion of Projects, Robbie Murphy

Robbie Murphy introduced the Friends of the Colrain Historic District, a nonprofit formed in spring 2025 out of concern for the deteriorating brick meeting house. The group aims to find solutions for preservation and community projects. They organized a collaboration meeting on February 28, 2026, involving 17 organizations. On the 9/11 memorial flag restoration, despite potential land sale concerns, the group has raised \$8,000 with a \$12,000 goal. Contributions include donated electrical services from Clint Dodge, donated paint from Sherwin Williams, and a 50% discount on labor from a neon company. Mike Slowinski confirmed the electric meter is on, and the GFI was replaced. Diana Parsons noted that the collaboration meeting emphasized a need for a comprehensive community plan, which she is addressing with a One Stop for Growth grant application.

Consent Items

Approve Minutes

Warrant AP2645 in the amount of \$151,536.64

Warrant PR2622 in the amount of \$29,284.15

Emily Thurber moved to approve Warrant AP2645 in the amount of \$151,536.64, and Warrant PR2622 in the amount of \$29,284.15 as presented. Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Appointments and Resignations

No discussion.

New Business

Reorganize Select Board Positions, Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk

Ben Eastman moved to reorganize the Select Board by appointing Katie Korby as Chair, Ben Eastman as Vice Chair, and Emily as Clerk. Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Request for Support for Legislative Remedy Related to MTRSD Assessment Error from Wilder Sparks, Charlemont Select Board

The Board reviewed a request from the Charlemont Select Board for a letter supporting a legislative earmark to fix an error in the Mohawk Trail Regional School District's (MTRSD) assessment formula. Incorrect enrollment data in FY2020 affected FY2021-FY2025 assessments, resulting in a \$109,265 overpayment, with Colrain's share at about \$20,040. Diana Parsons mentioned the error was found during a sustainability review. Mike Slowinski highlighted recurring enrollment data errors, noting mischarges during COVID for students with Colrain postal addresses who lived in Heath. The Board preferred a legislative remedy over individual town reimbursements. Ben Eastman asked if Colrain would need to cover its share if the earmark failed; Diana noted this had been discussed.

Emily Thurber moved to sign the joint letter of support related to the MTRSD assessment error. Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Colrain Sewer District Collection System; Address Request from Randy Crochier, FRCOG

The Board discussed a request from Randy Crochier of FRCOG about the Colrain Sewer District collection system's endpoint. Diana Parsons pointed out the urgent timeline—with construction due by summer and risk of funding retraction if not started by November—presents a timely opportunity to require the Sewer District to officially acknowledge ownership of the system, which they have overseen for about 30 years without signing the initial agreement from the early 2000s.

Katie Korby expressed concern about taking any action that would imply the Town owns the system. The Board agreed to have legal counsel draft a letter requiring the Sewer District to sign the existing agreement and formally take ownership.

Emily Thurber moved to have Town Counsel draft a letter to the sewer district requesting that they sign the previous agreement if we fulfill their request. No second. **Motion failed.**

Katie Korby moved to ask counsel to draft a letter requesting the Colrain Sewer District officially take ownership of the collection system and sign the original agreement. Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Rescind Previous Vote for Declaration Surplus 2001 International Fire Truck (for Town Reuse)

Diana Parsons clarified that the 2001 International fire truck chassis is currently listed on auction and needs to be pulled from auction for Town reuse, requiring the prior surplus declaration to be rescinded.

Emily Thurber moved to rescind the previous vote declaring the 2001 International fire truck as surplus. Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Call for Special Town Meeting, June 23, 2026, 6 PM and Sign Warrant

Diana Parsons confirmed the Special Town Meeting warrant contains two articles: (1) to revote the school assessment by June 30th, and (2) to formally establish an elder and disabled tax relief fund in accordance with state law, enabling donations to be solicited on tax bills. Diana noted that Charlemont and Plainfield had not yet voted to call the meeting, with Plainfield expected to vote by week's end.

Emily Thurber moved to call a Special Town Meeting for June 23, 2026 at 6 PM. Katie seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Review Job Description and Adopt Assistant Treasurer/Collector Position

This item was tabled to the next meeting as the job description was not included in the packet. Paula Harrison confirmed via remote attendance that tabling was appropriate, as the position is not effective until July 1st.

Old Business

268A §19 and 268A §23(b)(3) Disclosures – Police Chief Christopher Lannon

The Board reviewed and voted to accept and sign two ethics disclosures submitted by Police Chief Christopher Lannon.

Katie Korby moved to accept and sign the two disclosures from Police Chief Christopher Lannon. Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Continued Discussion Regarding Town Office Coverage during Town Admin Leave

Diana Parsons plans to return to the office, working on-site Mondays and Wednesdays while handling pressing deadlines. She's been working remotely, using two to four hours of FMLA leave daily, and is monitoring her hours closely.

Marjorie Smith indicated she is able to work up to four additional hours per week if needed, though the full scope of additional coverage needs remains unclear. The Board agreed to revisit the staffing situation at the next meeting rather than retain outside help at this time. Ben Eastman encouraged Diana to communicate openly if the workload becomes too much.

Administrator Updates

Received Grant Awards from DOT for Grader Purchase, Small Bridge Program and Community Culvert and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Funds for Additional Bridges

Diana Parsons reported that all DOT grant applications were successful. The Town received \$250,000 from the Rural Roads grant for a grader purchase, planned after July 1st post Town Meeting funding. Charlemont Road secured two grants: a Small Bridge Program grant for the Meadow Brook bridge and a Community Culvert program grant for Holden Brook, a road that has been closed for over three years. Franklin Hill Road over East Branch North River was added to the TIP.

Mike Slowinski stressed the importance of consistent engagement with designers and the DOT to avoid delays, suggesting outreach to the property owner at the Charlemont Road culvert site, as cooperation affects the project. Diana noted ongoing contact with the DOT and a solid connection with the grant supervisor, stating she would seek Board support if legislative escalation is necessary.

Mass in Motion Grant for Improvement to Town Office Ramp and Repairs to Highway Garage Meeting Room Ramp & Survey

Ben Eastman noted the gutters were installed at the Town Office the same day as the meeting. Mass in Motion grant funds will be used for repairs to the Highway Garage meeting room ramp.

ADA Grant for Power Arm Opener & Canopy at Town Office; Additional Ramp Improvements

Diana reported that following the ramp improvements funded through the Mass in Motion grant, she intends to apply for an ADA grant to add power door openers at both the Town Office and the Highway Garage meeting room. A site visit with the project consultant is scheduled for the following day to develop a scope and cost estimate for the grant application.

COA Service Incentive Grant Application for Additional Nutrition Services

Diana reported she is preparing a COA Service Incentive Grant application to pursue congregate meals and/or brown bag delivery services for seniors. Diana noted Life Path has confirmed they can provide the service if suitable space meeting program requirements is identified, and may issue an RFP to a local food vendor. The grant would fund the first year of service. The draft application will be shared with the Board prior to the next meeting for review.

One Stop for Growth Grant for Community Planning in Process; Need Surplus Disposal Proclamation for CCS Reuse

Diana reported that the One Stop for Growth application for community planning is nearly complete and must be submitted before the next Board meeting. The application seeks up to \$110,000, and a proposal received from FRCOG came in at \$97,000. Diana is seeking support letters from the Friends of the Colrain Historic District and the Planning Board. Diana noted a separate One Stop expression of interest for Colrain Central School reuse was explored, but that application requires a surplus disposal proclamation the Town has not yet made, so it was set aside as premature.

Katie Korby moved to authorize Diana Parsons to apply for the One Stop for Growth grant for community planning. Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

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

Emily Thurber - FRTA Updates

Emily provided updates from the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) Board meeting. The Board maintained an 80/20 employer-employee health insurance split through June 30, 2027, offering an extra \$4,000 benefit to the small employee group. Cost evaluations of alternative insurance found no savings. Fare-free demand response service for riders over 60 was also extended to 2027. The audit report was excellent, and the FRTA budget rose 5.1% to \$6 million. The Board raised the Executive Director's salary. Paul McClatchy was elected as the new FRTA Chair. Emily highlighted strong ridership on the regional 413 route.

Ben Eastman - COA Meeting Update

Ben reported attending the Council on Aging (COA) meeting and noted that the COA's Mass Council on Aging online portal has never been set up, which is why no information has appeared there. Ben also conveyed that some COA members feel they have been bullied by the Select Board, past and present, and that current members seeking reappointment object to submitting letters of interest. Marjorie Smith clarified that all boards are being asked if they wish to continue on their respective Board/Committee as part of the standard annual reappointment process. Ben confirmed the COA is supportive of the nutrition services grant but has no capacity to assist, as they are currently managing two other grant applications. Ben also reported 43 attendees at the most recent COA lunch, with 12 and 9 attendees respectively at the two foot clinic sessions.

Katie Korby - Miscellaneous Updates

MA Craft Cultivation - Katie reported attending a community outreach meeting hosted by the marijuana cultivation operation on West Leyden Road, noting the applicant is proposing a limited expansion and addition of on-site manufacturing. Katie noted the facility is subject to extensive regulatory audits and that the operator plans to present to the Board in June.

Board of Health Meeting & CSD - Katie briefly mentioned attending a Board of Health meeting regarding a request by the Colrain Sewer District to reduce a holding tank size from 9,000 to 6,500 gallons in a nitrogen-sensitive area was approved, as the smaller size still exceeded required buffer thresholds.

Chris Krezmien - Katie reported receiving an email from Chris Krezmien proposing to install solar panels on the school, who indicated he has a private investor and believes the infrastructure can support the project. A more formal proposal is expected.

School Choice Decision by School Committee - Katie shared that the school district voted to change school choice enrollment at Colrain Central School, which would reduce the student count by approximately 40 children. Community members and school staff are upset, citing that the discussion occurred without public comment and included statements by the superintendent suggesting the school would close regardless. A community meeting was scheduled at the library for Friday at 3:30 PM, and a letter-writing campaign to the State is underway asking for the vote to be rescinded. Katie planned to attend. Mike Slowinski noted that Colrain's school board representative voted to increase school choice at Buckland-Shelburne while reducing it at Colrain, and questioned whether that representative was adequately advocating for Colrain's interests. Discussion followed about the deliberate nature of the move, parallels to what occurred in Heath, and the condition of the Buckland-Shelburne building relative to Colrain Central, which is among the better-maintained elementary schools in the district. Robbie Murphy suggested reaching out to Warwick, which recently faced a similar decision, to learn from their experience.

Regional EMS Meeting - Katie also reported attending an EMS planning meeting, where discussions have progressed to narrowing toward concrete budget scenarios for regional emergency services. A follow-up meeting is scheduled in coming weeks.

Mike Slowinski noted that the lilacs on the Town Common, which were healthy at a recent maintenance visit, have since disappeared. Mike expressed concern about who removed them and why, and noted that several community members had asked him about it. Jane Johnson mentioned seeing the pollinator garden volunteers in the area on a recent weekend. Mike confirmed that the annual common maintenance—liming, fertilizing, and edging—was completed at no cost to the Town using donated funds and volunteer labor. Mike also requested time at a future meeting to present broadband project data, noting the projects are substantially complete.

Requests for Future Agenda Items

Joint Meeting with Colrain Council on Aging — The previously proposed June 1st joint meeting will not proceed due to a lack of COA quorum on that date. To be rescheduled.

Annual Reappointments, June 9, 2026 — Noted for the June 9th meeting agenda.

Appointment of Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee — Noted for a future agenda.

Correspondence and Select Board Informational Items (votes will not be taken)

No discussion.

Executive Session

At 6:05pm, Emily Thurber moved to enter Executive Session in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A, §21(a)(1), to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition, or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual. The Board does not intend to return to open session. Ben Eastman seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Emily Thurber – Aye, Ben Eastman – Aye, Katie Korby – Aye. **Approved unanimously.**

Dissolve Meeting

Emily Thurber moved to dissolve the meeting. Ben Eastman seconded. Approved unanimously. The meeting dissolved at 6:17pm.

These draft minutes were created using ClerkMinutes, an AI-powered platform that transcribes meetings, identifies speakers, and generates professional minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

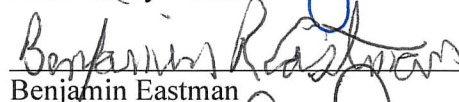


Marjorie Smith
Administrative Assistant

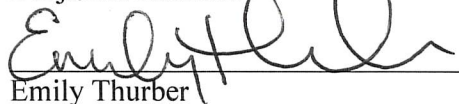
Accepted by the Select Board on 6/16/2026



Katie Korby - Chair



Benjamin Eastman



Emily Thurber

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

Email dated 5/9/2026 from Wilder Sparks, Charlemont Select Board, re: MTRSD Assessment Error
Draft Letter of Support re: MTRSD Assessment Error

Email dated 5/12/2026 from Randy Crochier, FRCOG, re: Colrain Sewer District Collection System
6/23/2026 Special Town Meeting Warrant

Municipal Adoption & Implementation Toolkit re: MGL c. 60 s. 3D: Elderly & Disabled Taxation
Fund

MGL c. 60 s. 3D: Elderly & Disabled Taxation Fund

268A §19 and 268A §23(b)(3) Disclosures from Police Chief Lannon

Diana Parsons In Process List dated 5/20/2026

MassDOT Award Letter dated 5/15/2026 re: Municipal Small Bridge Program for Charlemont Road
over Meadow Brook

MassDOT Award Letter dated 5/15/2026 re: Community Culvert Program for Charlemont Road over
Holden Brook

MassDOT Award Letter dated 5/19/2026 re: Unpaved Roads Grant Program for Purchase of a New
Grader

MassDOT Project Eligibility Notification Letter dated 5/19/2026 re: Bridge on Franklin Hill Rd over
East Branch North River

Letter from COA Members dated 5/1/2026 re: Appointment to Council on Aging

Letter from Michael Scranton dated 5/22/2026: re: Real Estate Tax Payment Complaint

Real Estate Tax Bill #2026-01-0001105 re: 109 Shelburne Line Rd

Real Estate Tax Demand Bill re: 109 Shelburne Line Rd

Copy of Check #5505 and 5518 re: 109 Shelburne Line Rd

Letter from Paula Harrison, Treasurer/Collector, to Michael Scranton re: Real Estate Tax Payment
Complaint

Mass in Motion & Age-Friendly Community Survey

MA Craft Cultivation: Community Outreach Presentation dated 5/19/2026