

Town of Colrain
Select Board/MLP Board Meeting
Colrain Highway Garage
9 Jacksonville Road
4:00PM
MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD
June 23, 2026

Present: Chair Catherine Korby, Select Board Member Benjamin Eastman, Select Board Member Emily Thurber

Absent: None

Others Present: Cheli Mennella (Library Trustee); Nancy Turkle (Library Trustee); Betty Johnson (Library Trustee); Joe Slowinski; Bruce Ridge; Joe Sacco ; David Greenberg; Lena Jillson; Melissa Shepherd; Kat Brow; Sheryl Stanton (Superintendent); Joe Kurland; Peggy Davis; Stephanie Herzig; Amy Lavallee (State Representative Candidate); Diana Parsons (Town Administrator); Marjorie Smith (Administrative Assistant)

Call To Order

Chair Catherine Korby called the Select Board meeting to order at 4:01 PM. All three Select Board members were present. The meeting was noted as being recorded.

Joint Meeting With Library Trustees To Consider Appointment Of Trustee Member Pursuant To M.G.L. c. 41, §11

The purpose of the joint meeting was to consider the appointment of Casey Chadwick to fill the vacancy on the Griswold Memorial Library Board of Trustees resulting from Nancy Turkle's resignation, effective July 1, 2026.

Town Administrator Diana Parsons confirmed that the Trustees had previously voted on May 11th to recommend Casey Chadwick for the position.

A letter of interest from Casey Chadwick was read into the record. In it, Chadwick expressed her commitment to accessible literacy resources and community learning, citing her professional background as an early childhood special education teacher.

A member of the public raised concerns regarding the direction of library programming and public comment policies. Chair Korby acknowledged the comments and noted that positive community feedback about the library had been broadly received.

Chair Korby moved to appoint Casey Chadwick to the Griswold Memorial Library Board of Trustees for a term beginning July 1, 2026 and lasting until the next election. Select Board Member Emily Thurber seconded.

Roll call vote: Catherine Korby— Aye; Benjamin Eastman — Aye; Emily Thurber — Aye.
Approved unanimously.

Town Administrator Parsons noted that Casey Chadwick would need to take her oath of office to make the appointment official.

Consent Items

Approve Minutes

Approve Warrants

Chair Korby moved to approve Warrant AP2650 as presented. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Appointments And Resignations

Annual Reappointments Remaining – Electrical Inspector (If Legal Opinion Received)

Town Administrator Diana Parsons provided a legal update indicating that the Town's inspectors likely qualify as part-time hourly employees under Massachusetts law and the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act, rather than as independent contractors. This classification requires withholding taxes, using time sheets instead of fee-based stipends, having entitled access to workers' compensation and liability coverage, and requiring employees who drive for Town business to provide a copy of their driver's license annually. She highlighted the need for written contracts for services rather than individual fee payments and mentioned that the plumbing and gas inspection may qualify differently due to its business structure. A meeting is planned for June 30 to discuss these changes. Select Board Member Eastman supported the plans and confirmed his availability.

Request For Appointment And Letter Of Interest Received From Colleen Worden For Fire Station Building Committee

The Board reviewed a letter of interest from Colleen Worden, a 43-year member of the Colrain Fire Department, requesting appointment to the Fire Station Building Committee. Select Board Member Eastman noted the committee should be actively meeting, particularly in light of EMS consolidation discussions.

Select Board Member Benjamin Eastman moved to appoint Colleen Worden to the Fire Station Building Committee for a term of one year. Chair Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

New Business

Review Chapter 90 Activity For FY27 And Balances; Approximately \$600K Scheduled For End Of August

Town Administrator Parsons reported that the Town currently holds approximately \$1,200,000 in Chapter 90 funds and is slated to receive approximately \$571,000 for FY27. The Highway Department has completed preparatory work including road widening and geo-grid installation, and approximately \$600,000 is proposed for paving the following roads by end of August: Shelburne Line Road, Van Nuys Road (currently paved sections), East Colrain Road (currently paved sections), Jurek Road (currently paved on the Shelburne Line Road end), and Fort Lucas Road (currently paved on the Shelburne Line Road side).

Chair Korby moved to approve Chapter 90 activity for FY27 as presented. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Listening Session Regarding Colrain Central School Potential Consolidation

The Board held a public listening session regarding the potential consolidation of Colrain Central School. Chair Korby opened the session and invited community members to provide feedback, asking speakers to limit comments to two to three minutes.

- Concerns were raised about the current staffing-to-student ratio and the sustainability of the regional assessment structure. It was suggested that a fiscally responsible solution could be to consolidate all elementary schools at Mohawk Trail Regional.
- There is recognition of Colrain Central's high school quality, with calls for careful consideration in any transition to avoid potential harm.
- The belief that closing Colrain Central may not yield the direct financial savings anticipated, as benefits would primarily accrue to the district, not the Town.
- Highlighted the need for a clear Town-specific plan before taking any action on school closure.
- Advocated for single-payer health care as a more effective financial strategy than closing the school.
- Emphasized the school's value as a central community hub and the importance of preserving this role.
- Concerns about health care costs being the primary financial burden while valuing the school's offerings for families with young children.
- Raised awareness about the stable enrollment numbers at Colrain over the last 15 years.
- Concern was expressed about the potential loss of families due to uncertainty about the school's future, emphasizing the importance of better community outreach and publicity for meetings.
- The sudden acceleration of the consolidation process from the community's perspective was noted.
- The Two-District Eight-Town (2D8T) Working Group's ongoing effort, which focuses on a consolidated campus with equity as a core goal, was acknowledged. The district is in the eligibility phase with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) and is moving towards a feasibility study.
- Clarification highlighted the requirement for town approval to close Colrain Central.
- Mention of the broader implications on family transportation, property values, regional employment collaboration, and state-level advocacy for health care and education funding were discussed.
- Support was expressed for legislative advocacy due to a lack of adequate state-level representation.
- Illustrating the economic risks posed by potential cuts to other town services due to the budget pressures related to the school.
- Clarified that many staff are shared across the district and are not indicative of overstaffing, correcting any misconceptions regarding staff numbers.
- Emphasized community-focused decision-making and maintaining strong communication to align future actions with residents' desires.

The Board agreed that continued listening sessions would be held, particularly through the summer and into the fall and winter budgeting season. Improved outreach and meeting accessibility for families with young children were identified as priorities.

Old Business

Review And Sign Host Community Agreement (HCA) For MA Craft Cannabis

This item was tabled as the HCA was not available at the time of the meeting.

Administrator Updates

No separate discussion was recorded under this agenda item.

Public And Board Member Comments (Votes Will Not Be Taken)

David Greenberg inquired about the status of the Barnhardt mill building. Chair Korby noted that disposition of the property is contingent upon resolution of the sewer district agreement, and that the sewer district meeting held the prior day was progressing positively. Mike Slowinski added that Barnhardt had withdrawn a demolition permit for the red building due to the extent of asbestos present, and the excavator had been removed from the site.

Requests For Future Agenda Items

Town Administrator Review & FY27 Goals & Objectives

No discussion.

Correspondence And Select Board Informational Items (Votes Will Not Be Taken)

Executive Session

No Executive Session was held.

Dissolve Meeting

Chair Korby moved to dissolve the meeting. Select Board Member Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

The meeting was dissolved at 5:26 PM.

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

Respectfully submitted,

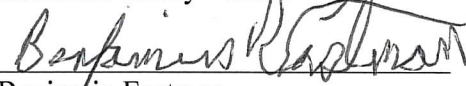


Marjorie Smith
Administrative Assistant

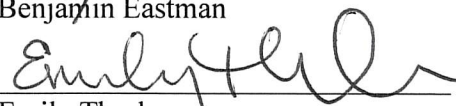
Accepted by the Select Board on 8/11/2024



Catherine Korby - Chair



Benjamin Eastman



Emily Thurber

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

Letter dated 5/20/2026 from Cheli Mennella, Co-Chair GML Trustees, to Colrain Select Board re: Casey Chadwick Appointment

Letter of Intent from Casey Chadwick dated 5/4/2026 re: Library Trustee Appointment

Resignation Letter from Nancy Turkle dated 5/6/2026

Letter of Interest from Colleen Worden dated 5/16/2026 re: Fire Station Building Committee Appointment