

Town of Colrain
Select Board/MLP Board Meeting
Colrain Highway Garage
9 Jacksonville Road
4:30 PM
MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD
August 25, 2026

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

Absent: None

Others Present: Gary Ponce (Director, Colrain Volunteer Ambulance Association); Kevin Worden II; Police Chief Chris Lannon; Mike Slowinski (MLP Manager); Drew Houser; Tesia Elani; John Yannis; Joel McCloud; Jane Johnson; Richard Herzig; Amy Herzig; Elane Stanley; Justin Korby; John Yannis; Laurie Francis; Glenda Wood; Gail Sinistore; David Greenberg; Joe Slowinski; Nancy Turkle; Marjorie Smith (Executive Assistant); Diana Parsons (Town Administrator)

Call to Order

Chair Korby called the Select Board meeting to order at 4:30 PM. All three Select Board Members were noted as present and the meeting was noted as being recorded.

Update re: Development of West County Regional Ambulance Service, Gary Ponce, Director, Colrain Volunteer Ambulance Association

Gary Ponce, CEO and Director of Colrain Volunteer Ambulance Association, presented an overview of the current state of EMS services in West County and the ongoing regional planning effort. The current model relies heavily on on-call staffing, with an average ambulance response time of 21 minutes across the service area. Colrain Volunteer Ambulance is the only Advanced Life Support (ALS/paramedic-level) provider in West County, and the current operational and financial model was described as unsustainable beyond two to three years.

Eight towns are now participating in regional ambulance service planning discussions: Colrain, Charlemont, Shelburne, Buckland, Hawley, Heath, and Rowe. The group has been meeting for approximately nine months and is developing a regional nonprofit model with shared governance and funding. The Town of Colrain currently contributes no direct financial assessment to the ambulance service, though it provides facility space at no charge.

Select Board Member Eastman raised the concern that, as the sole ALS provider, Colrain should hold significant influence in any future governance structure. Gary noted that governance formation is a near-term priority for the participating towns. No vote was taken; this item was informational.

Implementation of Informed Response Program, Police Chief Lannon

Police Chief Chris Lannon presented the Informed Response Program, a voluntary registration program designed to provide first responders with advance information about residents who may require special assistance during emergencies. The program will initially target residents aged 64 and older (approximately 304 households) and will expand Town-wide in subsequent phases. Information collected

will be stored securely at the Colrain Police Department, accessible only to Chief Lannon and responding EMS agencies during emergencies.

The program includes a registration form, a confidentiality policy, and legal disclosures consistent with HIPAA guidelines and existing Town policy. The Board noted the program was ready for implementation following legal review. Chief Lannon also provided a departmental update covering part-time staffing recruitment, a police administrator search, free speed limit signs obtained via a MassDOT grant for five roads, a behavioral response pilot MOU with the Sheriff's Department, a concern and welfare check program, body camera grant pursuit, and FBI leadership training.

Broadband Uncollectible Accounts & Misc Updates, Mike Slowinski, MLP Manager

Mike Slowinski reported that the MLP is currently collecting 100% of broadband fees with zero uncollectible accounts, performing better than comparable municipal broadband operations. Mike noted that a previously authorized vote allowing transitory use of dark fiber for smart meter communication was no longer necessary, as the utility provider pursued an alternative solution. The Board discussed whether to formally rescind the prior vote but took no action.

Mike reported that smart meters have been performing well, with the system automatically detecting outages and dispatching crews faster than traditional call-in methods. Mike also confirmed that full restitution was collected from the Town of Shelburne for damage caused to MLP infrastructure. Mike further noted that an outage notification contact list and a flag-raising volunteer for the fire station had not yet been finalized.

Consent Items

Approve Meeting Minutes of 8/19/26

Approve Warrant AP2707 FY27 in the amount of \$78,589.58

Approve Warrant AP2708 FY27 in the amount of \$35,283.47

Approve Warrant PR2703 FY27 in the amount of \$26,847.02

Chair Korby moved to approve Warrants AP2707, AP2708, and PR2703 as presented. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Note: The minutes of 8/19/26 were tabled pending receipt of the document.

Appointments and Resignations

Request to Readdress and Discuss Appointment to COA, Michael Slowinski

Chair Korby recommended tabling any new appointments to the Council on Aging (COA) in light of concerns arising from the COA meeting held on August 24 and correspondence received by the Board. Select Board Member Thurber and Select Board Member Eastman concurred, with Select Board Member Eastman noting that recent correspondence was "very disheartening." The Board emphasized that the moratorium applies to all prospective appointees, not solely to Michael Slowinski's application.

Chair Korby moved to table any new appointments to the COA. Select Board Member Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Following the vote, Mike Slowinski objected that the agenda item concerned his appointment and cited correspondence indicating that spouses may serve together on a COA absent a conflict of interest. Chair Korby responded that the Board's concern was the overall functioning of the COA, not solely Mr. Slowinski's application.

Request for Appointment to Colrain Cultural Council and MA in Motion Committee, Drew Houser, 161 Franklin Hill Road

Drew Houser, participating remotely, introduced herself as a musician, composer, and volunteer with Colrain Food for All with an interest in local cultural programming and food insecurity. The Board expressed enthusiasm for her involvement.

Select Board Member Thurber moved to appoint Drew Houser to the Colrain Cultural Council effective August 25, 2026, for a term expiring June 30, 2029. Chair Korby seconded. Approved unanimously.

Chair Korby moved to appoint Drew Houser to the Mass in Motion Committee. Select Board Member Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Request for Appointment to Colrain Cultural Council, Tesia Elani, 47 Thompson Road

Tesia Elani, participating remotely, introduced herself as a teacher, resident of Colrain, and regular attendee of local cultural events, expressing interest in contributing through the Cultural Council.

Chair Korby moved to appoint Tesia Elani to the Colrain Cultural Council effective August 25, 2026, for a term expiring June 30, 2029. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Request for Appointment to Zoning Board of Appeals as Alternate, Ben Eastman, 24 Heath Road

Select Board Member Benjamin Eastman recused himself from the vote. A letter from Select Board Member Eastman was submitted to the record expressing his interest in serving as an alternate to assist the community.

Chair Korby moved to appoint Benjamin Eastman as the Zoning Board of Appeals Alternate. Select Board Member Thurber seconded. **Approved 2-0-1 (Select Board Member Eastman recused himself).**

Accept Resignation from Council on Aging, Susan Slowinski

Consistent with the Board's decision to table COA appointments, this item was tabled. Mike Slowinski advised the Board that the resignation is legally effective upon receipt by the Town Clerk or Town Administrator and does not require a Board vote.

Select Board Member Thurber moved to table the item. Chair Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

New Business

Readdress Surplus Police Cruiser as Shared Fire Chief Vehicle

Town Administrator Diana Parsons summarized an evolving proposal from the Town of Heath to use the Town of Colrain's surplus police cruiser as a shared fire chief vehicle, with Heath funding the outfitting and both towns sharing ongoing costs of maintenance, fuel, and insurance. The cruiser is currently owned and insured by Colrain. Heath's original proposal to purchase the vehicle outright fell through when outfitting costs exceeded their \$10,000 budget. Select Board Member Eastman raised liability concerns about the vehicle being used in Heath under Colrain's insurance policy. Several Board members and residents questioned whether the arrangement represents sufficient value to the Town, and noted that Fire Chief Nick Anzuoni currently also has access to fire department vehicles.

The Board requested that Fire Chief Anzuoni attend a future meeting to provide additional context, and directed Diana to gather more details on maintenance costs, insurance implications, and the duration of Heath's prior use of their vehicle. No vote was taken; the item was tabled to a future meeting.

Accept Disclosures from John Yannis, Pursuant to MGL 268A, 23(b)(3)

The Board accepted two conflict-of-interest disclosures submitted by John Yannis: one relating to the Council on Aging and Colrain Food for All, and one relating to the Council on Aging and LifePath. A minor informality on the Food for All disclosure (an unchecked box) was noted and accepted as a minor omission, with the Board's intent reflected in the record.

Chair Korby moved to accept John Yannis's disclosure concerning the Council on Aging and Colrain Food for All. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Chair Korby moved to accept John Yannis's disclosure concerning the Council on Aging and LifePath. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Accept Disclosure for Maggie Smith, Pursuant to MGL 268A, 20(b)

The Board accepted a conflict-of-interest disclosure from Maggie Smith regarding her simultaneous service in two appointed positions: Executive Assistant and Assistant Collector Treasurer. The disclosure is permissible under Massachusetts law for towns with populations under 3,500.

Chair Korby moved to approve Maggie Smith's disclosure concerning her multiple appointed positions for the Town. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Appointment of Maggie Smith to Executive Assistant Position

The Board noted that Maggie Smith had been performing the Executive Assistant duties but had not been formally appointed to the position.

Chair Korby moved to appoint Maggie Smith to the Executive Assistant position, effective August 25, 2026. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Adopt Trench Permit Application, Set Fee & Department Authority

Town Administrator Diana Parsons presented a newly created trench permit application based on the state model, noting that no such permit or fee was found in existing Town records, though the requirement exists under Massachusetts General Law. Diana recommended designating the Highway Superintendent as the permitting authority, as residents typically approach him for such permits, and he would also be responsible for monitoring open trenches. The fee was discussed in context of the current \$25 curb cut fee, which was noted as potentially insufficient.

Chair Korby moved to adopt the trench permit application, set the fee at \$50, and designate the Highway Superintendent as the permitting authority. Select Board Member Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Chapter 61B Release of Option to Purchase, 66 Reils Lane

Town Administrator Diana Parsons explained that the Chapter 61 application had not been renewed following a death in the owning family, and that the property has been taxed at the full rate for the past two years. The Town retains no active right of first refusal at this time, and the Chapter 61 lien itself remains in place until rollback taxes are paid. The Board determined that the Town does not have the resources to purchase the property.

Chair Korby moved to release the option to purchase for 66 Reils Lane. Select Board Member Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Town Administrator FY26 Review & FY27 Goals & Objectives

The Board agreed to follow the same individual review process used in the prior year, with each Select Board Member completing the performance evaluation form independently and submitting it to Diana Parsons within one week. FY27 goals and objectives will be discussed at the next meeting. Select Board Member Thurber indicated she had not yet completed her form and would drop off a hard copy at the office.

Old Business

Review Transfer Station Rules/Regulations re: Oversize Trailers, from 5/27/25

Town Administrator Diana Parsons reported that, while the Transfer Station operators have been informally discouraging oversized trailers, no written regulation currently exists to support enforcement. Two incidents involving large trailers causing traffic and operational difficulties were referenced. The Board discussed options including a staging area for trailers, posted signage, and a formal size limitation aligned with DEP regulations, which allow trailers up to five cubic yards of waste with required exception reporting. The Board agreed that a written regulation was necessary to give Transfer Station attendants a defensible basis for enforcement.

Diana was directed to consult with Transfer Station operators John and George and to align the posted regulation with DEP standards, including trailer size limitations. No formal vote was taken.

Administrator Updates

Green Communities Grant Update, Extension Received to 9/30/27

Town Administrator Diana Parsons reported that the Town has received a one-year extension from the Green Communities program to complete a previously identified energy project, which is now funded and moving toward implementation.

Four Town Shared Police and Shared Fire Meetings

Diana provided a broader context update on regional service sustainability, noting that volunteer fire, ambulance, and minimally-staffed police services are no longer sustainable in their current form across small rural towns. She noted that the four participating towns — Colrain, Charlemont, Heath, and Rowe — are engaged in discussions about shared police and fire services. Diana emphasized the need for the Town to develop a long-term financial plan in light of rising service costs, aging demographics, and the

potential for significant capital expenses related to school projects. Mike Slowinski suggested the Board explore expanded engagement with the Franklin County Sheriff's Department for policing services, referencing their existing work in other communities.

Update Charlemont Road Small Bridge Program and Community Culvert Program DOT Grants

Diana reported that, following the Town's concerns about designer BSC's capacity, the Massachusetts DOT held a meeting with BSC and confirmed that both the Charlemont Road Small Bridge and the community culvert project will be designed and constructed within 18 months. DOT indicated that funding through an existing program may also cover construction costs, relieving pressure on the Town's own grant reserves. Diana noted that a written timeline for the Adamsville Road bridge project remains outstanding and that she will continue to pursue it.

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

Update from Joint Meeting of Town Officials on 8/19 re: Franklin County Technical School

The Board provided an update following the joint meeting of town officials held on August 19 regarding the Franklin County Technical School project. Select Board Member Eastman summarized that the Town faces a choice between funding a new school or paying for an estimated \$100 million renovation of the existing facility, either of which represents a significant financial obligation. The current building's Federal Pacific electrical panels — which are a known fire hazard and uninsurable in residential applications — were cited as a major driver of capital need, with electrical replacement alone estimated at \$50 million. Select Board Member Thurber noted that any ballot question on the project may lack sufficient public understanding of the financial implications, including debt exclusions and overrides, and recommended that the Board host an informational public meeting. Joe Slowinski raised the concern that declining Mohawk Trail Regional School enrollment due to school choice and homeschooling should factor into any comprehensive education cost discussion.

Update from COA Meeting on 8/24, Service Incentive Grant Awarded

Chair Korby reported that the Council on Aging voted to reject a \$20,000 Service Incentive Grant at its meeting on August 24, which would have required a \$4,000 Town match and was intended to fund congregate meals, food insecurity initiatives, and expanded senior services in partnership with LifePath and Colrain Food for All. Reasons cited by COA members included objections to using appropriated funds as the match, dissatisfaction with congregate meal quality, uncertainty about volunteer capacity, and characterization of voting for the grant as "crazy."

Diana read a letter from a current COA member regarding the meeting, which highlighted these concerns. Select Board Member Thurber expressed significant frustration, noting that the grant would have provided approximately \$17 in savings per meal per person and that Diana had invested considerable time in the application at the prior chair's request. Diana confirmed that the grant will lapse if unspent and that she intends to notify the Executive Office of Aging and Independence and the Massachusetts COA Association of the situation.

Requests for Future Agenda Items

Address Fire Alarm Control Panel at Colrain Central School, 9/8/26

Request from Owners for Meeting re: 230 Greenfield Road

A meeting has been requested by the proposed buyer of 270 Greenfield Road (noted as a correction to the agenda, which listed 230 Greenfield Road) to discuss a proposed project. Details were not available at this meeting.

MTRSD Request for Meeting re: Update 2D8T, 9/22/26

Joint Meeting with Finance Committee, Date TBD

The Board agreed that a joint meeting with the Finance Committee should be scheduled in September or October to discuss the upcoming FY28 budget challenges and resource sharing implications.

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

Reminder – Invitation to First Day at Colrain Central School, 9/2/26, 8:30 am-10 am

Chair Korby noted the invitation for Select Board Members to attend the first day of school at Colrain Central School on September 2, 2026, from 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM.

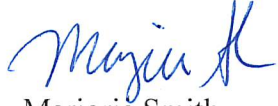
Adjourn Meeting

Chair Korby moved to adjourn the meeting. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 PM.

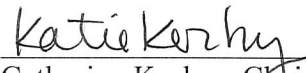
These minutes were created using ClerkMinutes, an AI-powered platform that transcribes meetings, identifies speakers, and generates professional minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

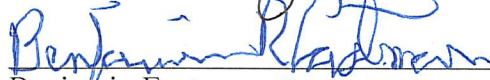


Marjorie Smith
Executive Assistant

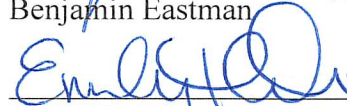
Accepted by the Select Board on 10/13/2020



Catherine Korby - Chair



Benjamin Eastman



Emily Thurber

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

Police Department Updates

Informed Response Program Documentation

Confidentiality Policy for Informed Response

Email from Amy Herzig, Chair of Council on Aging, to Select Board Members dated 8/19/2026 re: Mike Slowinski COA Appointment

Email from Adam Frank, Executive Office of Aging & Independence, to Amy Herzig, COA Chair, dated 8/13/2026 re: Formula Grant Assistance and Question Regarding Council on Aging Membership

Board and Committee Interest Form from Drew Houser re: Cultural Council Appointment

Letter of Interest from Tesia Elani dated 8/14/2026 re: Cultural Council Appointment

Letter of Interest from Ben Eastman dated 8/25/2026 re: Zoning Board of Appeals Appointment

Resignation Letter from Susan Slowinski dated 8/14/2026 re: COA Resignation

MGL c. 268A s. 23(b)(3) Disclosure from John Yannis

Email Correspondence between Diana Parsons, Colrain Town Administrator, and Mia Francesconi, Heath Town Coordinator, dated 4/2/2026 - 8/5/2026 re: Former Police Cruiser

Procom Services Estimate dated 4/6/2026 re: Former Police Cruiser

Draft Intermunicipal Agreement between the Town of Colrain and Town of Heath for Shared Equipment and Vehicle Use

Disclosure Letter from Marjorie Smith to Select Board re: Multiple Positions

Draft Trench Permit Application

Release of Option to Purchase of 66 Reils Lane Colrain, MA

Municipal Lien Certificate dated 7/21/2026 re: 66 Reils Lane, Colrain

Purchase and Sale Agreement re: 66 Reils Lane, Colrain

Department Head Performance Appraisal and Town Administrator Goals and Objectives

Correspondence between Diana Parsons, Town Administrator, John Tynan, Transfer Station Employee, and Jan Ameen, Franklin County Solid Waste Management District, re: Trailers and DEP Guidance

Franklin County Technical School MSBA Building Project Presentation

Letter to Select Board from John Yannis dated 8/25/2026 re: 8/24/2026 COA Meeting

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which are arranged in two columns. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are written in a more formal, printed style. The list appears to be a directory or a roster of some kind.

2. The second part of the document is a series of short, handwritten notes or entries. These are written in a cursive script and are arranged in a single column. They appear to be a continuation of the list or a separate set of notes related to the first part.

3. The third part of the document is a series of short, handwritten notes or entries. These are written in a cursive script and are arranged in a single column. They appear to be a continuation of the list or a separate set of notes related to the first part.

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