

Town of Colrain
Select Board/MLP Board Meeting
Colrain Highway Garage
9 Jacksonville Road
4:30 PM

MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD
September 22, 2026

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

Absent: None

Others Present: Sheryl Stanton (Mohawk Trail & Hawlemont Regional School Districts, Superintendent); Martha Thurber (Mohawk Trail Regional School Committee, Chair); Ben Minifie, Deb Menard, Cody Cardaropoli, David Swiderski, Tony Sprelonga (Finance Committee Members); David Greenberg; Justin Korby; Jane Johnson; Melissa Shepherd; Mike Slowinski; Colleen Worden; Laurie Francis; Joe Slowinski; John Yannis; Nate Smith; Matt Shearer; Brian Scranton; Nick Anzuoni (Fire Chief); David Schwartz (Developer/Buyer, 270 Greenfield Road); Gabriela Della Croce (Valley Community Land Trust); Cynthia Lively (remote); Michael Miller (remote); Johnny Depin – Greenfield Recorder (remote); Brady Shearer (remote); 3 unnamed remote participants; Marjorie Smith (Executive Assistant); Diana Parsons (Town Administrator)

Call to Order

Chair Catherine Korby called the Select Board meeting to order at 4:30 PM. All three Board members were present, and the meeting was being recorded. Chair Korby noted a recent change to the public comment policy and read the updated public comment statement into the record.

Joint Meeting With Finance Committee

Mohawk Trail Regional School District Update 2D8T

Superintendent Sheryl Stanton and School Committee Chair Martha Thurber presented an update on the 2 Districts, 8 Towns (2D8T) consolidation initiative. The district entered MSBA eligibility in July 2026, has formed a building committee, and is targeting a feasibility study vote in January or February 2027, with a deadline of March 2027. Estimated feasibility costs range from \$630,000 to over \$1,000,000, with MSBA reimbursing 63.5% of eligible costs. A single pre-K–12 campus at Mohawk Trail remains the model under study, with an anticipated new district launch of July 2030. The Board was encouraged to begin local discussions about potential reuse of the Colrain Central School building should consolidation move forward.

Discussion of Franklin County Tech School Vote for School Renovation

Town Administrator Diana Parsons summarized the upcoming October 6th vote on the Franklin County Technical School renovation project. Colrain polling hours are 12:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The estimated annual debt exclusion impact to the average Colrain taxpayer would be between \$200–\$300. Select Board Member Eastman noted that if renovation is not approved, member towns would still be responsible for approximately \$100,000,000 in repair costs with no reimbursement financing available.

Discussion of West County EMS Regionalization

Administrator Parsons briefed the Finance Committee and Board on ongoing West County EMS regionalization discussions. A proposed assessment model of 50% calls and 50% population has been tentatively agreed upon, with Colrain's estimated annual share of approximately \$180,000. The Board was advised that the current ambulance service may not be sustainable as structured, and that the question of alternative service delivery must be considered if regionalization does not proceed.

FY28 Budget Development

Administrator Parsons cautioned that FY27's budget was trimmed to the point where there is minimal flexibility going into FY28. With the potential for a school assessment increase of \$200,000 or more, town services could face cuts or an override would be required—the last successful override in Colrain having occurred in 1991. She expressed intent to begin budget development discussions in October and invited Finance Committee engagement earlier in the process than prior years.

Update re: Fire Alarm Panel at Colrain Central School, Readdress Surplus Police Cruiser as Shared Fire Chief Vehicle

Fire Chief Nick Anzuoni reported that the fire alarm panel at Colrain Central School requires full replacement, as parts for the existing system are no longer reliably available and do not meet code when sourced from unauthorized vendors. The Fire Marshal confirmed there is no flexibility on this requirement, and a fire watch must be maintained during the replacement, which is scheduled for two days. Chief Anzuoni stated he would coordinate coverage and indicated the School would assess the Town for its share of the replacement cost.

Regarding the surplus police cruiser, Chief Anzuoni provided vehicle usage data showing the cruiser responds to approximately 59–65 calls per year. Administrator Parsons noted that the cruiser is sitting unused and that Highway Superintendent Nate Gilbert has expressed no strong objection to continuing with repairs and maintenance on a shared vehicle with Heath. The Board requested additional time to consider the matter and indicated a decision would be made at the next meeting.

Request from Buyers/Developers for Meeting re: 270 Greenfield Road Development

David Schwartz and Gabriela Della Croce introduced themselves and their project to the Board. The Valley Community Land Trust is under contract to acquire the 163-acre Shearer Farm next to Pine Hill Orchards property, with transfer anticipated in February 2027. Plans include farm operations (commercial agroforestry, perennial plant nursery, and a nature-based educational program), with a long-term vision for a small cluster of 5 housing units near the existing farmhouse and additional housing in the field on Jurek Rd. Ninety-nine of the 163 acres are already in Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) and no APR land would be affected. The developers confirmed that residents on Land Trust land pay regular property taxes and that the existing flag lighting arrangement at the property would be maintained.

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

Discussion & Response re: Lilacs on Town Common/Veterans Memorial

Select Board Member Thurber apologized for not speaking to the item at the next meeting and reported on her investigation into the cutting of lilacs near the Veterans Memorial steps on the Town Common. She stated that she inspected the area after the issue was raised, observed that the lilac cuttings appeared

fresher than other plant debris nearby, and confirmed with the pollinators group that they had not cut the lilacs. She also spoke with Matt Gilbert, who cares for the Veterans Memorial and Town Common, and he likewise denied cutting them. The origin of the cutting remains unknown.

Mike Slowinski reviewed the area around the Veterans Memorial steps, stating the lilacs had been intentionally left and replanted to screen the steps and discourage use of that area. He said prior invasive removal exposed the steps, the lilacs later regrew to about three feet, and were then cut again. He expressed concern that the removals may be intentional.

Possible next steps were discussed, including replanting the lilacs, coordinating with the pollinators group, and using temporary markers to help identify and protect the plantings. Board members also noted that lilacs are hardy and may regrow on their own.

Joe Slowinski - Town Counsel Opinion

Joe Slowinski expressed frustration that a prior request for a Town Counsel opinion on a Council on Aging matter had not been shared with them in advance of the meeting and characterized the Town's handling of the issue as placing barriers on constituent oversight. Chair Korby acknowledged the comment.

Consent Items

Approve Meeting Minutes 6/30, 7/7 and 8/11

Approve Warrant AP2710 FY27 in the amount of \$13,303.04

Approve Warrant AP2711 FY27 in the amount of \$711,007.43

Approve Warrant PR2705 FY27 in the amount of \$25,798.74

Approve Warrant AP2712 FY27 in the amount of \$32,101.78

Chair Korby moved to approve the meeting minutes of June 30, 2026, July 7, 2026, and August 11, 2026. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Chair Korby moved to approve Warrants AP2710 FY27, AP2711 FY27, PR2705 FY27, and AP2712 FY27 as presented. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Appointments and Resignations

Readdress Michael Slowinski's Appointment to COA

Chair Korby stated that the Board was generally still on a holding pattern regarding new appointments and specifically said she did not intend to appoint Michael Slowinski to the Council on Aging, while inviting the other Board members to make a motion if they wished.

Select Board Member Eastman moved to appoint Mike Slowinski to the Council on Aging. No second. **Motion did not pass.**

New Business

Open Special Town Meeting Warrant for Tuesday, October 20, 2026; Review Draft Warrant Articles

Diana Parsons presented a draft warrant for the October 20, 2026 Special Town Meeting containing four articles: demolition of 101 Heath Road (\$18,000); replacement of the Colrain Central School fire alarm panel (\$11,692); weatherization of Colrain Central School using Green Communities funds with a Town match of approximately \$8,700; and a potential article for the MCOA Service Incentive Grant (\$4,000, noted as likely unnecessary). The Board discussed removing the SIG grant article and scheduling a brief follow-up meeting to finalize the warrant.

Chair Korby moved to open the Special Town Meeting Warrant as presented, opening September 22, 2026 and closing October 1, 2026. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Request from Colrain Fire Association Date and Location of Semi-Annual Boot Drive

Chair Korby moved to approve the Colrain Fire Association's semi-annual boot drive on October 18, 2026, or October 25, 2026 as a rain date, in front of Colrain Central School from 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Old Business

Ratify Votes from 9/8/26 Select Board Meeting

The Administrator explained that a posting error had resulted in the September 8, 2026 meeting agenda appearing under the incorrect date on the Town calendar. As a precautionary measure, the Board ratified all votes taken at that meeting.

Chair Korby moved to ratify all Select Board votes from the September 8, 2026 Select Board meeting. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Massachusetts Councils on Aging (MCOA) Service Incentive Grant (SIG)

The Board accepted the MCOA Service Incentive Grant and delegated authority to expend to Town Administrator Diana. Town Counsel confirmed the Town has authority to accept and administer the grant, and MCOA will update the grant agreement to name the Town of Colrain as recipient. The Administrator indicated that the engagement coordinator line item in the grant budget would likely not be utilized given the timeline, and that she would manage implementation in-house.

Chair Korby moved to accept the MCOA Service Incentive Grant. Select Board Member Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Chair Korby moved that Diana is the delegate authority to extend this service grant. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

COA Disclosures; Review Opinion from Town Counsel

Town Counsel's opinion was reviewed, finding that Council on Aging members who receive preferential access to limited-seat congregate meals may be required to file conflict of interest disclosures, and that even with disclosures filed, reserving seats ahead of the general public could constitute a violation of the conflict of interest law. The Board discussed transitioning to a lottery or first-come, first-served sign-up

process open to all residents before Board members register. Diana agreed to forward the Counsel opinion to the COA ahead of their next meeting and indicated she would follow up directly.

Town Administrator FY26 Review as Compiled

The Board acknowledged receipt of the compiled FY26 Town Administrator performance review. Individual Board member comments were noted as substantially aligned. No further action was taken.

Review FY27 Goals & Objectives

The Board briefly reviewed FY27 Goals and Objectives. The Administrator noted that long-term financial planning remains a priority focus area for the coming year.

Administrator Updates

None

Requests for Future Agenda Items

The Board discussed scheduling a brief follow-up meeting to finalize the Special Town Meeting warrant. After reviewing availability, the Board agreed to meet on Wednesday, September 30, 2026, at the usual meeting time.

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

Annual Opening of the Colrain Wood Bank

Laurie Francis reported that the Colrain Wood Bank will open on October 3, 2026. Several cord donations have been received and additional lumber has been offered by DCR to repair the wood storage structures. The Wood Bank is in good supply heading into the season.

Eversource Providing Essential Services to Massachusetts in 2026

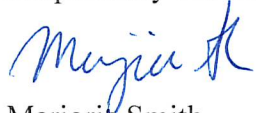
No discussion

Adjourn Meeting

Chair Korby moved to adjourn. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**
The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 PM.

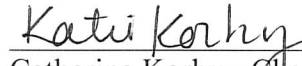
These minutes were created using ClerkMinutes, an AI-powered platform that transcribes meetings, identifies speakers, and generates professional minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

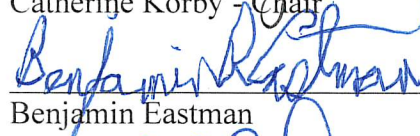


Marjorie Smith
Executive Assistant

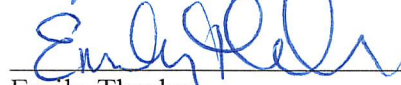
Accepted by the Select Board on 10/13/2024



Catherine Korby - Chair



Benjamin Eastman



Emily Thurber

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

2Districts8Towns Select Board Update Presentation

Franklin County Technical School District Town Debt Service Projections

Public Forum for Town Administrators Presentation re: Proposed FCTS Building Project

FCTS MSBA Building Project 10/6/2026 Vote Q&A

FCTS All Twon Comparisons and School Cost Comparisons dated 8/17/2026

West County EMS Planning Meeting Summary dated 8/19/2026

West County EMS Discussion Agenda for 9/16/2026

Draft Intermunicipal Agreement for Advance and Basic Life Support Services

Draft Regional EMA Department Annual Operational Budget

MTRSD, Sanderson and Middle/High School Capital Projects FY2027

Colrain Fire Dept 2025 Apparatus Run Summary

Colrain Fire Dept 2024 Apparatus Run Summary

Draft Select Board Minutes 6/30/2026

Draft Select Board Minutes 7/7/2026

Draft Select Board Minutes 8/11/2026

Draft Special Town Meeting Warrant 10/20/2026

Larocque Architecture & Planning PC Proposal for Accessibility Grant Preparation dated 6/4/2026

Associated Building Wreckers, Inc. Bid dated 9/18/2026 re: 101 Heath Rd

Email from Malik Arif, CET Online, to Diana Parsons dated 9/14/2026 re: CCS Weatherization Project

Colrain Firefighters' Association Inc. Boot Drive Request dated 9/10/2026

9/8/2026 Select Board Meeting Votes

Town Counsel Opinion dated 9/21/2026 re: SIG Grant Acceptance and Administration of Program and Conflict of Interest Law

MCOA Direct Grant Agreement (FY2027)

Compiled Performance Appraisal for Diana Parsons, Town Administrator, dated 9/22/2026

Department Head Performance Appraisal of Diana Parsons, Town Administrator, by Emily Thurber, Select Board Member dated 9/2/2026

Department Head Performance Appraisal of Diana Parsons, Town Administrator, by Ben Eastman, Select Board Member dated 9/7/2026

Department Head Performance Appraisal of Diana Parsons, Town Administrator, by Katie Korby, Select Board Chair dated 9/7/2026

Email from Michael Kane, Eversource, to Diana Parsons, Town Administrator, dated 9/18/2026 re:
Providing Essential Services to MA in 2026

Eversource Providing Essential Services to MA in 2026 Presentation