Town of Colrain
Select Board/MLP Board Meeting
Colrain Highway Garage
9 Jacksonville Road
MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD
October 13, 2026, 4:30 PM

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

Absent: None

Others Present: Diana Parsons (Town Administrator); Val Finkel (Library Director); Mike Slowinski (MLP Manager); John Yannis; Laurie Francis; Johnny Depin (Greenfield Recorder)

Call To Order

Chair Catherine Korby called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM with all three Select Board members present. The meeting was recorded.

Executive Session

At 4:30pm Chair Catherine Korby announced that the Board would enter Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(3), to discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. The Board planned to return to open session immediately afterward.

Chair Catherine Korby moved to enter Executive Session. Select Board Member Eastman seconded.

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

Consent Items

Approve Minutes Of 8/25, 9/8 And 9/22/26

Approve Warrant AP2714 FY27 In The Amount Of $17,187.03

Approve Warrant AP2715 FY27 In The Amount Of $22,246.18

Approve Warrant PR2706 FY27 In The Amount Of $25,514.71

Approve Warrant PR2707 FY27 In The Amount Of $49,678.15

Chair Catherine Korby moved to approve the minutes of 8/25, 9/8 and 9/22/26 as presented. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Chair Catherine Korby moved to approve Warrants AP2714, AP2715, PR2706 and PR2707 as presented. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Appointments And Resignations

None

New Business

Request Fee Increase For Conservation Commission Request For Determination Of Applicability, Increase From $75 To $115.

Town Administrator Parsons explained that legal advertising and publication costs for these applications generally run $100 to $135, so the current fee does not cover the Town's expense. The Board agreed that $115 would help close the gap.

> Select Board Member Thurber moved to increase the Conservation Commission Request for Determination of Applicability fee from $75 to $115. Chair Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Update re: Application of Verizon to Discontinue POTS Telephone Service in MA to FCC

Town Administrator Parsons reported that she had planned to bring a draft letter to the FCC but held off because the FCC comment period had not yet opened and Verizon may not discontinue the lines. Mike Slowinski (MLP Manager) noted significant public pushback, said a decision was months away, and recommended the Board stay tuned. Select Board Member Thurber noted that the Mass Lottery and some fire alarm systems rely on hard lines. Diana suggested surveying residents to learn how many still depend on landlines. No action was taken.

Presentation & Request For Feedback re: Griswold Memorial Library Strategic Plan In Development; Update on Library Feasibility Study & Next Steps, Val Finkel, Library Director

Library Director Val Finkel presented the draft Strategic Plan, including its mission, vision, values and priorities. The plan adds a new priority for the Library to serve as an emergency resource center for the Town. Board members praised the Library's outreach and programming, and Val reported that workshop attendance was uneven and that book delivery is available on request. Val also presented the feasibility study site plan, which prioritizes storm-water drainage, a redesigned accessible ramp and expanded parking from 6 to 11 spaces, with trails and other features as lower priorities.

Mike Slowinski raised the building's knob-and-tube wiring. Val said they would add it to their list and noted that project costs must stay under 35% of the building's replacement value to avoid triggering Architectural Access Board requirements, or a variance would be needed. Diana recommended exploring Woodlands Partnership Grant funding for the trail concept. Next steps are to obtain pricing and make recommendations to the Trustees.

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

Mike Slowinski

- Mike Slowinski reported that a fallen tree on Shattuckville Road took down lines on Saturday. Eversource and the Broadband restored service by 2:00 PM, and about 10 to 12 Broadband subscribers were affected.
- Mike also stated that he had initiated a formal discrimination claim alleging that the Board did not apply the same criteria in appointments to Town Boards and Committees.

Old Business

Review And Approve Memorandum Of Understanding Between The Franklin County Sheriff's Office And The Town Of Colrain For The Behavioral Health Community Response Services Known As RIDGE (Rural Intervention, Diversion, Guidance, Engagement)

Town Administrator Parsons explained that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) replaces the prior multi-town clinical response arrangement led by Ashfield. Shelburne and Colrain are participating and Heath is expected to join. The Board expressed support.

> Chair Korby moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Franklin County Sheriff's Office and the Town of Colrain and that we sign it. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Readdress Surplus Police Cruiser As Shared Fire Chief Vehicle

Chair Korby and Select Board Member Thurber supported the shared arrangement with Heath, citing the Town's roughly 10 years of use of Heath's vehicle and its lower cost compared to buying a vehicle. Select Board Member Eastman requested that the shared vehicle be used more often. Town Administrator Parsons will draft a Memorandum of Understanding for review by both towns and their shared counsel.

> Chair Korby moved to use the surplus police cruiser as the shared Fire Chief vehicle. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Review Motions And Explanations For Special Town Meeting On Tuesday, October 20, 2026; Discuss Other Meeting Logistics As Needed

Town Administrator Parsons reviewed draft motions with dollar amounts and funding sources, including $18,000 for demolition of the schoolhouse at 101 Heath Road, $11,693 for the fire alarm panel, $8,700 for Colrain Central School weatherization, $6,000 for Council on Aging meals, at least $3,000 for an asbestos survey at the property in litigation, $2,000 for permitting software, and $5,000 for IT cloud migration. Several articles require a two-thirds vote. Select Board Member Thurber expressed frustration with IT vendor response times. Diana will add the Green Communities and utility incentive figures and Finance Committee recommendations, and plans to post the motions online Thursday.

Administrator Updates

Franklin County Tech School Voting Results

Town Administrator Diana Parsons reported that the Franklin County Technical School project passed. FY28 debt service is projected at about $17,000, rising to roughly $150,000 the following year, and a debt exclusion may be discussed during the budget process. Colrain, Buckland, Shelburne and Greenfield voted against it. Diana also stated that the Town Clerk's election result timing concern had been resolved.

Test Borings Completed Behind Fire Station

Town Administrator Parsons reported that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) witnessed test borings at eight locations, with the material found mostly directly behind the fire station and 3 to 6 feet below the surface elsewhere. DEP will provide a GIS map, and Diana will prepare a list of desired projects, including the erosion mitigation project and a roof for the existing pole structure, for a future agenda.

Diana also reported on election space concerns: the school declined to move its in-service day, and the Town Hall basement can fit only three or four voting booths. Alternative locations are being explored.

Grant Award For Town Comprehensive Plan

Diana reported that the Town was awarded $105,000 for a Comprehensive Plan, with a contracting meeting scheduled next week. She plans to issue a Request for Proposals and form a planning committee for the two-year process. The Board agreed with this approach.

Submitted Grant Application To MIIA Risk Management For Body-Worn Cameras For The Police Department

Diana reported that the application requests two body-worn cameras, funded by MIIA for a five-year subscription, with a policy adopted per POST recommendations. She cited officer safety and protection from litigation as the reasons.

Submitted Expression Of Interest For Eco OneStop Grant For Construction Funding re: Lower Dam Removal Project

Diana reported that the Town has design funding for the Lower Dam project and submitted an expression of interest for construction funding to improve the application's competitiveness. She added that the erosion mitigation application behind the salt shed was found competitive but unfunded, so no expression of interest was needed.

Update On Legislative Acts re: Fire Chief And Deputy Chief

Diana reported that after the bill sat for about three months, she contacted Senator Paul Mark's office and Representative Susannah Whipps' office. She mailed a hard copy of the clarifying letter with the Town Clerk's seal last Thursday. If the bill is not enacted by the end of the year, the process must begin again.

Other Updates

Diana reported on a scoping meeting with DOT for the Charlemont Road bridge project, in which the parties are working to avoid a new hydraulic report. A follow-up meeting is expected in about a month. She also reported that the Town will proceed with a conservation restriction on the open space at Stowe Farm, which was never recorded, while coordinating with DOT on possible easements for the FY28 TIP bridge project on Adamsville Road over Vincent Brook. Diana also reported on election space concerns: the school declined to move its in-service day, and the Town Hall basement can fit only three or four voting booths. Alternative locations are being explored.

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

Event Invitation For Stone Mountain Land Conservation

Diana shared the invitation to an upcoming event celebrating land conservation in Heath and Colrain, and Board members were encouraged to attend.

2Districts8Towns: A Shared Educational Vision For The Future Of MTRSD And HRSD

Diana distributed informational materials on educational visioning from the steering committee.

Requests For Future Agenda Items

Diana requested that the Board's first November meeting will include a draft FY28 budget outline covering free cash, local receipts and revenue, and cost-of-living assumptions. Department budgets are due December 15, which will give the new Finance Committee time to review them. The Board agreed.

Adjourn Meeting

Chair Korby moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:23 PM. Select Board Member Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

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 11/10/2026

Catherine Korby - Chair

Benjamin Eastman

Emily Thurber

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

Letter from Hawley Select Board to Federal Communications Commission re: Discontinuance of Copper Land Lines

Memorandum of Understanding between the Franklin County Sheriff's Office and the Town of Colrain for Behavioral Health Community Response Services Known as RIDGE (Rural Intervention, Diversion, Guidance, Engagement)

10/20/2026 Special Town Meeting Warrant with Motions

Rural Development Fund Grant Award Letter dated 9/30/2026

FY27 MIIA Automated Risk Management Grant Application for Police Department Body Cameras

Correspondence between Susannah Whipps, Senator Paul Mark's Office and Diana Parsons dated 10/7/2026 re: Bills H. 4846 & H. 4848

Partnership to Conserve the Stone Mountain Landscape Flyer Event

2Districts8Towns A Shared Educational Vision for the Future of MTRSD and HRSD Presentation dated 9/28/2026