

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

**MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD
May 9, 2023**

Present: Benjamin Eastman, Chair; W. Thomas Griffin; Emily Thurber

Others Present: Pat Geary, Colrain Sewer District Chair; Sheryl Stanton, MTRSD Superintendent; John Chivers, MTRSD School Committee; Kate Barrows, MTRSD School Committee; Doug MacLeay, Finance Committee Chair; Bella Levavi, Greenfield Recorder; Deb Menard; Betty Ringwood; Jane Johnson; Kathy Phelps; Howard Phelps; Roger Williams; Cole Whitaker; Mikaela, Whitaker; Jade Mortimer; Karen Lovett; Dan Emerson; Patience Lowe; Marjorie Smith, Administrative Assistant; Kevin Fox, Town Administrator

Vice Chair Thom Griffin called the meeting to order at 4:32 pm.

Appointments: Pat Geary – Colrain Sewer District – Request for Town Assistance with Short-Term Feasibility Study

Pat Geary spoke on behalf of the Colrain Sewer District with an update on the sewer situation as Barnhardt is closing on 9/1/2023. On 2/9/2023 a meeting was held to reestablish the Sewer District and elect commissioners, which holds board meetings every two weeks, and began collecting \$25/month from each household. The Sewer District board will look to increase the fee at their annual meeting, which is scheduled for the end of the month. Pat also has weekly meetings with different organizations regarding the issue, particularly RCAP Solutions, Resources for Communities and People, which specializes in waste management. RCAP is providing 100 hours of assistance at no cost to the District and is upping that to 200 hours. He has also spoken with State Representative Natalie Blais and Senator Paul Mark, regarding the sewer situation. Pat is asking for the Town's cooperation and working together to help solve the issue. The question was asked about Barnhardt's existing system. Pat answered that the system is too large and not a feasible option.

New Business: Select Board Re-Organization

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to elect himself, Ben Eastman, as Chair of the Select Board. Emily Thurber seconded. Ben Eastman abstained. **Approved.**

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to elect Thom Griffin as Vice-Chair of the Select Board. Emily Thurber seconded. Thom Griffin abstained. **Approved.**

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to elect Emily Thurber as Clerk of the Select Board. Ben Eastman seconded. Emily Thurber abstained. **Approved.**

Declaration of Surplus Property – 2001 John Deere Backhoe

Thom Griffin asked if approval to declare the old backhoe as surplus needs to wait until the new backhoe is registered. Kevin Fox answered that the new backhoe is registered, he submitted the insurance paperwork, and the auctioneer has taken pictures. All that needs to be done is declare the old one as surplus so the auctioneer can start the online auction.

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to declare the 2001 John Deere Backhoe as surplus property. Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Approve/Sign FY2024 Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Kevin Fox prepared two versions of the warrant, one with the MTRSD Regional Agreement Amendment Article and one without, per the request of the Select Board. Thom Griffin asked for comments from the School Committee members. John Chivers commented the Amendment to the current Agreement is essential for the future of the district. Kate Barrows commented that the current Agreement was created prior to school choice and doesn't line up with district goals, one of which is financial stability. Towns with more school choice students leaving the district pay less, therefore is a disincentive to keep kids in the district. The new Agreement makes more sense to keep kids in the district, and Kate recommends putting the Agreement Amendment on the warrant. Sheryl Stanton reiterated that the proposed changes would be implemented over a rolling five years so to lessen the initial financial impact to the towns. She also went to the State House earlier this month advocating for rural school aid from the state government. Both the House and the Senate have proposed increases in rural school aid for the next fiscal year.

Thom Griffin suggested that two short paragraphs, written in simple terms to explain the changes between the current and proposed Regional Agreements, be written for the townspeople, should the Board move to put the Article on the warrant.

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to put the MTRSD Regional Agreement Amendment Article on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously. The FY2024 Annual Town Meeting Warrant was signed by all members of the Select Board.**

Unanticipated: Approve Selectboard Meeting Minutes – 4/25/2023

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to approve the minutes of the Select Board of 4/25/2023.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Thom Griffin stated that at the bottom of Hillman Road there is a very large tree leaning over the road and is rotting. Kevin Fox will speak to the Highway Superintendent.

Ben Eastman thanked Jade Mortimer and Jane Johnson for their work cleaning up the Chandler Hill Cemetery.

Town Administrator Updates: None

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to dissolve the meeting at 5:26 pm.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie Smith
Administrative Assistant

Accepted by the Select Board

Benjamin Eastman, Chair

W. Thomas Griffin

Emily Thurber

Documents:

Select Board Meeting Notes

Email from Pat Geary dated 4/26/2023 re: Colrain Sewer District and Short-Term Feasibility Study

Copy of the title to the 2001 John Deere Backhoe

Draft #1 of Annual Town Meeting Warrant including the MTRSD Regional Agreement Amendment Article

Draft #2 of Annual Town Meeting Warrant excluding the MTRSD Regional Agreement Amendment Article