

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

**MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD
July 25, 2023**

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

Others Present: Tom Scanlon, Scanlon Associates; Mike Slowinski, MLP Manager; Ellen Weeks, Personnel Committee; Paula Harrison, Treasurer/Collector; Michael Shuipis, Finance Committee; Jane Johnson; Kathy Phelps; Valeda Peters; Howard Phelps; Lynn DiTullio; Joe Kurland; Martha Richardson; Marjorie Smith, Administrative Assistant; Kevin Fox, Town Administrator

Chair, Ben Eastman called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

Appointments: Tom Scanlon, Scanlon Associates – Results of FY2022 Independent Audit

Tom Scanlon presented the results of the FY2022 Independent Audit. He stated the Town is in a solid financial position and to keep doing what we're doing. A fraud audit was done and pertained mainly to the Treasurer/Collector office ensuring controls are in place. The three comments were putting a broadband receivable on the general ledger, cash reconciliation, and the excess of \$30,000 in Highway Chapter 90 funds. Kevin explained the excess was from the new garage project and the State reimbursed too much and wouldn't reverse it. He will look into transferring the funds to free cash.

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to accept the report of Scanlon Associates regarding the Town audit. Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Mike Slowinski, MLP Manager – Broadband Update

Mike updated the Board regarding the status of broadband. There was very little storm damage with the recent rain, however, many people are re-grading driveways without contacting dig-safe and wires are being damaged. There are between 640-650 active subscribers and over 75% of residences have had a hook-up at one time; 70% is self-sustaining. There are two large payments coming up (\$180,000 and \$35,000) with plenty in the enterprise fund to make them.

RRR update: we are being fed by a primary 10G line from Leyden, secondary 10G line from Rowe and a third 10G line from LocalLinx.

Paula informed the Board about investing the broadband funds. The Town can invest the Certified Retained Earnings and looking at all the numbers and after speaking with the financial advisor she is going to invest approximately \$200,000 of the broadband funds. The funds need to remain liquid and was advised to invest in US Treasury Bonds. She will look at doing three-, six- and nine-month bonds. Michael Shuipis commented that our broadband is brand new and eventually we will need to make repairs and upgrades, which could potentially cost a lot of money. The money that Paula will be investing will be needed someday.

New Business: Request to Appoint Larry Richmond to the Conservation Commission

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to appoint Larry Richmond to the Conservation Commission to end 6/30/2027.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Old Business: Second Review of Updated Personnel Policies and Procedures

Thom Griffin asked for clarification on the political activity policy specifically regarding gathering signatures on town property. Kevin informed the Board that the Collins Center at UMass will come in the fall to do a training on the revised policies.

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to accept the latest version of the Personnel Policies and Procedures.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Unanticipated: Michael Shuipis – Transfer Station Fee Update

Michael informed the Board that the fee for the compost machines that are for sale did not get updated on the fee schedule.

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to amend the cost of the black barrel composters from \$45 to \$25 on the fee schedule.

Thom Griffin seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Michael Shuipis – Town Administrator Replacement

Michael expressed his concern regarding the replacement of Kevin, when he retires, and that it is not too early to reestablish the search committee or form a new one. Also, at least one of the members should be a Select Board member. Thom suggested discussing establishing a committee at the next meeting. Kevin stated that at least one member of the Personnel Committee should be on the search committee, as well as an employee in a management position. Further, the Board should start by looking at the job description and make sure it is in line with what they want that position to do. Ben suggested that Paula be on the committee, as she works closely with the current Town Administrator.

Transfer Station Hours

Ben Eastman spoke with the transfer station attendants regarding what the regular users of the transfer station want to see there. Most people want to see more hours. Ben asked Michael Shuipis if he would be willing to survey people about this, however, Michael is only a representative to the Solid Waste District and has no authority to do so. Kevin suggested talking to Steve Daby, as he oversees the Transfer Station. Paula commented that when the hours switch to being open both Saturday and Tuesday evening, the total revenue doesn't change versus only being open on Saturday. Michael also informed the Board that the Transfer Station is currently understaffed and that will need to be addressed soon.

Approve Select Board Meeting Minutes – 4/12/2022

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to accept the minutes of the Select Board for 4/12/2022 as submitted.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Approve Select Board Meeting Minutes – 3/10/2022

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to approve the minutes of the Select Board for 3/10/2022 as submitted.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Approve Select Board Meeting Minutes – 3/10/2022 (Executive Session)

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to approve the minutes of the Executive Session for 3/10/2022 as submitted.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Approve Select Board Meeting Minutes – 5/25/2021

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to approve the minutes of the Select Board for 5/25/2021 as submitted.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Approve Select Board Meeting Minutes – 4/20/2021

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to approve the minutes of the Select Board meeting for 4/20/2021.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Approve Select Board Meeting Minutes – 7/11/2023

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to approve the minutes of the Select Board for 7/11/2023.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Approve Select Board Meeting Minutes – 6/27/2023

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to approve the minutes of the Select Board for 6/27/2023.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Martha Richardson – Letter to the Select Board

Martha Richardson read a letter to the Select Board regarding a complaint against the Town Clerk, Town Administrator, and lack of cross-training among the office staff. Kevin explained to Martha that the Town Clerk is an elected position, and he has no authority over that position. Kevin explained further that there are certain tasks that only the Town Clerk can do for legally and other reasons, and the Town Clerk has the ability to appoint an Assistant Town Clerk.

Town Administrator Updates:

New Tractor and Mower

The tractor and mower has been ordered and the pricing came in at \$159,000, which was below what was apportioned for.

Greenfield Rd Project Update

Paving on Greenfield Rd is going to start on Thursday (7/27), weather permitting, and a notice is on the website.

Fire District – Dam Removal Grant

Kevin was approached by the Fire District, which serves as the water district, regarding an opportunity to work with a non-profit organization that is researching a grant to provide funding for preliminary design studies for dam removal, however, only the municipality can apply for the grant. There is no risk to the municipality because there is no obligation to do anything after the engineering firm completes the study. Kevin is recommending the Board authorize him to sign on the Board's behalf to submit the application.

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to approve Kevin Fox as signatory on the DOER program regarding the dam removal preliminary design study.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Millings

Kevin proposed giving some of the millings to the Town of Conway as they need materials, and Conway would truck them. Should the Board agree, Kevin will talk to Steve Daby regarding Colrain's needs and how much could go to Conway, then Steve can contact Conway.

MOVED: Thom Griffin moved to authorize Steve Daby to get in contact with the Town of Conway to see if they have an interest in excess millings from the Greenfield Rd project.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Highway Operator/Laborer Position Update

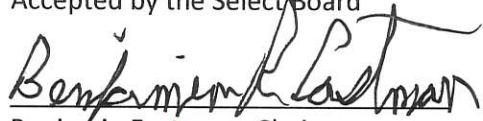
Kevin would like the Board to consider reducing the requirements for the Highway Operator/Laborer Position as there have been no qualified applicants and then readvertising. The Board advised that Kevin revise the advertisement and bring it to the next meeting.

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to dissolve the meeting at 6:28pm.
Thom Griffin seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

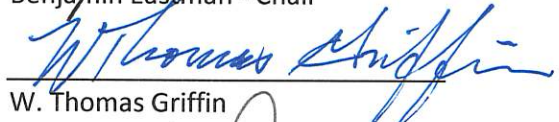
Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie Smith
Administrative Assistant

Accepted by the Select Board



Benjamin Eastman - Chair



W. Thomas Griffin



Emily Thurber

Documents:

Select Board Meeting Notes

Report on the Examination of Basic Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2022 by Scanlon Associates

Email from Emily Thurber dated 7/13/2023 re: Larry Richmond appointment to Conservation Commission

Personnel Policies and Procedures Revised 2023