

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

**MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD
February 11, 2025**

Present Emily Thurber, Chair; Benjamin Eastman; Katie Korby

Others Present: Michael Anthony, Eversource; Travis Walsh, Eversource; Jane Johnson; Jade Mortimer; Greg Walker; Brenda Sturmer; Pat Geary; Linda Walker; Mike Slowinski, MLP Manager; Dave Lewandowski; Abby Gilbert; Madison Schofield, Greenfield Recorder; Marjorie Smith, Administrative Assistant; Diana Parsons, Town Administrator

Chair Emily Thurber called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

Public Hearing – Joint Petition for Pole Locations

Hearing for Drawing #18542330

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to open the hearing to request permission to locate a line of poles, wires, cable and fixtures, including the necessary sustaining and protecting fixtures along and across the following public way of Shelburne Line Rd and W Leyden Rd.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously**

Dave Lewandowski, 127 West Leyden Rd, requested the pole be moved to the other side of the road, which he spoke with Nate Gilbert about as well. Diana Parsons explained that Nate went out and looked at the location and wanted it moved as well for snow removal purposes.

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to close the hearing on request permission to locate a line of poles, wires, cable and fixtures, including the necessary sustaining and protecting fixtures along and across the following public way of Shelburne Line Rd and W Leyden Rd

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to approve the petition referencing Drawing #18542330.

Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Hearing for Plan #19230428

Emily Thurber moved to open the hearing to request permission to locate a line of poles, wires, cables and fixtures, including the necessary sustaining and protecting fixtures to be owned and used in common by your petitioners, along and across the following public way. Eversource is requesting to install 6 new jointly owned poles along E Colrain Rd. Eversource has targeted this road as an area needing improvement due to outage frequencies. Eversource will be upgrading all of the older poles, replacing our overhead primary that does not have a protective coating. Along with installing new poles and wire, we will convert the system voltage in this area due to material shortage of transformers. To bring this road up to Eversource current standard 6 Jointly owned mid-span poles are required to shorten span length, increasing reliability. The first pole will be located 120' NE of existing jointly owned pole 24/6 M.

Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Michael Anthony, Eversource, explained they are requesting to add poles to shorten the spans on East Colrain Road before Nelson Road. Linda Walker, 56 East Colrain Rd, questioned the underground service and any further tree removal. Any underground service will be transferred to the new poles and there shouldn't be any tree removal.

Mike Slowinski, MLP Manager, questioned when the pole numbers will be available for licensing for the broadband. Eversource will get him the list.

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to close the hearing.
Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to approve the petition 19230428.
Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Hearing for Plan #80201870

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to open the pole hearing of Eversource and Verizon requesting permission to locate a line of poles, wires, cables and fixtures, including the necessary sustaining and protecting fixtures to be owned and used in common by your petitioners, along and across the following public way Eversource is to install 4 new 40ft mid-span poles on East Colrain Rd. These poles are required to accommodate a larger conductor, this work is part of a reliability upgrade from Shelburne Line Rd to Smead Hill Rd. New pole 24/B26M 137ft set southerly from existing pole 24/2 and other poles.
Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Travis Walsh, Eversource, explained these poles are from Nelson Rd to Smead Hill Rd. They need to shorten spans because of heavier equipment on the lines and poles. The wire being used is also being upgraded for better reliability.

Mike Slowinski, MLP Manager, questioned if new poles are being put in Shelburne. None in Shelburne are part of this project.

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to close the hearing.
Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to approve the petition for the new poles 80201870.
Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Consent Items:

Approve Minutes of January 14, 2025
Approve Minutes of January 28, 2025
Warrant AP2530 in the amount of \$427,726.32
Warrant AP2531 in the amount of \$43,953.89
Warrant PR2515 in the amount of \$35,140.78
Warrant AP2532 in the amount of \$37,781.14

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to approve the minutes of January 14, 2025, January 28, 2025, and the warrants as written.
Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Appointments and Resignations:

None

New Business:

Request for One-Day License (Beer/Wine), for Colrain Central School PTO for Paint & Sip Event

Abby Gilbert, Colrain Central PTO, gave a brief explanation of the event and what the funds will be used for. Discussion on serving alcohol on school property.

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to approve the one-day license for the paint and sip event at the Colrain Central School.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Colrain Broadband Budget Presentation & Misc. Updates, Michael Slowinski, MLP Manager

Mike Slowinski presented what happened with the slowdown and explained the upgrades happening to the Juniper switches in Leyden, Charlemont and Rowe.

Regarding the budget, Mike proposed lowering the costs by \$5/month to subscribers next fiscal year. Most charges/costs are fixed and locked in for 10 years. Discussion on the stripe fees and other items listed in MLP proposed budget. Overall, the proposed budget decreased from last fiscal year.

Further, Diana is working with the BEAD (Broadband Equity Access and Deployment) Program and trying to get broadband to North Green River Rd. Discussion on format of Broadband budget on the ATM warrant.

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to approve the Colrain Broadband budget.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Request for Colrain Firefighters' Association Boot Drive, Sunday, February 23, 2025, from 8 am-5:30 pm (Rain date: March 2, 2025) on Jacksonville Road in front of Colrain Central School

No discussion.

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to approve the Colrain Firefighters' Association boot drive set for Sunday February 23, 2025 from 8 am -5:30 pm with a rain date of March 2, 2025 with the same time frame.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Tri-State Fire Mutual Aid Agreement Renewal

Diana Parsons explained the agreement is an intermunicipal agreement and the potential of extending the term to longer than three years, however, after speaking with Town Counsel and lack of response from others, she put it forth to the Board for approval.

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to renew the 3-year mutual aid agreement as written.

Katie Korby seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Cyber Seniors/MBI Regional Digital Equity Grant Submission

Diana Parsons explained there is \$56,000 in digital equity money and after collaborating with other towns, decided to focus on senior cyber security with a regional grant of \$5,200.

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to approve the digital equity grant submission.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

FY26 Draft GL Budget Overview w/ Projected Revenues; Review of Capital Plan

Diana Parsons summarized that she hasn't received the figures from the schools and would be premature to show the budget without those. She has prepared what the department heads have requested, and the other assessments and health insurance costs. Diana further explained that free cash hasn't been certified yet, which impedes capital planning.

Discussion on the school's 5-year rolling assessment being incorrect. Discussion on holding a joint meeting with the Finance Committee and School Committee. There are also two contract renewals for the Treasurer/Collector and Director of Assessing for the FY2026 budget and discussion on scheduling an executive session.

Old Business:

Updates regarding Highway Department Staffing; Hiring & Discussion re: Personnel Policy Proposed Amendment & Effects

Diana Parsons explained there is an ad out for the highway laborer position and have received an application from a candidate who is currently working as a seasonal employee, however, he doesn't have all licensing. Diana recommended the possibility of extending the probationary period until he acquires all of the licensing. The wage would increase as licenses get acquired and the Town would pay for licensing. She further recommended including in the offer that if they leave within three years, they will have to pay back the licensing costs. Discussion on what the applicant could do without the licenses.

MOVED: Ben Eastman moved to offer Eli Guerin a job at the highway department.

Emily Thurber seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Personnel Policy Edits

Diana Parsons explained the need to determine who is responsible for interpreting the personnel policies, she or the Treasurer, look at what counts as "work-time" (possibility of including sick, vacation and personal time as work-time), and the "call-in period" (increasing from two hours to four hours). Discussion on holiday pay.

Diana also updated the Board that Nate Gilbert has asked to take a pause on accepting the highway superintendent position.

The Board agreed to have Diana make draft changes to the Personnel Policy.

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to rescind the vote regarding the cap on Nate's vacation accrual.

Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

SSES Report re: Collection System Update and Next Steps

Pat Geary commented that most revisions were made to the report, and they are still working on inspecting a few items that were missing. Discussion regarding concerns with the vault in the middle of the road housing a metering system and sampling station. Diana Parsons spoke to scheduling an onsite meeting with DEP, the Sewer District, Select Board, Legislators and engineers.

Discussion on houses along Call Rd. not being hooked up to the system and which houses are included. Further discussion concerning the mistakes and missing information in the report from Wright-Pierce.

Diana Parsons commented that the Town needs to take some ownership of the situation, which isn't the same as taking ownership of the system and is concerned with the ability of the District to manage the system, due to capacity issues.

Discussion on work done to Church Street 7-8 years ago, the historical records regarding the sewer project, and history of the I&I and SSES projects.

Administrator Updates:

FRCOG Annual Meeting and FY26 Budget Vote

Diana Parsons updated the Board that the FY26 budget passed and approved some charter changes and revisions to language.

FEMA GO Submittal of SOI for Hazard Mitigation Plan Funding (HMP)

Diana submitted the Statement of Interest for HMP funding.

Public and Board Member Comments:

Ben Eastman

Ben received a letter from a resident regarding Jacksonville Rd conditions. Diana added that Jacksonville Rd and Colrain Mountain should be added to a future agenda. Discussion on Nate taking a step back deciding on the Highway Super position.

Requests for Future Agenda Items:

Amended Building Department Fee Schedule

No discussion.

General Bylaws Changes for Annual Town Meeting

No discussion.

Correspondence and Select Board Informational Items:

Inquiry on Pole Attachments and Conduit Access on Public Rights of Way

No discussion.

Executive Session:

None

Dissolve Meeting:

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to dissolve the meeting at 7:11 pm.

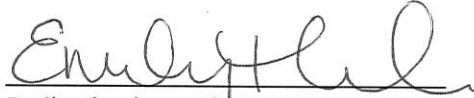
Ben Eastman seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,



Marjorie Smith
Administrative Assistant

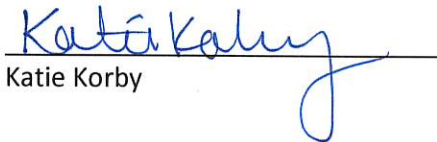
Accepted by the Select Board on 4/8/2025



Emily Thurber - Chair



Benjamin Eastman



Katie Korby

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

Petition for Join or Identical Pole Locations #18542330, #19230428, and #80201870

Tri-State Fire Mutual Aid Inc. Membership Agreement

Colrain Broadband Budget FY2026 Draft

Letter dated 1/19/2025 from Colrain Firefighters' Association re: Boot Drive Request

One-Day Liquor License Application – Abby Gilbert and Colrain PTO

Email from Ted Harvey, FRCOG, dated 1/16/2025 re: Regional Digital Equity Grant Application

Memo to Pat Geary, Colrain Sewer District, and Jessica Atwood, FRCOG, from Matt Corbin, Wright-Pierce, dated 2/7/2025 re: Responses to comments on the draft SSES Report

Email from Jessica Atwood, FRCOG, dated 2/7/2025 re: Colrain Sewer District On-site Meeting

Memo dated 1/17/2025 from Kerri Phillips, MA Dept. of Public Utilities, re: Inquiry on Pole Attachments and Conduit Access on Public Rights of Way