

Town of Colrain  
Select Board/MLP Board Meeting  
Colrain Highway Garage  
9 Jacksonville Road  
4:30 PM  
**MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD**  
**February 25, 2025**

**Present:**

Emily Thurber (Chair), Ben Eastman, Katie Korby

**Others Present:**

David Meagher, Eversource (remote); Nate Gilbert, Interim Highway Superintendent; Paula Harrison, Treasurer; Alice Wozniak, Director of Assessing; Doug MacLeay, Betty Ringwood, Deb Menard, David Swiderski – Finance Committee; Diana Parsons, Town Administrator; Marjorie Smith, Administrative Assistant

**Call to Order:**

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

**Public Hearing – Order for Pole Location:**

Emily Thurber moved to open the public hearing at 4:31pm regarding a new service pole at 116 New County Road. Ben Eastman seconded the motion.

David Meagher from Eversource explained that a tree branch had fallen and taken out the service line, bringing attention to the need for a new pole. He stated that Eversource no longer ties services to trees and would like to install a 35-foot fully owned pole.

Diana Parsons requested that Eversource connect with the town's highway superintendent to ensure the pole placement is appropriate. David agreed to do so.

*Emily Thurber moved to close the public hearing. Ben Eastman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Emily Thurber moved to approve the installation of the pole, pending on approval from the tree warden and highway department. Ben Eastman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Unanticipated:**

**Maxam Road – Fran Ryan**

Fran Ryan addressed the board regarding Maxim Road, its location, and condition. He expressed concerns about the tax maps being incorrect and the road's disrepair. He requested two actions: 1) correction of the tax maps to accurately show the road frontage, and 2) repair the road to make it passable to his property.

Diana Parsons acknowledged that the town has a list of similar road situations that need to be addressed. She suggested that Fran Ryan return after sugaring season to discuss the matter further, allowing time for additional information to be gathered.

## **Consent Items:**

Approve Minutes of February 11, 2025 - *Not presented*

Warrant AP2533 in the amount of \$116,386.73

Warrant AP2534 in the amount of \$451,298.35

Warrant PR2516 in the amount of \$32,995.75

*Emily Thurber made a motion to approve warrant AP2533 in the amount of \$116,386.73, warrant PR2516 in the amount of \$32,995.75, and warrant AP2534 in the amount of \$451,298.35. Ben Eastman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **Appointments and Resignations:**

### **Appoint Representatives to Resilient Deerfield River Watershed Coalition Per Request of FRCOG**

Diana Parsons informed the board about a request from the Resilient Deerfield Watershed Coalition seeking representatives who are interested in participating. She mentioned that the coalition has grant money available and is looking for vibrant participation and that they are willing to offer a small stipend, although it does not apply to board members.

Emily Thurber suggested that Brian Gilbert, who organized the first Deerfield River cleanup, might be interested in participating. After discussing potential participants, the board decided to post the opportunity on the town website.

## **New Business:**

### **Review and Vote Amended Building Department Fee Schedule effective April 1, 2025**

Diana Parsons presented the amended building department fee schedule. She explained that the fees had been adjusted to match those of comparable towns, particularly Wendell.

The board discussed the implementation date, initially proposed for April 1, 2025, but ultimately decided on July 1, 2025, to allow time for proper setup in the Permit Pro system.

*Emily Thurber made a motion to approve the amended building department fee schedule effective July 1, 2025. Ben Eastman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **Old Business:**

### **Updates regarding Highway Department Staffing; Hiring & Discussion re: Personnel Policy Proposed Amendments**

Diana Parsons informed the board that an offer letter had been sent to Eli Guerin for a position in the Highway Department. She anticipated his start date to be soon, possibly as early as the following Monday.

The board discussed potential changes to the personnel policy, particularly regarding overtime calculations and paid time off. They considered including vacation time in overtime calculations if scheduled sufficiently in advance.

Nate Gilbert, representing the Highway Department, expressed concerns about staffing levels and the difficulty in getting employees to respond to callouts, especially during winter storms.

After extensive discussion, the board made two decisions:

*Emily Thurber moved to amend the personnel policy to set the minimum callback pay at three hours, effective March 9, 2025. Ben Eastman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Emily Thurber moved to approve the amended Personnel Policy as written effective July 1, 2025. Ben Eastman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

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

Jim Ryan raised concerns about a proposed cell tower installation on Call Road. He requested information on the process for addressing potential erosion issues along the riverbank near the proposed site.

Alice Wozniak provided information about the cell tower application process and upcoming public hearings.

## **Joint Meeting with Colrain Finance Committee:**

### **Discuss Budget Strategy & Review FY26 Budget Development Schedule for March & April**

The Select Board held a joint meeting with the Colrain Finance Committee to discuss the FY26 budget. Diana Parsons presented an overview of the FY26 budget, highlighting key areas such as the Highway Department, education, and administrative support for various departments.

The committees discussed several budget items, including the potential need for additional administrative support in the Police and Highway departments, increases in the Fire Department budget, particularly for training and firefighter salaries, the need for a new fire truck and the challenges in procuring one due to industry consolidation and long wait times. Further discussion on potential changes to the Council on Aging budget and funding sources, the need for updates to town buildings and public spaces, and concerns about the school district's sustainability and potential future changes.

The committees agreed to continue budget discussions in upcoming meetings and to seek more information from department heads and school officials.

## **Administrator Updates:**

### **Police Cruiser Out/In Service Update from Police Chief**

Diana Parsons reported that there was a recent issue with police vehicles being out of service briefly, but they are now back in operation.

## **Requests for Future Agenda Items:**

### **Joint Meeting with Heath Select Board re Mohawk District Sustainability Study update, scheduled for March 18th**

Diana Parsons confirmed that a joint meeting with the Heath Select Board regarding the Mohawk District Sustainability Study was scheduled for March 18th at 5:00 PM in Heath. The board discussed the importance of this meeting and their desire to discuss both the sustainability study and budget implications with school officials.

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

None

## **Executive Session: None**

## **Dissolve Meeting:**

*Ben Eastman made a motion to dissolve the meeting at 7:13 pm. Emily Thurber seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

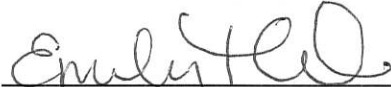
These draft minutes were created using ClerkMinutes, an AI-powered platform that transcribes meetings, identifies speakers, and generates professional minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

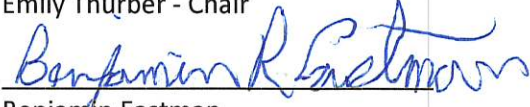


Marjorie Smith  
Administrative Assistant

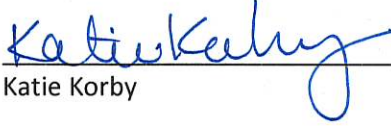
Accepted by the Select Board on 4/8/2025



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 #19528441

Building Inspector Fee Comparison Spreadsheet and Proposed Increases

Email from Ray Purington, Gill Town Administrator, to Diana Parsons dated 2/14/2025 re: Sick and Vacation as Time Worked

Fair Labor Standards Act FAQ re: Employers Counting Holiday Leave, Vacation and Sick Leave Toward Hours Worked for Overtime Calculation

PTO Included as "Time Worked" for Calculating Overtime Spreadsheet

Draft FY2026 Budget Workbook

Email from Chris Lannon, Police Chief, to Diana Parsons, dated 2/24/2025 re: Cruiser Update