

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Community Hall
March 4, 2014

Called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Sheila Litchfield with Bill Lattrell, and Kara Leistyna, Town Coordinator present.

Reviewed Agenda: Added to Other Business: WiredWest Update, Annual Report documents to review, Stipend review, Assessing/Collecting Office Review, Stabilization Funds, Town Comparison Data. Minutes – postponed to March 18.

WiredWest Update: Needs discussion. They are applying for a \$50 million loan for the last mile. Banks require a back-up mechanism so the 42 member towns will need to support it should they default on loan. There is a meeting scheduled at the Academy of Charlemont to discuss. One question for towns is the amount each town will be responsible for pro-rated or shared equally? Larger towns will benefit more. Finance Committee members are encouraged to attend. WiredWest will be sub-competitive with Verizon. Homeowners may eventually purchase service as a utility. Discussed why the State should support the last mile of the MassBroadband project bringing high speed fiber to underserved or un-served areas. After the meeting, Kara will invite Al Canali and Art Schwenger, Heath representatives to WiredWest, to hold an informational session.

7:12 p.m. Mike Smith, Highway Supt. entered meeting.

Highway Dept. Discussion: Mike proposes that the highway workers be granted permission to work a 4 day, 10 hour per day work week. The proposal requests work to be conducted Monday through Thursday from 6am-4pm beginning April 1st and ending October 15th. After October 15th, the work week will resume at 5 days, Monday through Friday from 7am – 3pm (October 16th-March 31st). Kara will check if there is a lunchtime policy. The Selectboard approves the inclusion of a half hour lunch break in the 8 or 10 hour day.

On a motion by Bill Lattrell and seconded by Sheila Litchfield, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Highway Dept. Supervisor's request for all highway personnel to work a 10 hour shift, 6am to 4pm, four days per week from Monday through Thursday beginning April 1st and ending October 15th at which time the workday will be eight hours, 7am to 3pm, five days per week from Monday through Friday beginning October 16th and ending March 31st with a half hour lunch break included.

Mike expressed gratitude in the Board's cooperation, appreciation of the work performed by the Highway Dept. and the trust and confidence they have in his management of the department.

Mike mentioned roadwork and his preference in hot-in-place recycling especially on Number Nine Road and West Branch Road. He is working on bids for the upcoming season.

7:33 p.m. Don Freeman, Gloria Fisher, Ned Wolf, Kathy Inman and Jeff Simmons entered the meeting and Brian DeVriese and Betty Nichols arrived shortly after.

Finance Committee joined discussion with Mike Smith. They asked for an update on Fire Engine and whether it could be re-wired. Mike shared, that after researching, it seems unlikely. It has already been refurbished and Mack does not recommend further repairs as it is a 1979 vehicle and would cost between

\$15,000-\$30,000 which is extensive for such an old vehicle. Mike says it is not failing but has had problems with headlights and such failures which pose a problem during a fire call.

Discussed stabilization accounts. One will include vehicles. Reviewed timeframe for replacements. The purchase of a service/crew truck and superintendent vehicle were revisited and it was decided to combine the two into one warrant article requesting up to \$10,000. The procurement may result in vehicles costing less. Mike will get procurement guidance from accountant.

Transfer Station Repairs: Mike has discussed with Jan Ameen, Exec. Director of FC Solid Waste District, the pricing for the concrete pad, electrical, site work, etc. for the transfer station. Worked up a budget for this project based on Jan's recommendations. A refurbished compactor will cost \$9,000, the pad, \$3,000, the attendant's shed, \$3,000 and electrical work roughly \$1,000. The Select Board will take \$10,000 from the Recycling Revolving account and the remainder of \$6,000 will be requested in the warrant article for voters to approve. Kara will confirm cost for recycling roll-off fee.

Uniforms: Added to Article 3.

Summer Road Work: Mike will revisit to discuss projects and funding options.

8:12 p.m. Mike Smith left meeting.

Performance Review: Betty Nichols, Tax Collector.

- Also discussed Software. Betty would like to stay with her current software.
- Options for on-line pay with UniBank. Betty shared there are four free services to the Town for on-line payments. She described the process which she learned from a meeting with a bank representative. An electronic payment from a debit card will cost the payer .25 for each transaction. Credit card payments will be on a scale. A link will be added to the Town's website for easy access. Betty will also be able to swipe credit cards in her office and they are 100% guaranteed. If there is a problem, the payer will have to address it with their credit card company whereas the Town will be paid. Another option is on-line bill pay to Jeffrey & Jeffrey, the attorneys who handle delinquent accounts. And last, a check swiping option is available allowing direct payment to bank rather than driving to the bank for in person deposit. An end date can be set up to avoid payments coming in beyond the payment due dates when a late payment fee is assessed. The only con, Betty feels, is that eventually, the bank may charge for this service. Currently, it is free. There are no costs to the Town to have this feature available and the Town can easily discontinue the service. A question was posed on security/liability – Betty will check with UniBank. A flyer can be distributed with tax bills letting tax payers know of this payment option. Betty said that it will take UniBank 4-6 weeks to build the system. E-billing is another option that costs the Town \$50/month but not interested at this point. Transfer Station permits, dog licenses, etc. can also be set up for on-line payment. The Board thanked Betty.

8:41 p.m. Betty Nichols left meeting.

FY15 Budget Review:

- Reiterated choice for Stabilization fund requests to include Highway vehicles/machinery and School maintenance/capital expenses. A 2/3 vote is required to use funds. Kara will get wording for article and insert in draft of warrant.
- C.O.L.A.: Need the overall budget to review in order to get a better sense of what Heath can offer this year. It's important to keep up with increases to avoid falling behind everyone else. Further discussion needed.
- Town Comparison Data: Discussed and looked at compilation of data. Need to determine the best towns for comparison. Each town varies and it's difficult to find similarities – depends on what variables one looks at and what is being compared e.g. highway dept. Also need to rate the current market value of positions in determining a recommendation for salary. After further discussion, it was

decided that the following towns would be used to compare for salary: Warwick, Leyden, Charlemont, Hawley and Colrain. Kara will prepare Classification/Salary spreadsheet for review at 3/18 meeting.

- Update on MTRSD Budget and Capital Plan: FY15 Assessment for Heath is Operating: \$776,172 and Capital \$8,675 for a total of \$784,847. Talked about the lunch program changes again. Sheila shared that 25 lunches are served in Heath and the income is never enough to make the program cost effective. Now the District is pondering that lunches are to be made at the high school with a cold breakfast both delivered. But still there are many unanswered questions. It is a model to consider however and an option to reduce the budget in non-educational related areas. Eric Glazier has Heath's best interest in mind and the Select Board trusts his judgement but need to stay apprised and see how it's going to be decided and how it will proceed.
- Assessing/Collecting Office Review: Finance Committee supports asking the DOR for technical assistance for a review. Kara will contact Joe Markarian at the DOR to find out how to ask for such assistance including recommendations on stipends and elected vs. appointed

9:34 p.m. Finance Committee left meeting.

Mail/ Email:

1. Email from Leah Gibson
2. Email from Michael Buoniconti
3. Email to Finance Committee from Town Coordinator (copy) regarding salary proposal and grade increase
4. Email from Mark Smith – IT option
5. Email from Rol Hesselbart regarding green burial and proposed changes for Heath
6. Selectmen Assoc. Announcement for Meeting: Select Board members will attend in addition to two Finance Committee members. Kara will RSVP.
7. Cash Book Summary Feb. 2014

Other Separate Documents:

- Town Coordinator Report
 - 1) Discussed issue of dogs coming into Town Hall and relieving themselves on carpet and in Post Office. Board feels a policy is needed for all town buildings.

On a motion by Brian DeVriese and seconded by Bill Lattrell, the Board voted unanimously that all pets, with the exception of certified service animals, are not allowed to enter town-owned buildings unless upon written approval by the Selectmen.

2) Kara shared that she researched stipend vs. salary and reviewed the information on US Dept. of Labor's website. She learned that a 'nominal fee' or stipend is paid to volunteers to cover out-of-pocket expenses incurred incidental to providing volunteer services e.g. transportation expenses. Further, a nominal fee is not a substitute for compensation and must not be tied to productivity. However, as a general rule, the Department finds that a fee paid is nominal as long as it does not exceed 20 percent of the amount that otherwise would be required to hire a permanent employee for the same services. From this, the Select Board decided that the Assessor Administrative Asst. and BOH Clerk should be considered employees receiving an hourly wage rather than a stipend (or nominal fee) because they receive compensation commensurate with tasks performed. The Select Board discussed this and agrees that the amount appropriated at ATM should be divided into equal pay periods for the year and that once the money is gone, tasks should still be p

- Open Meeting Checklists
- MTRSD Assessment Calculations and other documents
- ATM Warrant DRAFT

Other Business:

1. Update on Feasibility Study: Brian shared that a presentation will be prepared for ATM as well as a motion for a follow up at an STM.
2. Annual Report Documents: Reviewed draft of annual BOS report as well as dedication page. All look fine and Kara will add to report.
3. ATM: Kara will add an article to warrant asking for one lump sum for the Compactor Replacement Project.

Signed:

- Weekly Warrants

On a motion by Bill Lattrell and seconded by Sheila Litchfield, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:22 p.m.

Next meeting scheduled for March 11, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. (SPECIAL TOWN MEETING)

Respectfully submitted,

Kara Leistyna, Town Coordinator