

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Sawyer Hall
May 4, 2010

Called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Tom Lively with Sheila Litchfield present. Also present Town Coordinator Gloria Fisher.

Agenda was reviewed with storm damage and loader purchase added to new business.

- Discussed possible renovations to Community Hall and applying for a grant.
- Discussed cost of living raises for town employees.
- Read a letter of complaint from a Rowe resident regarding a Heath police officer.

7:21 Police Chief Margo Newton entered the meeting.

Police Chief

Discussed the recent complaint regarding a Heath Police Officer. The Board asked the Chief to investigate and report back to the Board prior to yearly appointments.

Discussed Margo's request to have her road (a private road) plowed by the town. Margo was asked to ask her plow person to come earlier or make other arrangements. It was determined that it was inappropriate for the town to plow a private road.

7:36 Margo left the meeting.

Mail

- Received for distribution brochures providing information about the FY 2009 Housing Rehab Program.
- Received the Franklin Area Survival Center newsletter.
- Letter from a town resident recounting her recent encounter with animals wreaking havoc on her property and threatening her grandson. The matter has been resolved by the animals' owner.
- E-mail from the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District regarding the pros and cons of Leverett's membership in the FCSWMD.
- Notice of a Strategic Planning Session on Thursday, May 20, 6:30 p.m., at the Hadley Senior Center. The session is being held by the Hampshire Council of Governments to learn about the needs of municipalities.
- E-mail from a town resident discussing the problems the United States Postal Service is having and wondering what, if any, effect it will have on Heath.
- Quarterly report and announcements received by e-mail from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG).
- Notice from the FRCOG of a Mass Region I Tabletop Exercise to be held May 21 from 9 a.m. -12:30 p.m. at the Clarion Hotel in Northampton.
- Notice from the FRCOG that the Regionalization Advisory Commission Report is now available online.
- E-mail from Hwy. Supt. Mike Smith noting that the Highway Dept. has tried out two loaders and recommends the purchase of the Komatsu. He also notes that he will be out of town May 8 and will not be able to attend town meeting.
- Received the annual report from the Franklin Regional Retirement System.

Town Coordinator Report

The Town Coordinator reported that:

- Mark Reich reports that there is nothing in MGL C140 §157 that defines when, after a written complaint is received by the BOS, the Board must proceed with a hearing. The Board has the discretion whether and when to act upon the complaint. Should the Board determine to act on a complaint, he recommends that a hearing be called sooner rather than later, as the seriousness of the situation may warrant.
- The 2009 Annual Report is done and is being distributed. Thank you to Eileen Tougas.
- Accountant Tracey Baronas reports that she has received info from the Dept. of Veteran Services that the town will have to pay benefits monthly to an individual who lives in town. The benefits for FY 2011 the amount will be \$2,742 at the current rate, which could increase in July if there is a cost of living increase. The state reimburses 75% of the benefit on the Cherry Sheet, which goes into the general fund. The budget (article 3) will need to be adjusted to accommodate these extra charges. Presently the town has been budgeting \$500 per year.
- Budget has been revised and adjusted.
- Annual Town Meeting Warrant was amended and posted last week.
- Landfill – She has been working on researching documents related to the abutter's well and agreements made among the towns in preparation for Thursday evening's meeting.
- The Planning Board will be meeting on Thursday, May 13, at 6:30 p.m., to discuss Smart Growth options. Peggy Sloan, FRCOG, will be attending.
- The next Three-Town Landfill meeting will be held on Thursday, May 6, at 7 p.m., in the Library at Hawlemont School.
- Filing and Organizing is progressing.

8:04 Finance Committee members Jeff Simmons, Ned Wolf, Don Freeman, Jan Carr, and Dave Gott entered the meeting.

Finance Committee

- Veterans Benefits – discussed the need to raise this line item in the FY 2011 budget and to transfer some money in for FY 2010. The state reimburses the town 75% of what is spent. Sheila moved to transfer \$347 from the Sand and Salt Account to the Veterans Benefits Account under the laws of Chapter 44. Tom seconded. The motion passed. The Finance Committee also voted to approve the transfer.
- Article 3 – the FinCom recommended deleting the budget items for: 1. painting of Sawyer Hall (\$6,000); 2. preschool support (\$10,000); and renovations to Community Hall (\$15,000). They also recommended that town employees receive a 1.5% COLA rather than 3%. There is enough money in Heath's Mohawk account to pay \$10,000 for support of the preschool. The Historic Commission will look into grants for Community and Sawyer halls.
- COLA – discussed cost of living adjustments (COLAs). Sheila noted that Heath is below average in salaries for eight positions. The Board hopes that a 3% COLA will accomplish a cost of living and salary adjustment at the same time. Discussed how salaries are set. It was agreed to keep the 3% COLA as part of Article 3.
- Landfill- Sheila moved to transfer \$10,000 from free cash to the landfill closing account. Tom seconded. Discussed why this was necessary. The motion passed. The Finance Committee voted to recommend as well.

Sheila moved to approved Article 3 as amended. Tom seconded. The motion passed. The FinCom voted to approve as well. The FinCom was invited to attend the Three-town Landfill meeting on Thursday. Discussed options for maintaining the filtration system.

9:06 The Finance Committee left the meeting.

Old Business

- Landfill – Discussed the meeting to be held Thursday in Charlemont and who would be attending. Sheila made it clear that it was to be an open meeting and anyone who wanted could attend, but that they would need to request to be heard. It was noted that Charlemont has incurred over \$6,000 in expenses due to the abutter's filtration system. At Thursday's meeting, a vote will be needed to invite town counsel to the June 7

meeting. Discussed the need to explore options further. Special legislation would be need for the three towns to own the property. Discussed what Heath is responsible for. The Town Coordinator was asked to attend the meeting and research how much has been spent on the landfill and what is owed to whom by which town.

New Business

- Storm Damage – discussed what, if any, damage happened in Heath during the recent rain storm. There was no severe damage reported in Heath.
- Loader – discussed whether to reduce the amount requested for purchasing the loader. It was decided to keep the amount as written.

Documents Signed –Warrants were signed.

Minutes

- April 13 – Sheila moved to approved the April 13 meeting minutes as amended. Tom seconded. The motion passed.
- April 20 - Sheila moved to approved the April 20 meeting minutes as amended. Tom seconded. The motion passed.
- April 27 - Sheila moved to approved the April 27 meeting minutes as amended. Tom seconded. The motion passed.

Sheila moved to adjourn. Tom seconded. The motion passed.

Next meeting is scheduled for May 4, at 7:00 p.m. at Sawyer Hall.

Adjourned 10:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gloria Fisher, Town Coordinator