

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Sawyer Hall
June 13, 2011

Called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Tom Lively, Chair with Sheila Litchfield and Brian DeVriese present. Also present Town Coordinator Kara Leistyna, Library Trustees Deb Porter, Jan Carr, Finance Committee Chair Don Freeman , Jeff Simmons, Dave Howland and Town Clerk Hilma Sumner.

Reviewed Agenda: Hilma Sumner to discuss ATM Warrant. Added Space Task Force minutes; Open Meeting/ Conflict of Interest Worksheet for review.

ATM Warrant: Hilma informed Selectboard that the salaried positions for BOH and Assessors' Clerks were not included in Article 3. A Special Town meeting needs to be held to raise and appropriate those salaries. Alternatively, the Finance Committee can fund these salaries to be later reimbursed. Selectboard will take this under advisement.

7:15 p.m. Hilma left meeting.

Library Trustees: Dave Howland handed out a prepared white paper, "Growth Issues and Needs for Space in the Town of Heath," which outlines local history of Town projects, suggestions and a change in strategy for the purchase of the Mackie property on 4 East Main St. Deb Porter pointed out that the Trustees had not met yet to review this document. Dave met with Greenfield Co-op to explore the possibility of borrowing funds to purchase the property. The bank indicated willingness to consider a \$350,000.00 loan at 4% for 20 years to the Town – payments roughly \$25,451. per year. Dave feels the funds would cover the cost of property and the money already in hand (\$17,000) with the additional \$20,000 from the bank could fund necessary work needing immediate attention. The Trustees will be meeting with Senator Ben Downing on Wednesday to see if support from the MA Board of Library Commissioners is possible. Dave pointed out that this is an option where the Town would share the expense with other funding options – the cost of the project would be shared almost equally rather than the Town taking on the entire obligation.

7:55 p.m. Bill Gran entered meeting.

8:05 p.m. Karen Brooks entered meeting.

Discussion continued about how to approach ATM with this new suggestion; the pros and cons of a no-vote or withdrawal of Article 22. Thomas Lively, Chair, asked the BOS and all in attendance their opinion on the matter and their sense of how others in the community feel about the purchase. Many reported that people are concerned with tax increases; others are fully supportive and many are committed to helping fund the project. Many pointed out that the Public has questions and needs answers – Dave suggested sending this white paper to the public prior to ATM to promote a discussion. It was pointed out that purchasing the property offers more chances for fundraising. Because many are worried about the cost, the BOS discussed the option to lower the offer price to \$280,000.00 (appraised value) plus the cost of the septic and closing costs. This way it could be more manageable for people and the vote could result positively. This project, Dave and many believe, is an opportunity for Heath to plan its municipal needs for the next millennium while including both the library/office space as well as the Municipal Complex. Sheila stated that the conversation needs to take place publicly on ATM floor.

8:34 p.m. Hilma left meeting.

The Board addressed concern brought forth by Treasurer and Accountant via email, regarding the process for obtaining loans for Town.

9:10 p.m. Don Freeman, Dave Howland, Jeff Simmons, Jan Carr left meeting.

Beaver Issue on Long Hill Road was discussed with some property owners present. At this point, the Town cannot perform any work on the dam. The Board determined that the owners of the pond need to discuss the matter. The Town's role is to protect the road and public health. Otherwise, the Town is not involved.

9:14 p.m. Bill Gran and Karen Brooks left the meeting.

Mail and Email:

Discussed Mike Smith's email regarding the closure of Sadoga Road Bridge per DOT requirement and the consequences of closure and optional access. Kara presented grant opportunity sent from Comprehensive Environmental Inc. which may offer some funding for repairs. Notification forwarded to Mike Smith for his review. There may be other options for funding.

Read letter sent from Suzanne Crawford, Preschool Teacher at Heath School. Suzanne thanked the Board for the, " tremendous support given to the Heath Preschool and to me personally over the past 18 ½ years."

Kara informed Board of her temporary schedule change for next week. Office will be closed on 6/22/11.

Received email from School Committee Representative, Ann Pacino, indicating the Superintendent recommended to the Budget Subcommittee to vote to accept the \$15,000.00 the Town appropriated for Heath preschool tuition funding for Heath residents and out-of-district students.

Reviewed Town Coordinator's report.

Tom phoned Jerry Ferguson regarding highway dept. bathroom work and inspected work this week. Things are going smoothly. He will follow-up on weekly basis till completion. Upon completion, the space will be assessed for cabinets.

Sheila updated Board on Space Task Force and distributed meeting minutes. They plan to issue a survey to Town Offices and Committees. Board set end of September as a good point for two new committees to report back to BOS.

Reviewed Fiscal Year 11 Tax Rate Approval Notification from DOR. The tax rate was set at 18.83.

Discussed Board Meeting minutes and setting time after ATM for review and approval to bring current.

9:40 p.m. Brian DeVriese made a motion to adjourn. Sheila seconded. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kara Leistyna
Town Coordinator