

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Community Hall
November 18, 2014

Called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Sheila Litchfield, with Brian DeVriese and Kara Leistyna, Town Coordinator present. Also present: Ed Grinnell, Animal Control Officer.

Reviewed Agenda: Ed Grinnell, Animal Control Officer, will attend meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Ed Grinnell: Ed described an incident that occurred on Sumner Stetson road involving a dog attacking another dog and causing injury. The owner was not present but Ed discovered the owner owns land in Heath but is a resident of Pelham, MA. He spoke with the dog control folks in Pelham and the owner of the perpetrating dog. Injuries sustained in Heath caused over \$700 in vet bills. Ed asked that the dog be quarantined and that the owner reimburse vet bills. To date, Ed reports that the owner has not cooperated. He would like to ban the dog from Heath and therefore requests a dog hearing be held by the Selectmen. Ed will provide the written complaint, Animal Control documents, vet bills, and email conversations for the hearing. A tentative date is set for Dec. 9, 2014. Kara will work with Ed to prepare a letter of notice.

7:15 p.m. Ed Grinnell left the meeting. Al Canali and Art Schwenger arrived shortly after.

7:35 p.m. Gloria Fisher, Don Freeman, Kathy Inman, and Ned Wolf entered meeting.

MBI/WiredWest: Al came to share about the status of MBI/WiredWest Final Mile project. This will be a big issue in FY16. The first step is for the Selectmen to vote on a resolution (non-binding) basically agreeing to participate by bringing this matter before voters for FY16. Currently, the range of cost for Heath to bring fiber to residents is \$.9 to 1.3 million. This would be in the form of a bond. According to Al, this is really the only way to get broadband to residents at the best price. \$47 million has been allocated by the State to help the 42 underserved towns complete this final mile – and at a 50% savings. Towns will cover the balance of the cost through these bonds. Al will now proceed with the public educational component so residents are informed. Resident will need to commit to purchasing services through WiredWest. Al has made himself available to anyone who is seeking information on WiredWest and this project. Meetings are planned for finance committees to discuss everything to do with the bond process. Joe Markarian, formally with the Mass. Dept. of Revenue, will be a part of the meetings. No dates are available yet. Al still needs to determine number of households in Heath – this number has been disputed and needs to be confirmed. Al will call WiredWest and attempt to resolve this dispute.

On a motion by Brian DeVriese, and seconded by Sheila Litchfield, the Board voted unanimously to adopt resolution as amended.

Resolution: *BE IT RESOLVED* that by signing this non-binding resolution at the request of Wired West, the Selectmen for the Town of Heath hereby confirm our intent to continue to support the Wired West cooperative initiative to construct and operate a regional “fiber to the home” broadband network which will serve all interested subscribers in the Town of Heath. The Selectboard agrees and intends to seek formal approval of voters at the May 9, 2015 Annual Town Meeting for a general obligation bond issue in an amount sufficient to pay the Town’s share of the regional network, as determined by Wired West with input from the Town of Heath upon resolution of the dispute regarding the actual number of households in the Town of Heath.

8:23 p.m. Al Canali and Art Schwenger left meeting.

FY16 Budget Planning and Preliminary Discussion: Items to explore:

- \$170K Long Term borrowing for Irene
- Broadband Bond
- Recommendation for audit – DOR. Need to save for regular audits
- Assistant Assessor position – DOR. Need to create a new, appointed position. Assessors will no longer appoint one of their own to serve as Adm. Assistant. Will require new job description, classification/salary. Need preliminary conversation with assessors. DOR also had recommendations on lowering stipend.
- Highway vehicle replacement schedule/maintenance – need to review. Kara will invite Mike Smith to a meeting in the next few weeks to discuss.
- Special Projects
- Municipal Complex Building
- Police/Fire Accident coverage increase (roughly \$10,000)
- STRAP grant – 4.5 miles of paving to VT line. Lower Rt. 8A not included – may fund with Chap. 90 money.

There is roughly \$150,000 in free cash – need to discuss options for this money.

Reviewed Budget Planning calendar

Tax Classification Hearing set for 12/2

Joint Guidance Memo will be sent with budget requests. Don will bring a draft memo on 12/2

Discussed highway budget. Finance Committee will formulate some questions for budget hearing.

If valuations are down, this is an indicator that rates will go up. Can gauge whether budgets can go up or down. The budget memo will offer guidance to dept. heads/committee chairs on budget planning.

8:46 p.m. Finance Committee members left meeting.

Other Business:

DOR Follow-up & TAP Workplan Status: Sheila will work with Margo Newton and Kara will offer a follow up after contacting Bob Bliss. Sheila discussed the DOR recommendation to have an appointed, assistant assessor. Trying to schedule a meeting to discuss with full board of Assessors on 12/1.

Classification Hearing has tentatively been set for 12/2/14 – three weeks later than scheduled on budget timeframe but earlier than last year.

FY16 Budget Planning: Board will meet on Nov. 12 and then with Finance Committee jointly on Nov. 18, 2014. Need to formally adopt Strong Chief Bylaw and standard Town bylaws as amended.

Procurement Officer for HRA/CDBG grant: The Board will act as Procurement Officer.

SHRAB (State Historical Records Advisory Board) Roving Archivist Statement of

Commitment/application: Kara will meet with Nancy Thane and Hilma Sumner to complete and submit application for archiving support for town records.

Long Range Planning Committee: Don reported that they will report to school committee in January. No other update.

Mail/ Email:

1. Email from Hilma regarding request from HCOG for Town Seal
2. Request from HCOG for Town Seal
3. Email from Hilma with follow up regarding Tanners
4. Letter from Caring in Community, Inc. proposing health care services for Heath. Sheila will find out more about this proposal and how it may affect our Town Nurse – need more information before proceeding.
5. Update email from Environment Massachusetts. They will add your Board to the signature page of a formal letter in support of solar to the Governor Elect.
6. Response email from Ken Elstein regarding an anonymous email that was sent regarding aggregation and HCOG

7. Email from Sheila regarding Herald and STRAP grant
8. Email from Fred Feit, AXIA, regarding estimate for Community Hall fiber connection
9. Formal letter announcing award of STRAP grant. Contract documents will be sent to Town
10. Performance review for Town Nurse
11. Email announcement from FRCOG for planning and regional collaboration projects through Local Technical Assistance funds. Select Board ranked projects
12. Email from Mike Smith regarding Expedition. Mike may go ahead and scrap Expedition for highest bid.
13. Notice of Excess and Deficiency for Mohawk Trail. Understand article was defeated at last town meeting. Need to send a note to find out the plan for long term maintenance needs.
14. Update on Cemetery transfer from Claire Rabbitt. Ask Claire to ask attorney to draw up paperwork to transfer deed to Town for \$1 and ask them to donate remaining funds to cemetery donation fund for maintenance of North Cemetery.
15. Written complaint from Camille Freeman. Kara will send a letter to Ms. Freeman acknowledging receipt of letter. Select Board will follow up.

Other Separate Documents:

16. Town Coordinator Report
17. Draft resolution for MBI/WiredWest

SIGNED:

1. Keeping West County Warm Program (3 copies)
On a motion by Brian DeVriese, and seconded by Sheila Litchfield, the Board voted unanimously to sign the Sub-Grantee Agreement Public Social Service Project Keeping West County Warm Program for Heath, Hawley, Ashfield, Charlemont with Community Action of Franklin, Hampshire, and North Quabbin Regions, Inc.

Other Votes:

2. ***On a motion by Brian DeVriese, and seconded by Sheila Litchfield, the Board voted to hire Sarah Hettlinger as Temporary Winter Help for \$12.83/hour, part-time responsible for clearing/treating steps and walkways of Community Hall and Sawyer Hall during winter months as needed.***

On a motion by Brian DeVriese, and seconded by Sheila Litchfield, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:44 p.m.

Next meeting scheduled for December 2, 2014 at 7 p.m. (No meeting 11/25/14). Tax Classification Hearing scheduled for 12/2/14, 8 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kara M. Leistyna
Town Coordinator