

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee
February 8, 2011

Time: 7:00 pm

Place: Sawyer Hall

Present: Don Freeman, Jan Carr, Ned Wolf, the BOS, Betty Nichols, Becky Allen, Eileen Tougas

Tax Collector Betty Nichols presented a level-funded budget. There was discussion of having a test run of the new software that the Assessors and she will be using. Betty said that to stay on schedule quarterly tax bills will have to be ready by April 1st. Sheila said that the State aims to be done inputting data by March 1st. Betty said that from the date when the data is loaded it will take more than 10 days to set the tax rate.

The budget request submitted by the FinCom is level-funded. There was a discussion of whether circumstances would ever arise in which we would spend money from the Reserve Fund without BOS OK. There was a consensus that such circumstances would not likely arise and that members would continue to approve any transfers from the Reserve Fund with their signatures.

There was also a consensus on the need to build up the Stabilization Fund for future capital projects.

Becky Allen presented the Board of Health (BOH) budget request. She said that she had talked with Phoebe Walker who said that \$5,762 would be needed for FY12 to pay the FRCOG agent to do what the BOH can't do. She said that the agent will work 5 hours less in FY12 but at a higher rate accounting for the jump from \$5000 to \$5,762. The budget request also includes \$1500 for one year of code red reverse 911 service. The \$1500 would be guaranteed for the first 3 years. Members were supportive of the value of this service in time of emergency although wary of the potential for its overuse.

Becky will return to the BOS to talk about the Mohawk Schools budget. The BOS will extend an invitation to Jeanine Heil to explain her budget for the Heath School.

Eileen presented a level-funded budget request for the Senior Center. The BOS approved a motion to establish a stipend for the Senior Center Coordinator of \$500. There was discussion of the electrical work for which Jerry Ferguson's estimate is nearly \$8,000. Brian will get an estimate for 4 chandelier-like lights. There will have to be a PA system if the ATM is to be held there this May. Brian will inquire about PA systems. Perhaps the school's system could be used. Sheila told Eileen that the Town has multiple storage needs that will be addressed. It's not clear at this time where the respective storage spaces will be.

After a discussion of a new rules policy for the Community Hall the BOS voted to adopt changes that include reducing the user fee from \$50 to \$25 for Heath residents.

Sheila made a motion that the BOS accompanied by the FinCom go into Executive Session because of purpose #6, Section 21, M.G.L. c.30 A. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote. The possible purchase of Helen Mackie's house was discussed. A motion was approved to offer Helen \$325,000 plus \$5,000 to cover additional fees and to tell her that the Town would assume responsibility for any necessary work on the septic system. The motion stated that Town counsel would be consulted on the details of making this offer.

The BOS approved the motion. It was decided that before Helen would receive this offer in writing Tom would visit her on behalf of the Selectboard. The BOS voted unanimously by roll call vote to come out of Executive Session.

The increase in the Planning Board's budget request from \$500 to \$650 is to pay for the costs of advertising.

Tom reported on a letter from Dale Kowacki stating that the County Retirement System will want \$36,595 for FY12, an increase from \$30,301.

There was discussion of the estimated \$5000 in damage to the plow of the 4500 truck. Mike reported that the same truck had been taken away for brakeline repair. Mike has asked for aa additional driver due to the amount of snow to be cleared. There was a consensus that staffing needs be considered a week at a time.

Tracey has e-mailed Mike to say that the Winter Temp Account is overspent.

The FinCom meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ned Wolf, Secretary