

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee
July 26, 2011

Time: 7:30 pm

Place: Sawyer Hall

Present: Don Freeman, Jeff Simmons, Ned Wolf, Jan Carr, and visitor Steve Rogers

Jeff noted that he lives in Mohawk Estates and introduced members to Steve Rogers, president of the Mohawk Estates association.

Don expressed the committee's appreciation for Steve's presence and asked about the concerns of residents of Mohawk Estates. Steve said that there was disappointment over the increase in taxes and the lack of services. Snow plowing is the service he said is lacking. There are ten school age children and nine miles of road to be plowed. Some questions are "What would it cost the town to plow the nine miles of road or those roads most often used?", "How would that affect the tax rate", and "What would the effect be on Mohawk Estates dues if the plowing were subcontracted to the Town?" Steve likened the feelings of Mohawk Estates residents for the rest of town to those of people in western Massachusetts for people in the Boston area. He would like more communication between the two groups and expressed interest in having one or more members of the Finance Committee attend the upcoming meeting of the Mohawk Estates Board.

The minutes of the July 11th meeting were read and approved as submitted by all members except Jan who did not attend.

The discussion turned to replacing the 2001 truck. Mike Smith has said that the cost of the truck will exceed the \$110,000 approved at the ATM by about \$44,000. Three possible ways of funding this increase would be to raise and appropriate, use a five year loan, or use Chapter 90 money. To raise and appropriate would boost the tax rate by \$0.49. The FY2012 tax rate would then exceed the FY2011 tax rate by 6.5%. A five year loan would also cause problems with the tax rate and possibly the levy limit in FY2013. Don made a motion that the chair would draft a memo to Mike stating that the FinCom believes taxpayers cannot be asked for an additional \$44,000 and encouraging Mike to look for a used truck at a cost of \$110,00 or less, or to consider reconditioning the present truck. Don will first circulate this memo among FinCom members. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The next item for discussion was Don's July 26th draft of a memo 'Changes in Budgetary Procedures' to the BOS. Members unanimously approved Don's motion that he send the memo to the BOS.

Turning to Don's July 26th version of 'Some Thoughts on Participation in FinCom Meetings', members agreed that we should tell prospective visitors that it will help us to serve you better if you tell us ahead of time what your concerns are so that we can do our home work.

Don said he would talk with Kara about getting an e-mail address for the FinCom that would appear on the website.

Some members said that they could attend the meeting at 8:30 am on August 1 in Sawyer Hall with the BOS.

Members expressed interest in getting on the BOS agenda at some future meeting to discuss the enforcing of dump stickers.

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ned Wolf