

Minutes of the Heath Finance Committee Meeting  
March 20, 2012

Time: 7:00 pm

Place: Sawyer Hall

Present: Don Freeman, Jan Carr, Ned Wolf, Dave Gott, Kara Leistyna and the BOS, Maureen Mullaney, Transportation and CIS Manager of the FRCOG, Eileen Tougas, and Hilma Sumner

Absent: Jeff Simmons

There was a discussion of Heath bridges with FRCOG representative Maureen Mullaney who said that Heath is responsible for the maintenance and repair of at least 5 bridges: Sadoga Bridge, Dell Bridge, 2 bridges on Taylor Brook Road, and one on Route 8A near Sumner Stetson Road. The bridges on Taylor Brook Road and the one on Sumner Stetson Road are classified as 'functional'. Sadoga Bridge is closed. Dell Bridge, which is posted with a weight limit, is classified as 'functionally obsolete'. The bridge near Sumner Stetson Road has been weight posted but is considered OK.

Regarding the replacement of Sadoga Bridge, Maureen referred to Chapter 85 which says that a Massachusetts town that replaces a bridge must have the approval of the state engineer. Maureen said that she is willing to assist Mike as a liaison person with the Vermont engineer with whom he has talked and with the Massachusetts engineer. Members acknowledged that prevailing wages would affect the replacement cost.

In discussing the Dell Bridge the question arose as to whether or not it is 'structurally deficient'. Only 'structurally deficient' bridges qualify for federal funding. Brian said that Dell Bridge had been found to be structurally deficient. The BOS spoke of Article 22 on the draft of the May 12<sup>th</sup> ATM Warrant which would appropriate if approved approximately \$30,000 for an engineering study of Dell Bridge. Maureen advised that the BOS write a letter about Dell Bridge in an effort to get back in the TIP Municipal Bridge Program. There is a long waiting line for funds. Brian asked about the possibility of funds from the Community Development Block Grant Program. Income data for Heath residents would be a factor in determining eligibility.

At 7:30 FinCom members left the BOS meeting for the Assessors' Office. The minutes of the March 13<sup>th</sup> meeting were read and approved with emendations. Don reported that the average amount spent from the Highway Miscellaneous Account over the past 5 years has been between \$1800 and \$1900. Members reviewed the proposal of the Community Hall Committee to build a \$7000 storage shed. Dave, who said that the Space Committee's report to the BOS would be on April 10, said that the committee had considered a compromise for additional storage space. It was suggested that the stairs and balcony railing be altered to allow for storage in the balcony.

At 8:10 FinCom members rejoined the BOS to begin a discussion with Eileen Tougas of the Community Hall Budget. Dave asked Eileen whether she expected that all the funds provided for the Community Hall in the FY2012 Budget would be spent. She spoke of the impending cutoff of state funds from the

Council on Aging. She said that the Community Hall would need for FY2013 the \$16,000 as was budgeted for FY2012.

Eileen provided members with a detailed plan for a \$7000 storage shed to the south of the Community Hall. Members discussed ways of creating more space in the current building. Brian said the use of the balcony for storage was not feasible. Sheila suggested replacing the wooden chairs with stackable chairs. Jan said that buyers might be found for the wooden chairs. Eileen said that the Council on Aging will fund cabinets downstairs if current stuff is stored elsewhere. Brian said that a shed like the one proposed could be moved elsewhere if the need arose. Don thanked Eileen for her informative proposal.

Members turned to the draft of the May 12<sup>th</sup> ATM Warrant Articles. They discussed the funding of Article 19 which would establish a disability pension for Heath firefighters or police officers who become disabled on the job through no fault of their own. On line 55 of Article 3 the Ins/Prop/Casualty/Workman's Comp has been increased by 5% from \$33,850 to \$38,084 for the new insurance level needed to fund Article 19.

In Article 20 provision would be made for the Town to pay up to \$15,000 in funeral expenses for a firefighter or police officer killed in the line of duty. Kara will get an answer from MAIA as to how this would affect the Town's insurance. Tom suggested we consider self-insurance.

The discussion turned to Article 6 which would establish a revolving fund for the Dog Officer. Fines, license fees, and delinquent fees would be deposited into the revolving fund. Tom favors eliminating the revolving fund. Hilma described situations where having such a fund would be helpful.

At 9:10 pm a discussion began with Hilma Sumner about the Town Clerk's Budget. The Clerk's Expense line of \$2000 is sufficient to cover the new computer she needs. Hilma's request for a salary increase of \$12,476 was accompanied by a handout listing a town clerk's many duties. Don asked Hilma to tell members about the number of hours she spends on her job. She said that she puts in an average of 10 and ¼ hours per week but could easily put in 20 hours per week. She said that many tasks such as the binding of town records go undone. She said that with a salary increase she would have more office hours in Sawyer Hall. Regarding Hilma's recommended increase in pay for Constables, Tom said that all stipends need to be reviewed. Sheila asked Hilma whether she still needs the file cabinets she once requested. Hilma said yes. Brian said that a 4 drawer fireproof cabinet would cost about \$2800. Members thanked Hilma for her presentation.

At 10:00 pm FinCom members returned to the Assessors' Office. Dave noted that the 2012 Hampshire and Franklin Municipal Conference will be held March 31 at the Clarion Hotel and Conference Center, Northampton. Ned said that after checking with Kara he would post a FinCom meeting for March 27<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting adjourned at 10:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Ned Wolf, Secretary

At 10:00 pm FinC