

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee
May 7, 2013

Time: 7:03 pm

Place: Community Hall, Senior Center

Present: Gloria Fisher, Jeff Simmons, Don Freeman, Ned Wolf, Kathy Inman, and at 8:00 Kara Leistyna, Sheila Litchfield, Tom Lively, Brian DeVriese, and Bill Lattrell

Copies of the following documents were distributed:

- Agenda for the meeting 5/7/13 (Don)
- Minutes of the meeting 4/23/13 (Ned)
- Draft Estimated Tax Rate Calculation, Fiscal Year 2014 (as of 5/7/13) (Don)
- Memo to Selectboard and Finance Committee Members of Mohawk Trail Regional School District Member Towns on the subject 'MTRSD FY'14 Budget' (Bob Manners)

Members read and approved the minutes of the April 23rd meeting.

Don cautioned members about what can happen after talking with newspaper reporters. He cited a recent example of Heath's budget being reported in the 'Independent' as \$2,800,000 instead of \$2,008,000.

Members reviewed their concerns about the \$7,000 line item 89 in Article 3 for Roadside Mowing and the \$19,500 in Article 21 for a new mower. Jeff cited arithmetic showing that the person mowing would be doing 8 miles per week at the rate of \$67 per mile. Members asked why the \$3,500 left over from the winter highway budget couldn't be used for the Salary Summer Temporary Help.

Gloria reported on her calculations of Highway and Education percentages of the Heath Town Budget for FY13 and FY14. There has been a 0.4% increase in Highway spending and a 4.2% decrease in Education spending.

There was a consensus to leave the amount for dust control in the Highway Budget at \$6,000.

Members had questions about the proposed new position of Building Maintenance Coordinator: Why is this person to receive a COLA when it's a new position, and are as many as five extra hours needed to coordinate the maintenance of Sawyer Hall and the Community Hall while Mike takes care of the garages?

Don made a motion that the proposed \$7,000 in line 89 of Article 3 for Roadside Mowing be one of the "exceptions" in the Finance Committee's recommendation of Article 3. The motion passed unanimously. Don made a motion that the \$12,334.49 in line 45 of Article 3 be one of the Finance Committee's "exceptions" in recommending Article 3. The motion failed to pass by a vote of 2 ayes and 3 nays.

Members looked ahead to big items in the near future such as a highway truck, highway garage, and fire station. We don't know yet whether the Bray Road site could accommodate both a highway garage and fire station. Another site being considered is the present site with an expansion by excavating behind the transfer station. Kathy spoke of the need to communicate to voters that in this easy year they'll be voting for items which will be recurring expenses in the more difficult years. She will talk with Don about a statement to that effect at the Annual Town Meeting(ATM). Members discussed Don's Draft Estimated Tax Rate Calculation of \$19.15. The 89 cent tax rate decrease for FY2014 is 4.4% of FY 2013's certified tax rate of \$20.04. He will explain at the Annual Town Meeting(ATM) the factors affecting this calculation.

Members discussed the memo on the finances of the Mohawk Trail Regional School District (MTRSD) and noted the description of MTRSD's administrative budget as 'extremely top heavy' in comparison with that of a similar school district in Franklin County. Jeff said he would ask Bob Manners for more details.

At 7:55 Kara visited the Finance Committee to inform members that the Selectboard had voted to add \$300 for a new safe to Tax Collector Expense, line 28 of Article 3. She also said that there would be a new line item of \$1500 for Heath Fair Police Coverage. This amount will be subtracted from the Police Salaries line.

At 8:00 members suspended the meeting to reconvene upstairs with the Selectboard. Don reported on the committee's votes on possible exceptions in recommending Article 3. Regarding the COLA for the proposed position of Building Maintenance Coordinator, Sheila said that the new position should not have a full 3% COLA, just the 1.7% Social Security increase. Kara will remove the asterisk denoting a full COLA for that position. Jeff expressed reservations over having a separate line item for Heath Fair Police Coverage because it could lead to more such items such as for the Highway Department to haul items from the fairgrounds.

Sheila said that she would announce at the ATM a Finance Committee review of stipends.

The Finance Committee meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ned Wolf, Secretary