

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee  
January 21, 2014

Time: 7:00 pm

Place: Community Hall, Senior Center

Present: Gloria Fisher, Ned Wolf, Jeff Simmons, Don Freeman (Chair), and Kathy Inman, and at 8  
Kara Leistyna, Sheila Litchfield, Brian DeVriese, Bill Lattrell, and Mike Smith

The following documents were distributed to members:

- Agenda (Don)
- Minutes of the meeting 1/14/14 (Ned)
- FYBUDGET 01.21.14 Excel spreadsheet (Kara)
- Memo RE: Explanations for FY15 (Mike)
- Memo 'Question about uniforms' from Mike to the Selectboard (Mike)
- Vehicle Replacement List for highway and fire equipment (Mike)

The minutes of the January 14<sup>th</sup> meeting were read. Don made a motion seconded by Jeff to approve the minutes with amendments. The motion passed unanimously. Gloria made a motion seconded by Ned to reconsider the motion of January 14 calling for the transfer of \$1000 from the Reserve Fund. The motion passed unanimously. Gloria made a motion seconded by Ned to rescind the vote of January 7 to deny the Request to Transfer \$1000 from the Reserve Fund to the Police Vehicle Maintenance Fund. The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 2 with Jeff and Kathy voting nay. Gloria made a motion seconded by Ned to approve the Request to Transfer \$1000 from the Reserve Fund to the Police Vehicle Maintenance Fund. The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 2 with Jeff and Kathy voting nay. Members signed the Request to Transfer form

Turning to the Highway Department invoices, members expressed their appreciation for the work done particularly by Tracey in gathering and sending them. Members commented on the challenges of distinguishing maintenance from repairs. Members looked over a bar graph that Kathy had made based on Jeff's data on the percentage of the town's total budget going to the Highway Department in towns such as Heath, Charlemont, Leyden, and Lanesboro.

At 8:00 members adjourned to go upstairs and join the Selectboard meeting in progress. Mike discussed with members his suggestion of switching to an hourly pay schedule for firefighters. He noted that an hourly pay schedule is used in other towns. Mike said that he does not think such a change would encourage more residents to become volunteer fire fighters.

In discussing the Highway Department Budget members agreed that in light of demands over the last 2 years on the Winter Equip. Maint./Repair Account it should be increased by \$3000 with the expectation that this increase will be compensated for by a decrease in the Dump Transportation Account. Members asked Mike whether 2 vehicles are needed to make up for the loss of both the black Expedition and the white pickup truck. Mike said yes. He added that a used 4 wd vehicle with a plow

would be useful although such vehicles are hard to find. Jeff suggested the GSA website. Mike said he might also try OSD the source of the Expedition. Before Mike can bid at an OSD auction for a vehicle he will need a letter from the BOS stating the maximum he can bid. A possible means of funding the purchase of 2 used vehicles would be to put money in a Warrant Article, say \$10,000, leaving Mike to decide how much should go towards each vehicle. Another possibility is to transfer from Free Cash \$10,000 into the Machinery Maint./Supplies Account.

Members next considered the Vehicle Replacement Schedule. The current span of the Chevy 4500 truck is 2010 to 2015, a life span estimated when the used truck was obtained in 2010. Jeff asked Mike to estimate by how much the life of the grader has been extended following approximately \$14,000 in maintenance. Mike said that he could not quantify the life extension. Chains that deliver power to the rear wheels will at some point need maintenance. He said that the replacement date for the grader could be pushed ahead one year to 2016 when the machine will be fifteen years old.

Next members discussed the Continental/Mac fire engine with 2010 as its replacement year. Mike estimated the cost to replace it with a used vehicle to be \$60,000 - \$100,000. Jeff suggested that a fund be started for replacing the fire truck. Members favored this suggestion noting that an earmarked stabilization fund is a possibility. Members responded to Mike's report that the truck has significant electrical problems by suggesting that an estimate be obtained for new wiring. Brian recommended that money be designated in the FY15 budget for electrical work for the Continental/Mac fire engine. Finally, Mike noted the addition to the list of the Brush Bandit Chipper with replacement date 2016.

In the discussion of Mike's request for uniforms the members of the Finance Committee did not voice support. The Selectboard decided to add a new line item for \$1540 for uniforms in the Highway Department Budget.

Finally, members discussed with Mike the request for invoices. Don said that the committee is not looking for anything in particular but is seeking a better understanding of how money is being spent in one of the larger portions of the Town's budget. He said that without the information in invoices it is more difficult to justify a request for new equipment based on the quality of the maintenance. Members said they wanted more evidence on a need to replace rather than repair. Regarding the service logs, Mike agreed that the format he had chosen would be of little use to the committee. The discussion of logs will be continued.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ned Wolf, Secretary