

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee
April 29, 2014

Time: 7:02 pm

Place: Assessors' Office, Sawyer Hall

Present: Gloria Fisher, Ned Wolf, Don Freeman (chair), Kathy Inman at 7:15 pm, and Jeff Simmons at 7:30 pm; at 8:00 pm Kara Leistyna, Sheila Litchfield, Bill Lattrell, and Jan Ameen

Don made copies of the following available:

-Agenda (Don)

-Minutes of 4/22 meeting (Ned)

-Tax Levy Worksheet (4/29, Don)

On a thumb drive Kara made available the spreadsheet for Article 3 and the Warrant Articles for the May 10th Annual Town Meeting.

Members read the April 22nd minutes. Gloria made a motion seconded by Don to accept the minutes with corrections. The motion passed.

Next came the Tax Levy Worksheet. Don reported that as of April 29 the Estimated Tax Rate for FY15 is \$18.92 which is 1% under FY14's certified rate of \$19.12. The rate of \$18.92 reflects these changes since April 22: First, Tracey considers it safe to cut the line for Veterans' Benefits to \$4000. Even if a veteran were to move to Town on May 11, the Town would be able to pay for benefits. Second, we can use North Cemetery funds for mowing. Third, Sheila reports that the preschool can get along on \$10,000 instead of \$15,000. Fourth, Sheila reports that Mike has said that \$5000 will suffice for Roadside Mowing instead of \$7000.

Members discussed the Roadside Mowing line item in Article 3. They reviewed what had been spent on that item in previous years and welcomed the \$2000 reduction. Don made a motion seconded by Ned to approve the Roadside Mowing line item with the reduction from \$7000 to \$5000. The motion passed with 3 votes in favor and none opposed. After some discussion of Article 3 Gloria made a motion seconded by Ned to approve Article 3 in its entirety. The motion passed with 3 votes in favor and none opposed.

Then the committee discussed a meeting earlier in the day at the Heath School with superintendent Michael Buoniconti. Don reported that Michael said that the use of a town's school building for activities other than educating children may be possible without a financial penalty to the town. Suggestions for the Heath School include a library and a site for seniors. There were some reservations about possible costs to the Town.

In reviewing the Warrant Articles members discussed Article 32: To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$2000 from the Sale of Lots account for the purpose of maintaining a parcel of land known as the North Cemetery or take any action related thereto. A question was asked as to whether the Town

might be inheriting any liabilities. After some discussion Jeff made a motion seconded by Gloria to approve Article 32. The motion passed unanimously. In a discussion of what Don might say at the May 10th meeting to accompany the Tax Levy Worksheet the suggestion was made that he mention how Heath's tax rate compares with those of surrounding towns.

At 8:00 pm the committee adjourned to move next door and join the Selectboard meeting in progress. Sheila announced that Bill and Tim have been appointed to a committee to look at the sustainability of the Charlemont ambulance service. Jeff will be asked to serve as a consultant.

Members turned to a discussion of 'Pay-as-You-Throw' with Jan Ameen. In the SMART/PAYT program the Town would receive \$10 per household. Jan calculates that Heath would need about 16,000 plastic bags per year at a cost of 4 to 5 thousand dollars. We could charge \$1.50 to \$2.00 per bag. Tipping Fees would go away but not Transportation.

Kara noted that in Article 8 the new amount that would be transferred from the Overlay Surplus Account to the Compactor Replacement Project is \$9,959. The increase reflects an increase in the cost of the Compactor.

The committee adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ned Wolf, Secretary