

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee
November 18, 2014

Time: 7:00 pm

Place: Community Hall, downstairs

Present: Ned Wolf, Don Freeman, Gloria Fisher, Kathy Inman, Gary Singley, and at 7:30 Kara Leistyna, Sheila Litchfield, Brian DeVriese, Al Canali, and Art Schwenger

Visitor Gary Singley expressed concern about the FY2016 budget.

Don provided members with CD's titled '2014 Finance Committee Handbook'. He reported that Kristi wants long term borrowing for \$170,000 for the repairs following tropical storm Irene. He reported having attended meetings of the Long Range Planning Committee in the Mohawk Regional School District where the following proposals are being discussed:

- Pre-K in each school
- Weighted voting for all issues except school closings
- Allowing towns to decide certain issues on their own such as whether to have all classes for grades 4 – 6 in Colrain and all classes for grades 1 – 3 in Heath

Don spoke of attending a Wired West meeting in Charlemont. Is it worth making Heath liable for 900,000 to 1.3 million dollars so that if nothing goes wrong, high speed internet will be available in 3 to 5 years? Concerns were expressed about bureaucracy and the prospects of changing technology over a 3 to 5 year span.

Members read the minutes of the July 15th meeting. Gloria made a motion seconded by Don to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Members turned to the election of officers for the coming year. Both Don and Ned said they were willing to continue as chair and secretary respectively. Gloria made a motion seconded by Kathy to nominate Don as chair. The motion passed. Don made a motion seconded by Kathy to nominate Ned as secretary. The motion passed.

At 7:30 members adjourned to go upstairs and join the Selectboard meeting in progress. Al Canali and Art Schwenger spoke of difficulties in determining the number of housing units in Heath as Wired West tries to confirm the interest of at least forty percent of those units in subscribing to high speed internet. The Selectboard voted to bring up the question of whether Heath will become liable for 900,000 to 1.3 million dollars for gaining a connection to high speed internet at the next Annual Town Meeting.

Looking ahead to the joint Selectboard/Finance Committee meeting on December 2, Don said he would draft a memo to the departments.

Sheila said that Tracey has been suggesting that a revolving fund be set up for audits. Sheila mentioned the possibility of increased coverage for police and firemen. Brian suggested that annual payment for broadband might be put into stabilization.

With an eye on the report of the recent DOR review, Sheila spoke of the possibility of a new position, assistant assessor. This person would not be an assessor. The assessors would no longer choose their clerk. Sheila asked whether we should go to a 5 member board. She noted that the review said that assessors get big stipends.

Finance Committee members left at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ned Wolf, Secretary