

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee
January 13, 2015

Time: 7 pm

Place: Central Open Space, Heath Elementary School

Present: Don Freeman (chair), Ned Wolf, Jan Carr, Gloria Fisher, and Al Canali, and at 7:30 Kara Leistyna, Sheila Litchfield, Brian DeVriese, and Bob Bourke

Al provided members with copies of two sheets, one that gives estimates of the costs to each town of the various components of WiredWest's plan to extend fiber optic connectivity and the second that gives estimates of the interest and debt service for each town. The estimate of the cost to Heath for the first two years is just \$6,345 because the first tasks of the project will be covered by the state grant. In year 3 the interest and partial principal add up to a cost to Heath of \$54,567. Some of that cost could be covered by the earnings in towns which are "lit up" in the third year. Jan asked whether these estimates are based on all 43 towns complying. Al could not answer definitively. When asked about the fact that the number of households in Heath has been incorrectly stated to be over six hundred, Al said that securing at the annual town meeting the authority to borrow is a higher priority than contesting the number of Heath households. He said that a letter will be sent out at the end of January asking for \$49 from a household that decides to subscribe. Al thinks it is possible that the number of subscribers could exceed 40% of the number being used by WiredWest for the number of Heath households. Based on responses to an earlier mailing, Al thinks the subscription rate is now about 28%. Towns which are faster in reaching the 40% threshold will receive their service sooner.

At 7:30 members adjourned to the cafeteria to join the Selectboard meeting in progress. Sheila explained that principal Eric Glazer of the Heath School is trying to fix one of the 2 doors that serve as the front entrance to the school. At this time one of those doors does not open because of a rise in the concrete walkway in the approach to the door. Eric's plan is to use his school budget to hire someone to grind down the cement so that the door will open.

Al presented the Selectboard with the same sheets of financial data that he had given the Finance Committee. Don asked which of the 2 stated possibilities WiredWest will seek: a bond that is at 4% for 18 years or a 'qualified bond' at 4% for 30 years. Al could not answer definitively. Sheila requested that Al provide the Selectboard with the language needed for the warrant article. There was some discussion of organizing informational meetings in people's homes around town.

Members turned to a discussion of how the \$2 million matching grant for a highway/fire garage from the state might be used. Sheila said that the contract can be amended for \$3 million. Bob Bourke said that he will be meeting with the building committee to consider ways of reducing the \$4 million cost. It was noted that the \$0.3 million estimate for a salt shed is not included in the \$4 million. Brian suggested that officials of the Baker administration be contacted in an effort to get more funding for the building.

Members discussed the possibility of a regional fire station while acknowledging the continuing need for a fire station in Heath. There is a special town meeting scheduled for February 24.

At 9:02 members left the cafeteria to resume meeting in the central open space. Members discussed the need for a new truck body as well as for new tires for the grader. There was a consensus that if we support a new highway/fire garage, we cannot also afford a new fire truck.

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ned Wolf, Secretary