

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee
March 31, 2015

Time: 7:03 pm

Place: Assessors' Office, Sawyer Hall

Present: Gloria Fisher, Ned Wolf, Jeff Simmons, Jan Carr, and Don Freeman (chair), and at 8:00
Kara Leistyna, Sheila Litchfield, Brian DeVriese, Bill Lattrell, and Mike Smith

Copies of the following documents were given to members:

- Agenda (Don)
- Minutes of the March 24th meeting (Ned)
- Memo on 'Budgetary notes for the BOS to discuss' (Tracey)

Members read the minutes of the March 24th meeting. Don made a motion seconded by Jeff to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Regarding Wired West, Don reported that the amount of the loan that Heath voters will be asked to back up is \$1.42 million. He recalled that at the meeting in Shutesbury the Massachusetts Broadband Institute appeared to be trying to take control of the \$40 million grant from the state. He said that Bob Viarengo has informed him by e-mail that the making public of Wired West's business plan has been postponed until April 11.

Members discussed the public safety complex. Don said that the new estimate for the cost is \$3.6 million. That means that the Town would be responsible for \$1.8 million of which \$0.4 million would be contingency funds. The resulting increase in the tax rate would be 99 cents. One factor in the increase is a 3% increase in construction costs. Another is that due to certain fixed costs the shrinking in size of the original building by 25% does not translate into a reduction in cost of 25%.

Jeff suggested that there be a request for proposals. He said he knows of property in town other than the property now being considered that might become available. Members expressed concerns about volunteer firefighters leaving the department.

Turning to Free Cash, members noted that of the \$165,000 the amount needed for Highway Department overages will be at least \$40,000. Jeff suggested checking on news about Governor Baker's bill that would allow a town to borrow for overages.

At 8:00 pm members adjourned to join the Selectboard meeting in progress. Members reviewed the expected costs of the compactor project. Of the \$19,959 allocated last year for the project \$9,959 was used up. Jeff suggested that students from Franklin Technical School might work on the new shed needed for the attendant as well as the shed's wiring. Art will be asked to contact the school. The total cost for this year to complete the compactor project was estimated to be \$64,980. There was a consensus that the town could not afford this amount in FY2016. Sheila asked Kara to ask Jan Ameen

whose assistance is already needed in estimating the cost of the compactor footprint whether the paving, which is estimated to cost \$58,280, can be deferred until next year. If it turns out that we are required to do the paving this year, this expense will be revisited at the meeting April 14.

Mike spoke of bills totaling \$18,945 that are yet to be paid from the Machinery Maintenance Account. He will ask if they can remain unpaid until May 8. Also, the winter accounts have been overdrawn by about \$21,000. The broken plow on the grader will require about \$5000 to fix. Mike explained that replacing Swamp Road's beaver defense system last year has led to a current balance of \$215.25 in the Wildlife Damage Control Account. Tracey is holding an invoice of \$1065 to be paid from that account.

Members noted that Tracey reports a balance of just \$2.00 in the Town Garage Maintenance/Utilities Account. She is holding an electric bill for \$549.34 which is through March. Don made a motion seconded by Jeff to approve a Request to Transfer \$549.34 from the Reserve Fund to the Town Garage Maintenance/Utilities Account to pay the electric bill. The motion passed unanimously. Members signed the Transfer Request.

Jeff suggested that an escrow account be created to receive any profits from Wired West. Sheila said she liked the idea, and that a revolving fund could be set up. It is not necessary to set up the fund right away.

Sheila said that she has learned that the town will have to fund the afternoon preschool.

The Finance Committee adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ned Wolf, Secretary

