

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee
April 21, 2015

Time: 7:09 pm

Place: Sawyer Hall

Present: Don Freeman (chair), Jan Carr, Gloria Fisher, and Ned Wolf, and at 7:30 Kara Leistyna, Sheila Litchfield, Bill Lattrell, School Committee members Budge Litchfield and Ken Rocke, and Mohawk Business Administrator Michael Kociela

Absent: Jeff Simmons

The minutes of the April 14th meeting will be deferred until the April 28th meeting.

Don said that he and Tracey discussed the process of getting the tax rate set. He said that it seems too late to resolve the way in which the Accountant determines local receipts. He and Tracey agreed to a meeting of the whole financial team late in the summer.

Members discussed the possible uses of Free Cash. It appears that approximately \$60,000 of the \$165,000 in Free Cash will be needed for various Highway Department accounts. As much as \$50,000 may be used to lower taxes. The total for the stabilization funds for parks and recreation and for audit is \$6000. That leaves \$49,000.

At 7:30 members adjourned to join the Selectboard meeting in progress. Sheila said that what's in the school assessment for pre-school is for mornings only. There is presently pre-school activity at the Heath School Monday – Friday mornings. Pre-school is available to a given family for just 3 mornings a week. Sheila said that the Heath School loses children because of this. The \$15,000 in Article 3 is FY2016 money for afternoon pre-school in Heath.

Budge, Ken, and Michael discussed the budget of the Mohawk Regional School District. Gloria asked Michael about the request for \$90,000 for a bus. Michael said that the high school and middle school like to have a fleet of 3 buses for field trips athletic events and other activities for which the cost of renting a bus would eventually exceed the cost of owning one.

Members noted that if the school budget has already been defeated by the May 9th Annual Meeting, Heath could pass over it along with the WiredWest article.

At 8:10 Michael, Budge, and Ken left the meeting.

Members reviewed the Warrant Articles. Regarding Article 4, Kara will find an account from which to take the \$849.75 for the Wildlife Damage Control account. But Articles 5 - 10 require the transfer into various Highway Department accounts of approximately \$55,000. Tracey has a few accounts she wants to close. Still, the Free Cash Account will have to be a source of funds in these articles.

Don requested that Kara keep the articles for the School and Town Buildings Capital Improvement Stabilization Account and the Large Equipment/Vehicle Replacement Stabilization Account until we can tell more clearly whether or not we can recommend increasing those accounts. Kara said that over \$500,000 is available this year for Chapter 90. She said that Heath is on the list at Franklin Technical School for work on the construction of a new shed for the transfer station attendant and for the corresponding wiring. There was a consensus that Mike be asked whether any of the Chapter 90 money could be used for paving at the transfer station.

Members discussed the following Articles: Rowe School, Regional Agreement, Revolving Fund for Animal Control Officer, authorizing town departments to apply for grants, accepting Chapter 90 money, establishing revolving funds, 5 year recycling contract, and municipal safety complex.

Don made a motion seconded by Gloria to recommend the article for Rowe's becoming a 7 – 12 member of the Mohawk Regional School District. The motion passed unanimously.

Don made a motion seconded by Ned to recommend the article for changing the Regional Agreement to allow such things as 2 towns agreeing that grades 1 – 3 will be in one town's school while grades 4 – 6 will be in the other town's school. The motion passed unanimously.

Don made a motion seconded by Gloria to recommend the article for transferring funds from the revolving fund for the Animal Control Officer to the Heath Free Public Library. The motion passed unanimously.

Don made a motion seconded by Gloria to recommend the article for authorizing all town departments and boards with prior permission of the Selectboard to apply for any new state or federal grants. The motion passed unanimously.

Don made a motion seconded by Gloria to recommend the article for the town's accepting Chapter 90 monies for road improvements. The motion passed unanimously.

Don made a motion seconded by Gloria to recommend the article for revolving funds for Hearings, Animal Control, Board of Health, Council on Aging Meals, Board of Health Vaccine Program, and Recycling. The motion passed unanimously.

Gloria made a motion seconded by Ned to recommend the article for a 5 year recycling contract. The motion passed unanimously.

Kara will check as to whether the article for the municipal safety complex should authorize borrowing up to \$1.8 million or \$2.0 million.

Don made a motion seconded by Gloria to recommend the article for a municipal safety complex. The motion passed unanimously.

Gloria made a motion seconded by Jan to recommend the article for acquiring the land at the proposed site of the municipal safety complex. The motion passed unanimously. Because the seller cannot walk the land with Town officials until early June, this Article will have to be continued.

There was a consensus to talk with Jim Drawe to determine whether he will have a WiredWest business plan by May 9th.

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ned Wolf, Secretary