

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee  
April 28, 2015

Time: 7:03 pm

Place: Sawyer Hall

Present: Ned Wolf, Gloria Fisher, Don Freeman (chair), Jan Carr, and at 7:15 Kara Leistyna, Sheila Litchfield, Brian DeVriese, Bill Lattrell, and and Betty Nichols , and at 7:45 Bob Viarengo and Heather Row

Absent: Jeff Simmons

Copies of the following documents were made available:

- Agenda (Don)
- Minutes of the April 21<sup>st</sup> meeting (Ned)
- Warrant Articles for the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) May 9<sup>th</sup> (Don)
- Partial list of transfers to be voted on at the May 9<sup>th</sup> ATM (Tracey)

Members read the minutes of the April 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. After some discussion Gloria made a motion seconded by Jan to approve the minutes with corrections. The motion passed unanimously.

At 7:15 members adjourned to join the meeting of the Select Board in progress. Tax Collector Betty Nichols has found in her research that comparable positions in other towns receive more pay. She suggested a way to proceed that involves the demand fees which yearly amount to about \$3800 but which do not count as income towards her retirement. Voters at the May 9<sup>th</sup> ATM could vote for a bylaw that would turn the fees over to the Town. Then in Article 3 Betty's salary could be increased by a comparable amount. The demand fees can be kept at \$5 this year and increased next year. After some discussion Don made a motion seconded by Gloria to increase the Tax Collector's salary to \$15,000 and to turn the demand fees over to the Town. The motion passed unanimously. The Select Board and Finance Committee expressed appreciation to Betty for sharing her research. Betty left at 7:45.

The discussion turned to broadband. Sheila displayed a mailing she and others in town have received from Crocker. The message from Crocker is that Heath has options. Sheila said that receiving 2 different warrant articles from MBI and Wired West is cause for concern. More concern was expressed over the lack of a business plan from Wired West to refer to at the May 9<sup>th</sup> ATM. Heather said that Wired West has not yet determined the cost of connecting those customers in excess of the forty percent level. There was a consensus that the Wired West article be taken off the Warrant of the May 9<sup>th</sup> ATM and that there be an STM to take up the issue later. Al will be asked not to invite Jim Drawe to the ATM. Al will be acknowledged for his continued good work.

Members turned to the Warrant and discussed the transfers in Articles 4 -15: \$849.85 from the Overlay Surplus Account to the Wildlife Damage Control Account; \$4,000 from the Feasibility Study SH/CH account to the Town Garage Maintenance & Utilities account; \$30,000 from the Free Cash account to the Highway Machinery Maintenance account; \$1,993.95 from Overlay Surplus, Sawyer Hall Upgrades

2012 to the Salary Winter Highway Wages account; \$12,642.14 from Free Cash account to the Winter Equipment Maint./Repair account; \$6,450.86 from the Board of Health Permitting/Insp. Revolving Fund account to the Winter Salt/Sand & Other account; \$4,350 from Treasurer Tax Title & Collection account to the Winter Hired Services account; \$1,321.16 from Sawyer Hall Upgrades 2012 account to the Salary Winter Temporary Help account; \$783.50 from Police Vehicle Maint. Expense account to the Salaries Police Dept. account; \$1,500 from the Code Red account to the Community Hall Maintenance & Utilities account; \$5,140.00 from Feasibility Study SH/CH account to the Feasibility Study Municipal Complex account; \$322.50 from Treasurer Tax Title & Collection account to the Hired Equipment/Services account for the payment of a bill of a prior fiscal year consisting of parts delivery charge incurred in FY14. Don made a motion seconded by Jan to approve Articles 4-15. The motion passed unanimously.

Members discussed Article 25 which would result in transferring \$50,000 in Free Cash to reduce taxes in FY16. Don made a motion seconded by Jan to approve Article 25. The motion passed unanimously.

Members turned to Article 22 which would result in transferring \$685.83 from the Revolving Fund for Animal Control Officer for the use of the Heath Free Public Library. Don made a motion seconded by Jan to approve Article 22.

The discussion turned to transferring funds from Free Cash to start stabilization funds for Parks & Recreation (\$2,000) and the Audit (\$4,000) as well as to increase by \$15,000 each of the existing stabilization funds for School & Town Buildings Capital Improvement and Large Equipment/Vehicle Replacement. Don made a motion seconded by Jan to approve these 4 transfers. The motion passed unanimously.

Next the Sheila stated that Chapter 90 money cannot be used for the paving that is part of the Compactor Project. Kara reported that \$65,940 would be needed for the project. There was a consensus that this is too large a sum for a single year and that borrowing should be used. Don made a motion seconded by Jan to approve borrowing \$65,940 for the Compactor Project. The motion passed unanimously.

Regarding the borrowing for the municipal safety complex, Don will check the contract of the state grant and will call the people recommended to Kara as possible financial advisors.

As for the article on acquiring the land on which to build the safety complex, it will be left on the Warrant with a blank for the required funds.

After a discussion of COLA's there was a consensus to recommend a COLA of 1.7% which is what the FRCOG is using. Gloria made a motion seconded by Jan to approve a COLA of 1.7%. The motion passed unanimously.

At 9:20 members adjourned to return to the Assessors' Office for discussion of Articles 16 – 19 and 21.

The Articles 16-18 and 21 are for the \$772,079.00 Mohawk Trail Regional School District Operating Assessment, the \$7,157.00 Mohawk Trail Regional School District Operating Assessment, the borrowing of \$250,700 for repair work to the Mohawk Trail Regional Middle & High School, and the \$73,037.00 for the Franklin County Technical School Operating Assessment. Don made a motion seconded by Jan to recommend Articles 16-18 and 21. The motion passed unanimously.

Then members discussed Article 19 for \$90,000 for a school bus for the District. Some concerns were expressed about this expense. Don made a motion seconded by Ned to recommend Article 19. The motion passed with 3 ayes and 1 nay.

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ned Wolf, Secretary