

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee
May 5, 2015

Time: 7:02 pm

Place: Assessors' Office, Sawyer Hall

Present: Ned Wolf, Gloria Fisher, Jan Carr, Don Freeman (chair), at 7:15 Jeff Simmons, and at 7:30 Kara Leistyna, Sheila Litchfield, Brian DeVriese, and Bill Lattrell with Doug Wilkins at 8:45

Copies of the following documents were available to members:

- April 14th minutes (Gloria)
- April 28th minutes (Ned)
- Agenda (Don)
- Tax Levy Worksheet, Fiscal Year 2016 (as at 05/05/15)
- Memo 'Financial Advisor for Public Safety Complex (PSC)' (Don)

Members read the minutes of the April 14th meeting prepared by Gloria with assistance from Jan. Don made motion seconded by Ned to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously. Members read the minutes of the April 28th meeting prepared by Ned. Gloria made a motion seconded by Jan to approve the minutes with corrections. The motion passed unanimously.

Jeff arrived at 7:15.

Members discussed the Tax Levy Worksheet, FY2016 prepared by Don. The estimated FY2016 Tax Rate is \$20.93, a 97 cents or 4.9% increase compared with FY2015's certified tax rate of \$19.96. The amount used for local receipts after consulting with Tracey is \$125,000. The assessment for Franklin County Technical School is up by \$31,504 from last year due to increased enrollment.

The discussion shifted to Don's memo reporting on his phone conversation on May 4th with Lori Lombard of Eastern Bank in Boston. The conversation can serve as a template for conversations with officials from other institutions. It covered topics such as the steps in reimbursement, securing a Financial Advisor and bond counsel, and the Select Board's appointing a person for the Town to oversee the financial aspects of the project and report to them. After some discussion Gloria made a motion seconded by Jeff to nominate Don as the Town's financial liaison person recommended by Lori Lombard. The motion passed unanimously.

At 7:30 members adjourned to join the Select Board meeting in progress. Members reviewed Article 3 taking time to question any increases. The increase in line 6 of the Town Coordinator's salary is due to both a leap year and a 1.7% COLA. The salary of the Office Assistant in line 7 was reduced in FY2015. For FY2016 it was increased to \$905.04. This will fund such needs as coverage if the Town Coordinator goes on a 2 week vacation.

The \$50 increase in line 10 for the Finance Committee expense account is to allow for attendance at regional meetings. The changes in lines 13 and 14 are due to taking \$150 from Town Accountant Support and adding it to Town Accountant Expense. The salary of \$11,039.60 in line 17 is needed for the position of Assistant Assessor recommended by the Department of Revenue. The position has a new job description and is grade 15 for 520 hours at \$21.23 per hour. The \$1000 increase in line 19 for Assessors' Expense is to cover the training of new assessors. The increased cost of software accounts for the \$250 jump in line 20 for Assessors Software.

The salary increase of \$4,215.50 in line 26 for the Tax Collector is in keeping with the average salary of \$14,644.50 that similar towns are paying. The increase is partly offset by having demand fees re-directed from the Tax Collector to the general fund. This can be done if voters approve a corresponding change in the bylaws. Fees can be increased from the current \$5 to \$10 by means of an article on next year's warrant if voters approve.

The 5% increase of \$900 in the Sawyer Hall-Maint./Utilities Fund in line 43 is for an increase for utilities plus Emergency Alert monitoring through DetectoGuard. The \$5,400 increase in Town Garages-Maint./Utilities in line 44 is to cover an increase in utilities. In line 46 the 5% increase in the Comm. Hall-Maint./Utilities Account is for utilities, plus Emergency Alert monitoring through DetectoGuard. For line 47 there is an additional \$1,800 to cover the mowing of the public portion of the North Cemetery. This maintenance began last year.

The 5% increase for Insurance/Prop/Casualty/Workmen's Comp follows the suggestion of the Massachusetts Inter-Local Insurance Association.

The components of the \$9,411.48 for the FRCOG Assessment in line 52 are as follows: \$5,187 Regional Service and Statutory Assessment, \$2,058 Cooperative Purchasing, Statutory Assessment, \$350, \$150 REPC, Police and Fire Communication \$1,666.48.

The increase of \$1,521 in line 55 for Police Department – Salaries includes \$1,115.80 for 70 hours of Heath Fair coverage plus a COLA of 1.7%.

The increase of \$10,000 in Machinery Maint./Supplies in line 83 is to keep pace with inflation and the needs of aging vehicles. The intent is to reduce the STM dependency that has occurred over the past 10 years. Preventive Maintenance in line 84 is a new line at \$20,000 for pro-active maintenance to extend the life of equipment including automatic lubrication systems, sandblasting and painting dump bodies and plows etc. The Finance Committee will monitor this line for possible adjustments.

The \$1,250 increase in line 92 for Winter Hired Services is due to the increased cost of those services.

In line 98 the Dump Transportation and Tipping have been combined upon recommendation of the Solid Waste District and the Highway Superintendent. The Covanta contract, which expired last year, was not renewed.

The \$2,114.08 in line 101 for Uniforms is the same as the FY2015 budget after \$574.08 was approved as a transfer to this line in February.

The \$250 in line 102 for License Renewals covers license renewals and continuing education requirements for the highway crew per MA Dept. of Public Safety. Licenses are required for employment. After a person is employed by the Town, license renewals will be reimbursed 100% with proper paperwork.

The \$1,467.36 increase in line 113 for the Town Nurse's Expense covers supplies, equipment, and mileage reimbursement.

In line 117 for the Veterans' Service Center there is a 3% increase in the assessment. Heath now belongs to the Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans' Services District. The \$350 increase in line 119 for the War Memorial Committee Expense is to help prepare a fundraising program to include mailings, etc.

The \$466 increase in line 126 is for the increased assessment for CW Mars Library.

The \$500 for line 127 is new. This is for Parks and Recreation Commission Expense. The plan is to maintain the basketball court and to build up some money to implement design elements from the Conway School study. Playground equipment needs repair. There is a weekly yoga class.

The \$1,500 in line 144 covers interest payments for short term loans. The Town will borrow short term for STRAP Grant, re-surfacing Route 8A. The increase for Health Insurance in line 149 is due to a 1.5% jump in the rates. The \$10,000 for Special Projects in line 153 includes mitigating frozen pipes at the Community Hall, storm windows at the Community Hall, and repair of water pipes at Highway Garage.

The \$15,000 for Pre-School Support covers afternoon pre-school in Heath.

Don reported on his phone conversation with Lori Lombard of Eastern Bank in Boston. The Finance Committee announced its nominating Don to oversee financial aspects of the Public Safety Complex project and to report to the Select Board.

Jeff suggested that a Technology Stabilization Fund be set up.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ned Wolf, Secretary

