

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee
February 2, 2016

Time: 7pm

Place: Assessors' Office. Sawyer Hall

Present: Ned Wolf, Gloria Fisher, Jan Carr, Don Freeman (chair), and at 7:30 Kara Leistyna,
Sheila Litchfield, Brian DeVriese, Bill Lattrell, and Ken Gilbert

Absent: Jeff Simmons

Copies of the following documents were available:

-Agenda (Don)

-Minutes of the January 19th meeting (Ned)

-Cherry sheet (state)

Members reviewed the minutes of the January 19th meeting and recommended that there be mention in the second paragraph of consideration being given to rescinding borrowing authority for the \$4,000,000. Also, members favored adding 'Treasurer' to the list in the fourth paragraph of budget requests to be discussed with the Selectboard. Gloria made a motion seconded by Don to approve the minutes with the recommended changes. The motion passed unanimously.

Members reviewed the total amounts in Stabilization, about \$328,000, and in Free Cash, \$144,543. At 7:28 Gloria made a motion seconded by Jan to join the Selectboard meeting in progress and adjourn at the end of that meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Members discussed the proposed budget of the Fire Department. The Incentives line is up from \$6000 to \$7000. Ken hopes the increase will attract more volunteers. The stipend for the Chief is up from \$4,266 to \$5,250. Members said that the increase looks closer to being proportional to the amounts that other towns pay the Fire Chief. Members considered a greater increase. They noted that this is a year of greater budget pressures. Ken said that although he does not expect his tenure as chief to be lengthy, he would like with gradual increments of the chief's stipend to make the position more attractive to his successor.

Ken spoke of there being 5 sets of breathing equipment that are not compliant. He said that if a firefighter were to die at a fire while using one of those sets, he and the town would be liable. A new set of breathing equipment costs between 6 and 7 thousand dollars. He said that in the coming years replacement air bottles which cost \$1500 a piece will be needed. There was a consensus that the budget line labeled 'turnout gear' should be replaced with a line labeled 'personal protective equipment'. Ken said that he expects to hear whether his grant application for breathing equipment is successful in 1 to 6 months. Members discussed the possibility of using Free Cash or Stabilization for breathing equipment.

Ken said that the coming year will be a trial year for 2 new lines: Fire Department Maintenance and Utilities at \$3933 and Emergency Vehicle Maintenance at \$1500. The \$3933 was obtained by taking last year's amount of \$5,317.24 for LPG for both Highway and Fire, dividing by 2 to get \$2,658.62, and then adding \$939.43 for the estimated cost of electricity plus \$334.95 for minor repairs.

The discussion turned to whether or not Heath is over its debt limit. In the recent calculation that showed the town to be \$9K under its debt limit the amount of borrowing for the transfer station's compactor was not included. With that included the calculation shows Heath to be \$35K above its debt limit. Sheila said that a meeting is needed of the town's financial team. Kristi will be asked to come up with a way to retire \$35K in debt. Members said they wanted Joe Markarian of the FRCOG to be there. We need to assess the risk of rescinding borrowing authority for the \$4,000,000. Representative Paul Mark plans to introduce legislation to restore funding for the safety complex, but we may not know the outcome of that until September. We need to determine the feasibility of rescinding the borrowing authority from \$4,000,000 to \$2,000,000.

Sheila announced that on February 11 Lieutenant Governor Polito will visit Heath for the signing of the Community Compact. The signing makes Heath eligible for state aid. As part of the compact Heath agrees to implement 3 'best practices' which are financial management, energy and environment, and a shared diesel mechanic.

Finally, Sheila said that it looks as though the town won't get a crew from Franklin County Technical School for constructing the attendant's shed at the transfer station.

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ned Wolf, Secretary