

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee
March 29, 2016

Time: 7:00 pm

Place: Main Office Room, Sawyer Hall

Present: Gloria Fisher, Ned Wolf, Jan Carr, Don Freeman (chair), Kara Leistyna, Sheila Litchfield, Brian DeVriese, Bill Lattrell, Ken Rocke; at 7:15 Al Canali; at 7:30 Kris Nartowicz and Clark Rowell

Absent: Jeff Simmons

Ken said that he opposes one of the three amendments that have been proposed for the Regional Agreement of the Mohawk Trail Regional School District. It is the amendment which would change the procedure whereby an amendment to the Regional Agreement with the exception of closing a school passes. Presently, the amendment has to be accepted by all the towns to pass. The proposed change is that acceptance by two-thirds of the towns would suffice for passage. Ken objects that this change would undercut the original agreement. Also, he is concerned how a two-thirds vote of the School Committee 5 or 6 years from now might lead to a policy unhelpful to the Heath School. The Selectboard supported Ken's position and voted not to recommend the amendment.

At 7:15 the Finance Committee left with Al Canali and reconvened in the Assessors' Office where they discussed the amendment to the Regional Agreement. Gloria made a motion seconded by Jan that the Finance Committee does not recommend the amendment that would reduce the threshold except for school closings for the passage of changes to the Regional Agreement. The motion passed unanimously.

Al then spoke about 'Basic Provisions of a Proposed Plan A2 for Wired West' which Don had forwarded to members by e-mail. Al explained that Plan A2 intends to meet the main objections of MBI to Plan A by having towns own their local infrastructure, allowing towns to withdraw from Wired West with their local infrastructure, and by not allowing Wired West to mortgage or encumber that infrastructure. Al spoke of a meeting Saturday in Northampton where town officials would craft and sign a letter to the governor. Jan suggested that the letter not be "from Wired West". Al said that Wired West would not be mentioned in the letter.

At 7:28 Gloria made a motion seconded by Ned that the Finance Committee return to the Selectboard meeting until the conclusion of the discussion with Clark Rowell whereupon the committee would adjourn. The motion passed unanimously. Don informed Kara of the Finance Committee's vote against the proposed amendment that would change the procedure for passage of changes to the Regional Agreement. Kara said that on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant she would include a note that the amendment is not recommended by the Selectboard and is not recommended by the Finance Committee.

In a discussion of the Town's borrowing capacity Clark Rowell recommended that Heath send representatives to the office of the Massachusetts Fiscal Oversight Board (MFOB) in Boston to explain

our situation and request that the Town's debt limit be raised to 5 or 6 million dollars. Clark said that his services come with a fee. He assured us that the matter can be settled before the end of the fiscal year. The Selectboard voted to engage Clark Rowell's services.

Sheila said that the Selectboard plans to talk about the COLA and the salary review during the Selectboard meeting on April 12.

The Finance Committee adjourned at 8:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ned Wolf, Secretary