

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee
May 31, 2016

Time: 7:31 pm

Place: Assessors' Office, Sawyer Hall

Present: Gloria Fisher, Ned Wolf, Don Freeman (chair), Jeff Simmons, Jan Carr ;and at 7:30 Kara Leistyna, Sheila Litchfield, Brian DeVriese, Robyn Provost-Carlson, and Joe Markarian

Members read the minutes of the May 17th meeting. Gloria made a motion seconded by Jan to approve the minutes as corrected. The motion passed unanimously.

Members discussed a recommendation from Kris that the Town use approximately \$28,000 in Free Cash to pay off the loan for the police cruiser. Jeff said that if voters were to choose to do that there would have to be a repeal of the line item in Article 3 from a previous Annual Town Meeting guaranteeing funds for the police cruiser.

At 7:53 Don made a motion seconded by Jan to join the Selectboard meeting in progress and adjourn when the Finance Committee's business is done. The motion passed unanimously.

Members discussed broadband. The possibility of Heath's joining several other nearby towns to form their own network was mentioned. The person recently named the implementation liaison for the 'last mile' broadband project in Western Massachusetts is Bill Ennen. Members anticipate a meeting in which people from Heath can talk with Bill.

Sheila introduced Joe Markarian as someone who can guide the Town in capital planning. Joe spoke of an arrangement where there is a Capital Planning Committee, and no proposal can come up at the Annual Town Meeting without first coming before that committee. In the fall at the beginning of the budget cycle there would go out to each department head a second request that would be strictly for capital items. There would have by that time been a statement defining 'capital items', such as "costing more than \$5,000 and having a lifetime at least 3 or maybe 5 years".

Joe said that a bylaw could be used to give all the details of setting up the committee. The calendar for the Capital Planning Committee should mirror the operating budget process. The committee should demand information with each request and refuse to consider a request unless that information is provided. Joe said that no promises should be made until the committee has talked with the last person involved. It is important to prioritize the requests.

There were questions about what appeared to be the diverting of important information from the Selectboard and Finance Committee to another group. Joe insisted that the Selectboard and Finance Committee would be aware of important information. Members said that it would be important for Heath to have a trial run.

Joe said that his promoting capital planning emerged from Heath's participating with 13 other towns in a community compact project. He said that he will put something together after interacting with Kara. He said that there will be another round of community compact projects and that we might think about what we want to do. Members thanked him for his help.

There was a discussion of what loan or loans might best be paid off using Free Cash. The possibilities include paying off \$28,000 for the police cruiser, \$53,000 for the McCloud property, or \$55,000 for the safety complex land. Don asked about the rate of interest on the McCloud property loan. Upon learning that the 4.5% rate is the highest members said that that loan should be paid off first. Jeff made a motion seconded by Gloria to use Free Cash to pay off the loan for the McCloud property. The motion passed unanimously. Jeff asked how paying off that loan would affect the earlier town meeting action authorizing the loan.

Sheila said that on Monday June 13th there will be a Selectboard meeting to approve the Warrant for the Special Town Meeting on September 28th.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf, Secretary