

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee  
November 8, 2012

Time: 7:04 pm

Place: Assessors' Office Sawyer Hall until 7:55 pm, Community Hall at 8:00 pm

Present: Ned Wolf, Gloria Fisher, Kathy Inman, and Jeff Simmons

Absent: Don Freeman

Copies of the following documents were available:

-Agenda (Ned)

-Minutes of the October 30<sup>th</sup> meeting (Ned)

-Budget Preparation Calendar for FY14 (Kara)

-Data on Yearly Expenditures for Heat and Electricity in Sawyer Hall and the Community Hall (Tracey)

The minutes of the October 30<sup>th</sup> meeting were read and approved with emendations. There was a discussion of the Budget Preparation Calendar for FY14. Members agreed to recommend to the BOS that April 9 be the deadline for budget requests. As for the conduct of joint FinCom and BOS meetings, members recommended that both groups have clearly thought out approaches to issues on which they stay focused at each meeting. Members looked at the sheet of data giving expenditures for heat and electricity for Sawyer Hall and the Community Hall for FY03 – FY12. Gloria said it would be helpful to know the number of kilowatt hours of electricity used in each building for each year. Kathy questioned the \$154.44 cost of electricity in FY11 for the Community Hall. More explanation of the data would be helpful. Members expressed interest in having the corresponding data for the fire and highway garages.

Turning to the maintenance of Town buildings, Kathy suggested that there be 5 and 10 year plans. Jeff said there should be long range plans for the roads as well. Ned mentioned the statewide effort by the MMA to increase the funding for Chapter 90 from 200 to 300 million dollars. Putting pressure on our legislators is a way we can help.

At 7:55 there was a motion unanimously approved to suspend the meeting and resume at 8:00 in the Community Hall with the BOS. Mike Smith spoke of being hand-delivered a letter on Tuesday, October 30<sup>th</sup> by the Massachusetts Highway Department. The letter expresses concern about the integrity of the upstream side guardrail of the 8A bridge in the Dell. The letter directs him to secure the guardrail or take measures to direct traffic away from it. Mike also reported on a recent visit by a highway consultant who examined the Sadoga, Sumner Stetson 8A, and Dell 8A bridges. He said that while a new deck and beams would be sufficient to repair each of the first two bridges, the repair of the Dell 8A bridge would require new abutments.

Tom recommended that the Town Counsel be consulted about whether the Town's liability has increased as a result of receiving the letter. Sheila spoke of the urgency of bringing the bridge to the attention of Senator Downing.

Mike said that he will look into securing the guardrail. He explained that the program under which Sadoga Bridge is scheduled to be repaired by 2015 does not apply to a bridge on a federal road such as 8A. Next he informed the BOS that he is looking for a used pickup truck to replace the '89 Dodge. A possible source of funding is the Machinery Maintenance Account. When asked by Sheila about any new equipment that he would be requesting for next year, Mike said that he will ask for a new mower costing about \$22,000.

The discussion of the budget calendar began at 8:55. Gloria asked how people outside of Heath will know of the March 5<sup>th</sup> deadline for submitting Articles for the ATM and STM Warrants. Sheila replied that they would have to phone the Town Coordinator. Ned said that the FinCom wanted any budget request to be made by April 9 for there to be a hearing. Sheila said that the BOS would prefer that not be written into the calendar because it might suggest that there is 'wobble room' to the clearly stated January 2 due date for FY14 budget requests. Jeff asked how departments that submit no request for FY14 would be handled. Sheila said that Kara would phone them on January 3. A department submitting no request would likely be budgeted as in FY13. Jeff noted that any tweaking of the calendar this year would likely complete the 2-year process of fine tuning. He made a motion that the Finance Committee approves the FY14 Budget Preparation Calendar. The motion passed unanimously.

Sheila said that in a conversation with Don he had consented to her chairing joint budget meetings. They agreed on the value of focusing on just the issues of a given meeting and saw an opportunity for the Finance Committee to organize its thoughts in the 7 to 8 time slot. Don has requested that any information that the BOS gets be passed quickly to the Finance Committee. There is agreement that only Kara will make changes and that she will e-mail documents to everyone in advance of meetings. It may be helpful for each FinCom member to have a thumbdrive.

Ned spoke of the FinCom's interest in Capital Projects as a way in which each year a certain amount could be spent on building maintenance. We see an opportunity this year to do something about insulation and a new furnace for Sawyer Hall and inside storm windows for the Community Hall. Brian said that the BOS is responsible for building maintenance and that a process of Special Projects already exists. Sheila mentioned that capital improvements is one of the topics for discussion at the joint meeting on December 11. Kathy suggested 5 and 10 year maintenance plans for buildings. Brian said that there should be information from the feasibility studies that helps to guide the Town's spending on maintenance.

Sheila spoke of the coming joint meeting on December 4 to finalize the memo to be sent to the departments.

The Finance Committee adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ned Wolf, Secretary