

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee  
March 26, 2013

Time: 7:07 pm

Place: The Community Hall, Senior Center

Present: Don Freeman, Gloria Fisher, Jeff Simmons, Kathy Inman, Ned Wolf, and at 7:30 Kara Leistyna, Sheila Litchfield, Tom Lively, Brian Devries, and Hilma Sumner

The minutes of the March 12 meeting were read and approved with emendations.

Members discussed possible projects as listed in Sheila's March 18 e-mail to the committee. Regarding the proposal to buy new software for the Tax Collector and the Assessors, members agreed that an outside expert possibly from the DOR should be called in to study the situation.

The discussion turned to the Town Clerk's request that her 15 hours per week be increased to 20 hours per week. Members spoke of similarly sized towns in western Massachusetts whose town clerk works only 8 to 10 hours per week and receives 8 to 10 thousand dollars per year.

At 7:30 members suspended the meeting to go upstairs and join the Selectboard for Hilma's budget hearing. Hilma said that she is no longer requesting an increase in hours. She continues to request that her pay be increased from \$17.35 an hour to \$20.00 an hour because of the level of responsibility of her job and its supervisory nature at election time. She was asked about the progress of the project of compiling the by-laws. She said that in looking back to 1900 she still has to read the documents for 1900-1920. She will later consider those for 1785 – 1900. So far she has made a list that includes the accepting of not just by-laws but also MGL's and important dates such as that of the Annual Town Meeting.

In the discussion of town clerks' pay the Finance Committee told the Selectboard its findings for similarly sized towns in western Massachusetts. Sheila suggested that other towns be contacted for data on their pay for town clerks.

On the issue of Assessors' software Tom reported having talked with Betty who says that the CAMA software with a bridge that she has been using has a backup if anything were to happen to her. Members agreed that someone from the Division of Local Services of the Department of Revenue should be asked to come and assess the software situation involving parcels and tax collecting. Betty has expressed interest in discussing software and other tax collecting issues with the Selectboard.

On the possibility of getting new poles and a fiber optic line to the Fire Department and EOC Brian urged that the Town maintain the satellite connection through the Town garage.

There is a Council on Aging request for \$3000 for a more nutritious and appetizing meals for seniors program. The \$3000 would be seed money.

Margo has requested more police hours for both patrolling and training. Brian noted that the Town no longer receives a grant for community policing.

In the discussion of special projects for FY14 Don said that it is important to hold off on those projects which could be covered by the Green Communities Initiative. Members spoke of the need of the Town to focus on fulfilling the five criteria of becoming a Green Community. Dale Ward of Ward Plumbing and Heating has said that the furnace in the Community Hall is fine but that the boiler in Sawyer Hall needs replacing. His estimate for that job is \$8,600.

Sheila urged the Finance Committee to think about COLAs.

The next meeting of the Selectboard will be Monday, April 1.

At 9:20 pm the Finance Committee suspended its meeting to go back downstairs. Members discussed the pay request of the Town Clerk. Jeff made a motion that the Finance Committee approves an increase in the Town Clerk's hourly rate from \$17.35 to \$18.67 per hour. The motion passed unanimously. It was agreed that the next Finance Committee meeting would be April 1 at 7:00 pm in the Community Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 9:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ned Wolf, Secretary