

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee
April 9, 2013

Time: 7:00 pm

Place: Community Hall, Senior Center

Present: Kathy Inman, Jeff Simmons, Ned Wolf, and Don Freeman, and at 8:00 Kara Leistyna,
Sheila Litchfield, Tom Lively, and Brian DeVriese

Absent: Gloria Fisher

The minutes of the April 1 meeting were read and approved with one abstention.

Members discussed how to use Free Cash to buy down the Tax Rate and add to Stabilization. Jeff made a motion to use \$50,000 of Free Cash to buy down the Tax Rate and add \$80,000 of Free Cash to the Stabilization Fund. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

The total cost of the items in Article 3 for FY14 is about \$46,000 more than the corresponding total for FY13. The breakdown of the \$46,000 is approximately as follows: \$11,000 for tax taking, \$7,000 for the difference between the salaries of the new Building Maintenance Coordinator and the no longer needed Custodian, \$2000 for the increase in Workman's Compensation, \$9,000 for the increase in police salaries due to more hours, \$1,500 for the increase in the stipend of the Animal Control Officer, \$6,000 for calcium chloride for the Highway Department to help control dust, \$1,000 for a meals program of the Council on Aging, \$5,000 for Veterans' Benefits, and \$1,750 for signs for the Historic District. The \$11,000 for tax taking is expected to come back to the Town.

Members expressed concern about the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) warrant article proposing the purchase of a new \$19,500 mower for the Highway Department for roadside mowing. The question arose as to what the Temporary Summer Help budgeted for \$3,650 does other than roadside mowing. A question also arose about the voice data fiber network that appears in another Warrant Article.

At 7:58 members suspended the meeting to go upstairs to join the Selectboard.

Sheila spoke of the Town's recently completed audit and gave Don a printed copy. The report contains recommendations to be discussed after the ATM. Don reported to the Selectboard the Finance Committee's having voted to recommend \$50,000 of Free Cash for lowering the Tax Rate and \$80,000 of Free Cash for building up Stabilization to \$193,000. This would bring the amount in Free Cash down to \$34,000. He said that the estimated Tax Rate would be \$19.45, down 57 cents from last year.

Jeff spoke of members' concerns about a new mower. Sheila said that Mike would be invited to the April 23rd meeting for further discussion. Members asked the Selectboard about the \$3,650 budgeted for Temporary Summer Help. Tom said that a major use of those funds is to provide coverage during vacation times. Jeff said it seemed that there would be sufficient personnel to do roadside mowing.

Regarding the voice data fiber optic installation in the ATM Warrant Article, Sheila said that new telephones are needed in Sawyer Hall to realize the full capability available with the fiber optic line. Kara added that new wiring will be needed in the Post Office and the Library. One consequence of the installation of the new equipment would be the elimination of long distance charges. Jeff suggested that we check whether a 911 call from Sawyer Hall in the proposed system would connect directly to Shelburne control or instead to a more distant location.

Members reviewed Article 3. The Selectboard has chosen to delete the Flower Fund. The amount for Sawyer Hall, Community Hall/Internet has increased from \$980 to \$1439.40 because of the new broadband costs. The 5% increase in Workman's Compensation is as in previous years. There is a need to resolve Margo's request for an increase in Police Salaries. Is the request for \$20,000 or \$25,000? There is an increase from \$5000 to \$6000 in the Health Agent Services line because the extra work of the health services agent is considered worthwhile. In the case of Veterans Benefits Tracey has calculated that with the new recipient the total cost will come out just under \$30,000. That is why the \$5000 increase is needed. The increase of \$1,750 for the Historic Commission is for 6 new signs marking the Historic District. The Special Projects line of \$11,700 can be broken down as follows: \$3,400 for a new furnace for the Community Hall, and \$8,300 for a new boiler for Sawyer Hall.

At 8:04 the Finance Committee returned to the Senior Center downstairs. Members discussed the Warrant Articles for the Special Town Meeting (STM) preceding the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) on May 11. The warrant Articles for both meetings are attached. Jeff made a motion that the Finance Committee approves articles 1 – 9. The motion passed unanimously. Kathy made a motion that the Finance Committee approves articles 10 – 13. The motion passed unanimously.

Members reviewed the ATM Warrant Articles. Kathy made a motion that the Finance Committee approves the article that would raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or borrow \$19,500 for the purchase of a roadside mower for the Highway Department. The vote was unanimous in opposition to the motion. Jeff made a motion that the Finance Committee approves the article that would raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or borrow \$12,000 for the repair of the grader. The motion passed by unanimous vote. Jeff made a motion that the Finance Committee approves the article that would raise or appropriate, transfer from available funds, or borrow \$3,130.04 for the installation and purchase of telephone and internet equipment for the transition from DSL to MassBroadband fiber network. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Members considered the article for the purchase of a paper compactor for the transfer station. An extended concrete pad and electrical work would be needed. Jeff made a motion that the committee pass over this article pending further information.

Members turned to the article that would set up a revolving fund for receipts related to the Town's recycling program. Having the fund available for expenditures for the operation of the Town's solid waste and recycling programs is acceptable to members. But there were concerns over the wording which would have the fund available also for "the purchase of recycled content or environmentally

preferable products, to be under the authority of the Board of Selectmen.” It is difficult to know what future Boards might do. Don made a motion that the Finance Committee approves the article. The vote was 2 in favor, 2 opposed. Don will say to the Selectboard that with an appropriate change in the wording the vote would be in favor of the article.

Members discussed ATM Article 3 and in particular the \$7000 for Roadside Mowing and the proposed increase in Highway Materials. Don made a motion to approve Article 3 with a 3% COLA, \$7000 for Roadside Mowing and a \$3000 increase in Highway Department Materials for dust control or half the increase requested. The motion passed by unanimous vote. Don read articles 4 – 7. Jeff made a motion to approve articles 4 – 7. The motion passed by unanimous vote. Articles 8, 9, and 10 are to establish revolving funds for the Conservation Commission, the Animal Control Officer, and the Board of Health respectively. Don read articles 8 – 10. Jeff made a motion that the committee approves articles 8 – 10. The motion passed unanimously. Don read articles 11 – 13. Article 11 establishes a revolving fund for the Council on Aging in relation to Senior Meals. Article 12 is “To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$570.89 from the Revolving Fund for Animal Control Officer, the receipts from the sale of dog licenses ,for the use of the Heath Free Public Library.” Tom has made a suggestion that the words “to appropriate \$570.89 from the Revolving Fund” be replaced by the words “to transfer the sum of \$570.89 from the Revolving Fund.” Article 13 is to accept chapter 90 money from the state. Jeff made a motion to approve article 11, both versions of article 12, and article 13. Articles 14 and 15 state the amounts of Free Cash designated for tax reduction and increasing stabilization respectively. The committee approved them earlier in the evening. Don read articles 16 and 17. Article 16 concerns the approval of the appointment by the Board of Assessors of one of its members to a part-time assistant position. Article 17 is to approve the appointment by the Board of Health of one of its members to the position of Clerk of the Board of Health. Members spoke of there being better ways to achieve the goals of these articles. Jeff made a motion to approve articles 16 and 17. The motion passed unanimously.

At 10:26 members suspended their meeting to go back upstairs and rejoin the Selctboard. The Selectboard agreed to remove the language from the recycling article that prevented the Finance Committee from approving the article. The Selectboard reported having decided to reduce the first proposed salary for the new position of Building Maintenance Coordinator by \$1000.

The meeting adjourned at 10:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ned Wolf, Secretary