

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

Time: 7:04 pm

Place: Sawyer Hall

Present: Jeff Simmons, Jan Carr, Dave Gott, Ned Wolf, Don Freeman, Kathy Inman (until 7:50), and at 7:50 Kara Leistyna, the BOS, and Becky Allen

Members received copies of the following documents:

- Minutes of the May 1 meeting from Ned
- Status as at 5/8/12, Coordinator's Spreadsheet of 5/8/12 from Don
- Further Considerations for the FY 13 Tax Rate May 8, 2012 from Don

Members read and approved the May 1 minutes with emendations.

Members discussed the Town Clerk's salary. Don and Jeff reported that at the May 1 BOS meeting Hilma provided a well prepared rationale for increasing her hours to 20 per week and her pay to \$18 per hour. Sheila supported that proposal. Considering budget constraints, members discussed an increase from 10 to 15 in Hilma's hours with a pay increase to \$17.35 per hour and the addition of \$2600 to the Town Clerk's Expense line for help in compiling the bylaws.

The discussion turned to a 'special project', the re-carpeting of the large 2nd floor office room in Sawyer Hall. Jeff made a motion to delete the line in the 5/8/2012 version of Article 3 that sets aside \$5,300 for that project. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Next the committee acknowledged Jeff's proposed cuts of \$41,489 in Article 3 which include using \$8,000 from the escrow waste management fund to pay for the firefighters' turnout gear. This would provide quicker funding for the needed equipment. In another matter affecting firefighters Jeff said that he felt that the BOS response to Article 23 (ATM Warrant 5/1/2012) showed lack of support for the financial needs of firefighters.

Margo appeared briefly to express her concern that there was BOS and FinCom support for funding a new \$40,000 truck body for a truck that had not been well maintained while support for a new police cruiser to replace the Subaru she had worked to maintain was lacking. Jeff acknowledged her concern and noted some features of this particular truck body that make it more expensive to replace.

Dave expressed appreciation for Jeff's having talked with Eileen about the fact that funds are not provided in the new budget for a storage shed. He and other members agreed that Eileen should be contacted again about this matter. Don said that he would phone Eileen before the May 12 meeting.

Members discussed what per cent would be an appropriate COLA increase, 1% which has been a common increase in the private sector or something closer to 3%. Ned wondered what the FRCOG has been using for a COLA because we have often used that.

At 7:50 members joined the BOS meeting in progress. Members went over Article 3 (5/8/2012) line by line. Regarding the Flower Fund in Line 5, Jeff said he thinks it is not needed. Sheila explained why the BOS thinks it is needed.

Turning to salaries, Tom said that those of the Town Coordinator and the Transfer Station Attendant need to be brought up to grade. Brian found that there was a consensus to bring everyone's salary up to job rate. Don recommended that there be a single line for the total COLA increase. Members agreed to that cleaner approach to giving salary information. For a 3% COLA it would be \$14,610.94. Don also recommended a discussion later in the summer on simplifying the use of the salary classification system.

In commenting on the Reserve Fund in Line 12, Jeff suggested making it self-funding using the waste management escrow account. Members thought it would be worthwhile discussing this with Town Counsel. In Line 15 Jeff would like the Accountant's Support lowered by \$200. Members wondered whether or not the Accountant needs that \$200. In Line 20 members asked whether the Assessors Expense could be lowered by \$400. Val asked that \$400 be restored to pay for training a new Assessor which may not be needed.

In Line 43 Jeff asked whether \$1500 is needed for the Conservation Commission's Consulting Expense. Brian said that it is needed because the Selctboard lacks the expertise to deals with certain wetland situations. In Line 46 Jeff asked why there is a \$1050 increase in Technical Support for Sawyer Hall. Kara explained the increase as needed in light of what the Technical Support person does and charges. In Line 66 Jeff suggested that the firefighters' turnout gear be paid for using the waste management escrow fund. In Line 67 Jeff said that the amount for Fire Dept. Supp./Training was increased for people going to classes, but that since no one is now going to classes, it could be cut back to \$14,000. Dave asked that if the amount is not increased, someone inform Mike. In Line 87 there was interest in asking Mike why there is a \$3000 increase for Machinery Maintenance/Supplies. In Line 91 Jeff recommended that the \$7000 for roadside mowing be deleted and that the present road crew do the job. Tom said that to do that would significantly slow the restoring of roads. In Line 109 Jeff suggested that the Town break its contract for dump tipping and seek a new contract with a Hadley firm. Jan Ameen spoke of this as a possibility in the near future for reducing costs. In Line 122 members noted that the salary of the Town Nurse is not in line for a COLA because it is over grade.

Don reported to the BOS that the FinCom recommends withholding spending for a new floor in the large 2nd floor office room of Sawyer Hall. Dave suggested that we await the results of a building use study before redoing the floor.

There was a consensus to delete the line adding \$10,000 to the Dump Closing account because there is already about \$12,000 in the account.

Jeff made a motion that the Finance Committee recommends Article 3. The motion passed unanimously.

Tom reported that Maureen Mullaney of the FRCOG has said that Sadoga Bridge will be replaced with Federal funds in several years. Tom will recommend passing over the Article regarding the bridge engineering study.

The meeting adjourned at 10:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ned Wolf, Secretary