

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Sawyer Hall
December 6, 2017

Call to Order at 7:00 p.m. by Sheila Litchfield, Chair with Brian DeVriese, Robyn Provost-Carlson, and Kara Leistyna, Town Coordinator present. Also present: Mike Shattuck, Highway Supt., and Ned Wolf. See sign in sheet for other attendees.

Reviewed Agenda: No changes.

Mike Shattuck/ Highway Matters Cont'd: The Select Board, with prior notice to Mike Shattuck, has decided to enter into Executive Session. *On a motion by Brian DeVriese, and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted as follows to enter into Executive Session pursuant to the provisions of MGL, Chap. 30A, Sect. 21(a)(1) to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual, and to return to open session upon completion of executive session:*

Sheila Litchfield, Aye

Brian DeVriese, Aye

Robyn Provost-Carlson, Aye.

7:40 p.m. Open meeting resumed:

Finance Committee: Ned Wolf, Chair of Finance Committee, on the topic of assessment, shared that he inquired with the Dept. of Revenue regarding the \$630,000 drop in Heath's total assessed value. Over the years it increases or decreases but this year it's a substantial decrease and prompted Ned to research further. Ned spoke with Ryan Johnson at DLS as well as Asst. Assessor, Alice Wozniak. He asked why the utility poles are listed under personal property category. He was told that most electrical utilities are listed under this heading. Homeowners listing personal property use the same form. Robyn Provost-Carlson spoke on behalf of Assessors. She shared that growth has slowed and due to depreciation of wire work done some years back, it resulted in a drop in value. The assessors are working on a better understanding of how depreciation is calculated. The town can opt to pursue legal action but it would prove costly according to Robyn. Utilities set their own value. Robyn will find out more details on the period of depreciation. It was suggested that perhaps Dept. of Public Utilities would have information as well. Assessors will report back to the Select Board and Finance Committee. Heath does have an option to reverse the Personal Property exemption or reduce it to \$5,000.

Stipends: Kathy Inman is working on stipends. She created a chart showing current stipend positions, etc. The goal is to create some sort of formula for assigning stipends to positions in Heath. Perhaps base it on frequency of meetings, expenses, responsibilities, etc. Discussed stipend for fire chief and firefighter's incentive fund. Sheila will forward the spreadsheet she prepared last FY. Will revisit discussion at next scheduled meeting.

Reviewed Minutes: *On a motion by Sheila Litchfield, and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of 11/7/17 as presented with one abstention.*

On a motion by Brian DeVriese, and seconded by Sheila Litchfield, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of 11/14/17 as amended with one abstention.

On a motion by Brian DeVriese, and seconded by Sheila Litchfield, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of 11/21/17 as presented with one abstention.

Shared Services: Reviewed draft of West County Police Cooperative and discussed. Currently meetings have included Charlemont and Heath. Initially, Hawley and Rowe participated. Option is always open to join. Community Compact/ DLT A grant money is available to assist the towns in planning. Dan Nietzsche from FRCOG has been assisting. Sheila Litchfield, Melinda Herzig, and Sarah Reynolds from Charlemont have been meeting. Towns may have signed on to Mutual Aid agreements with neighbors which is fine but different when it comes to enforcement of legal issues or taking action. This draft MOU ensures that all towns fall under same umbrella with consistent policies, procedures, and insignia. This current MOU is between Heath and Charlemont but others may join. It includes four models of shared police services. Sheila continued detailing each level. She described the formation of an advisory board including representatives from Select Boards, Police Depts. and a lay person not associated with the police department. This board would serve to advocate on behalf of police departments and assist in making the transition work well. Transition would include creation of consistent job descriptions; pay rate; and performance review process. An Advisory Board at Level 3 would oversee decision making. It is critical to calculate total population of each town and number of calls received. Reviewed some examples of how it would function and although not its intent, the model shows a savings overall. Officers are currently already serving in multiple towns – a benefit is that more qualified officers will be available to serve each town. Cost savings and efficiency could possibly be achieved by consolidating training and creating a consistent uniform. The details have not been finalized. Sheila will keep BOS apprised of any updates. Will revisit discussion with Melinda Herzig at next scheduled meeting.

WiredWest MOU: Sheila provided brief update. Shutesbury recently signed the MOU with WiredWest. Everyone read response from Gail Huntress of Shutesbury MLP. She stated that Shutesbury agreed to sign because the MOU is non-binding and non-exclusive; signing gives WiredWest the power to negotiate on town's behalf in order to get better rates and favorable terms; signing gives the town power to negotiate and ensure contracts and decisions are in the town's best interest – by not signing, towns lose voting rights. And last by signing, the town continues as an active member and reaps benefits of information and solution sharing as we navigate the next steps in the broadband build-out project. Art Schwenger shared that he doesn't see a down side to signing. If things change in the future, Heath can re-assess and choose to opt-out. Seven towns have signed. Town counsel opined that this MOU is not an operating agreement, and lacking an exclusivity provision, does not bind the town to WiredWest. All that said, ***on a motion by Brian DeVriese, and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to sign the MOU between Town of Heath / Heath MLP and WiredWest.*** Signed MOU and hand delivered to David Dvore.

Discussed need for MLP Manager. This person is critical during construction phase. Sheila will find out if funds from State can pay for this position and draft a job description. It is a full time job for someone to handle license agreements; pole applications; pole licenses; review all pole data to ensure accuracy; edge cases; permitting, etc.

On a motion by Brian DeVriese, and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to appoint the following:

- ***Art Schwenger to serve as WiredWest Representative;***

(The Board will seek out and alternate representative to serve in Art's place should he not be able to attend a WW meeting.)

- ***Art Schwenger, Jan Carr, and Ned Wolf to serve as advisors to the MLP Board (a revised appointment)***
- ***Kate Peppard to serve on Parks & Recreation Committee***

9:30 p.m. Ned Wolf, Jan Carr, Art Schwenger left meeting.

Mail/ Email:

- Email from Mark Reich re: MLP Question
- Email from Kimberly Longey re: MLP / Heath assistance request
- Email from Kimberly Longey re: Verizon Pole Attachment License
- Email from Kimberly Longey re: Aerial License Agreement process
- Email from Pamela Leavens, NGrid re: application packet for applications
- Email from Bill Ennen re: Summary of MBI Grant call
- Email from Bob Viarengo re: Wireless Internet/ 2001 report/ digital map on flash drive
- Email from Pat McGahan re: Internet Café Proposal
- Email from Margo Newton re: response to Café Proposal
- Email from Tracey Baronas re: Café Proposal
- Email from Betsy Kovacs re: Glen Ayers
- Email from Alyssa Larose re: Green Communities
- Email from Deb Porter re: School Library. Will schedule a meeting in January to discuss further.
- Town Nurse Report, November
- Email from Sheila Litchfield re: Bond Bill
- FRCOG Shared Human Resource Program Opportunity
- Email from Assessors re: mapping update
- Email from KP Law re: Bray Road update
- Email from Andrea Woods re: Elevator
- Emails (hard copy) re: dog matters and illegal dumping

Other Separate Documents for review and/or signatures:

- Vacation Request
- Treasury and Payroll Warrant
- Hanover Insurance Group Bond Application for Utilities
- Pole Attachment Agreement for Verizon
- Aerial License Agreement with NGrid
- Reimbursement Request
- Insurance Cancellation Request 55 Route 8A South
- WiredWest MOU
- Draft Agreement Charlemont/Heath establishing West County Police Cooperative
- Additional Info. Re: Sharing Formula for discussion
- Town Coordinator Report
- Accountant's Cash Reconciliation, November, 2017

Other Business:

- **Internet Café Proposal:** Board read revised proposal. They also read responses from Margo Newton, Community Hall Chair, and Tracey Baronas, Town Accountant. Sheila will reach out to accountant with questions and clarification on donations.

On a motion by Brian DeVriese, and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to agree to the following:

The Board of Selectmen agrees to sponsor the Community Café on a trial basis in the downstairs/Sr. Center of Community Hall beginning Jan. 13, 2018 and for four Saturdays during the following four week period;

Heath Rural Connections shall use Community Hall Use Form to specify dates/times and submit to Margo Newton. Any funeral or For Profit event will be accepted if it falls on the day/time of the Community Café and you will have to reschedule with Margo.

The Town will cover the cost for improving the Community Hall WiFi connection up to \$400.

Any donations or money taken in by the Community Café shall be turned over to Margo Newton for deposit into the Community Hall donation account.

If, at the end of the trial period the café proves viable, a proposal for future dates shall be submitted to the Board of Selectmen for approval.

- **Fire Dept. Update:** Robyn has met with Heath Fire personnel and the Chief in Colrain. She has also been meeting with Beth Bandy or Charlemont, Phoebe Walker and Dan Nietzsche of FRCOG to discuss shared services. Charlemont is experiencing a similar situation with their chief resigning, too. Ken Gilbert will resign as of Dec. 31, 2017 but willing to assist with transition during day time hours. Charlemont will be advertising for an interim chief and asked if Heath was interested in sharing a full time chief. Robyn will reach out to Charlemont. Discussed existing personnel and need to assess department and formulate a plan for the future. Need to review training schedule, needs, and budget planning. Robyn will also follow up with Colrain before next scheduled meeting.

Signed documents:

On a motion by Brian DeVriese, and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to sign:

- Vacation Request
- Treasury and Payroll Warrant
- Hanover Insurance Group Bond Application for Utilities
- Pole Attachment Agreement for Verizon
- Aerial License Agreement with NGrid
- Reimbursement Request
- Insurance Cancellation Request 55 Route 8A South

Next meeting scheduled December 12, 2017 at 7 p.m. at Sawyer Hall.

There being no further business to come before the Board: *On a motion by Brian DeVriese, and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:40 p.m.*

Respectfully presented,

Kara M. Leistyna
Town Coordinator