

**MEETING MINUTES**  
Town of Heath  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
Sawyer Hall  
January 30, 2018

**Call to Order at 7:03 p.m.** by Sheila Litchfield, Chair with Brian DeVriese, Robyn Provost-Carlson, and Kara Leistyna, Town Coordinator present. Also present: Budge Litchfield and Bob Gruen, School Committee Reps. See sign in sheet for other attendees.

**Reviewed Agenda:** No changes.

**School Committee:**

**Regionalization:** Budge opened discussion. He has read some information from the DESE website on forming or joining regional districts but needs to study it further. Heath needs to start working beyond the bridge that was created with Hawlemont School. Need to discuss how we envision the process of exploring and working in the direction of forming a new district. Budge reports that parents are happy with the transition to Hawlemont. First step is a feasibility study to determine if the transition is educationally and fiscally viable. Fiscally meaning there is sufficient budget revenue available to provide quality education while keeping town assessments manageable. If the three town School Committees are in favor, it will go to Annual Town Meeting vote to appoint regional planning committees from each town (3 members each including one School Committee member) as well as to appropriate funds (proportional by town) to fund this process (operations/legal). Then, those committees form together as a regional planning board that will work to revise the regional agreement and recommend amendments. A neutral study facilitator will need to be hired. An ideal person will be versed in regional structure and finance. Budge mentioned that people at M.A.R.S. (Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools) are available to help facilitate the work. Budge recommends a feasibility study (in accordance with DESE guidelines) prior to April to determine viability – the request coming from School Committees. If positive outcome, towns will request articles for warrants. Budge shared that the District has people willing to begin to move us forward and will assist with compiling data to determine how this change will affect the three towns – Heath, Hawley, and Charlemont. Budge will draft a letter to each town and their school committees. Budge feels feasibility study results may confirm to voters that it's a positive choice and that will help to foster support for the change. Informational meetings will be held in all three towns and articles will run in local newspapers. Budge has drafted a timeline and he predicts the process will take roughly 2-3 years.

**FY19 Budget:** Bob Gruen shared FY19 budget numbers that show a 1% increase. Funds from transportation revolving fund and excess & deficiency were used to reduce overall impact. Budget vs. assessments were reviewed by all. Explanation of changes will be provided at ATM. Many variables create these figures and it is difficult to ascertain an exact cause for an increase or decrease from year to year and it varies by town. This draft proposed budget shows a total assessment decrease for Heath by -2.75%.

**Pre-School (PK) Funding:** Heath has historically raised funds to support PK for Heath families – usually \$10-15k on Article 3 of ATM warrant. With a new site for PK in Hawlemont, need to calculate for FY19. Heath has supplemented PK for families in order to compete with neighboring towns offering free PK. Tuition included in assessments covers 3 mornings for three year olds and 4 mornings for 4 year olds. The money raised at ATM covers Heath families wanting additional hours either in the morning or afternoon. The FY18 calculation is \$11,469 and \$15,000 was approved. The remaining balance could be used to cover general operating expenses or could go back to general fund. It is important to communicate this option to all Heath families with children to be sure everyone who needs the hours is aware they are

available. The plan for next year is undetermined. The cost will be rolled into assessment and Heath will pay the difference.

Sheila reminded everyone that although Heath did not get grant funding through Community Compact Efficiency & Regionalization, we will request support this year again to assist with the transition in forming a new district. Budge will contact KP Law to discuss OPEB issue and how it affects our potential withdrawal from current district. Thank you to Budge and Bob.

### **8:13 p.m. Budge and Bob left meeting.**

**Fire Dept. Budget Hearing:** Nick Anzuoni, Interim Fire Chief attended tonight to discuss FY19 budget and other fire dept. related matters. Nick has level funded most accounts. He would like to restructure the system for compensating on call firefighters. Nick shared that Colrain pays hourly and that most towns do so similarly. There is a one hour minimum per call and then hourly thereafter. If training is mandatory, that is paid hourly as well. The current incentive system in Heath is one pool of money. If it's a busy year with a lot of calls, each firefighter who responds is paid less. We need a system that is fair and equitable. Call volume is up this year. Two structure fires could exhaust the entire budget. Discussed Personal Protective Equipment line and questioned the increase. Discussed the intent of the line and that two turnout full gear suits were to be purchased each year. Ken was replacing two SCBA bottles each year as well. The training account includes funds to cover EMT training for two people. This line may also cover costs for First Responder training and books. There are other mandatory trainings that can be covered under this budget. Nick shared that firefighters are required to train to Firefighter I standards but it is not required for them to be certified. Many local courses do train under this standard but others offered may not be official. Firefighters may attend trainings when offered in Turners Falls where they are taught to the standard. Volunteers are required to train and Nick feels compensation for such a commitment is important. Discussed how calls and responders is coordinated and if there is a cap on how many are needed for each call. It varies depending on reason for call. Each case is unique and offers valuable hands-on training. Robyn will assist by reviewing FRCOG salary survey to determine an hourly rate for firefighters.

**Compressor:** Heath currently has an old compressor that will need to be replaced. A new compressor costs roughly \$25-28k. Grants can offer funding to purchase new. There is a used compressor for sale for \$7,000 but no guarantees. Discussed need and urgency. Nick has eight back up bottles and Colrain has assisted with refills. Bottles cost \$600 each. All felt it was not urgent to purchase at this time. Nick will look out for any grant opportunities.

**Engine 2:** This is a museum-vintage vehicle. It is outdated and has limitations including current firefighters who know how to drive it. Nick would like to house the new rescue truck (used for 85% calls) in the bay and sell Engine 2 – not to be replaced at this time. Nick will salvage any serviceable items that he can from the vehicle – four air packs and bottles, etc. Extra crew, if needed, can be transported in rescue truck.

### **8:56 p.m. Nick Anzuoni and Finance Committee left meeting.**

#### **Mail/ Email:**

- Art Schwenger re: MLP/Broadband Construction Liaison job description
- Betsy Kovacs re: Advice on how to handle trailer matter and Sheila's response. Kara will ask Town Counsel if BOH has authority to enforce or not. May discuss on Feb. 6 if necessary.
- Patricia McGahan re: update on first Community Café. Well attended.
- MassDOT Bridge Rating H-14-014
- Robert Bourke re: Hose Connection for Community Hall. Select Board approved request for installation.

- Bob Dean/FRCOG re: refund for FCCIP Program \$781.59
- Ken Gilbert re: Life Flight Landing Zone
- Jan Ameen re: more on PAYT numbers. Excellent, positive news on program!
- Town Nurse monthly report
- Robert Viarengo re: Swap Shed at transfer station. Will install shed in spring. Town will earn 2 points towards MA DEP Sustainability Grant which is roughly \$700.

**Other Separate Documents for review and/or signatures:**

- Notes from Sheila for discussion with School Committee members (7-8 pm)
- FY19 Budget Spreadsheet - DRAFT

**Other Business:**

- **Special Projects:** Select Board prefers this as one account as voted at ATM.
- **Informational Meeting Green Communities:** Kara will confirm 3/27 with Jim Barry.
- **Insurance Shortfall:** Select Board would like paid from MTRSD funds.
- **Ledges Road:** Robyn will talk with Nick Anzuoni regarding possible practice burn to remove building.
- **Broadband Construction Liaison:** Made further revisions to job description.

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

- Payroll and Treasury Warrant
- DCR Cost Share Application for Parks & Recreation Comm.
- Letter to NGrid to participate in LED street light program
- Prior Year timesheet Catherine Hannigan
- Exec. Office of Elder Affairs standard state contract for COA
- Bay State Elevator quote for elevator repair, \$10,964.00

**Next meeting scheduled February 6, 2018 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 9:40 p.m.*

Respectfully presented,

Kara M. Leistyna  
Town Coordinator