

**MEETING MINUTES**  
Town of Heath  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
Sawyer Hall  
April 10, 2018

**Call to Order at 7:03 p.m.** by Sheila Litchfield, Chair with Brian DeVriese, Robyn Provost-Carlson and Kara Leistyna present. Also present: Ned Wolf, Gloria Fisher, Kathy Inman, Jan Carr, Alice Wozniak, and Mike Shattuck. See sign in sheet for other attendees.

**Reviewed Agenda:** Minutes of 4/3 to be reviewed at next scheduled meeting.

**Board of Assessors/ Electric Assessment:** Alice Wozniak, Asst. Assessor, attended a presentation at the end of March featuring George Sansoucy. Mr. Sansoucy values and assesses public utility property and has a history of defending his valuation results in court over the assessment methods of public utilities — winning some and losing some. He believes that fair market value model is a better way to assess than book value plus depreciation which eventually ends at zero value. Mr. Sansoucy has been in business for 36 years. He is believed to have significant understanding of these issues. Many towns in western MA have experienced a significant drop in the public utility's assessment. Alice shared that Mr. Sansoucy is interested in working for a group of towns (minimum 32) in Berkshire, Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin counties. If Heath is interested in participating, it would cost \$25,000 over five years (\$5,000/year) for each town. He can work to show a different appraisal indicating an increase in true cash value of assets that could lessen the impact on our tax rate. Alice shared that Rowe, Ashfield, Colrain, Irving and a handful of others have shown interest in hiring Mr. Sansoucy. Alice's hope is that Sansoucy can use his model to modify the electric assessment in our favor. The impact of the public utility's assessment is significant equating to an .85 increase in our tax rate, according to Ned Wolf, Chair of Finance Committee.

Discussed poles as well as related to Broadband project. Heath has a lot of old, short poles. If we need to replace them, the utility company is assessed as they maintain ownership. But then they can accelerate depreciation in an effort to lower it. If we don't join the 'cooperative' will utility company continue to depreciate? Alice says yes and they will eventually depreciate to zero value according to their book value plus depreciation model. If Heath signs on, Mr. Sansoucy would have to be appointed as a Special Municipal Employee. The Board was curious if he could do the work in time for ATM? It was determined that it would have to be addressed at a STM but the moderator could inform voters at ATM. At the time DOR certifies the Town for next year, they would otherwise use the figure provided by utility company. It's a complex task with a lot to sort out and could eventually end up in court. The Board is interested in gaining more information on this topic and participating. Legislators are aware of this critical issue. Thank you, Alice.

**Mike Shattuck and Jeff Johnston/ Highway Reorganization:** Discussed how transition has been received by crew. Everyone seems positive and open to ideas reported Mike. They met for about an hour. No one had specific concerns; felt it was pretty straightforward. Jeff feels it's needed – a welcome change. Robyn shared that there were a lot of questions and positive feedback. Everyone participated with a lot of ideas. It is an opportunity for the crew to step up and be pro-active. It appears that the outcome from this type of organization will encourage more frequent feedback. Regular meetings will be held to discuss matters. It may take time to adjust to change and how the overlap of tasks will work. Crew will work together to smooth out any rough spots during transition. The delegation of tasks creates the potential for a more efficient functioning of the department. The reason for this change is to create a system that maximizes everyone's strengths and for the crew to each own a piece of the whole, so to speak. By using everyone's strengths, efficiency of running the department is maximized. Team approaches are being used more and more. Leadership models are changing in the workplace. Employees will work as a team to meet the demands/goals together. All job descriptions needed an overhaul to better match the

tasks accomplished by crew. Redefining roles became more complex when considering the different positions needed for departmental functioning. Worked to regrade each job description; the next step is to propose FY19 salaries. Will review current superintendant job description for comparison.

**TRUCK:** Mike researched a new truck. He had Truck #1 assessed. It requires more and more repairs and is not cost effective, in his opinion. Grader needs replacement. Truck #3 requires about \$10,000 per year; Truck #1 is similar. Mike feels that more delay equates to more expense. A new truck would go out to bid at roughly \$180,000. The option to purchase a new, used vehicle could result in more repairs. Switching to Mack would necessitate switching tires/rims which is costly. Another way to save in the long term is to utilize town employee (mechanic) to assist with some repairs. Thank you to Mike and Jeff.

**Finance Committee:** Pondered uses for Free Cash for FY19 which included Irene payment, Audit Stabilization, \$30,000 to reduce taxes, other stabilization accounts, paying off loans. A suggestion was made to create a Treasurer Tax Taking Revolving account which eventually will be self sustaining as money is taken in and used to replenish account. Will further discuss uses of Free Cash next week as well as Highway salaries.

### **9:20 Finance Committee left meeting.**

**Review Minutes:** *On a motion by Brian DeVriese, and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of 3/27/18 as presented.*

### **Mail/ Email:**

- Ned Wolf re: electric company assessments
- Tracey Baronas re: request for history of tax possession properties account
- Tracey Baronas re: year-end transfers. Will address at meeting on May 1.
- Tracey Baronas re: year-end memo
- Tracey Baronas re: questions from Ned
- Heath School Account (expenses)
- Mark Reich clarifying borrowing for broadband and debt exclusion
- Nick Anzuoni re: transfer request (STM in May?)
- Martha Thurber re: clarification on warrant articles
- Veronica Vaca re: Planning Grant (expires June 30). Kara will check on reimbursable expenses.
- Karen Totman re: Revised Approach and Timeline for Exploring Joining Hawlemont Regional School District
- March Broadband Report from Bob Bourke
- Kara re: annual reviews – these should be scheduled.
- Alyssa Larose re: Energy Audit. I will schedule site visits with Nick.
- Colrain Volunteer Ambulance Annual Report
- Robyn Provost-Carlson re: Fire Service Discussion
- Ken Gilbert re: thank you
- Jon Diamond re: School Use. Would like feedback from Tim Lively.
- DLS Bulletin re: Local Option Excise on Retail Marijuana Sales \*FYI

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

- TC Report
- Treasury and Payroll warrants

- MEI Authorization Letter
- Agreement Establishing a Steering Committee to Establish the West County Police Cooperative. ***On a motion by Brian DeVriese, and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to sign the Agreement Establishing a Steering Committee to Establish the West County Police Cooperative.*** Appointees will include police chief and a member of Select Board as well as an unaffiliated member at large.
- Chap. 90 Requests for your signatures
- Draft ATM Warrant
- Draft FY19 Budget
- Draft Job Descriptions for Highway Crew
- Expenditure Reports
- 3/27 minutes

**Other Business:**

- ATM Planning: The Board would like to offer a moment of silence in memoriam of those whom have passed this year. Kara will get list from Town Clerk.
- Performance Reviews: Robyn will conduct Fire Chief review; Brian will conduct Tax Collector review; Sheila will conduct Treasurer and Town Coordinator reviews.
- Shared Fire Services: A letter was submitted to the BOS from Heath Firefighters requesting that Nick Anzuoni stay on as Chief for Heath. Need to respond to letter received from Charlemont. Kara will draft and send letter and cc: Dan Nietsche.

**Next meeting scheduled April 17, 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 10:05 p.m.***

Respectfully presented,

Kara M. Leistyna  
Town Coordinator