

MEETING MINUTES  
Town of Heath  
Finance Committee  
October 22, 2018

7:05 call to order

**Attending :** Ned, Jan Ken, Kathy,

Minutes reviewed approved by Ned, and seconded by Kathy unanimously agreed, upon. Jan abstained because she was not present at the last meeting.

Follow up on fin com liaison to the Highway Dept. Ned informed Robyn and Mike of plan for fin com liaison. Robyn working on a project with Mike and Jeff to document information Fin Com will want to know about maintenance, and when this is done they will come up with a vehicle replacement plan. Fin Com will wait until these documents have been completed. Liaison of fin com and Hwy dept will be discussed at another meeting.

Fin com will not be in the same room every time Robyn presented information about the Hwy. Dept. so Ned raised some concern about how we will get that information.

Ken wonders how we will have the basis for providing an informed decision if we do not get information from the hwy dept.

Discussion about broadband progress with pole survey, and questions were raised about continued involvement of wired west, since the town is working with Westfield Gas and Electric on this project. Wired west acts as a consortium, so works on some aspects of the project with Westfield Gas and Electric. Wired west is involved in the huts that house the works.

Ned has not gotten in touch with Paul Debrody who has been away and will try to contact him and will try to set a meeting for 2 weeks, on Monday, Nov 5.

Robyn told Ned that if there is a chance for a fire department grant, the highway dept can use the extra space of what is now the fire department. Ken mentioned that the FD has been mentioned for cold storage in the past.

Bob McGahan arrived to chat with fin com members.

Ned noted that the appointment is until the position is up for a vote in June. Bob was asked about his interest in becoming a fin com member.

Bob has interest in how the budget gets built in town and an interest in being involved. He has some concerns about how the money is spent in some areas, such as the Hwy dept. He notes that money gets spent on equipment that has not been properly maintained.

Ned asked about his background. Bob worked as an electrical engineer for the last 35 years. He has a PhD, repairs his own equipment, and well versed in how mechanics work and how equipment should be maintained. He does house maintenance projects and when he was working, he has managed 150 person research laboratory. Other related experiences include for 50 years he has been a member of a condo association, and for much of that time he was the director. While he was working he was on a variety of committees, including data gathering and a committee addressing peoples concerns.

Ned asked about small budgets vs larger city budgets. Bob thinks small towns have to be more careful because of limited resources.

Discussion of some of the projects that are current concerns include broad band, school building, possible grant for Fire Department.

Bob wonders what the fin com actually does, if the fin com has only an advisory capacity. Ned described the process of reviewing budgets with the BOS, sitting in on hearings by various departments. Fin com occasionally has some influence on the recommendations. Article 3 starts to take shape and we get a sense of likely spending related to requests and budgets. Ned also notes that we have to be more conscious of proposition 2 ½ because of levy ceiling is 2 ½ percent of the total evaluation of the town. For the last few years, that has not gone up much, although expenses have. Last 2 years the levy ceiling has increased and, has recently come close to the levy limit. The levy limit should always remain less than or equal to the levy ceiling.

Broadband spending will likely be necessary within the next 6 months.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Inman