

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Sawyer Hall
April 9, 2019

Call to Order at 6:00 p.m. by Brian DeVriese with Robyn Provost-Carlson, Gloria Cronin Fisher, and Kara Leistyna present. See attendance sheet for others present.

Review Agenda: No changes.

Public Comment Period:

- Jesse Weigand: Asked BOS to be sure handicapped accessible spots are left open near Community Hall for mobility impaired. Attended Assessors' meeting recently and wondered how broadband borrowing will affect tax rate. Robyn explained debt exclusion and upcoming vote. BOS and Finance Committee both recommend the debt exclusion for broadband borrowing. A hand out will become available. Current rate is \$21.60. Limit is \$25.00. Debt exclusion is a tool the Town may use to exempt the borrowing amount from the tax rate. CAF II funds were mentioned which may assist with payments towards debt but those funds are not to be available to Heath till at least FY23 and for 10 years. Certain amount of those funds goes towards maintenance of network. Another question Jesse had was when is the Heath Elementary School sign being removed.

Gloria announced openings on Board of Assessors and School Committee. She described the role of school committee representative to all in attendance.

6:20 p.m. Citizen Groups:

- Finance Committee chair, Ned Wolf, will have a power point presentation with slides comparing financial implications of sale vs. keeping building.
- Pam Porter distributed a draft outline and shared main points that will be offered at info. meeting. Group is still working on final numbers.
- Bob Dane's group is advocating the sale of the building. He distributed an outline of what his group will present at the meeting including answers to some concerns brought up at previous meetings.

Planning: Bob Dane proposes that the groups present and then open up for question/answer. Select Board agreed and decided that ½ hour per group is sufficient. They will review outlines/numbers in order to flesh out inconsistencies and get back to each group with questions. Ned Wolf shared that the Finance Committee unanimously supports the sale of the building to CA.

7:58 p.m. Tax Collector Budget Hearing: Betty Nichols in attendance tonight to review budget and offer update on software conversion. Finance Committee present but not deliberating as they are not posted. Discussed request for raise. Betty's salary was recently raised but offset by fees going into general fund. She shared that with her 25+ years in the position, increase in tax bills over the years, and with the software conversion, she'd like additional compensation. Betty also expressed that the demand fees could be increased from \$5 to \$10. Currently, Colrain charges \$20 but they can be raised as high as \$50. Board explained that the grade chart was adjusted to accommodate increase in minimum wage. If adopted, all salaries will increase and employees will stay within their current grade. Betty's would calculate to be \$17,791.80. If budget can sustain it, Board will recommend it to voters.

Software Update: Betty shared that all Beta Testing would be done by August, 2019. She will need an extract with new numbers to create a list of parcels. Rebecca Krause-Hardie already has the conversion from Patriot. Per the agreement, billing should not begin until activation of program.

Betty will send in writing her recommendation to increase demand fee.

8:00 p.m. Assessors Budget Hearing: Robyn explained that Alice Wozniak performed work as a consultant but was not compensated. Need to decide to either transfer in May or July or have a FY19 transfer on the ATM warrant. The total is approximately \$1,500. For FY20, they are asking to incorporate the consultant line into the Asst. Assessor salary line rather than proposing a new position (will consider next FY). Discussed compensation and similarly to other requests, the adjusted grading will satisfy the request for increase and will maintain current level within the grading system. Robyn shared that Alice is capable of doing the work but those credentials are not necessarily needed by the Town. If Alice is replaced, the Town would need a consultant so the budget line should be preserved. Another option is to level fund the consultant budget and discussed consequences if Alice may be compensated from that budget – 1099; does it affect retirement, etc. Would like to preserve budget line and if compensated at top of grade, annual compensation is \$15,896.40.

Discussed Utility Appraiser and fee for online support (\$1,500). This is the last step of mapping project in order to put options on line. \$2,400 hosting fee is assessed. Robyn researched agreement and found that it includes set up and 1 year of annual hosting – budget may be reduced accordingly.

Mapping: State highly recommends annual updates to stay current (as of Jan. 1st). These updates help with revaluation. Discussed results of mapping. Some property owners gained acreage; some lost; and some remained the same. Final figures will be available May 1st.

Other Budget Planning Business:

- Special Projects – need to decide priorities for FY20.
- Ned Wolf did a preliminary estimate of tax rate. Will need to adjust based on several factors and then will decide on uses for Free Cash.
- Finance Comm. not in favor of purchasing a tractor at this time. However, highway dept. feels a new tractor is needed for multi-purposes and for mowing roadsides. Can keep old tractor to use for other tasks other than mowing and new tractor may be used elsewhere. Jeff will find out the cost of a rental if purchase of a new tractor is not recommended. Will provide that number next week.
- All borrowing will be reflected in FY21 budget
- Kara will invite Jeff to attend next week for a joint meeting with Finance Committee to further discuss equipment proposals.
- Finance Committee will meet tomorrow to prepare for informational meeting. Discussed settling on \$74,000 for annual operating costs of building in-use and \$25,000 for tax revenue. Chart will be adjusted with new numbers.
- Enterprise Fund: Sheila Litchfield will send a recommendation to Board and Finance Committee from MLP Advisory Committee.

Mail/ Email:

- Highway Dept. Capital Expenditure Request Form (updated)
- Senator Hinds: Announcement of new office and contact information
- Ned Wolf re: Follow up to Clark Rowell's visit and debt exclusion
- Ned Wolf re: Tax Levy Worksheet *Draft*
- Greenfield Savings Bank re: Elm Tree for Town Common
- Karen Totman re: Call to Action – Support Funding of Rural Schools in MA
- Brian DeVriese re: meeting with Hilma
- Gloria Cronin Fisher re: meeting with Hilma
- Sheila Litchfield re: WiredWest Board meeting; related minutes
- Jan Ameen re: DEP letter on recycling contract

- DEP letter on recycling contract
- Bill Ennen re: Heath/April call (FYI)
- FRCOG re: Traffic Count (forwarded to Jeff)
- Senator Hinds re: Office Hours in Heath

Other Separate Documents for review and/or signatures:

- 4/2/19 minutes
- TC Report
- FY20 Draft Budget Spreadsheet and warrant
- Treasury and Payroll Warrants
- Tax Collector Budget Request FY20 and related documents
- Board of Assessors/Asst. Assessor Budget Request FY20 and related documents
- NGrid Make Ready Work Estimate, \$29,583.85
- Reimbursement Bill Schedule for postage
- Letter to Nicholas Connors, Director, confirming acceptance/agreement Green Communities Designation Loan
- Beacon, April 2019

Other Business:

- **Open Space & Recreation Plan:** Brian relayed that a town-wide mailing/survey will be sent out by this newly formed committee working on revising the OSRP for Heath with assistance from FRCOG. Will need to budget for postage and envelopes. Can be paid from Select Board expense account.
- Appointment: *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher, and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to appoint Gene Garland to serve on Board of Health as adjunct member.*
- Town Clerk Meeting: Met with Hilma Monday at 4 pm to further discuss her increase in salary. She has been Town Clerk for 19 years; certified by State which entitles her to \$1,000 stipend if voters accept statute at ATM. Will add a new line on Art. 3 for this stipend in addition to salary line. Propose to compensate her at top of grade (\$23.95/hourly) for 15 hours per week = \$18,681. With the additional \$1,000 it will nearly meet her request for increase. Some of this increase will be offset by fees going into general fund, approximately \$2,000. (Treasurer and Collector are also entitled to an additional stipend if State certified – Kara will inquire).

Signed documents.

There being no further business to come before the Board: *On a motion by Gloria Fisher, and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:46 p.m.*

Respectfully presented,

**Kara M. Leistyna
Town Coordinator**