

## MEETING MINUTES

Town of Heath  
SELECT BOARD  
Sawyer Hall  
March 26, 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. A public comment period will be added to agendas going forward. Public comment is dedicated time of up to no more than 20 minutes for the public to speak to items listed on the meeting's agenda. Each speaker may be provided up to two minutes to speak. In addition to topics on the agenda, the committee chair may allow public comment on other topics.

**Minutes:** *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher, and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of 3/19/19 as amended.*

### Public Comment Period:

- Sue Lively: Shared that her group has been meeting. Brian DeVriese attended last meeting. Tom Carlson has come up with another option as they try to pull together facts/figures. They are looking at property owned by the Town. If at the ATM, voters do not approve giving the Select Board permission to sell the property (or lease or otherwise), they would like the option to sell the Bray Road property. Discussed possible restrictions. According to Sue, Tom and Nick Anzuoni, Fire Chief, looked at the property to determine cost comparison to retrofit the Jacobs Road property. (A *citizen petition* was circulated and signed by at least 10 voters to allow the Select Board to sell the Bray Road property).
- David Detmold, not a Heath resident, brought forth another citizen petition regarding the State Flag and Seal. This petition, according to David, boosts legislators to come up with a more positive image including all peoples working in harmony rather than a Native American under a sword.

Thank you.

**6:25 pm:** Brian DeVriese, Chair, stated the need to enter into executive session, a continuation of a previously held meeting, for reason #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." The individual to be discussed was notified in writing by the public body at least 48 hours prior to the proposed executive session, however he is not able to attend tonight. Upon closure of executive session, The Board will resume regularly scheduled, open meeting.

Brian DeVriese: aye

Gloria Cronin Fisher: aye

Robyn Provost-Carlson: aye

### Regular, Open Meeting resumed at 7:00 p.m.

**7:00 p.m. Account Budget Hearing:** Tracey Baronas attended tonight to discuss her FY20 Budget Request. Tracey is asking for \$656.83 for salary increase which represents a 5% increase. She feels this is an opportunity to keep her salary competitive with nearby towns. Discussed broadband and the additional duties for accountant. Tracey figures sometime in 2020, Heath will need to set up any accounting measures for the network. She recommends the Enterprise Fund model for bookkeeping purposes. This

requires some additional paperwork to file. There may be an option to write-off a portion of the salary per DOR through an adjustment from Enterprise Fund to General Fund. To remain in WiredWest, accounting would be done without an Enterprise Fund. This requires more discussion and input from MLP Advisors and WiredWest representative. Another budgetary request is to fund an Accountant Software Stabilization fund and to provide more money to be deposited into the Audit Stabilization Fund. Clark Rowell will be visiting soon and will be asked his opinion on audit and broadband borrowing. Thank you, Tracey.

**7:20 p.m. Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership, Peggy Sloan and Art Schwenger:** Peggy Sloan from FRCOG and Art Schwenger attended tonight to gather support for the next phase of MTWP. The project has been in the making for four years for Western Franklin County, Northern Berkshire County, in forest conservation. Peggy offered an overview of the project which is part of the Franklin Land Trust, a non-profit organization in western Massachusetts that assists farmers and other landowners who want to protect their land from unwanted development. It's locally driven and not involving state-owned land but rather involves private land owners. 20/21 towns have representation. If towns opt into the program, funding will be available for conservation, economic development, forestry planning, etc. State-owned land is not part of the partnership. Conway, Shelburne, Adams, Peru have opted in. There is no financial obligation but if, in the future, a cost is required, member towns may opt out. Robyn shared that towns are often concerned with more land coming off the tax rolls – as land comes off the tax rolls, someone has to pay the bill, she added. Peggy responded that many towns share this concern and that is the reason the program is staying local.

***On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher, and seconded by Robyn Provost Carlson, the Board voted in favor of opting into the program with one abstention.*** Thank you, Peggy and Art.

**7:42 p.m. Art and Peggy left meeting.**

#### **Finance Committee:**

- Salary Increase Requests: Assistant Assessor, Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Accountant are asking for salary increases above a 2% COLA. Board of Assessors will address Asst. Assessor request. Each needs to justify increase whether increased duties above and beyond job description, and whether job needs to be reclassified and regraded. Kara will adjust all salaries with a 2% increase and populate Art. 3.
- Free Cash: Roughly \$146,000 remains. Finance Committee is discussing options some of which are pay off Three-Town Liability Waiver loan (McCloud property), roughly \$23,000; Audit Stabilization, Accountant Software Stabilization; General Stabilization or other, roughly \$50,000; \$30,000 to lower tax rate FY20.
- Highway/ Plan for OSHA: Added \$6,400 to highway expense account to cover any unforeseen expenses. There will be an OSHA assessment Friday at the highway garage. Any feedback received can be part of budget discussions to determine additional needs as they arise.
- Warrant: ***On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher, and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to close the FY20 ATM warrant.***
- Informational Meetings: April 6 and 13. Finance Committee will include a chart of estimated impact on tax rate considering various scenarios. Citizen groups gathering information will be asked to present their findings to the Board on 4/9 – they will have 15 minutes each to share their factual data. Discussed starting time for meetings at 10 am rather than have a set time of 10-1. Select Board will host. Will ask Eric Sumner to moderate or Doug Wilkins. Gloria and Kara will work on putting together a postcard for mailing out to all households. Kara will place All Call message.
- Debt Exclusion: Discussed strategy for explaining importance to voters. Will be on ballot at annual elections, 5/10/19. A power point could be created or posters including projected tax rates if debt exclusion not used. Importance will need to be emphasized and what it means for our fiscal health. Taxpayers will still have to pay but it is a tool the Town can use to create a better standing with DOR and borrowing especially for broadband. More will be learned at upcoming meeting

with Clark Rowell from UniBank. Kara will ask Town Clerk if an explanation of Debt Exclusion may be placed with ballot.

- Ballot Question: *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher, and seconded by Robyn Provost Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to place a debt exclusion question on the ballot for the 2019 Annual Town Election as follows:*

*Shall the Town of Heath be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one-half, so-called, the amounts required to pay for the bond issued in order to fund the Town's share of the costs of construction and installation and start-up of a high-speed broadband network, including all incidental and related costs?*

\_\_\_\_\_ *YES*

\_\_\_\_\_ *NO*

*And further, that the Town Coordinator be directed to provide a copy of this vote, including the form of the question, in writing, to the Town Clerk, notifying her of the vote to place the question on the ballot, as required by G.L. c. 54, § 42C.*

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

- Betsy Kovacs re: 16 Ledges Road (response)
- Jenny Hamilton re: MEPOA
- Sheila Litchfield re: overview for BOS on SBTT
- Lauren Goldberg, KP Law re: debt exclusion ballot wording
- Ned Wolf and Kara Leistyna re: spreadsheet questions
- HRA re: annual report activity 2018
- Citizen Petition re: Resolution authored by Represent US Supporting State and Federal Legislation to Limit the Influence of Money in Politics and promote Free and Fair Elections
- Henry Godek re: Phone Service during Power Outages
- Sheila Litchfield re: Request re: Emergency Dispensing Site / refrigerator. The Board approves of giving the refrigerator located at the Heath School over to the Emergency team overseeing Emergency Dispensing Site.
- Jan Carr re: Mailing
- Town of Hawley re: Mohawk School District and Native American imagery
- Hawley re: Landfill Gate
- Brian DeVriese re: Child care at ATM
- FY20 Mohawk Assessment Payment Schedule revised
- Heath Highway re: OSHA
- Copy of letter sent to Mike Shattuck
- David Detmold re: Resolution to change the state flag and seal of MA
- Acceptance of Emergency Waiver Request dated March 19, 2019

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

- 3/19/19 minutes
- TC Report
- FY20 Draft Budget Spreadsheet
- How to Adopt an Enterprise Fund – uncertain as Heath has not chosen an ISP for broadband yet.
- MTWP documents (on flash drive) questions for Art/Peggy: does this lead to more state-owned land? What is difference between a vote by BOS and ATM?

- Treasury and Payroll Warrants
- Bob Bourke, Broadband Liaison timesheet
- Broadband Construction Grant Quarterly Report
- Bill Schedule for Whip City Fiber (WG&E) paid from Broadband Construction Grant, \$13,812.88
- Town Accountant Budget Request FY20 and related documents
- Letter to Schmidt Equipment, Inc. confirming acceptance of bid for Backhoe, \$99,800 and related documents

**Other Business:**

- April 9: Will ask both citizen groups to present their information to the Board. Informational meeting will be held on April 13, starting at 10 am. The groups will provide results of their research. Select Board will host. Discussed need for a facilitator for the meetings. Kara will reach out to Eric Sumner and possibly Doug Wilkins. Gloria and Kara will work on getting a postcard prepared for mailing asap announcing dates/times/place of meetings. Kara will place an All Call message as well. Discussed need for childcare at all meetings – informational and ATM. Kara will reach out to a few folks in town whom may be able to assist.
- Henry Godek: Board would like to send a thank you to Henry Godek for assisting in getting Verizon to replace the battery back up so that residents will have phone service during an electrical outage.

**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 9:03 p.m.***

**Respectfully presented,**

**Kara M. Leistyna  
Town Coordinator**