

Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Via Conference Call #1-605-313-5944
October 6, 2020

- Present: Ned Wolf, Chair; Jan Carr, Ken Gilbert and Alice Wozniak. Will Emmet, absent.
- Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM.
- Minutes: **Jan Carr moved to approve the minutes of September 15th as amended. Ken Gilbert seconded. Alice Wozniak abstained due to absence. Passed by majority.**
- Expense Report: Expense Report-The Legal Account is more than 50% expended for the year. We will need to keep an eye on this in the event that more is needed. The Board of Health has used a portion for the property located at 3 Ledges Rd. and the Planning Board in conjunction with the Building Inspector have been working on private roadways and whether permits can be issued for those properties.
- Ongoing Business: State Budget-The state has not yet set their Fiscal Year 2021 budget. It has been noted that it could be several more months before it is finalized.
- Jean Gran's report-Jean Gran, Heath resident and former CPA compiled some comparison information from the Department of Revenue website in regards to Heath dated September 10, 2020. This report uses comparison data from the Towns of Leyden and Windsor to evaluate where we are financially. Two factors were noted in our discussion:
1. Growth-Heath doesn't have any Growth. Jan mentioned that if several houses were to be built that would help. Alice noted that a couple of houses are not going to be enough to dig us out of the financial hole but are helpful if we can also get some commercial, solar or cell tower activity like the neighboring town of Colrain. These are income driven which is more lucrative than residential growth which is market driven.
 2. Spending-Ms. Gran mentioned the difference between discretionary and non-discretionary spending in her report. Non-discretionary spending we have no control over (insurances-health, building and liability; interest rates on loans) whereas discretionary we do have control. She listed the Fire and the Police Departments in that "control" group. a.) Alice who clerks for the Colrain Fire Dept. said that some costs are not discretionary. If you don't have a Fire Dept. (because you have chosen to not fund, for example) your homeowner's insurance safety rating can increase dramatically. Ken stated that he thought that Heath's rating was currently high, at least when he was Fire Chief. This is something that should be looked into to determine whether it would have an impact on individual homeowners. b.) It was also discussed that the State Police are the responding entity already when the Heath Police are unavailable and Chief McDonough doesn't reside in town. Currently, there are only two State Troopers on shift at any given time to cover an area from (North-South) Bernardston to Deerfield and (East-West) Northfield to Monroe. This is significant area [416 square miles] to cover in the event of an emergency. Alice noted that a domestic violence victim might be seriously harmed in the time it takes for a Trooper to respond (currently we have 2 Heath residents on the

Police) depending on their location in their coverage area. Some might disagree that public safety officers are discretionary.

Ned noted that this was a good start and we would continue it at the next meeting.

Adjourn:

Jan Carr moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:59 PM. Ken Gilbert seconded. Passed unanimously.

NEXT MEETING: TBD

Respectfully Submitted,

Alice Wozniak