

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee

July 31, 2023 @ 4:00 pm

Atrium, 18 Jacobs Road

Present: Hilma Sumner; Selectboard: Robyn Provost-Carlson (Chair), Sue Lively, Elissa Viarengo;  
FinCom: Tom Lively (Chair), Will Emmet, Bob McGahan, and Ned Wolf;  
visitors Jeff Johnston and Kyle Jarvis of the Highway Department, and  
Barbara Gordon

Absent: Alice Wozniak

Tom called the meeting to order at 4:02.

Members discussed the list 'Town of Heath End of Year Transfers, 6/30/2023' prepared by Accountant David Fierro and sent by Hilma to committee members on 6/31/2023. The total in excess funds recommended to be transferred to deficient accounts is \$63,172.34. There is a total in excess funds in other accounts of approximately \$19K.

**Action Taken** *Bob moved that we recommend the above report from the Accountant to the Selectboard. Will seconded the motion. The motion passed with 3 ayes and 0 nays.*

The Selectboard approved the transfers by unanimous vote. Sue and Elissa suggested that a close look at which accounts had large excesses or large deficits could help guide our budgeting for FY24.

Highway Department Trucks

Robyn thanked Jeff for the information he brought to the July 25<sup>th</sup> STM and for the answers he gave to voters' questions at that meeting.

Jeff reported on his inquiries about local people and contractors who might be hired for snow removal. Two local people expressed interest.

For the cost for a driver plowing for a contractor Jeff said that the city of Springfield pays \$200 to \$220 per hour. He thinks that locally, a person plowing for a contractor without equipment would get \$150 per hour although prevailing wage would push that up.

Among the 5 contractors that Jeff contacted just one expressed interest in plowing Heath's roads. That is Saladino's landscaping business in Jacksonville, VT. They have model 550 trucks and a 2 ¼ yard sander. They would work fulltime 24/7.

Sue said we might hire them to do more than just snow removal. We would be funding them according to their hourly rate while saving our equipment.

Robyn said that we still need a list of drivers who could come in as needed. Maybe Saladino has a list we could use.

Robyn said that following the STM she made a rough estimate of the cost of hiring outside help from a contractor. She assumed the department had a \$100K truck which lasts 7 years. She assumed there will be 25 snow events and that outside help will work a minimum of 5 hours an event. She used \$150 per hr as a low estimate of wages for contracted help. Her estimate for the cost of that contracted help for 25 events using our truck is \$19K.

Jeff said that the 2012 truck has just passed inspection. Still, members expressed many concerns about its safety based on the 2012's documented breakdowns.

What would happen if the 2012 is removed from the fleet? Jeff said that his preference would be to put the 2016 Dodge on the paved roads and the contracted driver on the dirt roads.

Jeff said that we would supply the contract for Saladino. He has driven with a driver from Saladino around Heath roads. If Heath contracts with Saladino, the procurement process needs to be followed. We've done due diligence in seeking other contractors.

Robyn supposed that we table the 2012, and hire outside help with a 550 truck. That would mean having 2 small trucks plus Jason on the dirt roads with the 2003. Using the 2016 Dodge with Kyle on the paved roads would extend the life of that truck.

If the 2012 could be replaced with a big truck soon, Jason could go on the dirt roads with the 2016 Dodge. That truck would hopefully last 3 more years.

There was a consensus of Selectboard members to scrap the 2012, do whatever can be done with the 2003, and then seek to replace it.

**Action Taken** *Robyn moved that the 2012 truck be taken out of use immediately. Elissa seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Robyn said she doesn't recommend committing to using chapter 90 monies for a truck until more study has been done. Hilma will look into whether ARPA money can be used for a truck.

Will moved that the FinCom meeting be ajourned at 5:47. Bob seconded the motion. The motion passed with 4 ayes and 0 nays.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ned Wolf