

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Finance Committee  
August 21, 2023 @ 6:00 pm  
18 Jacobs Road

Present: Tom Lively (Chair), Alice Wozniak, Will Emmet, Bob McGahan, and Ned Wolf

The meeting began with the Select Board in the cafeteria.

Present: Hilma Sumner (Town Coordinator), Robyn Provost-Carlson, Sue Lively, and Elissa Viarengo, with visitors Jeff Johnston, Kyle Jarvis, Barbara Gordon, and Bob Viarengo who arrived at 6:45

Tom called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm.

Robyn thanked Jeff for his weekly updates on work of the Highway Department. Sue expressed appreciation for information about 'to do' items, what's done each day, and what's still to be done. At some point they plan to assess how much time has been spent on things such as ditching.

Kyle said that \$15K - \$20K of work will be needed on the 2003 truck to get it through the winter. Both the front and rear main seals are leaking. Removal of the rear seal will require taking out the transmission. A new wiper assembly is needed.

The Dodge truck needs some attention. Jeff's truck is good.

Robyn asked "Where is Joe Saladino?" He is the owner of a Jacksonville, VT property management company who has shown interest in having a contract with Heath for snow removal. There appears to have been a miscommunication regarding the place and time of a meeting about a contract. Jeff will reach out to Joe Saladino to make plans for the meeting.

At 6:17 the FinCom left the cafeteria to meet in the atrium.

Members read the minutes of the July 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. Recommended changes:

- replace in the second sentence of the second paragraph on p.1 'replacing' with 'repairing'. -
- in the third paragraph on p. 4 replace 'July 31<sup>st</sup>' with 'July 31<sup>st</sup>'.

Will moved that the minutes of July 25<sup>th</sup> be accepted as amended. Ned seconded the motion. The motion passed with 3 ayes and 1 abstain.

Members read the minutes of the July 31<sup>st</sup> meeting. It was recommended to replace 'supposed' in the first sentence of paragraph 8 on p. 2 with 'proposed.' Will moved to accept the July 31<sup>st</sup> minutes as amended. Bob seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Members discussed the possible uses of Heath's approximately \$207K of ARPA funds. Hilma has informed us during the past year that the funds could be used towards a new salt shed. She plans to attend a meeting where she may learn whether the ARPA funds can be used for a replacement truck.

**Action Taken**      *Ned moved that at least half of the ARPA funds be used for a replacement truck. Will seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.*

**Date of Next FinCom Meeting: Thursday September 21, 18 Jacobs Road at 6:30**

At 7:20 the FinCom returned to the cafeteria where the Select Board discussed with Bob Viarengo and Ned the proposed lease for the Heath Historical Society (HHS) to rent the former assessors' office in Sawyer Hall. Hilma informed the committees that Town Counsel has said that the proposed contingency clause for a situation where town offices return to Sawyer Hall or Sawyer Hall is demolished is not allowed. The Town cannot sign a lease that would require it to reimburse the HHS for capital improvements on the rented space if either of those situations were to happen.

Town Counsel has said that the funds to reimburse the HHS would have to be approved at the Annual Town Meeting on a yearly basis. Could the monies be kept in some stabilization-like account? Elissa said that the HHS could gamble and sign the 10 year lease with the intent of seeing whether with the Accountant's help an article can be brought to the Annual Town Meeting that addresses the HHS concerns. Select Board members said that more discussion is needed.

Tom told the Select Board of the FinCom's discussion of the possible uses of ARPA funds. Ned read the motion passed unanimously by the FinCom that at least half of Heath's ARPA funds be used for a replacement truck.

Hilma has a training session coming with possibly helpful information about how ARPA funds can be used.

Highway/Fire Site Study

Robyn said that the Select Board has decided to hire the services of Walter Cudnofufsky Associates, Inc. to get information about what an expanded highway/fire site would look like on both sides of Branch Hill Road. The Town's previous request was to get information just about the siting of a new salt shed on the same side of Branch Hill Road as the current salt shed. The results of the new request can then be compared with an earlier study of a possible highway/fire site on Bray Road.

#### Request to Help Fund MTRSD Late Bus

Tom brought up a request from the Rowe School Committee communicated to the FinCom by Hilma who sent an attached letter from Susan Zavotka, Chair. Susie says that the late bus transports students from Heath, Charlemont, and Rowe home following end of school activities (primarily sports). The cost of the late school bus is paid solely by the Town of Rowe as part of the Rowe School budget. The cost has risen sharply and for FY24 will be \$19,560. Susie says that the Rowe School Committee suggests that the three towns share the cost evenly, or that each town pay approximately \$6,550. A response would be appreciated by September 6<sup>th</sup> or October 12<sup>th</sup>, the next two dates when the Rowe School Committee meets.

Tom said that the FinCom could not think of a source for the \$6,550. This is not the time of year when we prepare articles to raise and appropriate. Could the money come from ARPA funds?

Will moved that the FinCom meeting be adjourned at 8:15. Bob seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ned Wolf