

Minutes of the Heath Finance Committee
January 29, 2025 at 6:30 pm
Jacobs Road Municipal Building

Present: Dena Briggs (Chair), Alice Wozniak, Bob McGahan, Wendy Whalen (at 6:55),
and Ned Wolf

Dena called the meeting to order at 6:38 pm.

Members read the minutes of the August 5, 2025 meeting. Alice moved that the minutes be approved with edits. Dena seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Stipends

Alice noted that as the recipient of an assessor's stipend she will not take part in any related discussion or vote.

Ned referred to the Select Board minutes related to stipends and sent to us by Hilma. He said that the last time that the Finance Committee worked on a system for determining stipends it was difficult to come up with guidelines even after studying the stipends of nearby towns. The FinCom eventually decided that the stipends of committee members should be based on the number of times that the committee meets.

Should Heath get rid of stipends? The Fire Chief receives the largest stipend. Members of the Finance Committee, the Conservation Commission, and the Historic Commission receive no stipend. In Colrain and Leyden Planning Board members receive no stipend.

What determines the work of the Board of Health? Alice noted that for a property in Heath with a condemned septic system it is the FRCoG agent who does the bulk of the work, not the Board of Health.

Ned noted that the hours of election workers vary from year to year depending on the number of elections that year. Dena said her memory was that she was offered \$100. For just being an election worker.

Action Taken *Bob moved that we think about stipends and share ideas at our next*

meeting. Alice seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Anticipating the Tax Rate at the Annual Town Meeting(ATM)

Members said that the Warrant at the 2025 ATM did indicate that the amount for the operating budget (Article 3) for FY 26 did exceed the amount for FY 25.

Ned said he had predicted the tax rate in the past based on an assumption that the total assessed value would remain the same. When a significant increase occurred in property values, the prediction turned out to be off.

Alice pointed out that at the time of the ATM neither the property values nor the estimated receipts are known.

Ned will reach out to Sue and Lyra about a possible taxes seminar at a Council on Aging meeting.

2025 Annual Report of the Finance Committee

Dena said she will come up with a draft and get feedback from the FinCom.

Town Nurse Position

Claire has said that this will be her last year as Town Nurse.

The Board of Health will be at the budget hearing on the position of Town Nurse. Rowe and Deerfield are the only other towns nearby that have a nurse. Claire has given the Select Board reports on the number of visits with patients.

What can be done to assist patients in getting to doctors' appointments? There is an FRTA bus with a lift.

Budget Hearings: February 17 Highway, Fire, Police, Board of Health
March 3 Snow date, Budget discussion

Date of Next FinCom Meeting: Thursday, February 12 at 6:30 - Stipends, MLB,
pay phone, late bus

Bob moved that the meeting be adjourned, Wendy seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf