Minutes of the Heath Finance Committee
February 12, 2026, at 6:30 pm
Jacobs Road Municipal Building

Present: Dena Briggs (Chair), Alice Wozniak, Bob McGahan, Wendy Whalen, Ned Wolf, and Cynthia Johnson (visiting)

Dena called the meeting to order at 6:39 pm.

We read the minutes of the January 29 meeting. Wendy moved that we approve the minutes as amended. Bob seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Bob will contact the Accountant about the payphone in Sawyer Hall as he looks into its use and its expense.

Stipends

We looked closely at a table of stipends for 9 nearby towns as well as for Heath.

The Animal Control Officer doesn't really get a stipend. It's an ACL assessment.

The $1000 stipend for the Animal Inspector appears to be in range.

We agreed that positions such as the Assessors that require an education component or a certificate should receive stipends.

The $1500 stipend for the Board of Assessors Chair and the $1000 stipend for each of the other 2 Assessors look appropriate.

The FinCom thought that the Board of Health stipends need more justification in light of the services of the FRCoG. Can we set up FRCoG visits to Heath?

The $1600 stipend for the Emergency Management Coordinator looks OK.

We discussed how Colrain is going to $10,000 for Fire Chief while Heath is at $6,870.

Nick Anzuoni had to take 3 days off from work for the fire in Cook State Forest. In FY26 the Firemen Incentive Award has been $12,500 which is split among all firefighters. Will regionalization in the long term be the best way?

No other town in our sample of 9 has library trustees.

Only 3 of our sample towns have stipends for Planning Board members. Neither Conservation Board members nor Zoning Board members in Heath receive stipends. Should the Planning Board, Conservation Board, and Zoning Board be treated similarly?

We recommend $500 instead of $1000 as the stipend for School Committee member based on what School Committee members receive in other towns.

There were questions about whether the MLB members should receive stipends.

The stipend of $1250 for Senior Center Coordinator looks OK.

We recommend that Election Workers be paid hourly. The number of hours worked varies depending on how many elections occur in a given year.

<u>2025 Annual Report</u>

We read the draft of Dena's report which includes FinCom members' edits.

Action Taken *Bob moved that Dena's report with edits be approved. Wendy seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

<u>Demand Fees</u>

When the FinCom suggested that the penalty for a late payment of the excise tax be increased, the Select Board informed us that the Accountant had purview in that matter.

Any increase in Demand Fees has to be voted. Alice will reach out to Mia and check whether an increase in Demand Fees can get on the Warrant by March 13.

<u>MLB</u>

Visitor Cythia Johnson expressed concern about the MLB's not meeting the deadline for informing the Assessors of the amount to be transferred to the town. She dislikes the resulting increase in the tax rate. She was concerned that there are people in Heath who do not have broadband but who are having to pay taxes to help pay off the broadband loan.

Ned acknowledged that the MLB had not met the deadline.
He noted that there are Heath taxpayers who are helping support the schools even though they have no children in those schools.

Bob will contact the Town Clerk looking for the Warrant Article establishing the MLP Manager.

Contract with Wired West

Dena asked who signed the contract with Wired West? Can we get a copy of the contract? Wendy will ask MLP Manager Bailey Cole.

Budget Hearing

Dena reminded us that there would be a Budget Hearing on Tuesday, February 17.
It will include the Highway Department, the Fire Department, and the Board of Health.

Wendy made a motion at 8:57 that the meeting be adjourned. Dena seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf