

Minutes of the Heath Finance Committee
March 10, 2026, at 6:30 pm
Jacobs Road Municipal Building

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

This was a joint meeting with Select Board members Robyn Provost and Elissa Viarengo, Town Coordinator Mia Francesconi, Highway Superintendent Tyson Howard, and Police Chief John McDonough.

Dena called the meeting to order at 5:31.

Robyn said that Heath has approximately \$1.2 million of Chapter 90 money including this year's \$377K. The estimated costs of resurfacing roads are as follows:

Sumner Stetson Rd.	\$140K
Number Nine Rd.	\$417K
Colrain Stage Rd.	\$541K

Various options were discussed. There was a consensus that first attention be given to Colrain Stage Rd. because it serves as access for emergency vehicles. There was also a consensus that Tyson will put all 3 roads on Warner Brothers schedule for this summer.

Just the binder coat will be done on Colrain Stage Rd. The chip seal, which costs \$100K, will be postponed until next year.

The FinCom was in favor of the proposal to spend \$30,209. for doors for the highway garage and the fire garage.

The proposal for a new mower has been withdrawn.

Police Department and Fire Department

The proposals for the chief's salary and for maintenance are the same as last year.

There is a proposal for 80 additional hours for patrolling. There are questions as to how those hours would be spent. The FinCom asked if hours could be gained by billing the Heath Agricultural Society at the Fair.

The fire chief is OK with one new set of gear. The FinCom proposed that it be funded using Free Cash.

Robyn said we need in the future to think about applying for grants for new gear.

Robyn suggested adding an administrative assistant for the fire chief. Alice suggested 3 hr/mo, 36 hr/yr.

There was a consensus to propose an assistant to the fire chief for less than \$1,000/yr.

Salaries

There was a consensus that the COLA be 2.8%, the same as for Social Security. This does not apply to stipends.

Stipends

There are questions as to whether members of the Board of Health need to put in certain hours of training to remain current. Since the Board of Health does not issue permits, training is not required.

The amount proposed for Emergency Personnel Services is \$1600. which includes \$1200 for the Emergency Management Director (up from \$1000), \$300. for the Coordinator, and \$100. for the alternate.

An inquiry will be made about the origin of stipends for the Library Trustees.

The Select Board will send Art Schwenger, Chair of the MLB, an email asking about MLB stipends.

The FinCom recommends a stipend of \$1500. for the Senior Center Coordinator.

Maintenance of Town Buildings

The FinCom supports the 10% increase proposed by the Select Board for the Municipal Building.

For Sawyer Hall the FinCom supports a 5% increase coupled with a 5% savings by removing the pay phone.

The FinCom does not favor any increase for the maintenance of the Community Hall.

Rental Payments

On April 1 there will be a new upstairs tenant in Sawyer Hall. Clarity is needed regarding where the lease income goes.

Is the lease income considered 'anticipated revenue'? Some rental fees go into a revolving fund. There is no revolving fund for Sawyer Hall.

Assistant Assessor's Software

The Assistant Assessor will need new software in moving to cloud based storage. The Warrant article submitted by the Assistant Assessor to fund the move to the Cloud proposes \$7,500 for a one-time installation.

New Copier

One estimate from Baker for a new Ricoh copier is \$4,495. Two options are a 60 month lease \$92.57 and a 36 month lease \$133.95. There are other estimates from Baker for different models of Ricoh copiers. The Town Coordinator will seek a quote for a copier from Colrain.

Improvements to Municipal Building

The cost of financing improvements to the heating system will hopefully be helped by grants.

The cost of the presently needed roof repair is estimated to be \$53K. The estimate for the remainder of the roof is \$250K - \$300K.

FinCom members left the Select Board meeting at 8:45 to meet in the atrium. Members read the minutes of the March 4 meeting. Alice moved that the minutes be approved as written. Wendy seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Dates of Next Meetings: Thursday, March 26 at 6:00 PM
Tuesday, March 31 at 5:30 PM

Alice moved that the meeting be adjourned at 8:55. Wendy seconded the motion which passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf